Reingard Spannring
Wilfried Smidt
Christine Unterrainer   *Editors*

Institutions and Organizations as Learning Environments for Participation and Democracy

Opportunities, Challenges, Obstacles

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Editors
Reingard Spannring 🆔
Institute for Educational Science
University of Innsbruck
Innsbruck, Austria

Wilfried Smidt 🆔
Psychosocial Intervention &
Communication Studies
University of Innsbruck
Innsbruck, Austria

Christine Unterrainer 🆔
Institute of Psychology
University of Innsbruck
Innsbruck, Austria

Contents

Part III   Young Adulthood

Part IV   Adulthood

Part V   Advanced Adulthood and Old Age

Chapter 1
Participation in Organizations and Institutions Across the Life Course

Reingard Spannring (iD)**, Christine Unterrainer** (iD)**, and Wilfried Smidt** (iD)

Abstract This introductory chapter provides an overview of the different meanings of participation and locates this concept in the context of the life course. Parallel to and intertwined with learning, participation is a lifelong and life-wide phenomenon, framed by life-course regimes and institutions. While participation has become a widely used catchword that promises personal, organizational, and community development, as well as the strengthening of empowerment and democracy, a continuous engagement with critical questions concerning the underlying motives, contexts, conditions, and effects of participation is essential for democratic societies. Organizations and institutions being vital subsystems of any society, this book's chapters scrutinize the potentials and limits of some of these as learning environments. The introduction concludes with a "guided tour" through the chapters and the concerns the authors raise, each representing institutions through which many of us move in the course of our lives.

Keywords Participation · Democracy · Life course · Learning · Organizations

R. Spannring (✉)
Institute for Education Science, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
e-mail: reingard.spannring@uibk.ac.at

C. Unterrainer
Institute of Psychology, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
e-mail: christine.unterrainer@uibk.ac.at

W. Smidt
Psychosocial Intervention & Communication Studies, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
e-mail: wilfried.smidt@uibk.ac.at

1.1   The Meaning of Participation

The concept of participation is heterogenous and multidimensional. Participation can be interpreted in many ways. At the individual level, it can refer to access to and membership in an organization, to being part of and having a voice in an organization, and to ownership and autonomy within a social context. At the collective level, participation implies social integration and activation, civic engagement and code-termination, democratic governance and legitimation, and social and political transformation (e.g., Verba & Nie, 1972). The term has come to signify openness and transparency, inclusion and diversity, voice and empowerment, and equality and democracy in all life spheres, including more recently developed domains such as citizen science, open-source technology, peer production, and online participation (e.g., Kelty et al., 2015).

Participation has significance for individual, organization, and society. It is a decisive factor for personal growth, identity formation, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), and self-determination (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Responding to a universal human need to interact effectively with one's environment and to influence decisions concerning one's life participation is considered the critical condition of intrinsic motivation, well-being, learning, and development (Wilpert, 1998). Furthermore, participation is deemed an essentially collective experience that is shared by individuals and characterized by affective and communicational qualities. It contrasts with the anonymous, disconnected, or mechanistic interaction in some spheres of life, such as markets (Kelty et al., 2015) or unresponsive institutions (e.g., Walther et al., 2008).

Participation is also associated with benefits at the organizational and institutional level, where individual satisfaction, aspirations, and self-reliance contribute to increased efficiency, for example, to the more successful integration of young people in education and work by youth transition institutions (Walther et al., 2008) or to companies' stronger organizational commitment, lower turnover rate, and reduced absenteeism, which leads to increased productivity, efficiency, innovation, or profitability (Batstone, 1983; Janssen, 2005).

At the societal level, individual self-determination is considered a fundamental value and an inalienable human right that needs to be realized not only in institutions of political democracy but also in all spheres of social life (Pateman, 1970). Participatory approaches thus seek to promote social and political inclusion and the remodeling of society toward justice, equality, and well-being for all. While "allow[ing] exploited and alienated workers to become active agents in the processes of remodelling society" was a central socialist tenet (Wilpert, 2000, p. 356), participation is now more generally used to bring the voices of marginalized and disadvantaged groups to bear on the aims, structures, and processes within institutions, organizations, and communities. This approach is tied to participatory theory, which posits a causal relationship between a lack of participatory opportunities on the one hand and apathy and lacks of engagement, motivation, and competence on the other hand. Dismantling the "patterns of authority" (Pateman, 1970) across

society is therefore understood to foster the development of civic virtues, "opening new possibilities and life chances for the individual" while increasing "participation as a collective effort for the benefit of all" (Kelty et al., 2015, p. 479f).

1.2 Participation and Life Course

Participation accompanies us throughout the life course—"from the cradle to the grave"—in various meanings and settings. It is not only an activity, experience, and competence that is transferred from one life stage to another (socialization) and from one life sphere to another (spillover effect) but also something that may change between life stages and with the biological cycle of maturation and decline. Similar to the life course itself, participation is structured by social institutions, economic and political contexts, and historical conditions.

1.2.1 Lifelong and Life-Wide Participation

Socialization for participation takes place throughout the lifetime. In the course of one's socialization, social norms, values, and behavior patterns are internalized. In primary socialization, the family plays the most important role. Politicization in the family has a lasting effect on the political values of children (Youniss, 1982). However, individual attitudes and behavior may change during secondary socialization, when peers become more influential, and during tertiary socialization through political and social institutions such as schools, workplaces, voluntary organizations, political parties, and trade unions. Schools not only impact cognitive knowledge but also the possibility of experiencing "lived democracy." Participatory activities in school boost political participation outside school and after leaving school. Similarly, political engagement in the workplace is associated with political participation outside work and volunteering with other forms of social and political participation (Westphal et al., 2008; Pateman, 1970; Weber et al., 2020). Furthermore, the socialization process is not a one-way street: research has identified "trickle-up socialization" where children's engagement in participation has an effect on their parents' values and behaviors (e.g., Fitzgerald, 2011; Hooghe & Stiers, 2020) and "spillover" effects of mobilization extend from one family member to another (McDevitt, 2006).

The socialization thesis put forward by Almond and Verba (1965), Barnes and Kaase (1979), and Putnam (1993) assumes a causal order where participation in civic and political life leads to greater civic-mindedness, trust in civic and political collaboration and institutions, and active engagement. Civic engagement is thought to not only enhance the capability for empathy, altruism, solidarity, and reciprocity but to also transcend the limits of one's own private sphere, widening one's social identification with and interest in the lives of others. In institutions and

organizations, beyond socialization effects, self-selection and organizational selection effects are also plausible. A self-selection process is thus assumed; people who have developed prosocial behavior in previous settings search for work in institutions and organizations that fit their values. Additionally, organizations select newcomers whose values and aspirations correspond to organizational values and goals (Schneider, 1987). However, selection and socialization effects may occur simultaneously. Adopting a corresponding role in organizations will therefore tend to lead to the development of congruent value patterns and of even more intensive participation (Quintelier & Hooghe, 2012). From a learning perspective, practice leads to more self-efficacy, improved skills, better social recognition, and enhanced motivation to pursue further participation (Wenger, 1999).

A focus of the life course also encompasses life cycle effects, i.e., the physical, psychological, and social changes implied in an individual's maturation and aging process. Life cycle events such as entering or leaving school, entering the labor market, starting a family, or retiring have implications for participation. Not only is the workplace an agent of politicization, but marriage and parenthood can also create incentives for participation (e.g., Stoker & Jennings, 1995). However, these implications are not uniform; they depend on additional factors, such as age, gender, and social class. Marriage and having children, e.g., entail lower political participation rates among individuals under 30 and women. This finding regarding young parents may be related to the fact that they have lower educational attainment and thus lower participatory skills and motivation. Mothers with children at home may in turn lack the work-based opportunities to develop participatory skills and become involved in political activities (Erkulwater, 2012). However, these groups may also have a lower "biographic availability" (McAdam, 1986) due to their family responsibilities and possibly inadequate support by the welfare state.

Beyond these (gendered and classed) life cycle-specific participation patterns, research has revealed highly personalized and subtle changes in participation as people move from one life stage to another (e.g., when older political activists step back from power positions or find new meaning in their involvement) and inverse dynamics when trajectories of participation affect the life course, e.g., when intensive political involvement leads to dismissal or divorce (Serrat & Villar, 2020).

The life cycle and its implications for participation must always be viewed against the backdrop of social structure and historical change. The combination of life cycle and historical period produces generational or cohort effects based on the collective social and historical experiences of those born in the same era. Hence, Mannheim's notion of generation (1952) builds on the formation of a generational unit, similar to a social class, with a worldview that is specific to its social and historical context and differs from those among generations raised in a different time and social space. Generational effects are often associated with major sociopolitical events, such as the Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II, and the Velvet Revolution in Eastern Europe, but need not be limited to these. Digital communication technology has heralded a new area, and we are excited to observe what effects the Fridays for Future movement and the COVID-19 pandemic will have on today's

younger generations. However, disentangling life cycle effects from generational effects remains a constant challenge for any analysis (e.g., Blais et al., 2004).

1.2.2   Life-Course Regimes and Institutions

With their corresponding positions and roles in society, life-course regimes and institutions link individual biographies and social life-course patterns and create social integration. Beyond biological and psychological maturation and decline, the life course is predominantly structured by an age-related institutional ordering (Mayer, 2004). Due to this ordering, life courses follow more or less certain empirical and normative sequences, i.e., normal biographies or standard life courses, which are usually differentiated by specific social categories, such as gender and social class. While some authors call the normal biography itself an institution (e.g., Kohli, 1985), other authors (e.g., Schütz & Luckmann, 1973) refer to organizational forms as institutions. Obviously, the education system organizes a large part of the life course through its age-specific ordering. Economic institutions, social security, and public welfare also produce age stratifications via their demands regarding education, work experience, and years of tax contributions.

Life-course regimes have changed historically from traditional (ca. 1900), industrial (1900–1955), Fordist/Welfare State (1955–1973), to post-Fordist/postindustrial (1973–) regimes, thereby altering the specific possibilities for and demands on participation. During the Fordist regime, life-course transitions were linear and clearly outlined with respect to the (class- and gender-specific) order and timing of life events, such as finishing education, entering the labor market, starting a family, and retirement. In the post-Fordist regime, life courses have become partially deinstitutionalized, losing their compulsory sequence and becoming somewhat reversible, e.g., when young adults return to live with their parents to pursue tertiary education (Biggart & Walther, 2006). Education careers have become prolonged, interrupted, and lifelong, labor market integration protracted and precarious; work careers are characterized by high mobility between firms and occupations, flat income trajectories, and repeated unemployment; and old age is accompanied by early retirement, decreasing pensions, and increasing longevity (Mayer, 2004).

Under these conditions, the significance of human agency and development returns to the fore: children are perceived to be (co-)producers of their relationships and development (e.g., Qvortrup, 1993), parent–child relationships and socialization processes are considered mutual interactions rather than one-directional influences (Mayer, 2004), and life decisions and lifestyles are individually fabricated in patchwork biographies (Beck, 1986). The postmodern and post-Fordist era, with its deinstitutionalization and individualization, has promoted lifelong learning (e.g., European Commission, 2001) and emphasized participatory and nonformal learning (e.g., Walther et al., 2008).

The shift from Fordist to post-Fordist employee participation has changed such participation's form and popularity. While industrial democracy and worker

representation through trade unions were en vogue during the 1970s, they yielded to the increasing focus on the organizations' objectives and benefits of the 1980s and 1990s. Competition pressures and the increasing demand for worker flexibility compromised direct participation and employee involvement. Deregulation and the accompanying precarization of workplaces and "high-commitment" work environments do not harmonize with "rights-based" employee participation (Wilkinson et al., 2010). Similarly, traditional forms and characteristics of political participation have changed as class-based ideologies and loyalties to authorities have lost significance. As life courses have been destructured and pluralized, participation has taken on more individualized forms, such as lifestyle politics (Giddens, 1991; Stolle et al., 2005), engagement in new movements and single-issue campaigns that cut across the traditional left-right cleavage, and creative forms of public action (Micheletti & McFarland, 2011; Norris, 2007). At the structural level, mass membership organizations have experienced a professionalization that mirrors reductions in mass mobilization, in the recruitment functions of these organizations' youth sections, and in the possibilities for their members to become actively engaged (Skocpol, 2003; Hooghe & Stolle, 2005).

1.3   Challenges to Participation

Participation has become a catchword, mainstream rhetoric that is used by politicians and organizations. While the notion has a fundamentally positive connotation, one often observes shortcomings in its theorization and operationalization, with very different interests and intentions informing these including manipulation, tokenism, and a range of counterproductive systemic factors (Reid et al., 2008). Some authors even point to a dark side of participation, where participation has become a politically and economically attractive slogan, an instrument for greater efficiency, a new source of investment, and a fund-raising device (Rahnema, 1992); consequently, participation has the potential to foster tyranny by facilitating an unjust and illegitimate exercise of power (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). This may be the case, for example, when participation is used as a social technology to increase worker commitment and output (Wilpert, 2000) or for developmental and governance purposes (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mendes & Hammett, 2020). The effects of these abusive forms of participation or "pseudoparticipation" (Heller, 2003) can be disillusionment, future resistance, and cynicism regarding participation projects (Strauss, 2006), as well as depoliticization (Mendes & Hammett, 2020).

In recent decades, a number of authors have sought to develop a deeper conceptual understanding of participation, e.g., Arnstein's "ladder" of citizen participation in urban redevelopment (1979) and Hart's ladder of participation for children and young people (Hart, 1992). Hart's ladder locates manipulation, decoration, and tokenism on the lowest three rungs; "assigned but informed," "consulted and informed," and "adult-initiated, shared decisions with children" on the middle rungs; and "child-initiated and directed" and "child-initiated, shared decisions with

adults" on the top two rungs. The model was initially intended to help professional groups and institutions rethink their work with children and young people and has since been extended and modified (Hart, 2008, p. 21). Additionally, Marchington and Wilkinson (2005) provide a more complex analysis of worker participation, exploring whether such participation can influence decisions (informed, consulted, actually making decisions), elaborating the forms that it takes (direct communication, representatives, "online participation"), discussing the available levels of such participation (tasks, departmental, establishment, corporate HQ), and identifying a range of salient issues (from relatively insignificant matters, such as the quality of a canteen, to substantial decisions, such as strategic investment).

Taking participation seriously requires considering a multitude of prerequisites and conditions. Individuals need to have a certain motivational basis and specific participation competencies. These are both a requirement for and a consequence of participation. Therefore, beyond learning *about* democracy and *for* (future) citizenship, it is necessary to facilitate democratic and participatory practice, i.e., articulating and balancing personal and collective needs, cocreating community, and strengthening the feeling of belonging and social identity (e.g., Hart, 2009). With respect to the close interconnection between learning and participation, the concept of participatory learning is relevant. In the philosophy of education, this concept is associated, for instance, with Paulo Freire (1970) and Ivan Illich (1970), who stress the counterhegemonic potential of participatory (learning) processes (see also Smidt & Roßbach, 2021). In terms of learning theories, there are three mainstream approaches to learning—behaviorist, cognitive, and situative—with different implications for participation. While the behaviorist approach focuses on the acquisition and application of associations and behavioral and attitudinal change, the cognitive perspective defines learning as an "active, constructive, cumulative, and goal-oriented process" and the learner as the "key agent" in the construction of his or her own learning and decision-making (Reid & Nickel, 2008, p. 41). With the learner's active participation as the necessary condition for learning to take place, this theoretical perspective clearly suggests that neither pseudoforms of participation nor reproductions of imposed knowledge are sufficient. On the other hand, situative approaches focus on the embeddedness of the individual's learning process in social relations and communities and are therefore often referred to as "communities of practice" (e.g., Wenger, 1999). Despite the differences between these approaches, they share the view that participatory competence is learned rather than inherent; it can be fostered or hindered by teachers, communities, and organizations (Reid & Nickel, 2008).

This insight, in turn, is apropos at the organizational level, where organizational aims, structures, technologies, participatory processes, relationships, and organizational culture, environment, and sociocultural realities facilitate the possibilities of learning and participating. In this complex, questions such as what works, for whom, and how it does or does not work arise. Specifically, where power issues and hegemonic ideologies and cultures are still in force and/or vulnerabilities and special needs account for a "dependent agency" (Francis & Silvers, 2007), protection

of the participant's ownership of his or her learning and participation process is needed.

Accordingly, we have assembled the chapters of this book to shed light on these questions regarding the range of institutions and organizations that are relevant in the course of our lives. While questions of participation are often bracketed in specialized discourses, such as participation in education, workplace, or community development, we sought to assemble them to highlight the width and complexity of the issue. The chapters thus provide examples of specific life phases with their respective institutions and organizations. They explore a range of different questions, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches, yet they share our concern with the positive, negative, and changing conditions of participation. Given the multidimensionality of this issue, the book is, unsurprisingly, incapable of covering all the institutions and aspects of participation. Important gaps remain to be filled regarding questions of not only migration and disability and culture and ideology but also digitalization and sustainability, which have begun to impinge on institutions and organizations. Last, as we finalize this manuscript, we are confronted with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and a renewed conflict between an authoritarian and a democratic political and social order, emphasizing the importance of constant and critical engagement with the issue of participation and democracy across both the life course and academic disciplines.

1.4 Structure of the Book

This volume is structured in accord with the life phases of early childhood, middle childhood and youth, young adulthood, adulthood, advanced adulthood, and old age. Most of the institutions discussed in its chapters are age specific, such as kindergartens, schools, workplaces, and homes for senior citizens. Others, such as political and social organizations, are not inherently age-specific but are discussed from the perspective of a particular age group.

Starting with *early childhood*, part I contains two chapters on children's participation in kindergarten. In Chap. 2, *Elmar Drieschner and Wilfried Smidt* critique the agency concept in childhood studies and early childhood education and care with a specific eye toward the justification of children's participation opportunities. They discuss the epistemological, psychological, pedagogical, and ethical premises of the underlying concept of agency and the educational responsibility of older generations for the development and education of children. Chapter 3 by *Elisabeth Richter, Teresa Lehmann, and Benedikt Sturzenhecker* is based on a 3-year qualitative study of six nurseries that structured their democratic practice through "constitutions" according to "the nursery of democracy." The authors thus investigate how democratic participation was implemented in these nurseries, how their children practice democracy, and how satisfied they are with the democratic practices.

Part II focuses on *middle childhood and youth*, comprising three contributions to the discussion of schools as places for democratic and participatory practice within

and beyond the institution. In Chap. 4, *Garth Stahl* takes up the debate on the institutional practices of the expanding charter school networks in the United States, which follow a very specific model of schooling and typically serve low-income students of color. Drawing on an ethnographic investigation of one middle-school site, he explores how institutional practices effectively construct a neoliberal conception of citizenship among disadvantaged populations and the implications of this for the dedemocratization of education. Chapter 5 by *Anna Jarkiewicz and Joanna Leek* discusses the potentials and limits of civic participation in school settings in four European countries (the UK, Italy, Lithuania, and Cyprus) based on a study that accompanied a project offering extracurricular opportunities for young people's engagement. The results emphasize the importance of educational aspects, such as continuous professional development for teachers, a shift from traditional learning models to participatory learning, and the relational aspects of participation. In Chap. 6, *Florian C. Feucht, M. Kate Michaelson, Regina Rotshtein, Sarah Bargardi, Rebecca Bush, and Julia McBride* present a case study of two high schools in the United States that implemented a curriculum called "Thinking Pro," which used local news media to promote civic engagement and teach critical thinking, reading, and news media literacy. The findings demonstrate the advantages of a localized curriculum for fostering civic engagement and illustrate strategies for implementing collaborative, teacher-centered professional development across grades and disciplines.

Part III, concerning *young adulthood*, elaborates how vocational education, professional training, and political organizations are contexts of participation. Chapter 7 by *Gabriela Höhns* explores the possibilities and boundaries of learners' participation in institutions by comparing upper secondary schools in Sweden and companies in Germany's dual system of vocational education. Since participation is one of several pedagogic rights, she concludes that education for living in a modern democratic society should offer enhancement and participation to vocational and academic learners within the relative structural limitations of educational contexts. In Chap. 8, *Romain Jammal-Abboud* studies the retrospective experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of Palestinian-Arab social work students in Israel in the context of the development of their professional identity. Her findings underline the importance of a critical, multicultural learning environment, which can help shape an integrative professional identity that is sensitive to the intercultural context of Israeli society. In Chap. 9, *Paul Eisewicht and Nico Maximilian Steinmann* critically examine the argument that young people are increasingly apolitical. Based on a review of German surveys, they demonstrate that while youth political participation is conceptually and empirically difficult to grasp, there seems to be a transformation of political action within civil society that is becoming more dynamic, more fragile, and less culturally stable, challenging organizations to create low-threshold opportunities for participation.

Part IV addresses *adulthood* in two chapters. The first offers an empirical perspective on participation in workplaces, and the second elaborates theoretical perspectives on the relationship between organizations and participation. Thus, Chap. 10 by *Christine Unterrainer, Wolfgang G. Weber, Thomas Höge, and Bettina*

Lampert investigates whether learning environments in organizations that offer participative practices for their employees are positively related to employees' solidarity at work and moral and democratic orientations/behaviors. In Chap. 11, *Thomas Wendt and Sebastian Manhart* draw attention to the fact that modern society depends on organizations that simultaneously constrain and enable opportunities for individuals through order-forming procedures. The mutual dependence between the organization and the individual and the tension between the functionalist logic and normative ideas of participation are thus defined as a fundamental educational problem as well as a teaching task of organizational education.

Finally, part V contains two contributions to the research on the life phase of *advanced adulthood and old age*. Chap. 12 by *Lorna Philip, Andrew Maclaren, Claire Wallace, and Krzysztof Adamczyk* explores participation in the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector among older people in Scotland. It provides an overview of the types of participation across urban and rural Scotland based on the Scottish Household Survey and discusses these trends by drawing upon qualitative data generated during fieldwork carried out in contrasting communities across rural Scotland over the last decade, including island and mainland areas. In Chap. 13, *Marleen D.W. Dohmen, Johanna M. Huijg, Susan M.W. Woelders, and Tineke A. Abma* present the results of an evaluation of a training program developed to address the difficulties experienced when providing democratic care in nursing homes. They suggest that the participation of residents and significant others in the care process can lead to a mutual understanding of what is deemed "good" in a specific situation; however, such participation requires a particular culture that facilitates engagement in dialogues.

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Reingard Spannring, PhD (Sociology), is a lecturer and researcher with a focus on youth, in particular youth participation, environmental and sustainability education, critical animal studies, philosophy of education, and learning theories. One of her recent publications deals with the concept of (youth) agency and political participation from the perspective of systems theory as a response to the challenges of climate change.

Christine Unterrainer, is a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Psychology, University of Innsbruck, Austria. She holds a PhD in work and organizational psychology from the University of Innsbruck. Her main research areas include organizational democracy and climate, participative leadership practices, and employee orientations and behaviors (e.g., employee participation and voice, employees' prosocial and democratic orientations, and employee well-being). Just recently she published a meta-analysis about the effects of organizational democracy on individual, organizational, and societal outcomes.

Wilfried Smidt, is Professor of Education with a focus on early childhood education at the University of Innsbruck where he is member of the Department of Psychosocial Intervention and Communication Studies. His research interests are in the fields of professionalization in early childhood education, educational quality in preschool and family, personality of children and early childhood pedagogues, leadership, and early literacy. His research has been undertaken in preschool settings and families using observational methods, questionnaires, and standardized tests.

Part I
Early Childhood

Chapter 2
Agency and Participation: A Critique of the Epistemological, Psychological, Pedagogical, and Ethical Premises

Elmar Drieschner and Wilfried Smidt (iD)

Abstract The agency concept of childhood studies in terms of considerations of children as socially competent actors has been controversially discussed in early childhood education and care (ECEC), especially with regard to the justification of children's participation opportunities in ECEC settings. Poststructuralist thinking aims at the deconstruction of such discourses as domination, power, and surveillance, through which children as addressees of pedagogical action are supposedly solely constituted. Childhood studies counter this with a new, supposedly more humane discursive reality. Children are understood as socially competent actors. This has made agency one of the most relevant concepts of childhood studies. This contribution criticizes of the epistemological, psychological, pedagogical, and ethical premises of the concept of agency. In conclusion, a connection between new child-oriented agency concepts and older educational knowledge is argued for, which emphasizes the educational responsibility of the older generation for the development and education of children.

Keywords Agency · Childhood studies · Participation · Education · Educational responsibility

E. Drieschner (✉)
Institute for Educational Science, University of Education Ludwigsburg, Ludwigsburg, Germany
e-mail: drieschner@ph-ludwigsburg.de

W. Smidt
Psychosocial Intervention & Communication Studies, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
e-mail: wilfried.smidt@uibk.ac.at

17

2.1   Introduction

For several years, the agency concept of childhood studies in terms of considerations of children as socially competent actors has been controversially discussed in early childhood education and care (ECEC), especially with regard to the justification of children's participation opportunities in ECEC settings such as families and preschools.

Childhood studies, which emerged in the 1980s, have been set apart from anthropological, developmental psychology, and social theory paradigms of childhood. In childhood studies, "childhood" is exclusively defined as a social construct. Therefore, research following this paradigm examines social institutions (e.g., families, kindergartens) and the social practices by which childhood is constructed ("doing childhood") (Qvortrup et al., 2009).

Childhood studies are closely linked to the children's rights movement. With reference to poststructuralist thinking in the tradition of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, the differences between adults and children are deconstructed as constructs of Western, male, and bourgeois- dominated cultural meaning. Thus, for paradigms of developmental psychology, socialization research, and empirical educational research, "dispositives," in the Foucauldian sense, are given. The determination of children as individuals with developmental and educational needs is interpreted as a justification for the exercise of power in the context of education.

Poststructuralist thinking aims at the deconstruction of such discourses as domination, power, and surveillance, through which children as addressees of pedagogical action are supposedly solely constituted. Childhood studies counter this with a new, supposedly more humane discursive reality. In the interplay of deconstruction and reconstruction, children are understood as socially competent actors. This has made agency one of the most relevant concepts of childhood studies (James, 2009).

Originally developed in peer culture research by Corsaro, the agency concept in early childhood education focuses on children's own contribution in constructing their everyday interactions, educational processes, and their interaction with social demands and expectations. In this context, children appear as participants in social practices, active interaction partners, and addressees of subjectification processes (Bollig et al., 2016). In the complex and controversial discourse of early childhood education, "agency" has various functions. (1) With regard to the research methods it stands for the attempt to access to children's perspectives (cf., e.g., Clark et al., 2005). (2) Educationally, it stands for the promotion of independent learning favored by progressive education while reducing the role of a teaching educator (cf., e.g., Dahlberg et al., 2013). (3) Ethically, it stands for the deconstruction of traditional power relations in generational orders in the sense of promoting children's participatory rights (cf. Sünker & Moran-Ellis, 2017).

In the ethical context, a common goal of childhood studies and the children's rights movement is to promote the social and political participation of children. However, the agency concept conflicts with developmental psychological and

pedagogical assumptions and, at least in the radical versions, can be seen as a new form of anti-pedagogy; it currently has a strong influence on discourses in ECEC.

Against this background, questions of self-assurance of educational science arise. This article aims at a critical discussion of the concept of agency. The epistemological background of the concept is reconstructed in the context of legal, political, and pedagogical demands for participation. From the perspective of developmental psychology, the concept of agency is contrasted with empirical findings on the development of young children. From the perspective of educational theory, agency emphasizes the child's activity in the educational processes, thereby excluding autonomy and maturity as educational goals. From an ethical point of view, it is argued that the participation of children reaches its limits where children do not (yet) have sufficient competences and, therefore, need educational support. In conclusion, a connection between new child-oriented agency concepts and older educational knowledge is argued for, which emphasizes the educational responsibility of the older generation for the development and education of children.

2.2   Epistemological Critique of the Concept of Agency

Childhood studies replace the biological and developmental psychological idea of a specific nature of the child with a social-constructivist understanding of childhood as a cultural pattern and social form of life in historical change (Honig et al., 1996, p. 10). Accordingly, the research objects of childhood studies are societal institutions, social practices, and symbolic knowledge orders in which childhood is produced ("doing age"). In contrast to the older paradigms of socialization and development, childhood is no longer seen as an unfinished, dependent, and immature phase of life. With the agency concept, even children are understood as competent social actors who act as co-constructors of the social world (Qvortrup, 1993, p. 122).

With regard to the interrelated development of cultural discourse and social structure, it seems that central cultural values of modern societies, such as individualization and autonomy, have influenced the construction of the agency concept. Emphasizing the agency of children results from the reduction of traditional power differences between generations and the liberalization of education from around the 1970s onward. With the change of educational practices of German families and in part schools toward a negotiation of interests and needs between adults and children, the scientific discourse on childhood also changed, moving away from the image of the child in need of education and care toward the image of modern, pluralized childhood and children as actors (Winterhager-Schmid, 2002, p. 18). Following the program of childhood studies, the child seems to act in a competent and independent manner in the pluralistic and individualized contemporary society. Today's sometimes difficult balance between the granting and the imposition of independence can hardly be systematically captured with the agency concept. With

its one-sided view of agency, it appears almost socially affirmative. This is a substantive contradiction to the critical deconstruction claim of childhood studies.

Deconstructivist and poststructuralist theories form the theoretical background of the agency concept. These positions became popular in German-speaking educational science in the 1980s, inspired by the thesis of the end of modernity and the transition to postmodernity, advocated by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, among others. Deconstructivist and poststructuralist ways of thinking are closely related to ambitions of socially disruptive renewal because they combine two motifs.

On the one hand, this way of thinking is moralizing and wants to deconstruct all alleged discursive structures of domination, power, and surveillance of (post-) modern societies, which seem to develop mainly in the intertwining of scientific, political, and economical goals (Butler, 1995). Against this background, scientific skepticism, e.g., in radical versions of childhood studies and ECEC, is combined with the children's rights movement and political correctness in the context of heterogeneity, participation, and inclusivity.

On the other hand, this way of thinking is based on a constructivist epistemology. Accordingly, all anthropological constants, such as childhood, adolescence, and other life phases, gender, disability, aptitude, and basic human needs, appear exclusively as social constructions. All orders of difference, such as those of adults and children or men and women, are based on social power structures. By changing social discourses, it seems possible to overcome the old orders of difference. According to Judith Butler's discourse theory, even physical orders can be deconstructed and reconstructed. Butler negates any natural "materiality" of the body that can be analyzed in terms of behavioral and evolutionary biology. The concept of the body as a biophysical and biologically-experientially analyzable system is social-constructivistically replaced by the concept of materialization. Accordingly, the body is not the outcome of evolution but a result of discursive practices (Butler, 1995).

The body of the child is also a result of discursive practices (Neumann, 2013). Privileged interpretive powers, such as developmental psychology, biology, or educational science, portray children's bodies as unfinished, in need of development, and tending to be passive. The aim is always to exercise dominance and to disguise it as natural. In this respect, childhood is a phenomenon of discursive practices in generational relations. The child is "first brought forth as a child through subjectifying discourses and practices, through invocations and addresses" (Machold & Kuhn, 2019, p. 115). Research from this perspective, therefore, explores how discourses, legal norms, social practices, and institutions continually produce the difference between children and adults in their historically and culturally specific form (Thon et al., 2018).

Against this background, the orientation of early childhood education to its reference discipline, developmental psychology, has been criticized in recent years. Developmental psychological child observation and documentation and diagnostic procedures measure the development and abilities of individual children against the statistical average development. In this way, selective notions of normality emerge (Dahlberg et al., 2013). The generational order is naturalized by producing children as "teleologically-normalistically determined beings of learning and development"

(Neumann, 2018, p. 45). Thus, a "norm of the normal" (Schmidt, 2019, p. 337) is established, through which interindividual differences are marked as deviations and stigmatizing distinctions are made between children (Blaschke-Nacak & Thörner, 2019, p. 42). In the Foucauldian sense, power of disposal is exercised here insofar as children are hierarchized, selected, and normalized according to scientific criteria.

This criticism seems to be based either on a complete misunderstanding or, more likely, on an intentional reinterpretation of the meaning and function of developmental psychology. Developmental psychology sees itself consistently as an empirical rather than a normative discipline, as it is accused of being. In its empirical orientation, it focuses on the entire life course from prenatal development to death. In doing so, it focuses on interpersonal and intercultural differences in a cross-sectional and longitudinal manner. Therefore, developmental psychological knowledge does not serve to standardize children, but it fulfills an orientation function for early childhood education, always emphasizing the heterogeneity of developmental trajectories. The function of developmental psychology for pedagogy includes, among other things, the concepts of developmental appropriateness and developmental supportive care, which are quality standards for early childhood education. The devaluation of developmental psychology by childhood studies must, therefore, be explained by scientific-political efforts. In claiming and expanding their own field of research, scientists often gain influence and prestige not only through the power of the better argument but at least through the devaluation of competing approaches.

The deconstructivist orientation ("doing theory") is closely related to the decidedly anti-naturalistic agency concept. In this concept, contradictory to the otherwise anti-essentialist argumentation figures, the romantic hope for a completely different world full of agency appears (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). This orientation was prefigured in Foucault's late work. Here, he advocates the invention of new practices of liberation in the constitution of the subject that is meant to overcome submission processes (Schroer, 2000, p. 106). Seen in this light, the agency concept has a clear political orientation. The social constitution in general and pedagogical practices in particular could be deconstructed in favor of new social orders. Accordingly, the child could simply be reinterpreted from a developmental being in need of education to a member of society capable of acting.

In the reconstruction of childhood and education, Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence combined the agency concept with the learning-psychological constructivism of Reggio pedagogy (inspired by Vygotsky, Bruner, and Youniss), according to which children construct knowledge themselves and together with others. This new image of the child has become the guiding principle of early childhood education programs internationally. Here agency stands for participatory practice in day care centers (Dahlberg et al., 2013, p. 53 ff.). Children's participation can, for example, concern the common rules, the daily program to be determined, or the redesign of the room. In addition, there are more politically oriented forms of participation, e.g., children's parliaments, children's councils, children's conferences, group or general meetings of the children, and project-oriented participation in which children work together on specific topics.

A central reference point of such debates on agency and participation is respect for the opinion of the child, which is included in Art. 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Coalition for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Germany considers children as political subjects. The political task of childhood studies is, therefore, to give children a voice in society. Even if it is undoubtedly an important cultural progress and an emancipatory achievement to grant children not only protection rights but also participation rights, to enforce them, and, if necessary, to sue for them, the assumption that children have and can present a political opinion is too one-sided. In political discussions, children and adults argue on the basis of different cognitive and emotional competences. In general, adults are better able to assert their ideas and opinions linguistically, so that the concept of agency runs the risk here of obscuring differences in competence between children and adults. This is especially true when children are expected to make decisions for which they cannot yet see the possible alternatives due to limited experience.

At this point, it should be clear that childhood studies make far-reaching programmatic claims for the social-constructivist reformulation of childhood. The one-sided analytical focus on the discourses and practices, through which childhood is supposedly exclusively produced, must be critically questioned. If one remains only at the level of discourses, then the deconstruction and reconstruction of images of childhood seems almost arbitrary and possible without correctives, for discourses form a reality of their own. However, discourses and social semantics, according to an insight of modern system theory, can only refer to themselves. Therefore, at least two other levels of reality must be distinguished from the discourse reality. At the psychic system level, a distinction must be made between the reality of discourse and the consciousness of the individual persons. Psychic systems operate in a self-dynamic and closed way; a person constructs his or her own subjective reality. For persons, discourses and social practices are relevant stimuli from outside, which are processed self-referentially against the background of inner structures (Urban, 2009).

On the level of social situations, the discourse reality, in turn, must be distinguished from concrete decisions of persons that lead to the construction of social organizations. The decisions in organizations and the reflection on these decisions at the level of discourse reality are coupled but separate spheres of reality. Unlike the qualitative analysis of discourses in their respective historical, cultural, and social contexts, empirical research on the societal situation level requires the collection of quantifiable facts, such as participation rates in educational institutions or infection rates during pandemics. The research of the discourse level and the situation level need each other alternately as a critique (Nath & Dartenne, 2008; Leanza, 2010).

The poststructuralist one-sidedness of discourse reality could have contributed to the political battle slogan of "alternative facts." Here, any statistical or experiential correction of discourse is negated. The danger of such one-sided orientations is that they create a post-factual space for re-mythologization and, in the extreme, re-autocratization (Kablitz, 2018). The postmodern absolutization of discourse truths without a corrective of the statistically ascertainable situation, which is ominously

completed in "fake news," must ultimately lead to its end, as was most recently made clear by the voting out of Donald Trump. Returning to childhood studies, it can be shown with statistical and experimental methods of developmental psychology that the idea of agency can only be transferred to the first years of life to a limited extent, because the formation of agency is the result of long-term developmental processes, one-sided discursive constructions of comprehensive child agency broken down on the basis of experiences in the educational situation.

2.3   Constraints from a Developmental Psychology Point of View

The relationship between childhood studies, which refer to the importance of agency, and developmental psychology can be generally described as strained and characterized by skepticism (Tatlow-Golden & Montgomery, 2020; Neumann, 2018; Hammersley, 2017; Hedegaard, 2009; Woodhead, 2009; Smith, 2007). The criticisms directed at developmental psychology are various and refer to – to name some examples – a concentration on a "normal" child with universal and immutable needs; a focus on developmental patterns of children from middle-class families from Western countries; a disregard of children from poor, less privileged, and culturally diverse families; and an emphasis of a deficit perspective on childhood (Tatlow-Golden & Montgomery, 2020; see also Smith, 2007). Whereas the aforementioned criticism targets on bias and narrowness of developmental psychology, the accusation, "believing themselves to be part of a neutral scientific endeavor, positioning themselves above politics and claiming to generate value-free 'objective' knowledge and evidence on which policy and practice are based" (ibid., p. 4), relates to fundamental and finally insoluble disputes about scientific paradigms. In conclusion, it has been called for research in ECEC to suspend the notion of developmental childhood in terms of a contingent assumption in order to examine processes of production and re-production of this notion of childhood (Neumann, 2018). Criticisms ultimately go as far as to suggest that developmental psychology should be banished to the "dustbin of history" (James et al., 1998, p. 9).

However, in contrast to these radical conclusions originating from childhood studies, when asking what adults and teachers can and must do to actively support children's learning experiences through appropriate educational arrangements (Grell, 2010, p. 164), findings of developmental psychology becomes essential. From a pedagogical point of view, developmental psychology provides important information for developmentally appropriate practices (DAPs) that aim to support children individually on the basis of their developmental needs. This is by no means in contrast to the view of children as competent individuals as agency concepts intend, but it does consider what children are not yet able to do because of developmental issues and where they need adult and preschool teacher's assistance. This understanding thus relates to discussions about the particular vulnerability of

children and the related reliance on developmentally appropriate education by parents and other caregivers. For Giesinger, the concept of autonomy as the goal of educational processes forms the central distinguishing feature of adults and children, whereby this boundary is fluid and not transcendentally anchored, just as it is also to be assumed that there are different expressions of rationality, freedom, and responsibility across the age boundaries. Since the child is not yet seen as an autonomous being, the transition to adulthood takes place through the empowerment of autonomy. Contrary to what the concept of agency suggests, modern developmental and moral psychology thus conceives the development of autonomy as a process of decentering from one's own subjectivity, i.e., the cognitive and affective liberation of the person from immediate sensitivities and unreflectedly adopted habitual orientations. It is about the development of the ability to deal autonomously with one's own needs, i.e., to be able to set oneself stable principles for one's own will and actions (cf. Giesinger, 2007; cf. also Schickhardt, 2016).

In this respect, recommendations on DAP of the US-American National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYEC) (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) take a particularly prominent status influencing educational practices in other countries. For instance, issues of DAPs have been considered in educational plans for preschools and day care centers, which have been implemented in Austria and Germany (e.g., Ämter der Landesregierungen der österreichischen Bundesländer, Magistrat der Stadt Wien, Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, 2009; Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung & Familie und Frauen Staats-institut für Frühpädagogik München, 2016). Based on findings from developmental psychology, DAP explains how children's competencies develop (e.g., with regard to children at the preschool ages of 3–5 years), what children are capable of and what they are often not yet capable of, and where developmentally appropriate support is indicated on the part of educators. It is important to note that DAP does not relate to an isolated view of developmental issues without focusing on the context that the child is embedded in. Rather, it refers to the important role of sociocultural context variables for children's development and learning considered in concepts based on Vygotsky, such as scaffolding (i.e., through the assistance of an adult or more capable peer with a new task becoming capable of completing that task and similar tasks independently, Bodrova & Leong, 2018) and sustained shared thinking (i.e., "sharing of thinking, and … the particularly sustained nature of some of the interactions identified in effective (in terms of child outcomes) pre-school settings," Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, p. 77), which are particularly compatible to a co-constructivist understanding of education and an active role of adults and preschool teachers in the support of children.

It is part of the basic inventory of developmental psychology that children's agency in terms of competencies develops and that young children are simply not yet as capable as agency concepts may imply. The enormous volumes of reliable findings on the development of children in various areas, well summarized in relevant overviews (e.g., McCartney & Phillips, 2006; Lerner et al., 2003), clearly underline developmental boundaries and that the resulting need for developmentally appropriate assistance from adults and early education professionals cannot be

ignored. To mention just a few examples: With regard to children's language development, there is evidence that the extent of vocabulary is highly limited until about 30 months (a 200-word vocabulary is usually achieved), and the production of complex sentence types is largely developed at the age of about 48 months (Hoff, 2006). With regard to reasoning, even very young children (around 2 years of age) are able to draw inductive conclusions on the basis of simple and concrete tasks, but they are generally not yet able to draw conclusions when they have to rely on abstract information (Goswami, 2011). With the theory of mind, children under the age of 3 usually cannot reliably distinguish between their own beliefs and those of another person; therefore, they assume that other people share their beliefs and express their opinions and views accordingly. This ability develops in 3- to 4-year-old children who "expect people not only to act in accord with their beliefs, even when those are mistaken or false, but also to experience internal, immaterial ideas, thoughts, and dreams" (Wellman, 2011, p. 261). Around age 5, children usually begin to become aware of others in terms of psychological motives and traits and can anticipate future behavior based on the characteristics they attribute to them (Thompson, 2006). With regard to moral development, children from about 5 years regularly recognize so-called prima facie obligations like helping and not hitting others, but they are not able to consider multiple factors to clarify moral questions (e.g., characteristics of a harmed person like handicaps) (Nucci & Gingo, 2011).

However, supporting children's developmentally appropriate needs is difficult to reconcile with basic notions of agency, and the resulting consequences are potentially far-reaching. According to Grell (2010), it can be argued that the application of agency concepts – particularly in their radical versions – and the corresponding ignoring of children's needs for educational support may be a severe problem, especially for children who are most in need of support, targeted stimulation, and active assistance. This would especially affect children who, for individual or social reasons, tend to have unfavorable conditions and environments for growing up and learning. As a consequence, the application of agency concepts, which are accompanied by a strong skepticism toward developmental needs, could, therefore, increase existing educational disparities.

This criticism is not new, and it has been similarly applied to other pedagogical concepts. Critics of the prominent situational approach in Germany ("Situationsansatz"; e.g., Zimmer, 1985; see also Smidt & Roßbach, in press for a summarizing overview) previously argued in this direction several years ago. In the situational approach, children's life situations are to be made the starting point for pedagogical activities. Associated qualifications are to be determined in nonhierarchical discourses between educators, parents, children, scientists, and other relevant persons (Zimmer, 1973). It was urged that it should be clarified to what extent children can already be involved in decisions on pedagogical processes, and the aim to involve children should not preclude adults. The development of the child and the corresponding boundaries remained too much out of focus in the situational approach (Krappmann, 1995). Similar problems were also discussed with regard to concerns of emotional and social overstrains because too little attention was paid to the child's developmental status (Bittner, 1981; Krappmann, 1995).

Bearing in mind the aforementioned problems, it is important to note that attempts have been made to consider developmental knowledge within the context of childhood studies, which emphasize the importance of children's agency. In this regard, the potential for an interdisciplinary "fruitful dialogue" (Tatlow-Golden & Montgomery, 2020, p. 7) between childhood studies and developmental psychology is seen by relying on psychological approaches emphasizing human development embedded in and related to sociocultural contexts and background variables (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1993). "Where psychologists incorporate genuinely ecological, contextual and cultural approaches in their models of childhood, important new insights can add to understanding of children and young people's experiences and responses to them" (Tatlow-Golden & Montgomery, 2020, p. 14). Similar attempts have been made to discuss the importance of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Hedegaard, 2009) and closely related concepts, such as scaffolding and guided participation (Woodhead, 2009), which, in turn, are considered to be an essential basis for DAPs (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Winsler & Carlton, 2003). Taken together, these thoughts thus point to the potential of developmental psychology in helping to overcome some severe limitations of agency concepts by appropriately involving children in decision-making processes considering their development status (Ruiz-Casares et al., 2017).

2.4   Critique of the Agency Concept in Educational Theory

As has been criticized many times in educational science, the agency concept ignores the child's need for education, i.e., its physical and psychological dependence on care, attention, and guidance from more competent elders (e.g., Winterhager-Schmid, 2002; Andresen & Diehm, 2006; King, 2015). In this way, it contributes to establishing a norm of child self-direction in pedagogical contexts (e.g., Kelle, 2018; Grell, 2010). Going beyond this critique, it will be argued in the following that the agency concept is in fundamental contradiction to the process logic of education.

In contrast to childhood studies, educational science has always emphasized the constant anthropological preconditions of the generational order, among other things with reference to the developmental psychological findings outlined (see above). Due to their constitutional lack of independence, need to learn, and need for help at birth, children are dependent on the protection, care, and support of adults. At the same time, due to the mortality of the elders, the continuation of culture is only possible through the transmission of knowledge, skills, and abilities to younger people. From the perspective of educational theory, therefore, the generational order is founded in the natality and mortality of human beings as cultural beings (Sünkel, 2013) and, therefore, cannot be reduced to the status of a mere social construction (King, 2015, p. 24). Education as a phenomenon is thus not only constructed in pedagogical discourses, but it exists independently of them. As the educationalist Klaus Prange emphasizes, education exists through the acts in which we relate to

children's learning and enable them to make the transition from not being able to do to being able to do, from not knowing to knowing, and from subjective to enlightened thinking, in short, from immaturity to maturity (Prange, 2000, p. 26).

From the point of view of educational theory, it, therefore, seems shortsighted to view childhood exclusively as a social construct in childhood studies. It is equally one-sided to analyze the generational relationship and the educational interactions exclusively under the sign of negatively connoted power. If education with the claim of support and protection is in this way placed under the general suspicion that it could potentially harm the child's agency, then a withdrawal from the educational process seems only logical, for the child should not be prevented from freely developing his or her agency.

Programmatically, a pedagogical perspective on childhood is thus rejected. If one recapitulates that the support of children's development is a central issue of pedagogical thinking in modernity, then childhood studies are very nearly characterized by an anti-pedagogical orientation. Only the realization that childhood is an independent phase of development with specific needs leads to the insight, central to modern pedagogical thinking, that education should be child-oriented and that childhood should be understood as a protected time of learning and maturing. However, childhood studies find the reference to abilities and competencies that are still developing and need to be promoted pedagogically suspect and suspicious of domination. Therefore, the agency concept propagates a change of perspective: Children are to be regarded as actors who can already act competently in their society.

By focusing on the child's competence to act in the present, childhood studies seem to want to overcome the process logic of education, which is characterized by dialectical opposites. However, this halves the reality, for it is not possible to resolve dialectics unilaterally. In logical-systematic educational theory, dialectics are, therefore, generally regarded as balances. For example, the child's present is in an educational balance with the future. Other balances in education are, for example, autonomy and attachment, guiding and letting grow, supporting and protecting, counteracting and protecting, closeness and distance, and paternalism and participation.

The one-sidedness of the agency concept will be explained below with a view toward negating such dialectics of education. As Friedrich Schleiermacher clearly recognized at the beginning of modern pedagogy, the meaning and function of education always unfold only in relation to the future. He was already aware that children, in the words of childhood studies, are already "human beings" and not just "human becomings." Schleiermacher, therefore, emphasized the double time horizon of education by stressing that care for the child in the present and enabling a connection to the adult world in the future must be balanced in education (Schleiermacher, 1826/2000, p. 52).

In this task, education works in the "mode of as-if," as the educationalist Dietrich Benner explains. Education means "requesting the child to do something that he or she cannot - yet - do, and recognizing him or her as someone who he or she is not - yet. The fact that pedagogical practice, requests for self-activity, means exactly that

the person to be educated cannot yet be self-active without a corresponding request, that he or she cannot become so on the basis of such a request, but only by means of his or her own participation" (Benner, 2012, p. 80). In education, the constitutional lack of independence of the child at birth is transformed into a "perspective of independence to be achieved in a process" (Winterhager-Schmid, 2002, p. 24). Therefore, the successive transition from external to self-regulation with the aim of gradually symmetrizing the initially asymmetrical pedagogical interaction is characteristic of the educational process.

The focus should be on the process of "Bildung" of the child. The term "Bildung" seems to be unique to the German language. It is closely related to the term "formation" in Anglo-Saxon educational philosophy. Bildung or formation refers to the process of developing inner structures in interaction with the environment and is an important personal resource for agency. Through formation, a person builds up and differentiates his or her own inner structures in relation to the outside world that is becoming more and more complex, or, in other words, in the process of formation, the person generates inner conditions for participation in communication. The person thus integrates his or her experiences and secures his or her agency in the outside world.

In the process of formation, the person develops increasingly definitive forms for the life course, which is still relatively undefined in early childhood. The formation initially concerns the inner structure as a personal resource for participation in communication. The formation of the inner structure is reciprocally linked to the formation of the outer life course, because knowledge opens up scope for participation in the world of social action (Luhmann, 2002, p. 93). Only through the dialectic interrelation of inside and outside can personality develop. In successful processes of formation, according to a basic assumption of modern educational theory, the person develops his or her possibilities and potential in active interaction with the social and material outside world. In this process, a differentiated, individual reference to the world and the self is formed in thinking, feeling, and acting.

Formation can differ greatly in quality. In the tradition of modern educational theories, formation processes are generally considered successful when the person interacts more and more with the world in a self-reliant and reflective way, as this increases his or her opportunities for participation and acting. Formation can then mean that the person develops an increasingly reflexive and self-determined relationship to the self and the world, i.e., opens up the world for himself or herself and, conversely, opens up for the world, in order to be able to deal with the variety of available options with regard to one's own way of life and social participation (Drieschner, 2017, p. 110).

In short, formation is an important resource of agency. Accordingly, children's agency cannot simply be assumed per se but is the goal of education that follows the claim to promote the child's educational process. In this long-term process, the right degree of protection, counteraction, and participation must be found again and again, depending on the situation. With regard to participation, an individually and typical age-appropriate measure of granting, imposition, and restriction of participation must be found. In contrast to the agency concept of the childhood studies, it

can be well justified with regard to the dialectics of education that participation reaches its limits when a child does not yet have sufficient coping skills for developmental reasons. This has also been confirmed by established findings of parenting style research: Children need clear rules and freedom appropriate to their developmental prerequisites and needs in order to develop independence. The authoritative parenting style, which is most common in the educated middle-class milieu, is based on a balance between consistent but flexible regulation, emotional warmth, and empathetic support. Thus, on the one hand, authoritative educators provide the young child with behavioral orientations that are appropriate for their development, but, on the other hand, they leave them a protected space to realize their exploration needs, desires, and interests. Rules are not simply given but are comprehensibly justified depending on the child's level of understanding. As the child grows older, he or she is increasingly asked to act independently. In research on parenting styles, there is solid evidence, at least for Western cultures, that authoritatively raised children compared to children whose parents have different educational patterns have higher intellectual, social, and moral abilities, lower problem behavior, and higher self-esteem and perform better in school (Fuhrer, 2005, p. 323; cf. also Fend & Berger, 2019, p. 141 ff.).

2.5   Ethical Issues Related to Child Agency

Child agency concepts have gained importance and have established a specific research approach within the field of early childhood education (Bollig, 2018) or, somewhat pointedly formulated, become "a type of mantra within social science" (Bordonaro, 2012, p. 414). However, constraints of childhood agency and possible ethical challenges associated with it are rarely considered (Baader, 2018). There are, nevertheless, some indications of tensions and, so it seems, unresolved problems. Following Baader (ibid.), the agency of children finds its boundaries through the legal status of children and associated norms, such as in questions of child protection or sexual self-determination. As a concrete example, Baader mentions the prohibition of child labor and refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). This positing seems to be connected to argumentations that refer to a protective function toward children (e.g., protection from physical or mental violence, harm or abuse, negligence, mistreatment, exploitation, sexual abuse), which set limits for children's participation and agency (Ruiz-Casares et al., 2017). At the same time, however, reference is made to a field of tension that seems difficult to resolve and that relates to a "lack of adult participation [that] can hinder children and youth's development and access to resources, [and] overprotection of children and youth [that] can lead to their exclusion from processes that affect them …" (ibid., p. 4). This tension as well as other areas of tension, such as the tension between freedom and constraint or between self-determination and external determination (Baader, 2018), may imply that references to legal foundations and related norms alone are not sufficient to determine the limits of childhood agency.

Other examples also make it clear that the implementation of children's rights as formulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is reaching its limits when considering children's capacity of agency. In this respect, Brighouse (2002) refers among other points to children's rights to their own culture which may cause issues, because children have not chosen their culture of their own free choice but rather have been raised in it. In addition, in a specific understanding, these rights could be interpreted in such a way that children "would have free choice what and when to eat [or] which classes to take in school" (ibid., p. 49), which has been regarded as "deeply implausible" (ibid., p. 48).

The claim for children's agency by referring to the legal status of children and related norms seems to also reach its limits of staying within the ban on child labor, considering the realities of children's lives in many (southern) developing countries, as reflected in the need for children to work to support their parents and families. Movements of working children demand recognition of their real-life circumstances, an end to the boycott of products made by children, respect and security for themselves and the work they do, and work with dignity that allows time for education and leisure (Nieuwenhuys, 2009). These claims are difficult to reconcile with a strict ban on child labor; it seems that there is a "Northern narrative of successful child labour abolition" (ibid., p. 298) viewing childhood and agency as fairly disconnected from political economics (ibid.). It would need to be clarified how concepts of childhood agency address such potential ethic-related problems related to notions of childhood agency that have little to do with certain realities of life.

Hammersley (2017) focuses on issues related to children's agency around sexual issues by concentrating on children's limited ability to take responsibility for their actions, which may conflict with views of children as competent actors. In this regard, a conflict between granting autonomy and providing protection becomes particularly clear with regard to children who get involved in sexual activities with adults. "So, in seeking to counter paedophile activity, it is often necessary to deny the wishes of children … to make choices for themselves, on the grounds that these choices are not an expression of autonomy but of malign influence. But how is this to be decided and by whom? … Childhood Studies, as currently constituted, may not have the resources to answer" (ibid., 121).

A look at the recent past of early childhood education in Germany provides an example of how necessary it would be to clarify such questions. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, although a few decades before introducing childhood studies and agency concepts into early childhood education, a view of preschool children as competent and self-determined social actors existed. For example, Göddertz (2018) reports that children's self-governance was implemented in children's courts as one of the central aims of the so-called Kinderladen movement. The term "Kinderladen" refers to alternative preschools located in former small stores and was intended to support the acting out of children's sexual needs (Heyden, 2018). The Kinderladen movement was embedded within broader left-winged social and educational policy discussions and reforms and aimed at introducing ideas of antiauthoritarian and emancipatory education in order to overcome traditional notions of education (Hungerland, 2016). One consequence in the pedagogical work in the preschools

(the Kinderläden) was that there were sexual acts between caregivers and preschool-aged children (Baader, 2017; Herzog, 2005). However, greater parts of the scholarly discourses in education and early childhood education in the 1970s were ambivalent about this at best; sexual acts between caregivers and children often remained uncriticized or were even justified, and the power relationship between adults and children was ignored by referring to ideas about consensual sexuality. This has been critically interpreted as a normalization of pedophilia in educational discourses of the 1970s (Baader, 2017). This older example, while not explicitly referring to later times, introduced ideas of child agency. It illustrates how a reference to children as competent actors can be accompanied by ethical problems in that the necessary protection of children provided by adults and caregiver might be suspended in favor of a view of the child's self-determination and agency. Brighouse (2002) concludes that children's agency is different from adult's agency, and "this difference, in combination with children's vulnerability and dependence on adults makes it inappropriate to think of them as bearers of fundamental agency rights" (ibid., 51). As a consequence, boundaries of current notions of children's agency would need to be clarified, considering the pedagogical responsibility of the older generation for the development and upbringing of children.

2.6 Concluding Remarks

In early childhood education, agency functions as a research methodological as well as an educational programmatic concept. It indicates a child- and participation-oriented redesign of pedagogical practices and, in a complementary way, a qualitative research perspective oriented toward the perspective of the child and the social construction of childhood. For proponents of this concept, its comprehensive reform claim seems to offer personal, emotional identification potential, insofar as it conveys the awareness of being on the "more correct," "more appropriate," and "more child-appropriate" side.

Agency, this essay concludes, with its delimitation of paradigms of development, education, and formation, is a one-sided, even anti-pedagogic concept on its own. The central task of early childhood education as a scientific discipline, on the other hand, is to clarify the complexity and dialectical structure of ECEC. In doing so, it is first necessary to differentiate within the discipline what should be known as the state of the art of educational science: the discussion of the dialectics of social realities and social attributions, of cultural interpretations of being a child, and of the biophysical foundations of human development. The starting point of early childhood education is the child, but not only in his or her agency, but in the general ability to learn, development, and need education. This is followed by the discussion of which conditions promote or inhibit child development. It is important to analyze the need for change and improvement wisely and calmly, without falling into reformist zeal, devaluation of competing approaches, and exaggerated hope in the effectiveness of individual concepts.

From this perspective, childhood studies can be meaningfully integrated into the context of early childhood education. It is precisely when childhood is understood as an anthropological developmental fact to which education responds that it makes sense to ask how early childhood is socially shaped in the respective historical and cultural context and what role child agency plays. Such an integrative perspective avoids one-sided orientations and unproductive polarizations in favor of emphasizing dialectics.

Although children's scope for independence and action has increasingly grown in recent decades, the idea of comprehensive child agency must remain illusory. Participation is not only a right of children but also an overriding goal of long-term educational processes. Participation always ends where children, due to their development, do not yet have sufficient coping skills and need educational support. In this regard, developmental psychology in particular points to clear limitations – obstacles – to children's participation. Therefore, the image of the child as an actor who competently participates in the creation of his or her social environment needs the counterimage of the developing, vulnerable child in need of education, whose environment must be responsibly shaped pedagogically. This dialectic of attachment and agency is constitutive for the pedagogy of early childhood. As developmental psychologist Rainer Dollase succinctly emphasizes, "Children are by nature programmed both to explore the environment independently and to learn through caregivers and others" (Dollase, 2013, p. 93). This balance must always be redesigned in view of the age, abilities, and needs of the child. This requires stable pedagogical relationships that provide security and at the same time offer support and assistance and challenge children increasingly and without excessive demands to become independent.

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Elmar Drieschner is Professor of Educational Science at the University of Education Ludwigsburg where he heads the BA program in early childhood education. His research interests are in the fields of historical-systematic educational science, educational theory, and theories and concepts of early childhood education.

Wilfried Smidt is Professor of Education with a focus on early childhood education at the University of Innsbruck where he is member of the Department of Psychosocial Intervention and Communication Studies. His research interests are in the fields of professionalization in early childhood education, educational quality in preschool and family, personality of children and early childhood pedagogues, leadership, and early literacy. His research has been undertaken in pre-school settings and families using observational methods, questionnaires, and standardized tests.

Chapter 3
Democracy Education in German Early Childhood Education Institutions: Empirical Research Results

Elisabeth Richter, Teresa Lehmann, and Benedikt Sturzenhecker

Abstract This article presents theoretical assumptions, methodological approaches, and conclusions of a 3-year qualitative study investigating children's democratic participation in early childhood education centres. The results are discussed from an international perspective and thus linked to an international discourse on democratic education.

Following John Dewey and Jürgen Habermas in their concepts of democratic education and democracy, the research project was designed to accompany six nurseries that had structured their democratic practice through 'constitutions' according to the concept, 'the nursery of democracy' (Hansen R, Knauer R, Sturzenhecker B. Partizipation in Kindertageseinrichtungen. So gelingt Demokratiebildung mit Kindern! [Participation in early childhood education institutions. This is how democracy education works with children!]. verlag das netz, Weimar, Berlin, 2011). The aim of the study was to learn how democratic participation has been implemented in the nurseries, how the children practice democracy, and how satisfied they are with the democratic practices. The results show an overall high level of

E. Richter (✉)
Department Family, Child and Social Work, Social Work, MSH Medical School Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Hamburg, Germany
e-mail: elisabeth.richter@medicalschool-hamburg.de

T. Lehmann
Bundesverband für Kindertagespflege e.V. (German Federal Association of Family Day Care), Berlin, Germany
e-mail: t.lehmann@bvktp.de

B. Sturzenhecker
Department of Social Pedagogy, University Hamburg, Faculty of Education, Hamburg, Germany
e-mail: benedikt.sturzenhecker@uni-hamburg.de

democratic decision-making through committees, concrete rights, and procedures for children's participation: Children can practice democracy in the ECE centres and are very engaged, i.e. satisfied, with it.

Keywords Democracy · Early childhood education · Participation · Participatory research

3.1 Introduction

Since the early 2000s, German social pedagogy has placed a focus on the need for and possibilities of democratic participation in early education within child day-care institutions.[1] One of the reasons for this discussion was that previous efforts in implementing democratic participation among children and youth in communal politics had often merely led to singular participation projects on specific topics (such as planning a playground in a part of town). Thus, they had no effect on the development of an enduring and firmly embedded structural procedure for promoting communal democratic participation. The conclusion of this critical analysis was that democratic participation had to be firmly rooted in the everyday practice in early childhood educational (ECE) institutions,[2] rather than being restricted to communal participation projects that were only temporary and limited. Subsequently, concepts have been developed, emphasising the integral role that democratic participation plays in ECE institutions and providing methodical support for implementing democratic political practices in these institutions. The broad discussion and the acceptance of the rights of children to participate led to a new federal child protection law that entered into force on 1 January 2012. With this law, the subject of participation gained far more importance. Both public *and* private agencies and institutions within child and youth socio-educational support services are now required to submit documentation concerning formulated professional practice concepts in child and youth participation to be granted licensing by the responsible supervisory authorities. With this action, German legislature has officially acknowledged the fundamental importance of participatory practice in child education for the protection of children's rights and well-being within organisational and institutional childcare settings. At the same time, increasing attention has been given to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC, signed by

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[1] Parts of this text refer to: Richter, E., Lehmann, T., & Sturzenhecker, B. (2018). Demokratiebildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen [Democracy Education in Early Childhood Education Institutions]. In I. Ruppin (Ed.): *Kinder und Demokratie [Children and Democracy]*. Weinheim/Basel: Beltz Juventa.

[2] The general term for ECE institutions in Germany is now "child day-care centre" (*Kindertageseinrichtung*). Their legal mandate is education (*Erziehung und Bildung*) of and care for children from the age of zero until they enter primary school. In this article, we use the following terms synonymously: day-care centre, ECE institution, nursery, and kindergarten.

Germany in 1990). But how should practical concepts of democratic participation be structured, and what kind of working principles and methods should they provide?

The Institute for Participation and Education (*Institut für Partizipation und Bildung*) in Kiel has been a pioneer in fostering democracy education (*Demokratiebildung*). Here, scholars from general universities and further education institutions joined together to formulate a concept for democracy education in ECE institutions. This concept is known as 'the nursery of democracy' (*Die Kinderstube der Demokratie*). Beginning in 2001, this concept was tested and evaluated in nurseries throughout the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein. From there, it spread to numerous day-care centres for children as well as to further education institutions and counselling services within the field. The concept is now widely accepted in Germany and has been incorporated into the national quality standards for the participation of children and young people (BMFSFJ, 2012). Since then, some 400 nurseries and day-care centres have begun working according to this concept. Approximately 300 multipliers have been trained to help local teams in organisations develop their own variation of the concept, enabling a broader democratic participation of children within their institutions.

Once the concept had been successfully incorporated into everyday practice, it was time to research whether the goal of enabling children's democratic participation in everyday decisions within the nursery had been reached. Also, how and what sort of democracy was co-constructed by children, professionals, and parents in the institutions? This was the task of a 3-year research project (2013–16) led by the authors of the University of Hamburg. As part of a qualitative study, we accompanied six nurseries that had structured their democratic practice through 'constitutions' according to the concept, 'the nursery of democracy'. The three research questions guiding the study were as follows:

1. How has democratic participation been implemented in the nurseries?
2. How do children practice democracy?
3. Are the children satisfied with their democratic practice?

In this article, we will summarise our research findings and discuss them from an international perspective.

3.2 Theoretical Assumptions of the Research Project

The 3-year Hamburg university-based research project (2013–2016) is titled 'Democracy Education in Early Childhood Education Institutions' (*Demokratiebildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen* (DeiKi)) (cf. here and hereafter: Richter et al., 2017). Its primary goal was to broadly examine the relationship between the implementation of democratic structures in ECE institutions and the resulting forms of democratic practice according to the concept, 'the nursery of democracy' (Hansen et al., 2011).

This concept of ECE involves professionals providing a *structural basis* for children's democratic participation by establishing a charter, similar to a constitution, within ECE institutions. It is based on a respectful and dialogic interaction between practitioners and children. In a dialogical and consensus-oriented process guided by trained staff (so-called multipliers), the practitioners first identify the rights of children and adults within the institutions. They therefore define the scope of children's and practitioners' rights to self-determination and co-determination but also limitations of involvement, i.e. which decision-making authority rests solely with the practitioners. The practitioners then define transparent participatory and deliberative procedures as well as children's committees (i.e. children's parliament) based on which opinion-forming processes take place, allowing children and adults to come to (shared) decisions. This process results in an ECE constitution which is binding for all members of the ECE institution. It enables and secures a joint exercise of participation rights, not only as 'adult-initiated shared decisions with children' but also as 'child-initiated and directed' and 'child-initiated, shared decisions with adults' (Hart, 1992, p. 8).

The concept of 'the nursery of democracy' began in 2001 as a model project bringing together practice and scientific research. It has since developed as the most elaborate and well-conceived concept for children's democratic participation in ECE centres. *How the ECE centres institutionalise the children's democratic participation varies depending on their respective pedagogical concept*: Some put an emphasis on shared decisions, including all children and adults, while others put a more representative democratic approach into practice, leaving the decision-making to a smaller group of elected children and adults. We will describe and discuss this in a later chapter.

The democratic and educational theory underlying the concept is based on the notions of democracy developed by John Dewey (2000 [1916]) as something that can be experienced not only as a form of government but as a form of life. The authors of this study follow Dewey's theory that non-governmental institutions should – from a social and particularly from a pedagogical perspective – be understood as 'embryonic community life' (Dewey, 1925 [1900], p. 29) and be democratically structured in the sense of sub-societies. This concept describes education as being inherently characterised by unequal, generational power relationships. With Alanen (2009, p. 168 f.), generational order is characterised by 'reciprocal interdependence, as well as a relationship of power'. The dependency arises from the circumstances of upbringing (*Erziehungstatsache* – Bernfeld) according to which children's survival is dependent on protection and care by adults. Characteristic power relations refer to historically and socially contingent construction processes of generations: The term given is 'generationing'. If the power relations do not appear anthropologically fixed, but changeable (Kelle, 2018; Prout, 2011), a concept of child agency (Qvortrup, 2005; Moran-Ellis, 2013; Eßer et al., 2016) can be applied here. Even if children are dependent on the power of adults to provide care and protection, this does not necessarily essentialise a relationship of inequality. Generational and educational power relations can change (without being dissolved),

especially if children are seen as capable and entitled to actively co-determine the social relations in pedagogical institutions.

If the aim is to enable children's right to participation, then structural power – lying with the practitioners in the institutions – needs to be shared with the children. Only when it no longer depends on the 'arbitrariness' of adults (as Korczak termed it) – i.e. whether children can clearly perceive clearly defined rights – can democracy also be possible in social-pedagogical settings, such as ECE institutions.

Building upon the democratic and educational theories underlying the concept, the research project was also able to broaden its perspective in a socio-theoretical as well as a socio-pedagogical sense: The study is based on the reflections of Jürgen Habermas on deliberative democracy. According to Habermas, participatory democracy should be implemented and applied in all non-governmental spheres, i.e. areas pertaining to individual everyday life or 'lifeworld'. In this way, the addressees of the law to which they are subject can, at the same time, see themselves as its reasonable authors (Habermas, 1992, p. 52, 1995 [1981]).

From a socio-pedagogical perspective, the theory developed by Helmut Richter (2016, 2020b) constituted another essential foundation of our research. According to this theory, (educational) institutions have to fulfil certain internal criteria – the so-called statutes of association – in order to enable deliberative democracy in practice. These are voluntary and open membership, honorary positions, organisational structure at a local level, degree of publicness and egalitarian forms of interaction, and freedom of discussion and majority decisions.

The focus of our research was to study how democratic participation among all members had been *empirically* implemented in ECE institutions that had adopted the concept 'the nursery of democracy' and subsequently introduced a 'constitution' within their institution (research question 1). In parallel, we took an *analytical* view as to what extent the above-mentioned (association) statutes, enabling deliberative democracy as a participation-based way of life, had been implemented. Our first step was, therefore, to identify institutional conditions, participation structures, and forms of interaction enabling deliberative democracy within selected ECE institutions.

The second step consisted in a study of young children's performance in the areas of democratic competence and democratic participation in the form of two questions: How do children practice democracy (research question 2), and how satisfied are the children with their democratic practice (research question 3)? The study describes the children's democratic abilities displayed in constitutionally anchored practices and procedures within ECE settings and carries out a satisfaction analysis, taking as its starting point the scope of children's democratic engagement within the participating nurseries.

Another objective was to identify conditions promoting effective participatory democratic practice according to conceptual and theoretical assumptions underlying the research project.

3.3   Research Design

Altogether, six nurseries in various *Laender* (states) were examined. The selected institutions were generally comprised of at least three kindergarten groups and had been operating under a 'constitution' along the lines of the concept 'the nursery of democracy' for at least 2 years. We selected the nurseries from a list of best practice institutions so that they differed in size and state. Table 3.1 shows the characteristics of nurseries involved in the research process.

Two basic principles were of particular importance when choosing the appropriate methods for survey research and evaluation: the integration of various perspectives on the topic of research when addressing the research questions and the active involvement of participants in the research process. Therefore, the research design is in the form of a triangulation involving various methods for survey research and evaluation: expert interviews with early childhood program directors (Meuser & Nagel, 2009); discursive interviews with practitioners and with parents (H. Richter et al.*,* 2003; Richter, 2020a); photo-elicited group interviews with children (Heinzel, 2010; Fuhs, 2010); walking interviews with children (Einarsdottir, 2005); participant observation with video recordings of children's committees, everyday life, and children's parliament meetings; and documentary analysis of charters, meeting minutes, concept drafts, etc. Increasingly, such strategies are now being used in German research on childhood and day-care centres. For example, the research project 'Children as Stakeholders in Day-Care Centres' (Witton et al., 2020) uses videos and interviews made by children. The project 'Children as Actors in Quality Development and Research' (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2021) uses a mix of 12 different qualitative methods (such as video-based group discussions, drawings, photo-assisted tours, and more) to collate the demands on the quality of day-care centres from the perspective of children.

Table 3.1   Characteristics of nurseries involved in the research process

	ECE 1	ECE 2	ECE 3	ECE 4	ECE 5	ECE 6
Constitution since	2008	2007	2008	2012	2008	2009
Number of children in care	100	105	75	150	40	85
Age of the children	1–6	0,5–6	0,3–6	0–6	1,5–6	0–6
Type of care for children aged 0–3	Crèche	Family group	Family group and crèche	Crèche	Crèche	Crèche
Group concept	Open concept	Partially open concept	Group concept with elements of an open concept	Open concept with home groups	Open concept	Open concept with home groups

Due to our methodological approach, it was especially important to us that the children participated in the research process on a voluntary basis. Before we conducted the research, we asked the practitioners to prepare the children for our presence in each respective nursery. While the children were informed about us and our study, they were also asked to volunteer for our photo-elicited group interviews. The practitioners then helped the children to take the photos needed. In total, we conducted eight group interviews with 48 children in total and four walking interviews (guided tours through the institution) with eight to 20 children each. Most children volunteering were 3 years of age or older. Only four children were under the age of 3.

In our project, we used the methodological orientation of 'action break research' (*Handlungspausenforschung* – Richter et al., 2003; Richter, 2020a), aiming for active participant involvement in the research process. The groups under examination are regarded as subjects rather than research objects, thus promoting a mutual educational process (*Bildungsprozess*) between researchers and study participants. This approach included designing the group discussions as discursive interviews, validating the interview transcripts prior to analysis by means of a communication process among participants and researchers. For each of the institutions examined, a sub-study was written in which the researchers' results were justified. This report was made available to the professionals and discussed with them. They had the right to delete sentences or words, criticise arguments, and introduce their own viewpoints. On this basis, a joint research result emerged. The children had their reports on participation processes returned to them as follows: Their interviews were converted into picture stories by the research team and an illustrator, without the use of written text. The researchers presented the picture stories to the children and asked whether the stories were expressed and understood correctly. The children's additions and comments were documented and included in the final report.[3]

In our study, we also reflected on the limitations of our research approach. Our study was the first one to address how children's democratic participation in German ECE institutions is put into practice. It is focused on a specific understanding of participation as democratic practice, following the concept 'the nursery of democracy'. Our methodological approach attached greater value to narrated and reflected practices within institutionalised democratic practice than to observed informal practices as part of 'everyday' participatory activities. We mostly analysed the interactions between practitioners and children and not the interactions within the group(s) of children, and we did not reconstruct how adults and children deal with differences and diversity within, for example, plenary gatherings.

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[3] Examples of these comic stories can be found at: https://www.ew.uni-hamburg.de/einrichtungen/ew2/sozialpaedagogik/forschung/deiki/posterdeiki.html

3.4   Results I: Participation in the Light of Basic Tensions Between Deliberative Democracy and Democracy of the Experts

The following sections report on research results concerning the question of how ECE institutions practise democracy and whether those democratic statutes (of association), which we consider to be central in achieving deliberative democracy, are actually applied. Essentially, the question is whether children act not only as addressees but also as active agents in creating the 'rules and regulations' important in managing everyday life together within the nursery.

Assessing the institutional conditions within the examined nurseries, it should be noted that all of them are organised at a local level and firmly anchored in their respective districts. In addition, five of the six nurseries are organised as registered associations and are, therefore, able to fulfil the above-mentioned basic requirements for deliberative democracy. However, according to our research, all these five associations lack two essential characteristics: voluntary membership among those involved and self-government based on honorary posts. Neither staff, practitioners, parents, nor even the children themselves are association members and are, therefore, excluded from democratic participation at an institutional level.

The focus of pedagogical work created the necessary conditions for a democratisation of internal relationships in all participating nurseries, i.e. the democratic principles mentioned above were implemented in each nursery. However, this was within the scope of the research project only with respect to relations between children and practitioners. Parents are, for the most part, excluded from codified participation procedures laid down by a constitution within the nursery. They can be invited or request attendance at children's councils, but they are only entitled to make proposals, not to vote.

The participatory democratic practice put into effect in the internal relations within the institutions is based on a constitution. This defines and codifies the rights of nursery children and practitioners and regulates the implementation thereof. Such a structural basis for self-determination and co-determination among children is present in all the institutions examined. Further on, we will identify content and scope of rights granted to children within the nursery charters.

Nonetheless, along with participation opportunities, the individual constitutions also specify *limitations* to children's involvement. These limitations are in areas not directly affecting the children and occur in cases in which the practitioner's duty of care and supervision outweighs the possible opportunities or cases in which the health and safety of the children need to be ensured.

For example, the charters may specify that the practitioner's decision can take precedence in areas in which child health and safety (crossing streets, leaving nursery grounds) or educational interests (routines such as closing circle time, policies concerning toys brought from home) outweigh the child's interest. This also includes the teaching of values, virtues, and traditions, such as celebrating seasonal festivities or conveying table manners and etiquette. In many nursery charters, the

practitioners have the last word on such matters. The same applies to situations in which children's involvement in decision-making is not required, or when association interests outweigh participation opportunities (i.e. designing staff rooms), but also to situations in which not even the staff itself has any influence (opening hours, work schedules, etc.).

The provisions laid down in the nursery constitutions place definite limits on children's democratic engagement in all participating ECE institutions. At the same time, they set a transparent and usable scope for democratic participation, thus enabling children and professionals to use the democratic committees and public forms defined in the constitution.

The research results also show that the *rights*, *committee structures*, and *procedures* concerning self-determination and co-determination codified by the practitioners and laid down in the charters enable, in principle, the nursery children to have a deliberative influence even on such issues involving heteronomy (limitations). They can bring about long-lasting and effective changes by means of democratic majority decisions or negotiate situational and individual exceptions in consensus with the practitioners involved. The rules and regulations established by the pedagogical staff can, in this way, later be the subject of negotiation processes with the children and even be revised accordingly. Whether such accounts can be empirically confirmed will be covered in the following sections relating to participation and self-determination in practice within the examined nurseries.

The 'deliberative democratic practice' observed in the examined institutions is based on formal majority decisions passed by committees laid down in the nursery charter and is reached according to procedures specified therein. This kind of 'formal majoritarian democracy' differs, however, from the nature of participation within groups (such as project groups or groups preparing for the transition from kindergarten to school). While these groups lack a constitutional basis, their manner of participating still applies formalised procedures for democratic participation. We call this 'non-formal majoritarian democracy'. In addition, there are also informal decision-making processes based on dialogue or discourse between two parties. Such processes take place in everyday interactions, for example, between a child and a practitioner trying to solve the question as to whether certain clothes should be worn, according to the intended activities. To preserve the participant's right to self-determination, such an interaction aims to come to a mutually shared agreement and, therefore, seeks a consensus-oriented decision. Accordingly, we hereinafter refer to these decision-making processes as 'informal consensus democracy' (cf. on these conceptual terms Richter et al., 2016, and Richter et al., 2017).

The *right* of the child to formally participate exists within all of the six examined nurseries in the following areas: election of delegates (active and passive voting right of delegates in committees, in part differentiated by age); planning of festivities; outings and projects; designing rooms as well as breakfast and lunch menus and procedures; co-deciding on the adoption of rules; and approving nursery-related purchases regarding 'educational supplies'. Formal democratic participation can even extend as far as the hiring process when the children each carry one vote concerning job postings, interviews, and personnel decisions.

Each examined nursery has its *unique committee structure* for shared decision-making, consisting of at least a plenary gathering and a 'children's parliament'. This parliament (members are six to 12 elected children) is based on a delegation system that democratically represents all nursery children and practitioners within an institution. The six nurseries also have standing committees in the form of formal meetings or 'group conferences'. Members of a standing committee are all children from the respective nursery group (between 10 and 25 children). The children elect one or two delegates from their group once or twice a year to represent the interests of their group at children's parliamentary sessions and to decide on proposals democratically drafted by that parliament.

The nurseries differ in terms of which committee has which decision-making power: Some prefer representative democracy (i.e. the parliament makes the decisions), while others are based on grassroots democracy (the parliament acts as a mediator between the standing committees).

Standing committee meetings are held at least once a week and last 30 to 45 minutes. Children's parliament meetings are held fortnightly or once a month. Staff normally also have democratic representation at the children's parliament sessions. In most ECE institutions, the plenary gathering only meets when there is a specific issue to be decided upon by every member. This can often also involve invitations to the parents or other third person parties. The parents, however, do not participate in decision-making. In all six ECEs, the parties not involved in the actual decision-making are informed about the results through published protocols (posted in the entrance area) and verbal reports in the committee meetings.

In all committees, the *decision-making process* itself is always preceded by a consultation phase, void of any specific action and in the form of a mutual learning process guided by professionals. In one example, the children told us that they wanted to build a level crossing to regulate the chaotic traffic of three-wheelers on the nursery grounds. They had to research with the professionals where to buy such a barrier and how expensive it was. When there were delivery difficulties, they had to build a barrier themselves and, thus, find out how a barrier works and can be constructed. In another example, the children (planning a new outdoor area) wanted a moat around the nursery. Sharks and dolphins should swim in it. The professionals visited a seawater aquarium at the zoo with the children. There, they had biologists explain to them how complicated it is to keep sharks and dolphins in a tank. In a factual clarification process that lasted over a year, the children finally decided to build an animal enclosure with guinea pigs and rabbits themselves with the help of their parents. Thus, many welcome side effects of learning through experience (in the sense of Dewey) arise. The children are confronted with factual and social problems for which they need to develop solutions on their own (assisted by the professionals): How to make concrete for a foundation for the self-designed climbing tower on the playground? How to write a letter of protest to the mayor against the dog poo on the football field? How to make a fair exchange of toys between two groups? How to make an hourglass out of plastic bottles (so you can measure each child's time spent riding a tricycle on the nursery grounds)? What are the tasks of

the children's police in the dining area in order to establish peace and order during mealtimes?

We found that when children as citizens have the opportunity to clarify questions, acquire information on topics affecting them, and weigh up all the arguments, they are able to formulate an opinion, in order to then make a sensible decision on the topic at hand. In addition, the democratic process itself can be subject of democratic participation when those involved negotiate and decide by simple majority whether the vote should be open or in secret. Generally, voting occurs on the basis of a relative majority – where necessary, on a parity basis – and includes a non-codified and non-formal minority protection policy. Child-friendly methods are applied during the voting process (voting with pebbles, dot stickers, photos, self-made drawings, etc.), and records using symbols and/or written records are kept in order to open the process to children and/or adults.

Apart from formal democratic committees, there are also groups that are not a part of the constitutional structure in day-to-day life within the examined ECE institutions. These are, for example, groups preparing the children for their transition from nursery to elementary school or groups consisting of children with a shared interest in a special activity or topic. These groups practice shared decision-making on topics such as where to go for the next trip or what to plant in their garden. They do not send delegates to sessions of the children's parliament, nor do they establish any form of openness towards third parties by means of documentation or verbal reports. However, the voluntary membership status is substantially clarified, and democratic methods in analogy to the procedures laid down for the formal committees are applied, albeit not exhaustively. We, therefore, include these associations encompassing parent representative councils as well as school children and interest groups in the area of 'non-formal majoritarian democracy'.

Within these associations, efforts in deliberative democratic engagement are initially limited to the group itself, and decisions made there require no formal consent from the children's parliament nor the group conferences. And, yet, the decisions made within this area of non-formal majoritarian democracy are, in principle, subject to referral to a formal democratic deliberation procedure, as the delegates elected by each nursery class can object to them before the children's parliament.

On the basis of participation rights, joint decisions made within the ECE institutions are reached by means of formal and non-formal majoritarian democratic procedures. In addition, the nursery charters also codify the right to self-determination in daily routines that are the subject of 'informal consensus democracy'. Exercising one's right to self-determination is also, for the most part, not a solipsistic act but, rather, a social one, something done together with another person, whether it be a child or a professional. The right of self-determination afforded to children within the nursery applies particularly to the following areas: planning daily activities, meals, membership in a specific group or class, clothing, and sleep and rest time policies. In contrast to majoritarian democracy characterised by a constant struggle to shift away from individual needs and ideas towards a common interest, the self-determination process is about satisfying individual needs. The freedom of action necessary to do so can, for the most part, be claimed without any conflict. And,

where needed, a child's personal decision is supported by pedagogical professionals in the form of a verbal affirmation expressing their consent. An example would be children informing practitioners during free play time when they would like to go to a different room so that the practitioners know where they are. The practitioners only briefly confirm having received the information. On the other hand, in cases of conflict or contradiction, as our study shows, a discursive approach is applied. This form of communication is based on a general acknowledgment of the affectedness of the children and those adults involved as competency and therefore such dialogues are carried out 'at eye level'. During the talks, they negotiate with each other to ascertain who, among those directly involved, has the better arguments, with the objective of reaching a consensus or a fair compromise. Voting procedures are not applied. The dialogues also often contain a pedagogical moment, since the children and the professionals have a learning – or rather *educating* – relationship with each other.

As part of our research, we were interested in finding out how professionals in ECE institutions resolve the contradiction between a legitimate right to educate and the expectation conveyed in the concept, 'the nursery of democracy', relinquishing power to the children. We therefore encountered a mode of dealing with this contradiction that can be termed as 'pedagogical discourse' (Richter, 1991). During such dialogues, the superiority of pedagogical staff grounded in professional experience is merely assumed and only for as long as it is not called into question by better arguments put forward by the children. To what extent an argument brought forth by children or staff will have validity is foremost the result of an open-ended dialogue carried out with the objective of reaching an agreement. One example: A practitioner in one of the participating nurseries was worried about a child playing outdoors in the cold and had asked the child multiple times whether she was *truly* not cold. Finally, the child turned the question around and asked the practitioner whether she was maybe cold herself and needed to put on a coat. The practitioner then realised that she had projected her own feelings onto the child, and she promptly took back her prodding. A different result was shown in another participating nursery, when a practitioner in a similar situation was able to convince the child by feeling its surroundings that it was necessary to wear warmer clothing.

Within the examined nurseries, self-determination is not achieved by means of laissez-faire but, rather, mutual communication. Pedagogical staff also have, hereby, the task of initiating and providing support during educational processes. Whereas normally a simple confirmative dialogue is sufficient to enable a child to exercise his or her right to self-determination, in the case of conflict, discursive negotiations are carried out to ascertain which dialogue partner provides a better argument. It is not always possible to reach an agreement due to differences in opinion (e.g. when compulsory actions have an influence on the situation at hand). Due to this, any subsequent discourse enabling the reflection and revision of decisions gains importance. This process of informal consensus democracy enabling the implementation of children's right to self-determination puts the expert status of the professionally trained adult practitioners up for discussion. And it can even have the effect that

limitations laid down by staff in the nursery charter concerning participation are questioned.

Apart from observing deliberative democratic practice, during the course of our research, we also came across an empiricism with respect to how pedagogical staff (despite the implementation of a nursery charter) claim legitimacy in making decisions for the children. This is because they see themselves as experts due to their age and training. Nonetheless, this heteronomous approach is, as mentioned previously, consistent with a fundamental understanding of democracy and by no means reflects principally autocratic claims to legitimacy. It cannot, however, be associated with the notion of a deliberative democracy in which addressees of laws laid down are, at the same time, their respective authors. But, rather, it arises from the idea of democracy as a form of government in which the addressees are not directly involved in determining rules and standards.

This kind of democracy as a form of government, which we refer to within ECE institutions as a 'democracy of experts', is, by virtue of its approach, quite democratic. This is demonstrated in the form of 'practical discourse' (Richter, 1991, p. 143) among pedagogical staff, during which they carry out reflection processes and make decisions based on democratic procedures but without children's direct involvement. And the experts also accept that they need to explain their decisions to the children: During the course of discussions, they seek to promote an understanding among the children for their decisions made. However, given that the matter has already been decided, open-ended discussions can no longer take place, and, therefore, it is also no longer possible to democratically revise past decisions. The authors of decisions (pedagogical staff) and the addressees of decisions (the children) no longer coincide.

In conclusion, all examined ECE institutions distinguish – according to their constitution – between participation through democratic practice within children's committees and participation through individual self-determination. However, the relative weighting given to these two forms of participation does vary. In two of the nurseries, the staff focus, in day-to-day relations, on meeting individual needs and personal interests by applying a discursive approach. In addition, they emphasise the fact that they only want to demand from a small number of children participatory democratic practice in children's committees and self-governance based on honorary posts, because they regard both activities as essentially too bureaucratic. At the same time, according to our research findings, staff do practice a kind of democracy of experts by making decisions *for* the children by means of majority vote. There is definitely an emancipatory element at work here, as staff in both nurseries are led by the ultimate objective of enabling as much 'freedom for the people' as possible. However, in doing so, they reduce an existing deliberative potential to a kind of democracy education for an elite group (this group being the few children who, acting as delegates of the 'people', co-decide on proposals within the committees). This approach is consistent with a *liberal* concept of democracy (Habermas, 2008, p. 141), such as Joseph Schumpeter (1950) who formulated a competitive or elitist model of participatory democracy.

In contrast, the four other ECE institutions examined all exhibit a clear focus on a democratic and collaborative approach to dealing with conflicts and competing interests. This enables the nurseries to establish opinion- and policy-shaping procedures and make majority decisions using a deliberative democratic process with everyone involved. These have the objective of condensing individual needs and wants into common interests. Such democratic practices serve the objective of educating children, already regarded as being competent, in democracy and are, in our opinion, consistent with the societal conceptions outlined earlier regarding deliberative democracy as a form of life. The pedagogical limitations concerning children's involvement are recognised as also necessary for this form of collaborative self-governance. But these are, at the same time, subject to the democratic principle of revision due to the structural anchoring of rights, committees, and procedures within the ECE institutions. Therefore, this fulfils the deliberative democratic claim to enable all persons affected by the law to not only be its addressees but also its authors.

3.5   Results II: Children's Democratic Participation

The second research question in our research project examines whether and, if so, how children practice democracy in ECE institutions. This question follows Jürgen Habermas' (1995 [1981]) theory that people are dependent upon communicative action in order to integrate themselves socially within the lifeworld. Their socialisation and individual reproduction are dependent upon communication and mutual recognition. We understand Habermas' concept of deliberative democracy as an institutionalised form of such communicative action. Drawing upon Habermas, Helmut Richter (1991) argued that the affectedness expressed in communicative action should be regarded as a competence for democratic participation. Expressed more pointedly, expertise is a result of such affectedness. We assume that all people inherently possess the expertise and the capacity to form and express views on matters of concern to them. Therefore, we conclude that small children involved in democratic deliberation are also capable of articulating views and opinions on matters affecting them and ultimately dealing with these issues on a basis of mutual communication.

In our study, we did not examine whether children have the competence to engage in democratic practices, but rather how they go about it in ECE institutions with democratic decision-making structures. We observed how they express their affectedness, voice their right to be heard, participate in all actions and decisions affecting them, and negotiate their interests via deliberation with others. Therefore, the focus of our study did not lie in examining an abstract competence for democracy among small children but rather their actual practice of democracy. In this way, we followed the 'social actor and social competence approach' (Moran-Ellis, 2013) that has positioned children as competent and capable of democratic interaction arising from communication with others within the lifeworld.

As our theoretical approach is based on the idea that every child is capable of expressing their affectedness in their own unique way of communication, we did not focus on the reconstruction of differences within the group of children, other than their age. That does not mean that we believe practitioners' and other children's responses to different ways of communication are free of prejudices or discrimination based on internalised classism, racism, or ableism. In fact, there is some empirical evidence that discrimination and deprivation also take place in German ECE institutions (cf., e.g. Thon et al., 2018; Machold, 2015, Kuhn, 2013). However, it was our aim to focus on joint democratic decision-making between adults and children in *general,* rather than reconstructing those differences.[4]

In the following, we present findings in our study that show how children in ECE institutions actively participate in negotiations and decision-making, a form we described earlier as 'formal majoritarian democracy'. Here we draw upon the competences for democracy depicted by Gerhard Himmelmann (2005): cognitive knowledge, practical skills, and moral values.

Beginning with the cognitive knowledge, photo-elicited group interviews with the children (who were mostly aged 3 and older) in the examined nurseries show that they are able to correctly understand and explain democracy-related terms used in their nursery's constitution. Such terms include delegates, majority, or children's parliament. Children under 3 have difficulty using such terms. However, younger and older nursery children both have in common that they are able to describe in detail how democratic committees in their nurseries generally work, even without using the correct terms. They can explain when and where committees meet, how to become a delegate, what it means to be a representative member, and how to conduct voting procedures. They know their constitutional rights and demand that these be respected when they say, for example, 'Grown-ups, you can't decide all by yourself!' The children are familiar with the rules and regulations decided upon in the democratic committees and can explain the tasks and duties of an elected delegate, for example, reporting to their nursery group regarding decisions made in the children's parliament or, vice versa, presenting proposals decided upon within their group to the children's parliament.

Our study clearly shows that all children within the examined nurseries demonstrate a high degree of procedural knowledge regarding democratic processes in everyday day-care settings. Not only the interviews but also our participant observations show: In committee meetings guided by pedagogical staff, the children are able to contribute their own personal ideas, discuss pros and cons of contributed views and ideas, make choices, develop alternatives, form their own opinions, and ultimately come to a decision on the respective topic at hand. Child-friendly methods applied during the voting process facilitate democratic participation. Children aged 3 and older understand voting procedures and can participate competently. Younger children, under the age of 3, need some support from professional staff. A

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[4] In her study focusing on the interaction between children and practitioners during their weekly plenary assemblies, Teresa Lehmann (2020) reconstructs different modes of thematising and reproducing differences such as age, gender, ability, and race.

symbolic language – often symbols drawn by the children themselves – is used to take notes of committee meetings. This way the children can later 'read' or reconstruct the processes depicted in their chosen symbols so that they can report to their nursery group on decisions made in committee meetings. The children understand and carry out decisions based on majority rule. They do, however, regularly show solidarity with minorities. Often enough, they reinvent minority protection when they notice that a decision made by majority rule has saddened a minority in their nursery group. In such instances, they often critically scrutinise majority decisions made and may even reconsider them altogether.

During committee meetings, the children are able to stay focused for approximately 30–40 min. They often display a high degree of personal engagement: They participate actively and are highly focused in discussions pertaining to specific topics that affect them directly.

Although the children do not make any moral judgments concerning democracy in general, we did clearly observe that they particularly like actively participating in democratic procedures and acknowledge the necessity of negotiation processes. The children criticise not being involved, even using the terms justice and injustice to underline their criticism. Moreover, they apply democratic decision-making principles to life at home within their family: The parents interviewed reported that their children sometimes suggest taking a vote when they are unhappy with their parent's suggestions. The children see parallels between their own democratic elections and decision-making and those at a state level. Several parents reported that children in the family demanded the establishment of a family council, analogous to the children's parliament in the day-care centre. Parents also told us that the children, referring to the election posters of the Bundestag elections, compared them with the election to the children's parliament in their kindergarten.

The children are not only willing to contribute their own views and opinions on matters that affect them but also to participate in deliberative negotiation processes, during which they discuss their views with other participants and decide on possible solutions and compromises. They accept decisions made on a mutual basis. Overall, it is apparent that the children are not only capable of participating in democratic deliberations but also want to be a part of them.

3.6   Results III: Children's Satisfaction with Democratic Processes

The Federal Youth Panel (*Bundesjugendkuratorium* – a central advisory council for discipline and profession within the field of social pedagogy which advises the federal government) noted in 2009 that children's participation was often a requirement but that there were, to date, no empirical studies concerning children's subjective satisfaction with opportunities offered for democratic participation (BJK, 2009, p. 41). We included this research question in our study and chose to apply the

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002, resp. Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) to make this abstract concept manageable for our research. This 'engagement scale' measures work satisfaction using observable items concerning work engagement. We classified and interpreted our observations according to the terminology used in the scale, assigning the competences for democracy described by Himmelmann (2005) to the criteria in UWES. The scale contains three main categories: vigour, dedication, and absorption. We combined these three categories with core democratic processes in respect to the following: how the children express their views on matters affecting them (the scope of their participation in deliberation with others), how they participate in democratic decision-making (the scope of their involvement in decision-making processes), and how they share responsibility within democratic structures (the scope of shared responsibility for roles and functions carried out within democratic activities such as elected posts). The children's reported positive and negative experiences with democratic decision-making procedures and committee meetings were also included in the analysis.

Even though we asked the children how the democratic system in their ECE worked, it might be questioned why we did not ask them directly how satisfied they were with it. This was because we did not want to address the children as mere (more or less) satisfied consumers or 'customers' of democratic practices created by the adult practitioners. We wanted to acknowledge the depth and comprehensiveness of democratic changes within the ECEs and found a possibility to do so in the concept of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002): 'Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour' (Schaufeli et al., 2002: 465). To observe and ask about the children's engagement in democratic practices seemed better suited for our approach to the subject than just asking the children whether they liked or were satisfied with democracy. We therefore used the categories within the concept of work engagement (energy, dedication, and absorption) as tools to analyse our interviews and participant observations.

Results of our study show that the children are most attentive and engaged in deliberative settings when they can put forward their own personal needs or interests. They can contribute their numerous ideas on shaping and regulating everyday life fully and confidently under such conditions. In general, this is the case when the discussion phase lasts no longer than 30–40 min.

Although not all children take part equally in discussions, we did observe that they are definitely interested in participating in democratic procedures. Throughout our observations, it was obvious that they want to vote, and they want to win the vote. For example, we were able to observe how a girl who was not even herself a candidate followed every step of the election process so attentively that her face reddened while she was repeating everything that was being said. At some point, the practitioner in charge of moderating the election took notice and asked her if she wanted to help count the votes. The girl vehemently affirmed this and smiled happily. She seemed very proud to be given this responsibility. If children lose an

election or a vote, this can induce strong positive and negative emotions: We observed children rolling on the floor with joy after 'winning' but also children crying after 'losing' a vote. Yet, as described earlier, the children can quickly show solidarity with minorities, practising a kind of informal minority protection if they learn that a minority within their group has expressed a lack of acknowledgment. The children are then very willing and fast to make the losing party's position and needs the subject of new deliberations, sometimes even reconsidering their decisions. Some professionals within the examined nurseries were concerned that the formal procedures would be too bureaucratic for the children. However, we did not observe (keeping in mind the suitable length of discussions) that they had any negative effect on the children's democratic participation.

The children also display a willingness to get involved, particularly with respect to shared responsibility within democratic processes. They readily carry out short-term or project-related tasks and are proud to be able to take on long-term assignments such as the role and function of an elected delegate.

We observed a high degree of individual children's engagement including vigour, dedication, and absorption. We therefore conclude that the children are, overall, satisfied with the democratic procedures in ECE settings. They experience respect and recognition as an equal and feel that their needs and interests are taken seriously.

3.7 Summary

All examined ECE institutions have defined the children's rights to self-determination and co-determination in detail. They have also developed democratic procedures that lay a structural basis enabling the children to realise their rights. Thus, in principle, the organisations address children as 'citizens' of the 'embryonic society' (Dewey) within the ECE. In this way, they go beyond the requirements of the UN CRC and enable the children not only to express their opinions but to also make collective decisions together with the professionals on a democratic basis. Although the children's decision-making rights are limited (especially due to the professionals' responsibility to protect the children), there are accessible procedures to use them. We see this as a great step forward in establishing democratic participation rights for children and in meeting the demands of the German Youth Welfare Act in ECE institutions.

With regard to the quality and political structure of the democratic procedures, it can be noted that four of the six institutions studied have introduced procedures of deliberative democracy. They involve children in the mutual process of deliberation, such that all children have the chance to publicly introduce their topics and interests and to co-decide on them within the committees. In contrast, two of the kindergartens have empirically established forms of expert democracy. Here, not all children have permanent access to a discursive public sphere and co-decision-making; only empowered and elected children are asked to make decisions for the others, together with the professionals. Due to our normative orientation, we favour the deliberative

concepts, but the forms of expert democracy found in the kindergartens go much further than all previously known forms of children's participation in Germany (Klein & Landhäußer, 2017). In addition, the entitlement of children in all six ECE organisations has led to a strong respect for their self-determination in everyday interactions.

Obviously, the 'big' debates concerning democratic conceptions of society can also be found in the 'embryonic society' of the democratic day-care centres. The structural difficulties of democracy (as discussed in political theory) can also be found at this level: How is it possible that differences between the society members – for example, in their language skills or their social background – do not lead to inequality and injustice with regard to access to democratic participation? How can it be ensured that everyday conflicts in the (embryonic) society find their way into a democratic public sphere and negotiation in the boards? How can people (children) in a democracy be enabled to take responsibility but not create exclusive and condensed power structures? These questions could not be explored within our limited research. They are a desideratum for future projects.

Although there is a large degree of democratic structures allowing participation between professionals and children, there is a lack of parental involvement in the democratic determination of life in the kindergartens. And, although most of the institutions are organised as democratic associations, professionals, children, and parents are not legal members of these associations. We conclude that the participation of parents in the democratic decision-making processes and the membership of professionals, children, and parents in the associations providing the ECE institutions could expand the democratic practice.

In answering the question of how the children act democratically, our research clearly shows that the children involved (ages 3 and up) are generally capable of participating in democratic processes; they understand their rights, the committees, and the procedures precisely and can explain them accurately in their own words when asked. They advocate democracy in their institutions: The children want to make decisions, see themselves in the community as capable of finding suitable solutions, and are ready to accept the consequences of joint decisions. Although it was not possible in our study to research the effects of differences among children regarding gender, ethnicity and origin, language, etc., the results obtained using our methods show the children's fundamental willingness and overall ability to make democratic decisions. Our basic assumption concerning the agency of children (Qvortrup, 2005, Eßer et al., 2016) is specifically demonstrated here in relation to their ability to act in democratic processes. Based on our concept of examining satisfaction in degrees of engagement, we find that children participate actively in democratic processes. They display a high degree of energy, dedication, and concentration in democratic procedures as long as they are limited to 30–40 minutes. In projects, they also readily commit themselves on a long-term basis. The children want to have a say, actively seeking decisions and holding elections. They take on honorary offices and put themselves forward for re-election. Overall, we take this as strong evidence for their satisfaction and willingness to participate in democratic structures within their day-care centres.

We conclude that the concept of 'the nursery of democracy' allows professionals to embed democratic structures for themselves and the children in the ECE institutions. In this way, children's participatory rights no longer depend on the mere attitudes or mindsets of adults only. On the contrary, rights and structures are put into practice in everyday life. In this way, the unavoidable power of inequality inherent between professionals and children regarding education cannot be eliminated but structurally 'tamed'. The processes we observed in the day-care centres prove that the rights and procedures based on the principle of joint decision-making fulfil Habermas' demand for a deliberative democracy: The children and professionals can see themselves (at the same time) as the authors and addressees of the rules and solutions that they had jointly decided on implementing.

3.8   Our Study Discussed from an International Research Perspective

Review articles show that, generally, there is still little research on children's participation in ECE. Any research that has been done originates mainly from European countries, with a focus on Scandinavian research (Correia et al., 2019; Zachrisen, 2016). This highlights the need for further research. In Germany, only a few studies focus on democratic participation in kindergarten (Lehmann, 2020; Höke, 2018; Ruppin, 2018; Bartosch et al., 2015; Klein & Landhäußer, 2017), and these studies have never been included in international review articles (Correia et al., 2019) or any books with an international perspective on democracy in ECE (Margrain & Löfdahl Hultman, 2019).

Comparing our findings to these international discussions, we first concentrate on the theoretical concepts of democratic participation in ECE. A larger group of studies can be identified that (like our study) refer to John Dewey's (2000 [1916]) educational concept of democracy. These studies define the right to participate as a key concept of democratic culture and pedagogy. This approach emphasises children as active and democratic citizens, who learn to defend their interests and take on responsibilities (Correia et al., 2019, p. 82). Although these studies argue from the basis of children's rights to participation (mostly according to UN-CRC), one can hardly find any concepts for research or practical pedagogy that focus on procedures and structures necessary in assuring that these rights can be exercised by the children. This is even the case in the huge Nordic research project 'Values Education in Nordic Preschools' (Johansson et al., 2018), as well as the latest international overview presented by Margrain and Löfdahl Hultman (2019)Instead, most studies consider the professionals as guarantors of children's participation and focus on interactions between practitioner and child. Participation is thus limited to various styles of interaction, recognition, and relationship, oriented via democratic values (Emilson & Johansson, 2009; Zachrisen, 2016; Johansson et al., 2018). Many studies refer to Article 12 UN-CRC, which, in fact, licenses the right to participation

according to a child's age and maturity. Thus, in two respects, the power remains with the adults: (1) They decide whether they choose to acknowledge the children's perspectives, and (2) it depends on them as to whether the children's views are adequately respected. Therefore, the right of the child remains weak. The children have to rely completely on adults and professionals to respect them; it depends on their granted 'paternalistic grace'.

The concept of early democratic education – 'the nursery of democracy' – and accordingly the published research that investigated its quality of implementation in ECE institutions is based on the critique that Korczak expressed in the early twentieth century. He argued that, without a special pedagogical 'constitution' consisting of detailed rights of the children (along with procedures), the respect of the will of the child depends on the structural power and situational mood of the practitioner alone. He describes this structural power as 'arbitrariness and despotism' (Korczak, 1919 [1969], p. 353). The concept examined by this study concludes that children's rights have to be guaranteed, not only through the values, interaction styles, and attitudes of professionals. Instead, they must be secured through constitutional rules and guidelines to assure the democratic participation of the children, and they should be based on differentiated rights and procedures in shared decision-making on common, everyday issues in the organisations. Participation, as it is defined by many international concepts and studies, merely means the ability of the child to interact and cooperate actively in social actions. Fostering participation, in this sense, means respecting the child as an active partner in (educational) interaction and cooperation but not necessarily as a rightful co-decider (analogous with the citizen) in democratic decision-making processes. The concept of 'the nursery of democracy' examined in our study tries to secure such rights by means of constitutions laid down by teams of the practitioners in kindergartens, defining the democratic rights of children and adults within the institution. This includes the procedures to put these rights into practice.

Additionally, some studies according to our position would agree with concepts formulated by Dewey (2000 [1916]) and Biesta (2011), arguing that democracy is not learned through teaching *about* democracy but through experiences in the democratic decision-making processes in everyday life as well as educational institutions (Zachrisen, 2016; Clement, 2019). These studies still focus on interaction (Ribaeus & Skånfors, 2019) and not on granted democratic rights and the procedures needed to put them into effect. The German discussions and the resulting concept of 'the nursery of democracy' are far more aware of the structural power and the dangers of its misuse in ECE settings. These structured democratic rights and procedures in kindergartens are, thus, seen to limit the dangers of adult power. Although the problem of structural power in education has been observed by more recent studies (e.g. Hägglund et al., 2019, p. 18), they do not discuss or provide structures in ECE that would adequately control inequality between children and professionals through democratic procedures. The practices we examined may seem to be more in the tradition of the 'states of childhood' (Light, 2020) or the 'children's republics' (Kamp, 1995) than emerging from a position of democratic value orientation in ECE.

Our methodological concept puts a strong emphasis on the argument that research on democratic processes in ECE settings has, itself, to be democratic, allowing the participation of children and practitioners in discussing and defining the outcome of research projects. But this perspective seems not to be very highly regarded in international research methods (Correia et al., 2019, p. 85), although there are projects that also use collaborative action research (Sigurdadottir & Einarsdottir, 2018) similar to our objective of allowing for a shared discourse between practitioners and researchers.

Although there are some basic differences between our assumptions and methods and the new literature on democracy in ECE, some of the findings *can* be compared.

Our research reveals that even in kindergartens with democratic constitutions, children's participation still depends on how it is put into effect by the practitioners. We observed their ability to lead dyadic dialogues with individual children, recognising them as self-determined, self-aware, and competent partners. This goes along with the findings of other studies (Zachrisen, 2016; Brownlee et al., 2018).

It is critically discussed as to whether a dyadic dialogue style of interaction is in danger of having a far too individualistic paradigm (Johansson et al., 2018, p. 41), negatively challenging the importance of community and common good in democracy. Studies show that: 'Many children could be gathered, but the interaction was still dyadic, and the children seemed not to be encouraged to develop fellowships with their peers. In addition, the adults appeared to regard themselves as the main partner in interactions with children concerning the democratic value field' (Johansson et al., 2018, p. 41). Instead, in our findings, dialogues between individuals are fed into common democratic structures, such as children's parliaments, and this way decreases the dangers of an overly individualistic dialogue style.

Moreover, our study proves that the democratic constitution of kindergartens allows a higher level of children's self- and co-determination on issues pertaining to everyday life in the institutions. Their rights and ability to decide includes planning daily activities, meals, membership of a specific group or class, clothing, and sleep and rest time policies. We could be sure that the children know these rights and actively demand them. In German kindergartens lacking specific democratic procedures, this is not self-evident: 'Complex or fundamental issues such as food, interior design, excursions and rules are obviously out of the sphere of influence for the clear majority of the children' (Klein & Landhäußer, 2017, p. 13).

Finally, looking at democratic attitudes and skills, international studies verify that, if allowed and encouraged, young children in ECE settings are able to participate. A study from South Korea, for example, shows that: 'Young children were capable of expressing their points of view and could contribute directly to issues that mattered to them if they worked in accordance with "child-centred" methods and were appropriately supported by adults. (…) The children perceived themselves as confident learners, developed the ability to communicate and negotiate with other children and adults, showed initiative and enthusiasm, and acquired democratic attitudes and skills' (Nah & Lee, 2015, p. 335). In parallel and according to our research results, Ribaeus and Skånfors (2019), who studied 'democratic events' in

preschools, conclude, 'Our results in this chapter show how children are democratic subjects (…) and agents (…), actively negotiating and constructing democracy in different democratic events. For the children, their democratic practices variously involve actions of inclusion, opportunities for influence in different ways and shared power' (Ribaeus & Skånfors, 2019, p. 243).

This goes along with our findings, and although there are restrictions to the children's decision-making rights concerning participatory democratic practice in the examined institutions, the children are, to a large extent, entitled to democratic participation and can experience themselves as citizens of their 'embryonic society'. Generally speaking, they respond to these opportunities with impressive democratic engagement, and they acquire democratic skills. And although the structural dependency of children and the power position of adults in ECE settings cannot be eliminated totally by this, there can be more focus given to children as entitled and capable subjects in a democratic society. We see this, some 100 years after Korczak, as a considerable step forward within the field of social pedagogy in respecting the rights of children.

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Elisabeth Richter, Dr. phil., is Professor of Intercultural Social Work in the Department of Family, Child and Social Work, MSH Medical School Hamburg (Germany), with expertise in youth work, early childhood education, and community education. Her research interests include democracy education, political empowerment, social work policy, and participatory research. Her current study focuses on democratic participation of rural youth and examines the potentials and perspectives of voluntary commitment within youth associations and rural communities.

Teresa Lehmann, Dr. phil., works as a consultant and project manager at the German Federal Association of Family Day Care. Her focus is on participation, early childhood, and democratic education. Her current project is about training lecturers and pedagogical consultants on these topics.

Benedikt Sturzenhecker, Dr. phil., is Professor of Social Pedagogy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hamburg (Germany) where he heads the Social Pedagogy Department. His research interests include democratic participation in child and youth welfare, especially in early childhood education and youth work. His current research examines how democracy-oriented kindergartens ensure the inclusion of all different children in the democratic process.

Part II
Middle Childhood

Chapter 4
Constructing the Neoliberal Citizen: An Ethnographic Investigation of Corporatized Practices in Education

Garth Stahl

Abstract Debate continues to grow over the institutional practices of the expanding charter school networks in the United States, often referred to as charter school management organizations (CMOs). These networks of schools, largely found in urban areas, follow a very specific model of schooling and typically serve low-income students of color. Neoliberal governance fosters a strict accountability structure which shapes the institutional practices of a CMO, where everything from language to behaviors is monitored. Drawing on an ethnographic investigation of one CMO middle-school site, this chapter explores how institutional practices work to construct a neoliberal conception of citizenship for disadvantaged populations. I consider how the conception of "grit" manifests in the institution and the implications for the de-democratization of education. Theoretical work on the inculcation of neoliberal selfhood – as well as neoliberal subjectivities – is central to the analysis. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the fissures as leaders, teachers, and students struggle with a strict and uncompromising model of schooling.

Keywords Schooling · Institutional practices · Inculcation · Neoliberalism · Disadvantaged populations

4.1 Introduction

Schools, as spaces of meaning making and identity work, remain powerful sites of socialization toward the values deemed necessary for citizenship. But schools remain incredibly diverse; their philosophies and institutional cultures are shaped by a variety of complex factors. Drawing on ethnographic data, this chapter focuses on one form of schooling in the United States designed to raise both the attainment and aspirations of low-socioeconomic students of color to pursue entry into elite

G. Stahl (✉)
School of Education, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

forms of higher education. This model of schooling, labeled under the broad umbrella of charter school management organizations (CMOs) – sometimes referred to as MOs (management organizations) or EMOs (education management organizations) – remains contentious due to its institutional practices and treatment of staff and students. Such institutions are known for a rigid "no excuses" culture where failure is not tolerated.

As Mitchell (2006) writes, education remains a critical site to consider "the shifting technologies of citizenship and state" as young people are "particularly impressionable 'subjects'" (p. 390). Education is widely considered to have an important role to play in developing citizens, both through overt forms of civic education and the hidden curriculum. However, it is unclear how to ethically and effectively foster citizenship in schools serving low-socioeconomic communities (see Black & Walsh, 2015). It must be noted that, historically, the educational experiences of the student population I interacted with in the CMO have been defined by disinvestment and underfunding, institutional racism, and, as a result, persistent academic failure. Therefore, in defense of this strict model of schooling – which is heavily focused on inculcation – an argument is commonly presented that "the end justifies the means" and the "results speak for themselves." Kevin Hall, CEO of the Charter Growth Fund, claims that:

> Over the past 10 years, the total number of students attending schools run by high-performing CMOs increased at least tenfold, from approximately 10,000 students in 2000 to more than 100,000 students today. Over the next decade, the opportunity exists for CMOs to continue this pace of growth and serve more than 1 million students by 2020 (Hall & Lake, 2011, p. 68).

The research presented in this chapter is positioned within enduring arguments concerning what we now expect from schools serving disadvantaged urban populations and what this means for our understanding of citizenship and, by implication, participatory democracy. We know that how disadvantaged young people experience their schooling has significant overlaps with the neoliberal discourses of accountability and responsibility imposed on populations living in poverty, which compel them to behave in certain "acceptable" and "valuable" ways (see Woolford & Curran, 2011, 2013). It is also important to note that the ability to perform a neoliberal personhood is not necessarily constrained by poverty or social class (see Woolford & Nelund, 2013). Furthermore, the research speaks to academic discourses concerning how we theorize the purpose of education itself, the sociology of schooling specifically in relation to class inequality, and the education–society nexus.

Throughout the chapter, I draw on my experiences as a school leader and a researcher where I seek to capture the ways the principles of the CMO inform normative practices – a "pull them up by the bootstraps" individualist institutional culture that is bold, regimented, and uncompromising (Stahl, 2017). I interpret such practices through a lens of poverty governance where controversial practices are deemed acceptable because they transform the undisciplined poor into subjects of value (Ross et al., 2011). Poverty governance, rooted in neoconservatism, refers to

individuals from low-SES backgrounds being administrated through a "neoliberal paternalist" approach, which emphasizes the responsibility of the state to "teach the poor to conceive of themselves as market actors" and in which "attempts to engage and empower the poor have been displaced by efforts to reshape the ways that poor people manage themselves as individuals" (Ross et al., 2011, pp. 28, 43–44).

Given that charter schools represent a robust neoliberal policy experiment, I first adopt the position that neoliberalism subverts the basic elements of democracy – specifically what Brown (2015) calls "vocabularies, principles of justice, political cultures, habits of citizenship, practices of rule, and above all, democratic imaginaries" (p. 17). Then, drawing on an ethnographic investigation of one middle-school site within a CMO, I explore how institutional practices work to construct and inculcate a neoliberal conception of citizenship in the students they serve. In problematizing the institutional practices of one form of schooling, and drawing on evidence from one ethnographic investigation, the research captures "an analysis of new regulatory forms" which, in turn, leads to performances and fabrications "as personhood becomes infused with the production of certain subjectivities" (Ball, 2006, p. 693). Finally, this work takes up the call by Maisuria and Beach (2017) for ethnography to broaden its scope and inform critical consciousness in capturing capitalism as lived experience.

4.2 Power and Principles of Schools Serving the Poor

There is a certain amount of validity to Gary Orfield's comment: "The charter school movement has been a major political success, but it has been a civil rights failure" (2010, p. 1). In the United States today, the neoliberal influence on schooling for disadvantaged urban populations continues to be pervasive (Stuart Wells et al., 2002; Lefebvre & Thomas, 2017), or, as Saltman (2014) asserts, "corporate school reform or neoliberal educational restructuring has overtaken educational policy, practice, curriculum, and nearly all aspects of educational reform" (p. 249). Apple (2004, p. 15) refers to this as a new "power bloc" with individuals "committed to neo-liberal marketized solutions to educational problems" and "neo-conservative intellectuals who want a 'return' to higher standards and a 'common culture.'" Such a shift arguably ushers forth a new doxic logic which influences not only the culture of educational institutions but how students are viewed. Scholarship continues to highlight the various problematics associated with an overemphasis on student academic performance rather than the social and emotional needs of the student (Apple, 2004, p. 20).

Schooling for those living in poverty is framed by intensive regimes of standardization, accountability, and performativity contributing to a high-stakes and pressurized environment. Accordingly, increased attention is now given to the purposeful and strategic construction of certain learner identities and, thus, personhood. Focusing on how neoliberalism informs the ways in which students are constructed as valuable, Wilkins (2011, p. 768) writes of the low attainment of students "being

transposed or re-coded into a matter of personal sin (i.e. a private psychological propensity or 'attitude' particular to the individual)" divorced from their social circumstances. While this chapter focuses on one school site in a large CMO, the practices around rewards, punishments, and "grit" – as integral to raising aspirations – are not uncommon in CMOs across the United States, and evidence suggests these practices are also occurring internationally (see Cushing, 2021).

4.3   Democratic Citizenship, Charter Schools, and Social Justice

Democratic citizenship, by its very nature, concerns participation in a diverse range of institutions and organizations as learning environments. The citizen is conceived as a bearer of civil, political, and social rights. Institutions and organizations are places where people learn to participate and learn *what it means* to participate. They are also places where there can be deliberation concerning the development of a common good and general societal betterment. With this in mind, institutions and organizations, regardless of their relationship to the state, are also P/political spaces infused with philosophies and beliefs which influence individual thoughts and actions. I acknowledge that there is debate about forms of democracy in the context of free markets (see Stuart Wells et al., 2002) and that social justice itself is undergoing what Lingard et al. (2014) call a "rearticulation" in the face of "neo-social economist rationalities in all domains of life" (p. 710). For schools serving disadvantaged communities – the so-called urban poor – these institutions are often vacillating between democratic principles and the constraints of neoliberal market forces, where schools are pitted against each other in continual competition. This is uncomfortable and conflicting work. According to Marginson (2006), we need to abandon the idea of "universal competition" in order to advance democracy:

> Competition between individuals fragments the potential for democratic school communities: parents and students seek fulfillment not through forging common institutions but through "kicking ass." Competition among schools stymies the potential for system-wide policies designed to equalize opportunities (p. 219).

Saltman (2014) explains that the neoliberal view of "the social world is understood through radical individualism and a social Darwinian ethos" and that such a view is "oriented toward educational competition in preparation for economic competition, initially against others in the nation and then for competition against other nations" (p. 251). This agenda, while clearly problematic, trickles down into everyday life, contributing to our understandings of "citizenship" and the "citizen." Wendy Brown (2015, p. 179) writes that the essential conditions of democratic existence are "limited extremes of concentrated wealth and poverty, orientation toward citizenship as a practice of considering the public good, and citizens modestly discerning about the ways of power, history, representation, and justice." According to Brown, each of these conditions is severely challenged by neoliberal rationality, governance, and

policy. However, the challenges presented by neoliberalism are not always clear-cut, and we see evidence of language games, specifically in regard to what constitutes "public" education (Lubienski, 2001; Savage, 2014). This echoes arguments by Saltman (2014), who asserts that neoliberalism "sees education not as a public good ideally serving a democratic society but as a private good primarily useful for preparing workers and consumers for the economy" (p. 251). After all, as Lingard et al. (2014) write, social justice has thus "been subsumed and transformed into equity by economic rationalities and discourses" (p. 715) where the human capital agenda frames our notions of what constitutes progress.

Drawing on ethnographic data (Stahl, 2017), this chapter focuses on the daily experiences of neoliberal inculcation in a CMO. Such networks of schools construct themselves as models to aspire to with their controversial practices and relentless focus on academic achievement. As these are nonunion institutions, common practices include extended school days, an exacting focus on improving standardized test scores, and acculturating low-SES students toward middle-class aspirations (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Through exploring modes of inculcation, as "technologies of governance" (Foucault, 1991) that facilitate and encourage a neoliberal model of citizenship, I show how institutions – specifically schools – are places people learn to participate and become citizens. Wilkins (2016) writes that crucial to the success of neoliberalism is how it informs "fields of representation, codes, conventions and habits of language," (p. 45) which, in turn, structures what Brown (2006) calls "the sayable, the intelligible and the truth criteria of these domains" (p. 693). In order to understand their power, these fields require scrutiny. The CMO discussed in this chapter represents one such field where language was actively structured, and practices were adopted, to facilitate certain behaviors (Stahl, 2017). While I accept conceptions of citizenship are diverse, my interest is in exploring how the neoliberal citizen is constructed through an institutional culture which is a complex array of codes, symbols, and practices. Before I outline how CMOs came to be and some of the normative experiences I witnessed in the CMO, I briefly describe how neoliberalism has influenced schooling for disadvantaged populations and what this may mean for how we understand the construction of the neoliberal citizen.

4.4   Neoliberal Citizenship and Schooling for Disadvantaged Populations

Neoliberalism, as an assortment of technologies of government, emphasizes the power of market systems by which populations are governed through regimes of incentives and disincentives (Ong, 2006). While fragmented and contradictory (see Mitchell, 2006), neoliberalism remains pervasive, and ideologies infused with strong meritocratic falsehoods have become "the ruling ideas of the time" (Harvey, 2005, p. 36). Neoliberal governance, as a distinct mode of government, is

underpinned by particular rationalities and logics, structuring subjectivities, and conceptions of personhood (Foucault, 2008; Rose, 1999). Constantly made and remade, Peck and Tickell (2002) argue neoliberalism involves a "technocratic embedding of routines of neoliberal governance" in the "everyday life of institutional practices" (p. 384). Over time, these practices become normative as institutions remain sites of inculcation, meaning making, and identity work.

Neoliberal citizenship, by its very nature, is focused on individual advancement. The performative citizen is market ready, able to adeptly respond to the coercive forces of neoliberalism. Such a principle subverts the idea of democratic forms of citizenship which is primarily concerned with the common good. In focusing on the rise of neoliberalism and what this means for democratic citizenship, Ross et al. (2011, p. 22) write: "The democratic citizen, positioned as one who must act in concert with others to achieve preferred outcomes, is redefined as a consumer, worker, and taxpaying customer of the state." Extending this point, Woolford and Nelund (2013, p. 307) contend that "individualized responsibility [has] become the currency" for vulnerable populations and that the apparatus of neoliberal governance ensures that such a currency is integral to accessing services from the state. Failure to exercise individual responsibility is seen as problematic: Ross et al. (2011, p. 22) note that the good neoliberal citizen exists in relation to the bad, undisciplined citizen, foregrounding a moral imperative to not fail as a citizen. Specifically, within the conception of citizenship in a neoliberal era, self-sufficiency is rendered a moral responsibility achieved through one's ability to perform one's civic duty. Suzan Ilcan (2009, p. 208) points to this aspect of citizenship as a necessary component of what she calls "privatized responsibility," by which she emphasizes the shift from social responsibility to private responsibility under neoliberalism (see Foucault, 2008; Brown, 2015). This responsibilization has implications for notions of selfhood and subjectivities, as notions of "rights" and "responsibilities" become muddled and paradoxes manifest especially around questions of social justice for populations experiencing generational poverty (Stahl, 2020a, c).

It is clear that schools are increasingly expected to produce neoliberal subjects who espouse and perform values of "self-reliance, autonomy, and independence" in order to gain "self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-advancement" (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 252; see also Black & Walsh, 2015). Neoliberalism purports to structure an active and calculating citizen subject who can choose – but must choose wisely. This could be considered a false notion of freedom as with the free and enterprising self comes a sense of duty, expressed in a shift from disciplinary forms of power to "self-governance" (Cruikshank, 1996). As Camicia and Franklin (2011) observe, in neoliberal forms of schooling, curricula are driven by competition and standardization, where the focus is on fostering competency and employability. Apple (2004) notes the movement toward "enterprising individuals" is coupled with neoliberalism's commitment to a regulatory state – or increasing power to the "evaluative state" (p. 23) to surveil and monitor. While this is arguably the current discourse – or at least the dominant mode in education – what tends to be forgotten is the wider sociocultural history. Education for disadvantaged populations has long

held a redemptive promise (Dale, 2007), and what we see today is the redemptive promise itself becoming neoliberal (see Bennett & Southgate, 2014).

The neoliberal subject is performed in reference to – or through – institutions which are, by their very nature, regulatory. Ball (2006) writes that the performances of individuals and organizations "serve as not only measures of productivity or output but also as displays of 'quality,' or 'moments' of promotion or inspection" (p. 692). Regulation and accountability structure our every day, contributing to how we understand the role of institutions, the role of young people, and the role of citizens in reference to their schooling. With this in mind, institutions which foreground a version of citizenship that is neoliberal in nature warrant attention. After all, neoliberal power establishes a social order by devaluing otherness, diversity, and intersectional categories through normalizing codes, symbols, and practices, thus privileging a singular and homogenized view of personhood. How we understand the construction and maintenance of performances of neoliberal citizenship has implications for democracy and the enactment of democratic principles. Therefore, in documenting a system of accountability and performativity in one CMO – as a form of neoliberal inculcation – I seek to explore how systems of reward and punishment work to privilege a notion of "grit" and the ways in which staff and students struggle with the uncompromising institutional model.

4.5 Charter School Management Organizations (CMOs): Cultures of Accountability and Performativity

Beginning as a grassroots movement offering more autonomy to parents and communities, charter schools represent the impulses within the education reform movement in the United States toward decentralization, deregulation of teacher education, and increased choice in a public structure. As Saltman (2014) notes, the rise in charter schools is at the expense of the dwindling public sector with the "closure of neighborhood schools and massive expansion of de-unionized, nonprofit, privately managed charter schools with short-term contracts" (p. 250). As a neoliberal policy experiment, charter schools remain largely free from the involvement of teachers' unions, and, as a result, they can set their own hours and have tremendous flexibility in their capacity to hire and fire staff. From the lens of poverty governing, these school sites serve as evidence that "devolution and privatization shifted authority to sites with fewer barriers to establishing new governing logics" (Ross et al., 2011, p. 42). This is important when one considers that charter schools have not only embraced controversial institutional practices to raise the aspirations and attainment of students but also draw on specific language practices to construct disadvantaged young people in a specific way (see Golann, 2015; Stahl, 2017). This can be seen most directly in their use of military-type language (e.g., corps, academies, mission statements), which positions their schools as centers of martial discipline and part of an overarching "call to action" against educational failure.

Educational research continues to critique the quickly changing terrain of the charter school landscape as part of a wider education reform movement in the United States. According to Stuart Wells et al. (1999, p. 174), the charter school, as a mode of school reform, offers an alternative to the bureaucratic and regulated public education system, opening the door for more variation in the delivery of educational services, greater local community input into how schools are run, and, in theory, more market-based competition between schools.

However, in time, this grassroots movement was overtaken by philanthropy (Stahl, 2020d) which carried with it a very different agenda. This agenda largely concerned experimenting with the institutional practices of corporate America and seeing what these practices could lend to schooling for populations living in poverty. There is a belief within the charter school world that education can *and should* borrow heavily from the "best practices" of high-stakes corporate culture to ensure the best for their students (see Stahl, 2017, 2020a, b, c, d).

Given the market-based education systems present in large urban areas, charter schools must attract students through routine market means rather than through catchment systems as with traditional public schools. To do so, charters often adopt and organize themselves around specific themes and missions (Carpenter, 2008), which, arguably, foreground a neoliberal conception of citizenship. Educational research continues to document that "successful" and "high-functioning" CMOs (e.g., KIPP, Uncommon Schools, Democracy Prep, Rocketship Education) place student achievement in standardized tests as the driving force within the organization (see Woodworth et al., 2008). As a result of this "relentless focus on achievement" (Hall & Lake, 2011, p. 69), students and staff often spend long hours not simply on learning content and practicing skills but on acquiring the dispositions deemed necessary to navigate within the wider world and perform their civic duty (see Stahl, 2017).

CMOs, which largely exist as autonomous entities, are often high-pressure environments (Golann, 2015; Stahl, 2017) as they operate under the policy remit that their continued existence is determined by student performance in high-stakes state testing. Failure to gain the necessary scores can result in a staff overhaul or complete shutdown. Thus, it is no surprise that these institutions adopt corporate accountability practices and remain highly prescriptive. Ravitch (2013) compares the model of CMOs to "retail chain stores, like Walmart or Target or McDonald's," each with a "brand" and "a certain uniformity of administration, curriculum, and policies, as well as financial oversight, back-office operations, human resources, marketing and public relations" (p. 165). This model is focused on combining high academic expectations with strict behavior rules, what is called a "no excuses" pedagogic approach (Stahl, 2020a). Within this model, CMOs have been accused of being militarized boot camps teaching "students not just how to think, but also how to act according to what are commonly termed traditional, middle-class values," and there is evidence they tell "students exactly how they are expected to behave, and their behavior is closely monitored, with real rewards for compliance and penalties for noncompliance" (Whitman, 2008, p. 54; see also Golann, 2015; Stahl, 2020b).

The majority of the research on CMOs is large scale, and we know very little about what happens inside charter school classrooms and how systems of reward and punishment work to privilege a notion of selfhood (with the exception of Golann, 2015, 2021; Whitman, 2008; Woodworth et al., 2008). Drawing on ethnographic data (Stahl, 2017), I explore how institutional practices work to construct a neoliberal conception of citizenship mainly through inculcation and accountability. I am interested in how students and staff are disciplined (in a Foucauldian sense) in order to both uphold and perform neoliberal values and the implications for the de-democratization of education. I focus on how power is exercised and how it is transmitted *by* people and *through* people. With this in mind, the next section focuses on normative practices I documented, specifically the rewards and punishment designed to foster "grit" in the students. I contend that the promotion of grit is integral to the construction of neoliberal citizenship and the formation of market-ready citizens. As students come to be in the CMO, they learn to participate, what it means to participate, and also what forms of participation are deemed worthy.

4.6 Institutional Practices and Constructing the Neoliberal Citizen

All schools invest in the inculcation of certain learner identities aligned with institutional values, and this can occur through explicit practice or the hidden curriculum. In forms of schooling serving disadvantaged populations where there are high stakes for underperformance, we know this can often lead to unsettling practices, especially when considered from a poverty governance perspective (Ross et al., 2011). Drawing on my research (Stahl, 2017, 2020a, b, c, d), I discuss three examples relevant to the construction of the neoliberal citizen.

4.7 Rank and Yank

Saltman (2014) writes that neoliberalism is infused with a powerful rhetoric of "failure, choice, and competition (as well as consumers, efficiency, and monopoly)" (p. 253). This rhetoric trickles down into the everyday institutional culture of the CMO where an emphasis on "productivity" and "targets" fosters a certain logic and both staff and students are measured accordingly. Within the institutional model, everything must be monitored to ensure there are no flaws or decay to institutional culture. CMOs celebrate a culture of exactness and of urgency (Stahl, 2017). In my experience, the expectation is to work efficiently, with an institutional rhetoric of "delivering on deliverables" and "getting better fast." Here we see how neoliberalism's emphasis on "efficiency," "productivity," and "targets" contributes to what it means to be a good employee and a good student.

Many CMOs adopt the "20/70/10 rule," where 20% of employees are the high-flyers, 70 provide the critical mass, and the remaining 10% should be removed even if they have achieved sufficient growth. In my time as a school leader, I was present at four meetings where teaching staff were fired (see Stahl, 2020d). This "rank and yank" appraisal system is informed by the logic that the removal of low-performing staff ensures everyone strives to be high performers. These dismissals were justified by reiterating the school's overriding ideological concern with rescuing children from the effects of poverty and social marginalization, which were seen to be perpetuated by inadequate teaching rather than gross socioeconomic inequalities. In my experience, often times, these rankings would be displayed publicly via email for all staff to see. Yet the use of such a system also contributes to a constant "churn and burn," which is counterproductive to forming powerful relationships between teachers and students.

In the hidden curriculum, students learn about the importance of performance through seeing their teachers' underperformance publicly identified and named. Seeing the zero-tolerance approach to teacher underperformance affects how they come to understand an individualist institutional culture that is bold, regimented, and uncompromising. Furthermore, students see the swift institutional action of firing staff members as the lived reality of "a social Darwinian ethos" (Saltman, 2014, p. 251).

4.8   Aesthetics and Precision

Within the CMO, student achievement is paramount, and there is vigilant attention to the controlling student and staff bodies as well as the physical aesthetic space. Any infraction of the rules by staff or students "could mean a broken path to college" for students (Stahl, 2020d, p. 188). The common infractions, such as students speaking in the hallway or wearing a shirt untucked, resulted in teachers quoting the mission statement verbatim. This would occur several times a day. The reiteration of the corporate mantra increased "buy-in" and worked in overt and covert ways, constraining the actions of staff and students. As I have discussed before (Stahl, 2020d), each time the mission statement was read aloud, it seemed to gain credibility, excluding alternative viewpoints.

Under the logic of maximizing learning and concentration, the physical space is always immaculately clean and brightly lit. Echoing the enduring redemptive promise of education for those who have been referred to as the deserving poor (Katz, 1989), the school's mission of learning and empowerment through education is celebrated through motivational posters, which adorn every available space. Similar to privileged secondary schools, the "importance of college physically manifests itself everywhere" (Weis et al., 2014, p. 31). The aesthetics – as a strategy – is designed to raise the aspirations of students, and it privileges a narrow conception of personhood that is expected to capitalize on the opportunities offered in order to ensure students' own advancement.

Furthermore, in the hidden curriculum, there was an overlap between the rank and yank and the vigilance around aesthetics. Consistent with neoliberal notions of "success" and "failure," after each dismissed staff member had left the school grounds, their classroom was immediately redecorated so the next day students could begin afresh. Furthermore, it was no longer permissible to mention the under-performing educator. Effectively, they were therefore removed from the institutional memory.

4.9   A Culture of Grit

Many of the institutional practices of the CMO are founded on psychologist Angela Duckworth's (2016) work on grit. She defines grit as a combination of passion and perseverance for a singularly important goal, and she presents evidence that with the right culture "grit can grow." Her website contains a "grit scale" so one can test one's level of grit. As modern prevailing discourses of individualization, meritocracy, and competition prevail, scholarship that valorizes "mind over matter" and "cultivating talent" resonates strongly in the CMO. I found in my research that the language Duckworth draws upon became embedded in the institution and worked its way into emails and team meetings – fostering the key disposition in staff and students of "having the right mindset" to "grow grit." The prevalence of attention to grit as a way to construct the ideal student was continually validated by other facets of the institutional emphasis on academic rigor. Furthermore, the language of sports was ever-present in the textual vocabulary and institutional discourses; common words were "players," "training," "protocols," "game day," and "plan of attack" or "counterattack," privileging an aggressive approach to accomplishing one's goals (see Stahl, 2017, for more detail).

This conceptualization of grit is, I would argue, part of a wider assault on what Bennett and Southgate (2014, p. 37) refer to as "affective, cognitive and habitual dispositions of people from low SES backgrounds." Such interventions that are overtly psychological and falsely emancipatory require scrutiny.[1] Research from Byrom and Lightfoot (2013, p. 818) asserts that students can "get caught up in discourses that present education as an equal playing field where decisions, choices and outcomes are influenced by the individual." Directly related to their sense of citizenship and moral responsibility to succeed as a citizen (see Ross et al., 2011), students buy into a neoliberal rhetoric and can come to falsely "see themselves as individuals in a meritocratic society, not as classed or gendered members of an unequal society" (Ball et al., 2000, p. 4). Writing from a policy perspective, Spohrer et al. (2018) note there are significant social justice issues when compelling disadvantaged young people to change their attitudes in order to realize a potential

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[1] While the model of the CMO is clear, the evidence that it achieves the necessary effect (i.e., getting students of color from low-SES backgrounds into prestigious universities) remains both sparse and limited.

dictated by neoliberal governance. Linking back to the CMO as an institution of inculcation where a certain conception of personhood is privileged, Cruikshank (1996) describes how neoliberal regimes govern individuals "from within" by calling on citizen subjects to modify their emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. These three examples highlight how students and staff at the CMO are compelled to behave in specific ways, to perform a neoliberal subjectivity.

4.10   Implications for Democratic Citizenship

While, on a surface level, the institutional practices described are focused on preparing the leaders of tomorrow, the hyper-surveillance has led to critiques of their paternalistic attitude to disadvantaged populations (Whitman, 2008). The ideology that informs normative practices (e.g., "rank and yank") in the CMOs echoes what Apple (2004) calls "a form of social-Darwinist thinking" (p. 15; see Saltman, 2014). A "neoliberal paternalist" approach, according to Ross et al. (2011), emphasizes the responsibility of the state to "teach the poor to conceive of themselves as market actors" (p. 28).

Adding another layer of complexity, Ross et al. (2011, p. 28), focusing on the nexus of race, paternalism, and neoliberalism, describe how poverty governance "seeks to impose order as a condition of freedom and, in so doing, to bring order to the exercise of freedom." The aim here is to "transform the poor into subjects who, under conditions of apparent autonomy, choose to act in ways that comply with market imperatives and political authorities" (p. 28). Through the strict institutional culture of the CMO, disadvantaged students are inculcated into a set of neoliberal values but also homogenized. In considering the tensions between neoliberal and democratic citizenship, I return to the work of Ball (2006), who highlights that performativity "works from the outside in and from the inside out" (p. 694). Performativity is a technology, a culture, and a mode of regulation that foregrounds judgments and comparisons. Through institutional practices, we come to understand ourselves and others in relation to how well we perform; as students *come to be* in the CMO, they come to understand what forms of participation are deemed worthy and what "success" and "failure" mean.

Daily practices in the CMO are part of the purposeful construction of certain learner identities that are aspirational and market ready (for full analysis, see Stahl, 2017). While I accept that neoliberalism is never totalizing and my arguments concerning inculcation were formed in the context of one school, the data suggest the main aim of the CMO is to create and maintain a culture where a neoliberal conception of citizenship is exalted. Institutional practices which purposely foster grit are integral to the construction of neoliberal citizenship; it is a grit of individual advancement as opposed to a grit of social democratic principles or a grit of a Marxist revolution.

Drawing on my research, the institutional culture of the CMO functions as an "evaluative state" (Apple, 2004, p. 23), focused on surveillance and the regulation

of personhood. This lends itself to comparisons and competitions which, as Ball (2006) notes, leads to the blurring of self-worth, where individuals "articulate ourselves within the representation games of competition, intensification and quality" (p. 693). This becomes the most valued quality of the ideal citizen subject, where the individual is willing to strive toward (socially sanctioned) goals through continual self-improvement (Spohrer et al., 2018; see also Black & Walsh, 2015). Competition contains an important affective element which can "engender individual feelings of pride, guilt, shame and envy" (Ball, 2006, p. 694) as individuals are cast as "winners" and "losers." The focus on psychological attributes – such as self-esteem, resilience, and grit – is indicative of the demand to adopt, in a Foucauldian sense, technologies which are directed at controlling and changing the psychic state of students (see also Rose, 1999).

However, the data presented in this chapter indicates a complicated picture as the educational opportunities available to this population prior to the charter school movement were unacceptable. While the controversial practices in a CMO do privilege a neoliberal citizenship, it is worth considering how this is located within a sociohistorical picture, as I recognize the wider tensions involved with fostering active citizenship for low socioeconomic communities (see Black & Walsh, 2015). Within a neoliberal state, all young people need the tools we associate with self-advancement. After all, what is to be gained by not adequately preparing students for a society that is neoliberal? Do schools not have a responsibility to prepare young people to participate in a range of institutions and organizations, a key aspect of democratic citizenship? In considering the subjectivities fostered in this learning environment, Saltman (2014) calls attention to how young people "learn to be savvy competitors" when they experience forms of schooling in which knowledge is "framed as a consumable commodity" (p. 251). In her research on charter schools, Kerstetter (2016, p. 513) notes that studies have continued to demonstrate "that when students are able to learn skills that more closely align with the evaluative standards of middle-class institutions, such as an ease in communicating with authority figures," they are able to self-advocate. At the CMO, the students not only learn grit but also *to be gritty* and to strive for a citizenship which is active and self-reliant.

Returning to citizenship, one significant effect of the continued presence of the CMO model of schooling on the educational landscape is that individuals' democratic autonomy regarding decision-making for their communities (students, teachers, parents, etc.) is being shifted into an idea of individual "choice" and/or "competition" between economic or consumer options, including education. However, reiterating my previous point about inculcation, this shift is not all encompassing. While people may "buy in" to aspects of a neoliberal ideology, it is rare that they cannot see the innate problematics. Given the uncompromising model of schooling, there were fissures as leaders, teachers, and students struggled with upholding such a model. Many knew the practices to be problematic and damaging, but there was always a discourse that the "end justified the means" and the academic results of the students gave a certain credibility to the model, fostering a certain truth. Furthermore, many staff members at the CMO were politically involved in

protesting what has been called an age of mass incarceration for African-American and Latino families; such political action fueled their motivation around the "relentless pursuit" of closing the achievement gap (Kretchmar, 2014; Lefebvre & Thomas, 2017). In my experience, for many staff members, choosing to teach in a high-functioning CMO was both a P/political decision and personal decision. This is where I would argue neoliberalism is truly dominant, structuring not only the rules of the game but also, through its robustness, promoting a nearly unassailable conception of personhood which informs how we understand "citizenship" and "the citizen." Naturally, this raises the question of what qualities and dispositions become marginalized as individuals struggle to produce the subjectivities that are deemed valuable.

4.11   Conclusion

I acknowledge that many consider CMOs a significant step to alleviating the inequalities inherent in education. Proponents of the "no excuses" charter school model contend it is the best way to counteract the "soft racism" of low expectations present in mainstream public schools (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003), or what is commonly called a "pedagogy of the poor" (see Baptist & Rehmann, 2011). Arguments exist that the relentless focus on individual responsibility present in these schools is necessary for alleviating, rather than exacerbating, economic inequalities (Payne & Knowles, 2009; Scott, 2009). Educators in CMOs rebuff discourses where "poverty = excuse," and, through a strict culture of academic rigor and high expectations, they feel they can counteract the effects of poverty (Stahl, 2017). Furthermore, there is evidence that charter schools are making progress in reducing inequality through the expansion of opportunities for poor and minority students who, if they can successfully navigate the charter school environment, are often well equipped with the academic capital to enter and succeed at university. However, this positioning of charter schools as progressive and integral to the promotion of social justice (Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Maranto & Ritter, 2014) is not without intense scrutiny focused largely on the treatment of students and staff (Ravitch, 2013). In documenting the practices of one CMO, I do not seek to make generalizations; instead, I seek to consider the ways in which neoliberal policies trickle down into everyday schooling practices that inform the ways in which students come to understand themselves as citizens.

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Garth Stahl is an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Queensland and a research fellow, Australian Research Council (DECRA). His research interests lie on the nexus of neoliberalism and socio-cultural studies of education, identity, equity/inequality, and social change. Currently, his research projects encompass theoretical and empirical studies of learner identities, sociology of schooling in a neoliberal age, educational reform, and gendered subjectivities.

Chapter 5
Democracy and Civic Participation Through Youth Forums in Schools: Reflections on Practice

Anna Jarkiewicz and Joanna Leek

Abstract This paper presents research findings on civic participation in school settings in four European countries (UK, Italy, Lithuania and Cyprus). Starting from the perspective of critical youth studies and a participatory approach, the study sought to investigate the potential of school practices to foster civic participation and the role of collaborative knowledge production. The study is based on focus group interviews (FGIs) with the teachers and young people involved in activities that support civic participation in schools. In the paper, we claim that there is a lack of participation through curricular activities as the curriculum is not flexible enough to develop skills such as participation and engagement in civic matters. Thus, the school should offer additional activities where students can practice their participation in matters that they believe are important for them and thus worth engaging in. By putting a naïve overemphasis on young people's agency and participatory competence in perspective, the results emphasise the crucial role of teachers in addressing issues of democracy and civic participation in schools, the need for continuous professional development for teachers and a shift from traditional learning models to participatory learning.

Keywords Civic participation · Youth · School · Education · Democracy

A. Jarkiewicz (✉)
Department of Educational Studies, University of Łódź, Łódź, Poland
e-mail: anna.jarkiewicz@now.uni.lodz.pl

J. Leek
Department of Theory of Education, University of Łódź, Łódź, Poland
e-mail: joanna.leek@now.uni.lodz.pl

5.1 Introduction

The inspiration for this text was the educational project: the Future Youth Schools Forums (FYS-Forums)[1] involving the authors. FYS-Forums revolve around two policy issues. The first issue addressed existing opportunities for the social inclusion and participation of students in school life, including, in particular, young people at risk of dropping out of school and at risk of social exclusion. The second one concerns the possibility of changes in schools to increase the complementarity of the practices offered and provide better opportunities for participation, democracy and the educational inclusion of young people (European Commission, 2015). The recognition of problems concerning democracy, civic participation and youth involvement in local and global matters (Aldenmyr et al., 2012; Ross, 2012; Onyx et al., 2012) as essential and important for the development of an aware and active citizen was the crucial argument behind looking into what happens at schools more closely in terms of student participation, what conditions are created for youth civic activities and how teachers perceive youth participation in schools.

The basic aim of the FYS-Forums was to create a model of schooling that would promote the idea of active citizenship through the use of a youth forum. Within the project, our main objective was to promote democracy, empowerment, civic participation and the active citizenship of young people in schools. The youth forum was defined as structured events led and organised by students within and among schools to express their ideas, opinions and proposals concerning relevant topics within democratic decision-making processes. They were intended to build young people's capacities to act consciously in and outside schools towards supporting a more democratic and equal society. As the first forum took place in 2016, when European countries were facing a migration crisis, it was to this issue that the young people dedicated the first event. In addition to a discussion aimed at understanding the present situation in Europe, the young people discussed how they could get involved and help those forced to flee their country. Among the activities undertaken immediately after the forum was a meeting with a person forced to flee their country. During the discussion, the young people pointed out that it was difficult to imagine what kind of difficulties such a person was facing. Therefore, they wanted to meet such a person and gain some insight into this perspective. They believed that this would make their help more relevant. In turn, during the second forum, the youth chose to raise the issue of gender inequality. The event resulted in creating a social advertisement in which young people expressed their support for the equal rights of all people, regardless of gender, religion, skin colour, etc. The advertisement was placed on social media. In addition, the effect of this forum, as pointed out by teachers also involved in the project, was to improve relationships between students. The students became more sensitive to how they treated others and were able to pay attention to people who mistreated another person in their presence. Before forums, students had the chance to take part in various activities, for instance, a series of workshops

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[1] https://fys-forums.eu/en/

on critical thinking, public speaking, leadership development, organisational skills, various forms of group activities, etc., which were actions that were intended to support and develop students' civic attitudes based on such priorities as involvement, democratisation, participation, empowerment and acknowledgement of the youth voice in matters that concern them. The idea to include such workshops came from our previous research and didactic experiences, which revealed that for students to participate in events such as forums in a personally satisfying way, it is worth preparing them for it. In our opinion, to participate in democracy satisfactorily, students need to be empowered in the skills presented above. The motivation to create youth forums in schools was an attempt to replace the traditional approaches to 'citizenship' with an inclusive social category using a participatory approach (Invernizzi & Williams, 2007; Cahil et al., 2010 Granosik, 2018; Granosik et al., 2019).

The definition of the traditional approach to education used here is based on the Carnegie public school model that has been in place since the early 1800s (DeLorenzo et al., 2009). In addition to details pertaining to the duration of classes and learning days per calendar year, the approach includes instructor-led and text-driven curriculum delivery that is time and credit based and delivered to all students in class at the same time regardless of individual ability. Students are assessed based on their achievements (DeLorenzo et al., 2009; Jerald, 2009; Silva et al., 2015). An essential difference between the traditional and participatory approaches is the system of power and position in the teacher-student relationship. In the traditional approach, the teacher has the power and occupies a high position compared to the relatively low position of the students. In contrast, the participatory approach aims for a symmetrical relationship and a democratic distribution of power.

Many aspects of the educational methods we propose correspond to the concept of Freire (2005), who pointed out that 'only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education. Education which is able to resolve the contradiction between teacher and student takes place in a situation in which both address their act of cognition to the object by which they are mediated. Thus, the dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom' (2005, p. 93). In other words, Freire (2005) believed that young people have the right to have a voice and should actively be involved in effecting change within their schools.

This chapter reports on the accompanying scientific research linked to the FYS-Forums project. It is based on focus group interviews (FGIs) with participant teachers and students in the school forums, concerning their experiences in terms of the preconditions and contexts of (participatory) learning. The chapter will first introduce the civic participation and the participatory approach to learning which converge in the priority they give to learning through participation over learning for participation. It will then proceed to explain the research question and design and present the findings. Finally, it will discuss the results in terms of the need for change in the education system in order to foster a truly participatory and democratic culture.

5.2   Civic Participation in Schools' Programmes

From an educational standpoint, youth is mostly understood to mean 'citizens in the making'. As Daniels and Perry (2003) found out, in the area of school education, on the one hand, one crucial point is that adults support youth in their initiatives. On the other hand, studies in the European context of education point out the significance of internal law or educational policy, giving youth chances to experience participation and civic engagement and to develop the skills and attitudes needed to act as an active citizen (Citizenship Education in Europe, 2012). In this context, attention is given to treating young people as full citizens rather than citizens in the making (Quijada et al., 2013). It also emphasises the abolition of the age category as a boundary defining one's skills, abilities or rights. Young people, according to the proponents of these postulates, should have opportunities for active action and participation, yet the social order, through a set of norms, rules and prohibitions, limits them (e.g. Austin & Willard, 1998; Vadeboncoeur & Stevens, 2005).

The term 'civic participation' is considered in matters pertaining to the community as an important agent of community development (Arnstein, 1969). In the 1990s, a model of children's participation (Hart, 1997) with degrees of participation was developed. At the top of the participation ladder, Hart (1997) placed decisions initiated by young people and shared with adults, followed by child-initiated and child-directed decisions, actions initiated by adults and shared with children, consulted and informed decisions and assigned but informed levels of youth participation. At the bottom, Hart (1997) placed non-participatory actions as tokenism understood as giving youth a voice but then allowing them little choice regarding the way they want to participate and decoration, meaning acting passively in compliance with the wishes of adults. The last third-bottom level in the theory of Hart's youth participation is manipulation that happens when adults help young people to participate whilst at the same time pretending that the ideas are inspired by youth.

Civic participation is considered a form of involvement that develops civic competence, supports community cohesion and improves neighbourhood relations (Florin & Wandersman, 1990). School youth participation provides opportunities to raise your voice and engage in school life, thus creating a learning environment through mutual activities where there has been a disconnect due to the transition from childhood to adulthood (Checkoway, 1998; Torney-Purta, 2002). Understood in this way, schools constitute an environment for developing civic participation and play a role in furthering youth engagement. In the context of school participation, McHale et al. (2001) found that middle school students who participated in curricular school activities with adults had improved developmental adjustment in their subsequent middle school years. Adults play a role as resources deliverers and collaborators and facilitate critical dialogues in partnership with young people (Zimmerman, 2000). Such adults-youth cooperation develops self-efficacy and a sense of control (Zimmerman, 1995) and provides vital social support and connections to other adults (Brookmeyer et al., 2005).

School programmes may include activities such as school community involvement in student government and participation in school advisory boards. Schools are considered one of the important socialising agents that play a role in youth civic engagement. They have the capacity to transmit civic norms and values systematically to the entire population of young people (Touney-Purta, 2002) and provide them with opportunities to adopt democratic principles (Flanagan et al., 2007). Zeldin et al. (2014) suggested that the most effective type of youth participation involves youth-adult partnerships, which include the expectations that 'youth and adults will collaborate in all aspects of group decision making from visioning and programme planning to evaluation and continuous improvement' (p. 338). Daniels and Perry (2003) showed how vitally important it is for students in the process of education to receive support and encouragement from their teachers to enable them to express their opinions, think critically and be autonomous. Researchers interested in youth education issues noticed that in classes where teachers supported such practice, the students were better motivated, found learning more important and were significantly more involved in work at school (Daniels & Kalkman, 2001; Ryan & Stiller, 1991; Valeski & Stipek, 2001).

5.3 Youth Participation in Student-Teacher Relationship

Another paradigm that describes the school environment and student-teacher relationship crucial for participation is considering a progressive approach in thinking about the role of student participation in institutions like schools where students are invited to participate in co-creating school. Dewey writes that 'we are apt to look at the school from an individualistic standpoint, as something between teacher and pupil, or between teacher and parent' (Dewey, 1907, p. 1). In this understanding, there is a need to think about school as a shared spaced or common space for students and teachers. Through their participation in this 'shared space' of the school environment, students become self-managers of their own development. 'The self' reference is also visible in community development studies (Jones & Doolitlle, 2017) and youth developmental studies (Bronk, 2012) that focus on the crucial term for considering youth participation as youth purpose understood as 'intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and leads to productive engagement with some aspect of the world beyond-the-self' (Damon et al., 2003, p. 121). The positive youth development theory of Lerner et al. (2005) proposes that 'if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society' (p. 12).

5.4   Questions and Research Design

The overall research aim was to identify how civic participation developed in school settings that introduced school forums between March 2016 and May 2018. We conducted FGIs with teachers and young people in 16 selected schools from four European countries (England, Italy, Lithuania and Cyprus). When selecting the project partners, we firstly bore in mind previous positive cooperation experiences and, secondly, the areas of knowledge that partners are experts in such as participation, youth work, working with young people at risk of dropping out of education, etc. The third argument was the location of the partners' countries and the assumed sociocultural diversity. We believed that this diversity made our proposal more international.

The FGIs took place in two rounds. The first round (March–May 2016) of the study was held before the relevant actions were taken in schools (one in each partner country). The second FGI took place between April and May 2018 after the project activity had finished (in two or three schools in each partner country). *Before the school forums*, we discussed with teachers what young people's participation presupposes and how teachers can support it. The FGI with young people examined the ways young people understand democracy and civic participation and their roles as citizens as well as their attitudes and beliefs. *After the school forums*, both teachers and students who had participated were asked to share their experiences and what effect the school forum had on them.

All FGIs were conducted by two moderators and held in the national language of the country in question. One of the moderators was nominated to ask questions, whilst the other was responsible for making field notes which were then translated into English. The interviews weren't recorded to ensure a safe space for the young people. All of the FGIs were kept small (from four to six participants), and they took the form of informal discussions. However, the FGIs were conducted in schools and were characterised as more akin to a 'lecture/class meeting' because most interviewees seemed to expect it to last 40–45 min. A qualitative content analysis was derived from students' and teachers' answers, using the guidelines suggested by Krippendorff (2004).

5.5   Participants and Recruitment

The main policy objective of the FYS-Forum was to enhance integration of youth at risk through participation. Thus, the sampling procedure aimed to capture at least 50% of schools with a higher proportion of pupils who receive free school meals (e.g. in the UK) or who are from different cultural backgrounds. Schools that we selected for the project were mostly located in the suburban areas of big cities, especially capitals. Depending on the education system in partners' countries, these were secondary, middle or high schools in suburbs where we had been informed by

Table 5.1   Data collection among teachers and youth by country

Country	Data collection with teachers		Data collection with youth	
	Before the forum	After the forum	Before the forum	After the forum
Cyprus	1 (FGI in 1 school)	3 (FGI in 3 schools)	1 (FGI in 1 school)	3 (FGI in 3 schools)
Italy	1	3	1	3
Lithuania	1	3	1	3
UK	1	3	1	3
Total	12		12	

Table 5.2   Information about the participants

Country	Teachers		Youth	
	Before the forum	After the forum	Before the forum	After the forum
Cyprus	1 FGI (3 teachers)	3 FGI (9 teachers)	1 FGI (6 pupils)	3 FGI (in 3 schools; 10 pupils)
Italy	1 FGI (3 teachers)	3 FGI (9 teachers)	1 FGI (4 pupils)	3 FGI (8 pupils)
Lithuania	1 FGI (3 teachers)	3 FGI (9 teachers)	1 FGI (6 pupils)	3 FGI (10 pupils)
UK	1 FGI (5 teachers)	3 FGI (9 teachers)	1 FGI (6 pupils)	3 FGI (9 pupils)
Total	50 teachers (teaching experience ≥3 years; 46 females, 4 males)		59 pupils (aged 11–18; both gender 37 females and 22 males)	

teachers about the high percentage of socially excluded youth. Teachers who were selected for the interviews had been involved in non-curricular activities that develop student participation (≤5 years) and teaching different school subjects (history, the mother-tongue language, geography, art and maths). Interviews with teachers aimed to bring together teachers with a similar background or experience from a school to discuss a specific topic of interest, namely, the application of youth forums in school settings and youth participation in each school. There were no selection criteria for young people to participate in the FGI. Information about the study being conducted was given to everyone, and only those who applied took part (Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

5.6   Results

In this section, we present the results of the FGIs beginning with the teachers' accounts in the first and second round, followed by the young people's shared experiences. Issues raised by the teachers pertained to skills, relationships, culture and structural constraints. The young people's accounts suggested two types of relationship between learning and participation that were subsequently named 'learning-oriented' and 'experience-oriented'.

5.6.1 Teachers' Perspectives on Youth Participation in School Settings

5.6.1.1 Before the School Forums

Before the school forums were implemented in schools, we asked teachers what skills would be necessary to develop youth participation through the school forum in the classroom and what challenges at school level needed to be met in order to develop school participation. In the opinion of teachers from Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania and England, youth is combined with *skills* such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, leadership, public speaking, critical thinking and research skills. As one teacher commented:

> Our students think that in school, teachers are supposed to give them all the information and knowledge, so there is no need for them to think critically. Maybe in some cases, this is our fault as well, because we do not ask our students to express their opinions and thoughts much. We need to trust them more and let them know that their opinions do matter … They don't know what it means to be a leader. They definitely need some guidance on that. (teacher from Cyprus)

However, teachers also commented on their own lack of skills for facilitating the development of youth participation at the school level. Some of them expressed their concern about the *lack of training* related to a whole spectrum of teaching issues, such as methods, tools, curriculum development, knowledge construction, learning support, psychological aspects of teaching and learning and pedagogical inclusive programmes fostering students' creativity and leadership in their learning. An example of one teacher's opinion:

> 'Pre-service training doesn't equip teachers in Italy with skills in promoting youth participation'. Apart from participation and skills development training, teachers emphasized the need for training related to classroom psychology in order 'to set objectives and create inclusive pedagogical programmes that will foster students' creativity and leadership in their learning'. (teacher from Italy)

In this context, teachers also assessed *teamwork* as essential for the development of youth participation in their schools. Due to the lack of collaboration and communication between teachers, they would welcome any meetings dedicated to good practice examples connected with global citizenship education. When talking about support for youth participation, other areas of cooperation mentioned by teachers included external organisations, such as NGOs, and involvement in programmes and projects with other schools in the country and abroad. Two examples of teachers' remarks:

> Seminars and training courses that are helpful and particularly seminars where we are trainers ourselves (…) as only a leader can create another leader. (teacher from Lithuania)

> The school principal has regular meetings with us, with pupils and with the representatives of the pupil council. (teacher from Lithuania)

What seems to be widely acknowledged as important for youth participation at the school level are the *relationships* built between pupils and school teachers, which support the development of motivation and help students overcome any shyness or lack of confidence issues so they can speak up for themselves. Many of the teachers spoke of the importance of helping young people to understand that they have a valid voice. Here is how one teacher explained it:

> It was challenging but I have seen them change and it has been beneficial for them, so it is something I will try to do more. It's just that you spend so much time with them, it does get tiring. That has shown me that I do need to take more risks because there are kids that are badly behaved in lessons but they want to shine and they love it. (teacher from England)

5.6.1.2   After the School Forums

In the FGIs with teachers on their experiences with the school forum, we particularly wanted to find out in what ways and to what degree the youth forum as a non-curricular activity has supported youth participation. The school forum was listed by teachers as an *opportunity for students to practice engagement*; it created a sense of empathy at a level where pupils could perceive the world around them globally and from the perspective of others. Advantages of the forum mentioned included fostering cooperation with institutions outside of school and supporting preparation for living with others in adult life. One teacher described it as follows:

> A forum creates the right conditions for integration into cooperation with various institutions. This creates links between schools and students and helps prepare young people for their inclusion in society. A student who is involved in this type of activity increases their academic success and the range of areas with which students can engage in the future. (teacher from Cyprus)

Some teachers also remarked that the extracurricular activities were engaging for students because they were involved in several activities at the same time which is an experience that is valuable, especially for disadvantaged young people:

> I don't think the school learnt anything as the school is very student-centered. But the students definitely benefited as not all students that got involved had done things like this previously themselves. (teacher from England)

> In citizenship projects we see our role as catalysts. We are the teachers, our functions include synthesis and analysis, within which the outside and the inside should go hand in hand. (teachers from Italy)

Several teachers shared their experience that the initiative had facilitated *team building* that included an improved relationship between teachers and students as well as the development of group identity:

> This experience has been an important moment of growth for both the students and the teachers involved. Forming one group with the aim to achieve a goal has enhanced everyone's listening skills and solidarity. I would be interested in running another forum. (teacher from Italy)

> The relationship between students and teachers has changed because now they often show their emotions or talk about how they feel. (teacher from Cyprus)

> By participating in the project and then in the forum during the implementation of the project, students and teachers had moments of confrontation, although collaborating on work gave everyone a sense of responsibility. (Teacher from England)

Some teachers also noted that *skills* like oral presentations within academic subjects had improved. One teacher said in the context of curricular activities that it is visible that (some students are) 'coming out of their shell when they speak'. Teachers noticed a change in motivation when undertaking leadership roles like finding information or reasoning. Changes are visible in students' attitudes towards 'how they look at everything once they have done something' and 'how they view the school', and 'therefore it could impact their grades because they're trying and accepting different ways of doing things, and seeing things from different perspectives and different viewpoints', explained teachers who were interviewed. Students' literacy might not necessarily be improved, 'but it might help them make more of an effort and give them more confidence', commented one teacher from England.

A specific issue that was raised by teachers in this context was the impact on students' critical thinking in relation to the media. After the forum, students were more aware of the dangers posed by information transmitted through the media and more cautious in their interpretations of media information:

> Students have learned truly new things on the subject by overcoming prejudices and fighting all the incorrect news in the mass media. (teacher from Italy)

> They understand that reality is a set of communicating vessels because one day during my history class, they made references to information available online and discovered relationships with reality (the role of women in different historical periods). They have created a link between themselves and the things around them. (teacher from England)

Finally, in the FGIs, structural constraints in the form of lack of time and space in the curriculum emerged. Tutor time – the time that they have available to discuss global issues with their students – is:

> the only time when we get the freedom to do that and it's not unless you're in a drama class where the opportunity is at that time that you can think right, now I can relate it. (teacher from England)

In the teachers' opinion, the curriculum is not flexible enough for them to foster participation and engagement in civic matters. This is how one teacher explained it:

> I think the curriculum sometimes gets in the way of them knowing what interests them outside school, they're probably at home watching TV and seeing the news, and you don't necessarily have the opportunity to explore how they're feeling about certain issues. I think that's really important because it's a way for students to develop who they are and have their voice heard, sometimes it is overshadowed by the curriculum. (teacher from England)

Summarising the teachers' observations, their own and the students' skills, trustful and supportive relationships and opportunities and time to actually practise deliberation and engagement are not only preconditions for participation but also mutually reinforcing elements of a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998). In Wenger's

understanding, a community of practice is a group of people who come together to share knowledge or skills. This sharing, however, is different from formalised learning as a community of practice typically grows organically through informal grouping and interactions. Communities of practice are common, and since they are pervasive, they frequently go unnoticed. Focusing on them allows us to expand and to rethink institutions like our schools and, in the context of learning, the youth agency.

5.6.2   Youth Perspectives on Democracy and Civic Participation

The analysis of the empirical material from the two rounds of FGI revealed significant differences in the responses of the young people from the schools. As is typical in most schools, young people's initial opinions on the need for civic participation and involvement in civic issues did not indicate that they were particularly interested in these matters. The analysis of the first round of interviews conducted with the youth in four schools showed that involvement was considered by them in terms of a school duty.

5.6.2.1   Before the School Forums

Students who associate civic participation with school duty were put into 'the learning-oriented' category. This group of participants had some difficulties when trying to think about what democracy and civic participation meant. At the same time, they listed some issues of importance to them such as climate change or human rights. Their comments in this particular context reflect their perspective on the significance of the curriculum and subjects where democracy and active citizenship are present and have to be passed in the context of a formal examination. This group of participants agreed that they had discussed and learned about the suggested global issues during various lessons, and though they were interesting to know about, however, they were not that different from other lessons. The following words spoken by one of the students may serve as an illustration of the above:

Well, it was interesting but it was like a normal lesson, just a different subject.

The lack of interest young people have in getting involved in civic issues could be explained in many different ways, firstly, due to the weaknesses of the present education policy in individual countries. All groups, when answering the question: 'What opportunities are currently available?', raised the issue of lack of time to engage in extracurricular activities, explaining that they had numerous school duties. Secondly, the reasons for the low levels of interest in involvement in civic issues could be explained by the attitude of school staff who paid most of their attention to following the curriculum rather than engaging with the students in extra-curriculum activities. Below is how one of the participants responded:

> In our school, we follow a very strict programme based on the curriculum and have no opportunities to engage in other extra-curricular activities.

According to Birdwell and Bani (2014), the lack of focus related to this directly translates into the approach to social involvement issues taken by young people. According to the aforementioned authors, young people nowadays become involved in civic issues in a very limited way, and this is connected with the school and teachers' attitude towards the subjects they teach in school classes during which young people learn about citizenship and are encouraged to be socially active. Poland, Lithuania or Great Britain, where subjects such as civics or entrepreneurship education have a significantly lower status than mathematics or physics, may serve as examples. In light of this, the attitude of young people could be understood as a direct consequence of the curriculum-oriented attitude adopted by teachers.

To understand the overrepresentation of students whose responses were categorised as 'the learning-oriented', we will refer to the traditional approach that has been the basis of teaching in most schools that took part in the study, despite the implementation of many innovations. Consequently, the students adopted an attitude and behaviour that they had internalised in the course of their education. To express it differently through their answers, they wanted to fit in with the expectations of the school and the teachers.

It is worth, at this point, adding that some of the FGI participants categorised as 'learning-oriented' were involved in various activities. However, because the school offered these activities and declared that the motivation of the students to participate in them was, for example, to get a better grade in the subject, we placed them in 'the learning-oriented' category.

The category of students described as 'the learning-oriented' was opposed to the category called 'the experience-oriented'. 'The experience-oriented' were involved in a wide range of community activities. They were involved in volunteer work. Their responses reflect their personal (direct or indirect) experience, and '(…) they had a much deeper and greater understanding of the importance of participation, but it needs to be pointed out that this group was much smaller than the first one' (Jarkiewicz, 2019, p. 29). Here is how one participant responded:

> I suffered from leukemia as a child and now I help other children who are going through the same thing I once did.

Students whose responses were categorised as 'experience-oriented' showed a deep understanding of the need for active citizenship. However, it is worth emphasising that the source development of this attitude was not school but their personal experiences. These students, on their own, began to look for opportunities for social engagement, which they sometimes found at school. However, it must be stressed, and this is important from the perspective of answering the research question on the school's contribution to the development of pupil participation, that the involvement of the school and teachers, in this aspect, is secondary to the pupils' original need.

At this point, it is also worth noting the concept of Freire (2005), in whose opinion the basis for the organisation of the educational process should be the seeking of

authentic needs of students and responding to them. According to Freire, education should be created through dialogue between all those involved in the process. Freire's approach coincides with the participatory approach we have adopted, which also criticises one-directional, non-dialogue teaching methods and which, as can be concluded from the students' answers, are still dominant in schools.

To conclude, the first round of FGI aimed to help us understand young people's attitudes, beliefs and needs regarding civic engagement, democracy and participation. It is important to stress the limited need of students for active social citizenship. We correlate this fact with the pattern of behaviour internalised by students, which is directly related to the schools' teaching model. It is worth noting here some similarities between the traditional model of learning and the banking method of education criticised by Freire (2005), also called anti-communication or anti-dialogue. As Freire noticed, the aim of the banking style is 'to give them knowledge or to impose upon them the model of the good man contained in a programme whose content we have ourselves organized' (2005, p. 95).

5.6.2.2   After the School Forums

Taking into consideration students' answers, it can be claimed that the role of the teachers was crucial in developing young people's civic participation and democracy in schools. As in the first round of the interviews, two main categories of responses were generated in the second round of the FGI. We called the first category 'the currently focused on learning' and the second category 'the active participants'. The purpose of modifying the category names is to indicate that participation in the project influenced the responses of interview participants. Some of them, whose earlier statements were categorised as 'the learning-oriented', in the second large FGI were combined with the category 'the active participants'. It is worth mentioning that the transfer between categories was one way (from *learning-oriented* to *active participant*, never from *experience-oriented* to *currently focused on learning*). In the responses of such students, motivational changes to action were noticeable. They varied from motivations related to benefits at school (better grades, teacher recognition, etc.) to motivations associated with the need to be involved.

The Currently Focused on Learning   The first category revealed itself in schools where teachers, from the very beginning of their involvement in the project, assumed the role of leaders, and students evaluated the participation in the forum as an interesting extracurricular school activity during which it was possible for them to learn something new. The educational aspect was stressed in their responses. These students appreciated the fact that they were able to participate in the forum. At the same time, they did not express their wish to continue or voluntarily participate in any action of this kind. They mostly recognised civic participation and democracy issues through the prisms of a school lesson, instead of issues of importance in their own life.

In an attempt to understand the students' continued limited need for social engagement, the boundaries of which for activity are the tasks set by the teacher, it is necessary to look at the teachers' responses and the actions they took. In these schools, teachers repeatedly highlighted a lack of confidence in the students that prevented them from giving full responsibility for implementing activities to the students. Worrying that they would not complete the activities in the project resulted in their preferring to take the lead themselves and delegate students to carry out specific tasks. This attitude is not very different from what we call the traditional approach. By attaching unmerited importance to the project they had agreed to participate in, these teachers began to modify in good faith its theoretical assumptions, the basis of which was the participatory approach. It can be stated that just as their attention was focused on the curriculum, they approached the implementation of the project activities with the same attitude.

The 'Active Participants' It was different in schools where the teachers assumed the role of facilitators of the 'active participants' from the very outset. The teachers from these schools, despite their concerns due to their attachment to a different – traditional – method of teaching, permitted themselves to taste another way of working based on a participatory approach. They fully trusted their students and made their contributions to the participatory process dependent on young people's interests and needs.

In these schools, students invented their own desired forum structure, assigned tasks among themselves and fulfilled them consistently and self-reliantly. Also, the students demonstrated a deeper understanding of the need for civic participation, and when the project ended, they emphasised that they were considering involvement in social actions or that they were already taking part in some.

The 'active participants' declared that they experienced the impact of the project in a number of areas and therefore confirmed the teachers' observations. The first one concerned the sense of developing transversal skills and competences (Mesquita et al., 2009; Pereira-Petiz et al., 2017; Tam & Trzmiel, 2018). In particular, they paid attention to an increase in organisational, planning and communication, social (interpersonal) skills, leadership or public speaking:

> It's a good opportunity to develop skills like that as you can't do that in class, where you mainly listen to teachers.

The second one was connected with perceiving oneself as an acting entity. In their answers, they emphasised that taking part in the project empowered them to act whilst at the same time making them more self-confident. The third one involved improving relationships between students and teachers:

> We definitely got to get closer, we didn't have that fear of asking questions. This boosted our confidence in asking questions as we used to be scared. Because we got to them more, I am definitely not scared now.

> We got to understand more from them about inequality as teachers shared how they and their family have faced inequality and their own views. It developed a bond to understand more about them.

The last effect concerned the evolution of the students' attitudes towards active citizenship, which was reflected in their way of thinking about social actions and the need to get involved. All interview participants emphasised that they were considering involvement in social activities or already taking part in some. The interviewees attributed this change directly to their participation in the project. Many of them openly said that the organisation of and participation in the forum inspired them to be more active in the future:

> Before the forum, I was not one that would take risks and go to many different clubs, but after joining it, I started to join clubs and I have also recently started volunteering because of that. (…) The forum has inspired me.

> For the action after the forum, we are going to go to a primary school to raise more awareness so that's going to benefit the wider community in (name of the city – author) and I think, in terms of school, we probably raised more awareness.

The second round of FGIs confirmed the validity of the theoretical assumptions made, including, in particular, the value of creating spaces in schools where young people are given opportunities to make decisions and take action on issues of interest to them. Young people can certainly take advantage of such opportunities, and treating them as full citizens results in the triggering of a real need to be involved as evidenced by the students' statements categorised as 'the active participants'. In the responses of these participants, a significant change in attitude from passively involved (i.e. one in which the student's social activity does not go beyond actions imposed by the teacher) to active and involved (i.e. one in which social activity is undertaken out of the student's need) is visible.

5.7   Conclusions and Discussion

5.7.1   Teachers' Role to Empower and Create Youth-Adult Partnerships

Firstly, the conducted study exposed the crucial role of teachers in addressing the issue of democracy and civic participation in schools, which sheds new light on their activities concerning how to promote this type of participation. When we wrote about the crucial role of teachers, we referred to findings which revealed that in schools where teachers took on the part of the leader, the method used was not as noticeable as in those schools where they let the students take on the role of leaders and organisers of the forum. In the optics of the undertaken theoretical framework (participatory approach and critical youth studies), paradoxically, this does not require increasing the teacher's work for students, e.g. by teaching them new

content, but by decreasing their educational activities. The teacher should allow the students to develop themselves, make decisions, observe their consequences, etc. In the light of these concepts, the teacher's role is mainly to empower and support young people's grass-roots activities rather than educate them on democracy, participation, active citizenship, etc., from a top-down perspective. The above correlates with Biesta's (2010) postulations about the required changes in the education system. Biesta (2010) suggests that discourse on purpose should be guided by the relevance and interconnectedness between three areas of educational practice: 'qualification, socialisation, and subjectification' (2010, p. 19). Qualification refers to the goal of giving students the knowledge and skills necessary for work and other areas of life. Socialisation refers to the transmission of values and traditions so that pupils are able to live within existing social orders and practices. Subjectification refers to the way in which students might 'become a subject' (2010, p. 21) by which he means students' coming into presence as individuals and becoming independent actors in society actively contributing to its shaping. Our assertion is that, in schools, teachers need to be provided with continuous professional development that will enable them to support and empower youth participation, youth engagement and youth leadership, showing how to implement opportunities for the practice of participatory methods when working with youth. What is interesting is that to develop youth participation in the school environment, adults like family members and teachers are being perceived as those that support understanding of issues that according to students create conducive conditions for their civic engagement, i.e. knowledge and issues that are not clear for youth. Mitra (2008) suggests that youth-adult partnerships must develop new ways to communicate effectively and to learn how to work together in more equitable ways. Our FGI after the forums showed that such youth-adult partnerships provide space for such partnerships with teachers, as a result of which they become empowered to speak out and act in a safe and supported space. The need to have adults nearby might be due to the fact that civic engagement, in providing information about present problems in our rapidly changing world, fills a gap that school is unable to fill. Interestingly, before the forums started, teachers focused their reflection upon the youth forums on their own (teachers') skills and knowledge and didn't consider the youth skills needed for the forums.

5.7.2 School to Promote Self-Awareness, Collaboration and Critical Approach to Information

Secondly, components of youth participation at the school level promote and encourage self-awareness, openness to collaboration with teachers and colleagues and the adoption of a critical approach to information received from the media. Studies on youth voices in the school environment suggest that involvement in school decision-making shapes the lives of youths and is perceived as an opportunity to cultivate skills beyond the classroom (Fielding, 2001; Levin, 2000; Brown &

Theobald, 1998). Other studies suggest that extracurricular activities support the development of peer relations (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005) and increase levels of numerous positive outcomes for youth (Brown & Evans, 2002). Through participation in a youth forum, young people were able to show their passions, creativity and strengths and develop interpersonal or communication skills when working with others, all of which supported their self-confidence and critical thinking. In the opinion of teachers, another benefit of taking part in a forum is the students' approach to media information. In a wider understanding of youth participation in the out-of-school environment, present studies show that media is being perceived as the main information source that shapes youth lifestyle, political views or value systems (Jensen & Oster, 2009; Koc-Michalska et al., 2019). In the opinion of teachers from Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania and England, youth participation is combined with skills such as creativity, critical thinking and communication skills. Access to media information is being considered in relation to critical thinking, understood as 'reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do' (Ennis, 1996, p. 166). In this understanding, reflective thinking is a process with two main dimensions: attitudinal and cognitive. The attitudinal dimension involves openness to new ideas or curiosity, and the cognitive dimension, reasoning, creating new ideas, analysing and concluding. Our study shows that youth forums, categorised as a non-curricular activity, support the cognitive dimension of critical thinking. In this understanding, critical thinking, which includes reasoning (i.e. on citizen issues like global migration flows) and expressing one's own opinion, is visible when considering information made available by the media. This conclusion confirms previous studies that critical thinking can help to improve communication with others (Atabaki et al., 2015), by developing argumentative skills, like expression or negotiation. In this context, critical thinking is perceived as a prerequisite for exercising active democratic citizenship (Bartels et al., 2016).

5.7.3   Curricular Activities for Youth Participation

Thirdly, in the school environment, there is a gap in developing participation through curricular activities as the curriculum is not flexible enough to develop skills such as participation and engagement in civic matters. But what is surprising is the question as to whether or not including the development of civic participation in curricular or non-curricular activities and participatory engagement in youth forums might influence students' academic outcomes. Thus, our study confirms previous studies on extracurricular activities that show relationships between extracurricular activities and students' outcomes (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005), youth attachment to schools (Mitra, 2004) or academic aspirations (Eccles & Barber, 1999). However, what is new here is our assertion that activities that support raising the voice of youth, the expression of their opinions, provide youth with additional confidence and skills, i.e. oral presentations during curricular activities, which, in our opinion, support academic outcomes. In addition to academic outcomes, extracurricular

activities where external organisations are involved support the development of youth engagement, building cooperation with out-of-school social partners, NGOs and organisations that focus on youth support. It is crucial, however, that activities that involve youth with their bottom-up initiative explore issues from a personal and global perspective so that they become empowered to speak out and act in the friendly environment of a school space. Outputs of such cooperation with external organisations should be supported by leadership activities that provide young people with civic skills for life.

5.7.4   Discussion

On a final note, the present research study on the development of democracy and civic participation in school settings provides evidence of the opportunities and limitations of using the participatory approach to reach these goals. The participatory approach may empower young people through their civic participation, but this may not also bring about all the desired effects. As has already been stated, the role assumed by teachers (as leaders or facilitators) is crucial in the context of the effectiveness of work using a participatory approach. As a result, school as an institution needs to be redefined. In the school space, this translates into the need to transform the traditional division of power (teacher-pupils) into a democratic power-sharing, which, as our research has shown, is not always achievable. The voice of young people should be heard and should be given the same importance as the voice of adults in the decision-making process. In consequence, the relationship between teachers and pupils will change – from asymmetrical to symmetrical. For example, representatives of critical approaches claim that discipline and protection become normative practices designed to control the lives of young people and secure the nation's future (in the form of sociocultural reproduction, keeping a specific social order). They also argue that the emergence of control and protection mechanisms is linked to how young people are categorised, rather than how they live and would live if adults recognised their full capacity for social participation (Quijada Cerecer et al., 2013). Therefore, instead of educating, controlling and protecting, the role of the teacher is to support and empower students in their self-development within a democracy, social participation, etc., which also means being able to make decisions, including wrong ones. Considering these theoretical assumptions, it is hard not to think that it may be challenging to apply them in their full version in practice. Herr (1999) notes that schools attempting to apply the participatory approach and create an environment for the participants of this reality to be able to co-decide in practice often bring about control of the discourse of changes under the guise of progressiveness. Thanks to this, the school maintains the old order and its status quo. When this happens, instead of helping to increase activity, participation effectively limits it. Hampering the development in this context can be understood as intentionally slowing bottom-up student initiatives. The participatory approach requires a similar level of active participation, collaboration and commitment from

all participants. In a school space, this translates into the need to change the traditional division of power, which, as our research has exposed, is not always achievable. Therefore, it is worth asking at the beginning of work what kind of empowerment we expect. For example, do we want to change the present authority system? If a radical, empowering solution is not our goal, do we only want to utilise it in some fields, and, if so, to what extent do we want to share the power (as school educators)?

5.7.5 Limitation of the Study

Finally, it is worth mentioning the limitations of this research and suggesting a further direction for studies in this matter. Firstly, the FGI was held in the mother tongue of its participants and later translated into English (in which the analysis has been done). The translation could deform some of the participants' statements and reduced their sociocultural context. Secondly, in each country, the FGIs were conducted by a different pair of researchers. Even though the moderators were obligated to write the field notes (the field notes included, for instance, information about the atmosphere of the interview, observations or reactions of the participants) based on their perceptions of the participants' emotions whilst putting emphasis on particular themes, each researcher may have differed somewhat. The difficulties inherent in measuring the impact of project activities on young people at risk of dropping out of school may be identified as the next limitation. Researchers did not identify those identified by teachers as being at risk. We also believe that conducting school observations would have significantly affected the quality of the material collected. Currently, the authors of this chapter are trying to use the experience and knowledge from the FYS-Forums project in another international educational project, Master to Educate in Diversity and Social Inclusion (MEDUSA). This project aims to create an educational module in the field of social inclusion and diversity for university students in which the content would be co-created by three categories of people: academics (theoretical knowledge support), students (interest support, knowledge of present educational needs) and practitioners (theoretical but mainly practical knowledge)

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Anna Jarkiewicz is Assistant Professor of Educational Science. She is committed to social work/ pedagogy practice, education, and research. Her research interests include social work with people with mental disorders or experiencing mental crises, social work with young people at risk of social exclusion, participatory socio-educational work, and professionalization of social work.

Joanna Leek is Assistant Professor of Educational Science. Her research interests are international education, functions of education, function of international programs, global citizenship education, mobility of students and teachers, digital mobility in Europe, curriculum development, and teacher education. She is leading courses for pedagogy students in the area of educational law and international education.

Chapter 6
Creating "THINKING PRO" for High School Teachers and Students: Two Cases of a Local News-Driven Curriculum in English and Social Studies Classrooms

Florian C. Feucht, M. Kate Michaelson, Regina Rotshtein, Sarah Bargardi, Rebecca Bush, and Julia McBride

Abstract Given the importance of community dynamics in democratic education, there is a need to explore the viability of locally focused, student-centered curricula. This chapter explains how school and district administrators, English and social studies teachers, and curriculum developers in two high schools in the United States implemented a curriculum called THINKING PRO. This curriculum used local news media to promote civic engagement and teach critical thinking, reading, and news media literacy. Lessons consisted of fixed components, including interactive videos that modeled critical thinking and reading skills, as well as flexible components that teachers modified to fit their classroom needs. Case studies of the two schools examined how district leaders empowered teachers to develop shared practices that fostered professional development and advanced school-wide goals. The results demonstrate the advantages of a localized curriculum in fostering civic engagement and illustrate strategies for implementing collaborative, teacher-centered professional development across grades and disciplines.

F. C. Feucht (✉)
Educational Studies, University of Toledo, Toledo, OH, USA
e-mail: Florian.Feucht@UToledo.edu

M. K. Michaelson · R. Rotshtein · S. Bargardi
Thinking Habitats, Detroit, MI, USA
e-mail: kate.michaelson@thinkinghabitats.com;
regina.rotshtein@thinkinghabitats.com; sarah.bargardi@thinkinghabitats.com

R. Bush
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA
e-mail: bakerbus@msu.edu

J. McBride
Pinckney Community Schools, Pinckney, MI, USA
e-mail: jmcbride@pinckneypirates.org

6.1 Introduction

Educators have long argued that schooling should prepare students for their responsibilities as active citizens (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970; Reardon & Snauwaert, 2015). Democratic participation is not simply the act of voting but the act of becoming informed and engaging in civil deliberation with the members of one's community (Feucht, 2010; Rawls, 1997). As part of this process, educational experiences must prepare learners to engage with and discuss reliable information from the news (Dewey, 1916; Feucht & Michaelson, accepted; Feucht et al., 2021, in press; Habermas, 1989). Adequate preparation must include deliberative classroom discourse that provides students with opportunities to practice discussing current issues and forming consensus across ideological perspectives. Such classroom discourse should prepare students to participate in public reasoning in which they learn to use facts and evidence to justify their positions in language that others can understand and, in turn, listen and respond to others' explanations in a civil manner (Feucht, 2010; Rawls, 1997). However, in an era of ideological polarity, implementing these classroom practices can present a difficult balance for teachers and educational institutions (Avery et al., 2014; Feucht, 2010; Kahne et al., 2016; McAvoy & Hess, 2013).

While there is a general consensus that educational systems should prepare students for democratic participation, individuals' conceptions of good citizenship and democratic education can vary greatly depending on where one stands politically. McCowan (2009) argues that a prefigurative approach to civic education, which models democratic processes for students in the school in order to teach them, offers an experiential approach to democracy that is rooted in learners' everyday experiences. Kahne and Westheimer (2003) advocate for a similarly immersive approach that prepares students to practice democracy within their own school and community context. Based on a review of educational programs dedicated to teaching democracy, they argue that successful democratic education must promote civic commitments, capacities, and connections. In other words, learners need to understand the need for change if they are to make civic commitments, but they also must acquire certain skills and knowledge, including information literacy, if they are "to connect academic knowledge to analysis of social issues" and participate in informed decision-making (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003, p. 39). Alongside civic commitment and capacity, successful programs also enable students to develop community connections that are foundational to taking collective action and enacting change.

Such systemic challenges can best be addressed when educators in a multitude of roles and disciplines collaborate (Thomas et al., 2019) and schools themselves model the democratic participation they hope to instill in their students (Tilhou,

2020). As the linchpins between school leadership and student experience, teachers are critical to these efforts. Teachers' own views on citizenship shape their teaching styles and signal to students if their classrooms are places for democratic discussion or the more passive banking of knowledge (Freire, 1970; Johnston & Nicholls, 1995). Beyond pedagogy, teachers also know the affordances and constraints of their community and school environment in which they teach – from having access to the materials and technology they need to having the support of administrators and community members as they address social and political issues in their classrooms (McCowan, 2009). When a community of teachers collaborates, these insights are multiplied, and each teacher benefits from their collective connections to the community in which they teach.

Given the importance of these community dynamics in democratic education, there is a need to explore the viability of locally focused, student-centered curricula that are implemented using teacher-centered approaches. This chapter focuses on how administrators, English and social studies teachers, and curriculum developers in two different high schools in the United States used an online curriculum called THINKING PRO to facilitate learning environments that empowered students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they needed to engage as citizens in their local communities. The THINKING PRO curriculum endeavors to cultivate this type of learning environment in the classroom as students practice critical thinking on authentic, local texts and consider the personal relevance of local news in their own lives. With the support of a small business innovation research grant from the US Department of Agriculture, the THINKING PRO curriculum was created by Thinking Habitats, a curriculum development entity whose mission is to empower people with thinking tools to lead successful lives and contribute to the well-being of their communities (Thinking Habitats, 2021).

Prior to and throughout the curriculum implementation, administrators in both districts and the THINKING PRO curriculum developers at Thinking Habitats facilitated the development of shared practices that allowed teachers to create common resources and strategies based on their experiences and expertise in their school community (Jones & Lee, 2014; Thomas et al., 2019; Wenger, 2000). Such activities, which included collaborative discourse, curriculum mapping, and lesson sequencing, resulted in teacher collaboration both within and across key learning areas (English and social studies). Students were also given agency in this curriculum to select newspaper articles they found newsworthy and to explore the local issues and community leaders that they found most relevant to their interests (McCombs & Miller, 2007).

The teachers in these case studies used THINKING PRO, a news media and civic engagement lesson plan, to facilitate participatory environments where students joined together as fellow community members to learn about, discuss, and address local issues. Although THINKING PRO materials and activities were housed in an online learning platform, teachers in the two schools implemented the curriculum in their face-to-face classrooms. Lessons in this curriculum furthered classroom goals and aligned with English (referred to as English language arts in the United States) and social studies standards at the state and federal levels (Center for Civic

Education, 2014; Common Core State Standards 2020; National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS] 2013; National Council for the Teachers of English [NCTE] 2012). Using their local newspapers and local politicians' websites as reading materials, students were guided through learning the who, what, when, where, why, and how of their communities (as shown in Table 6.1).

Daily lesson plans featured class discussions centered around exploring these community questions, content slides to build students' knowledge, interactive videos that modeled reading-to-learn and critical thinking strategies, assignments to practice applying these skills, and access to local resources. Table 6.2 provides a more detailed description of each of these features. Equipped with knowledge of their community, students participated in class discussions in which they deliberated about local issues, such as the responsibilities of area leaders and citizens alike in shaping and sustaining their communities. By harnessing the local news as a knowledge source, teachers used the THINKING PRO curriculum to empower their students to become more active citizens and take informed action in their school and their community in ways that mattered to them as young residents (Avery et al., 2014; Feucht & Michaelson, accepted; Kahne et al., 2016; Weinstock et al., 2017; Thinking Habitats, 2021). At the same time, in preparing and delivering this

Table 6.1 THINKING PRO lesson sequence and discussion themes

Lesson title	Discussion theme
Lesson 1: Local Issues. Local News. Local People	Knowing about and engaging in the local community is part of being successful in life and ensures the well-being of our community as a whole.
Lesson 2: The Who	People of the local community: Who are the people living in our community?
Lesson 3: The What	Issues in the local community: What are the current problems and needs that matter to people and groups in our community?
Lesson 4: The When	Events in the local community: When do people come together to organize our community and shape its future?
Lesson 5: The Where	Geography of the local community: In what ways do people use the natural and human-made resources to build and sustain their community?
Lesson 6: The Why (I)	Participating in the local community: What motivates individual people to engage in the decision-making of their community?
Lesson 7: The Why (II)	Understanding the local community: What are the different voices in our community and why do they exist? How can these different perspectives be integrated into our community?
Lesson 8: The How (I)	Governing in the local community: What are the roles and responsibilities of leaders in our community?
Lesson 9: The How (II)	Shaping the future of our local community: What expectations and goals create a stronger and better community tomorrow?
Lesson 10: Our Issues. Our News. Our People	Knowing about and engaging in our community is part of being successful in life and ensures the well-being of our community as a whole.

Table 6.2 Features of THINKING PRO

Feature	Description	Benefits	Customizability
Class discussions	Each lesson begins with a discussion prompt about local news, issues, and people, in which students think about their role as young citizens in the community	Promote classroom discourse on nonpartisan civic issues Offer connections between class content and students' lives	Teachers can guide and expand the discussion based on student interests, local issues, and content areas
Content slides	Instructional slides provide students with knowledge of news media literacy, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and local citizenship	Build a foundation for students to make more informed decisions and engage as citizens in their local communities	Teachers can adjust slides to fit key area goals, student needs, and teaching style Teachers can present slides to the class or ask students to study them on their own
Interactive videos	Interactive explainer videos model reading-to-learn and critical thinking strategies, provide opportunities for guided practice with immediate feedback, adapt to student performance, and assess proficiency	Adapt to the pace and ability of each student Encourage students to repeat videos until they reach proficiency	Teachers can choose short or long versions of videos based on time or their students' ability levels
Assignments	Assignments based on local news text and websites allow students to practice the strategies in each lesson while learning about their local community	Reinforce and apply fundamental skills to authentic news texts Prompt students to think beyond the classroom and feel more connected to their community	Students can choose news articles they find interesting Teachers can recommend articles that are relevant to the community, course content, and student interests
Local resources	Students use local newspapers and websites of public officials as learning materials	Learn informed action-taking at the local level and learn about topics relevant to their lives	Local resources are customized to each school's community and can be added by teachers

curriculum, teachers collaborated as leaders of their school community to tailor their instruction to the needs of their students.

The aim of this project was to explore the feasibility of implementing a locally focused, interdisciplinary curriculum that helped students develop the critical thinking and literacy skills needed to engage civically in their local community. As part of this, the curriculum developers explored the feasibility for teachers to use and adapt curricular features; case studies of the two participating schools resulted in an examination of how school and district leaders can empower teachers to develop

shared practices that foster teacher professional development and advance class-room and district goals.

6.2   Methods and Case Studies

This chapter compares and contrasts two high schools as separate case studies fol-lowing a qualitative research approach (Merriam, 1998). Using THINKING PRO, nine teachers in two school districts created learning communities in their class-rooms that offered students authentic practice in deliberative discourse and civic engagement. For each case, administrators and teachers provided their expert views on the success of the lessons and addressed issues of feasibility and usability that pertained to implementing this curriculum.

Data from administrators were gathered in semi-structured interviews following the curriculum implementation, with questions focused on their experiences imple-menting the module with teachers in their district (Flick & Tomlinson, 2006). Data on teachers' experiences with the curriculum were collected during pre- and post-implementation sessions, direct classroom observations, and daily check-ins. In the pre-implementation sessions, the THINKING PRO developers engaged in on-site planning sessions with teachers to familiarize them with the THINKING PRO con-tent and technology and to receive teacher feedback on the materials. These sessions were meant to give the teachers dedicated time to engage in collaborative discourse and develop shared practices based on their common experiences as educators in their school community (Jones & Lee, 2014; Wenger, 2000). Teachers were encour-aged to use components of THINKING PRO that they found useful based on their grade level, student population, and key learning area and to modify materials as needed. Similarly, THINKING PRO developers met with teachers from each dis-trict post-implementation to gather their feedback and learn from their experiences. During the implementation itself, curriculum developers took field notes as they observed classes and checked in with teachers between class periods; field notes were then revised and expanded upon for clarity at the end of the school day. Based on field notes and teacher profiles, one teacher from each school was purposefully sampled to illustrate classroom case uses in different key areas (one in English and one in social studies) (Emmel, 2013). Both of the selected teachers were expert teachers, and each used different techniques to successfully engage their students in meaningful class discussions about the role young people played in their commu-nity and school (Berliner, 2004).

Data from administrators and teachers were analyzed using the qualitative con-tent analysis method in which communications are summarized and then themati-cally categorized using both deductive and inductive codes that emerge when the content is framed against the objectives of the study (Feucht, 2016; Mayring, 2000; Williamson et al., 2018). For instance, the code *community* was derived deductively based on literature that shaped the overall framework of the locally focused curricu-lum (e.g., McCowan, 2009). In contrast, the code *shared practice* illustrates an

inductive code that emerged from the data as both teachers and administrators spoke of the role collegial collaboration played in their curriculum implementation.

While the two districts featured in these case studies varied in many respects, both were full-time high schools in the same state, and the curriculum implementation process was similar for both. In each case, a mix of teachers in social studies and English key learning areas adopted the curriculum. The following case studies each provide a brief overview of the school and community, the school/district administrator's goals and strategies for implementing the curriculum, insight into how teachers prepared and collaborated to make the curriculum work for students in their community (i.e., shared practice), and a classroom example to illustrate how a teacher in that district implemented the curriculum with students.

6.3 Case 1: A High School in a Small Rural Community

The curriculum was first implemented in School 1, which is situated in a small, predominantly White town located in the rural Midwestern United States. Administrator 1, who serves as the instructional principal for the school, described the community as a tight-knit town where families live for generations. From an academic standpoint, Admin 1 observed that although students' performance on standardized tests had improved in recent years, they still trailed many surrounding schools, and improving test scores was an area of focus. Given the lack of racial diversity in the area, Admin 1 also noted that the community faced issues of cultural awareness and tolerance.

In this setting, Admin 1 introduced the THINKING PRO curriculum to teachers in her district with the goals of enhancing disciplinary literacy, improving student reading scores, and broadening students' perspectives concerning their community. Further, she viewed the collaboration with the Thinking Habitat's curriculum developers as a way to facilitate school-based professional teacher training and develop a culture of shared practices. With the curriculum's focus on local news articles as reading material, Admin 1 referenced its potential to build students' capacities to critically analyze the news and to equip teachers with a toolkit and process to spark meaningful classroom conversations grounded in evidence. Thus, beyond describing the reading and communication skills in THINKING PRO as helpful on standardized test performance, she viewed them as foundational to citizenship and essential for preparing students for their future college and career experiences.

6.3.1 Preparation and Curriculum Implementation

Prior to implementing THINKING PRO, Admin 1 contacted English and social studies teachers in her district's high school and provided them with a description of the curriculum, its use of local news, and its overlap with their classroom goals.

Admin 1 asked the teachers to consider their interest in taking advantage of the "opportunity to try something new" and to discuss the possibility with their colleagues. Ultimately, two social studies teachers elected to adopt the curriculum in their US Government and economic courses, and two English teachers chose to use it in their ninth-grade English classes (ages 14–15 years). These teachers agreed to allow the THINKING PRO developers to observe their use of the curriculum in their classrooms over a 2-week period to determine its feasibility, further inform its development and optimization, and to be on-site to answer questions and provide support.

In the weeks leading up to the THINKING PRO implementation, the participating teachers met with the curriculum developers to preview the materials and discuss which components would work best for their students' needs. In addition to familiarizing the teachers with the curriculum's content and technology, these pre-implementation sessions gave teachers opportunities to collaborate with one another while simultaneously making the materials their own as they worked together to select which components were most applicable for their students and coordinated their schedules. Teachers from both key areas (English and social studies) collaborated to discuss how to use the THINKING PRO materials to meet their disciplinary goals. For instance, the English teachers omitted much of THINKING PRO's social studies-specific content to allow for more time to focus on reading and critical thinking strategies. Conversely, the social studies teachers developed a plan to first attempt to implement all of THINKING PRO social studies-focused content and, later, adjust if they encountered time constraints. The two social studies teachers at this school also shared students between their classes (e.g., students taking both economics and government), so they worked with one another to adjust the content for these students to avoid duplicating learning objectives and materials.

In the case of the two English teachers, one expert teacher (Teacher 1) with more than 30 years of teaching experience collaborated with a more novice teacher in her fifth year. Beyond working together in the pre-implementation planning sessions, the two teachers met between class periods on a daily basis to discuss their experiences with the curriculum throughout the 2-week implementation. During these informal conferences, the two developed shared practices, such as selecting news articles to use that they knew would appeal to their students' interests. For instance, knowing their students' interest in animals, both teachers selected an article about orcas in captivity to use for two consecutive assignments where students would examine claims and look for supporting evidence.

Observing this collaboration among teachers, Admin 1 described the pre-implementation planning sessions and continuing collaboration as meaningful activities that empowered teachers to move away from a prescribed sequence of lessons and, instead,

> contribute to active decision-making about what makes sense to [teach] when, while also being shown a way to think about and organize a learning flow that's supported by research.

Thus, the content the teachers delivered was rigorously designed and sequenced to teach vital reading and critical thinking skills, yet tailored to students' needs and interests.

6.3.2   Theory into Practice: Making News and Leadership Personal

Teacher 1, who was in her final year of teaching prior to retiring, delivered THINKING PRO in her ninth-grade English classrooms and framed it for her students as an opportunity for them to gain a greater understanding of their community while also learning how to engage with trustworthy news. Throughout the THINKING PRO implementation, Teacher 1 encouraged students to interact with the news on a personal level and to consider themes of citizenship and democracy as they applied to their lives as students. For instance, early on as Teacher 1 delivered a lesson on identifying quality news sources, she introduced students to an assignment that prompted them to find articles they considered newsworthy and non-newsworthy and explain their reasoning. After ensuring students could access their local newspaper, she noted that she would not give them further guidance on the assignment because she wanted them to come up with their own interpretations of what it means to be newsworthy and non-newsworthy based on what they valued. As the class worked, they discussed with each other why articles were not newsworthy (e.g., because of bias or irrelevance) and enjoyed sharing articles they found important or interesting. As students were browsing their local newspaper, one concluded: "Dang! There's a lot more that happens in [our] county than I thought!" In framing this assignment, Teacher 1 encouraged students to forge personal connections to news that was relevant to their lives by decentralizing her position of authority and emphasizing that the *students* were the only ones who could decide what they did or did not find newsworthy, and all that she required was for them to explain the reasoning behind their choices.

Later into the THINKING PRO implementation, following lessons on the *who, what*, and *why* of their community, Teacher 1 led students in a discussion about the *how* of their community (see Table 6.1). The discussion leading up to this lesson explored how local leaders can and should serve their communities and how citizens can participate, while the lesson itself explored themes of trustworthiness in news sources and prompted students to look for claims that leaders had made. As Teacher 1 introduced these themes to her students and they explored leaders in their local community, she abruptly pivoted and posed the question: "What about the [student] leaders at our school? Do you have to be an athlete or in a club?" After students indicated that they did not find it necessary to be in a formal organization to be a leader, Teacher 1 asked: "Can you be a leader in your group of friends?" Students considered this question and talked to one another briefly before one articulated that leaders could emerge in groups of friends. Another student followed up

with the argument that being a leader in school meant behaving responsibly and doing the right thing.

After a bit more discussion, Teacher 1 flipped the question around and asked: "What about [student] leaders that aren't doing positive things?" Students acknowledged there were peers in their school who led in a negative way, like bullies. Teacher 1 extended this point, asking if doing the right thing included not bullying, stopping bullying when they see it, and helping others feel included. Teacher 1 continued, "Do you think that's the same as adult leaders?" and students affirmed that it was similar. At this point, Teacher 1 connected this discussion of leadership to trustworthiness and noted: "When you break someone's trust, it's hard to get it back; as a leader in a community, you have to be able to build trust and keep that trust with people you're leading."

Teacher 1 redirected the class and discussion back to the news by noting that for an article to be trustworthy, it needs to be based in fact. She said that there are lots of accusations of "fake news," so how do we determine whom to believe and trust? From there, she reviewed THINKING PRO materials that included slides and a flowchart to guide students through determining the trustworthiness of information. While looking at the flowchart, which depicted the relationship between claims, evidence, opinions, and explanations, she asked students if it would be acceptable to use an "opinion" to support another "opinion." Students responded that it would not be, and Teacher 1 concluded the discussion by presenting students with different types of observable evidence, such as data and research that they could use to support an opinion. The lesson concluded with students working independently on an interactive learning video where they examined news articles for evidence.

Following these lessons, Teacher 1 spoke with the curriculum developers about her use of THINKING PRO and noted that the class discussions about local issues fit well with her underlying pedagogical goals because they "spoke globally" and brought large-scale issues "home to what [students] were doing […] so they could make a bigger connection." As she reflected on the ways in which THINKING PRO encouraged students to take agency in analyzing the news and determining meaning, she recalled an exchange with her students:

> Yesterday they said, "Mrs. [Teacher 1], I never knew to question the news." And if nothing else, if that's what they get out of this, I will be so happy. That people say things that sound like truth and you have to be able to discern. I just thought that was really, really mature, especially for that group of kids.

Thus, for Teacher 1, THINKING PRO facilitated classroom goals that encouraged her 14- and 15-year-old students to make their own connections between local and global issues and learn to critically interrogate the information they received from the news media.

6.3.3 Takeaways from Case Study 1

Following the THINKING PRO implementation, teachers met with the THINKING PRO developers once more to provide feedback on the curriculum and discuss their experiences implementing it. Teachers commented positively on how THINKING PRO encouraged students to take on agency in their own learning because they were permitted to select their own readings and repeat interactive learning videos to improve their scores. Further, teachers noted that the THINKING PRO discussions that centered on local issues encouraged students to participate and interact with each other in ways they did not often experience in their classrooms. In fact, teachers observed that they would have liked to have even more time in class for that component. Finally, teachers in both English and social studies emphasized that the lessons on critical thinking skills were important to school district goals and key area goals, such as preparing students for an upcoming research project in English and exposing their social studies students to content on critical media literacy and civic action. In terms of difficulties, teachers spoke of the value of THINKING PRO's built-in rubrics and self-scoring videos in providing students with feedback; however, because THINKING PRO used a different learning platform than their school's gradebook, they also noted some challenges in managing student grades across systems.

From the administrative perspective, Admin 1 reflected on the district's use of THINKING PRO as an opportunity for teachers to expose students to regional media outlets, to analyze texts for bias, and to "synthesize it all in a way that allows them to develop an informed conclusion or draw their own opinions." Simultaneously, she spoke of how the use of local news sources raised students' awareness of issues and information sources in their own backyard and how "local connections" made the news feel "less abstract and more meaningful" for students. She noted that students in some of the participating classes have since engaged in service-learning projects aimed at solving local problems. Admin 1 concluded that although it took some coordination to implement the curriculum and entice teachers to try something new, that the process facilitated "meaningful work and skill-building for both students and teachers" from start to finish.

6.4 Case 2: A High School in a Diverse Small City

In contrast to School 1, School 2 is located in a small city with greater racial and ethnic diversity. Administrator 2 serves as the social studies consultant for an intermediate school district that includes School 2. This umbrella district provides general education, career and technical education, and special education services to all 36 public K-12 local school districts, charter schools, and parochial schools in the region. In her position, she works closely with social studies teachers in all of these districts and also collaborates with English teachers due to the district's focus on the

integration of social studies and English. In describing the atmosphere of School 2, Admin 2 noted its collaborative community of teachers and the diversity of the student population, which is reflective of the changing demographics of the surrounding community. Coincidentally, the THINKING PRO implementation in School 2 coincided with the release of a study based on surveys of community residents. Admin 2 noted that the study had been eye-opening to many in the community because it not only documented the changing demographics of the area but also illustrated that many residents had indicated that they did not "feel like they were a strong part of the community because they were of a different ethnicity or political party that was not the norm," and, as a result, "there was really a call and a need for more people to be involved in the community."

Thus, with this backdrop, educators in this school used THINKING PRO with the objective of integrating the diverse perspectives of students into a shared community voice that accounted for the interests of different groups but avoided partisan politics. As the social studies consultant, Admin 2's aims for implementing THINKING PRO also centered on teaching students the skills they needed for democratic participation and emphasized that the curriculum fit with the overarching goal of teaching the "basic skills that are a foundation for students across the board" with a "civic emphasis and that civic efficacy piece to it."

6.4.1   Preparation and Curriculum Implementation

Having learned of the THINKING PRO curriculum at a regional social studies conference and teacher workshop, Admin 2 suggested the implementation of the curriculum in School 2 based on the highly collaborative nature of the teachers in this school. As she explained, "I knew that the Social Studies department and a couple of the English teachers that work fairly closely with [them]... would embrace it and make it their own." As with School 1, the teachers in School 2 were introduced to the curriculum and given the option of incorporating it into their classes. After expressing interest, two social studies teachers spearheaded the effort to invite other teachers to participate and, along with Admin 2, coordinated an informational session with the curriculum developers.

Two weeks prior to implementing THINKING PRO, School 2 teachers attended the pre-implementation session and met with the curriculum developers to preview the materials, receive training, and explore lessons to plan their daily schedules in advance. As with School 1, the pre-implementation session served as a collaborative forum for teachers to exchange ideas concerning their classroom goals, as well as challenges they encountered teaching reading and critical thinking skills. With these contexts in mind, the teachers considered how they could adapt the online curriculum to best meet their students' needs. In contrast to School 1, four social studies teachers and only one English teacher implemented the curriculum; thus, the teachers at School 2 met as one group for this planning session and discussed methods for delivering the curriculum that spanned their key areas. English and social studies

teachers jointly planned how to best frame THINKING PRO discussion questions in ways that would speak to students' interests and prior knowledge and also meet their individual classroom goals. For instance, teachers from both key areas spoke of a local journalist they could use as an example in one discussion so that students would have a local point of reference in mind as they considered local information sources. As the teachers selected which aspects of THINKING PRO that they felt would work best for their students, they also collaborated to discuss how they might personalize the materials and made plans to meet throughout the curriculum implementation to compare notes and make adjustments. The teachers at School 2 ultimately implemented THINKING PRO in 11th-grade English (ages 16–17 years), US Government, economics, and world history and added to existing THINKING PRO instructional materials quite extensively as a way to share data about the local area with their students and pique their interest. For instance, in one US Government class, the teacher added a link to local census and political data in order to help his students understand the "who" of their local community prior to engaging in a discussion on the topic.

Reflecting on the ways in which teachers at School 2 collaborated and personalized materials, Admin 2 observed that the local focus of THINKING PRO allowed teachers to "read their classroom" and make adaptations "based on the level of their students' abilities but also the level to which students are or may not be engaged in their community." At the same time, Admin 2 was pleased with how the consistent thread of the THINKING PRO curriculum enabled "access in a uniform way for all of the students to be able to look at the local issues and to really dialogue with one another." Ultimately she felt that the fixed elements alongside the flexible curricular design worked well in School 2 because teachers were able to adapt the curriculum to "capitalize on the knowledge that some of the students had already" and supplement students' knowledge of the community in other cases.

6.4.2 Theory into Practice: Empowering Student Voices in Their Communities

Teacher 2, an expert social studies teacher with 23 years of experience, implemented THINKING PRO in his US Government classes. Teacher 2 traditionally began each class period with what he called a "warm-up" during which he went around the classroom and surveyed every student on a commonplace topic, such as their favorite superhero or dessert. If a student did not have a response for one of the survey questions, Teacher 2 would pause and encourage them to take their time to think and answer; in this way, every students' voice was heard at the beginning of each class period, and Teacher 2 demonstrated the value he placed on hearing from all students.

In the third day of THINKING PRO implementation, the lesson dealt with the themes of quality local news and the *who* of the local community. After presenting

the THINKING PRO materials on the characteristics of a quality local newspaper, Teacher 2 played a local news video that showed the community's two mayoral candidates discussing area problems, such as a lack of affordable housing and issues surrounding the area's diversity. One candidate noted that some members of the community, in particular, did not feel welcome or heard. After playing this video for his students, Teacher 2 posed the THINKING PRO discussion question to his students, asking them to think about "who is heard or not heard" in their community. Very quickly, one student responded that "successful Caucasian people" are heard. Teacher 2 asked the class if they agreed with this statement, and another student raised his hand and noted that he felt "minorities do have a voice" and indicated that this was because people now want to know their perspective since they are realizing that they had been underrepresented in the past. After a few more students contributed to the discussion, Teacher 2 contextualized some of what his students had shared by noting that their community had long been famous for a yearly celebration it held based on its heritage of European settlement, but now it was becoming increasingly known for being more diverse than other cities in the area. He noted in his own position as a member of the School Senate (a committee of teachers dedicated to addressing student concerns) that they care about student issues. He informed his students that the School Senate met every week to listen to students' concerns and encouraged his class to come to them if they experienced problems.

At this point, Teacher 2 told his students now that they had heard what the two candidates for mayor thought were issues in their community, he wanted to hear their thoughts. He directed students to talk to a classmate at the desk next to them for 2 min about issues facing their city and then asked them to share their ideas. Students listed issues such as a rising crime rate, homelessness, and a lack of affordable housing. One student asserted that "instead of spending money on stupid Wizard of Oz [decorations in the park], the city could spend money on stoplights and crosswalks" on a main road. Another student echoed this sentiment.

Teacher 2 closed the class period by explaining the idea of newsworthiness to his students and introducing the assignment where they chose articles in their local paper that they did or did not find newsworthy. Using a THINKING PRO slide, he told the class that it is up to consumers to express to news editors what they find newsworthy by interacting with stories they feel are important, and he emphasized that online news allows publishers to get a better feel for what interest people and what they read. After listening to this explanation, one student asked if that's why there are stories about puppies in the news since people always click on those. Another THINKING PRO slide displayed different types of news topics, and Teacher 2 asked students what section of the newspaper would be most interesting to them. Answers included comics, sports, local issues, international affairs, and politics. Teacher 2 concluded by explaining the significance of a newspaper's editorial page and explained how community members could write to the paper about issues they felt mattered. He added that he often found letters from a former student on the editorial page and told the two students who disliked the Wizard of Oz decorations that they should write letters to the paper about this issue. At this point,

Teacher 2 wrapped up the discussion and gave students time to read the local paper and select newsworthy and non-newsworthy articles for their assignment.

Following this class session, Teacher 2 spoke with one of the curriculum developers on-site and indicated that he had been pleased with students' participation and that many students who typically disengaged during class discussions spoke up on this particular day. While the topics addressed in the THINKING PRO curriculum may have inspired greater participation, Teacher 2 also used some notable techniques that contributed to the success of the class discussion. First, by opening the class with a low-stakes activity that allowed students to "warm up" their voices, Teacher 2 created a classroom atmosphere in which students seemed comfortable expressing themselves and thinking through their ideas. At various points, Teacher 2 also paused the discussion to provide background and context to help his students understand causes and effects of issues, such as the ways in which the demographics and culture of their community had changed over time. Finally, as students raised issues or concerns, Teacher 2 consistently provided students with information on productive actions they might take to address problems, such as telling students they could talk to the School Senate about their concerns or write a letter to the newspaper about issues of public spending. By integrating these courses of action into classroom discussions, he linked students' deliberative discourse to meaningful avenues for participation.

6.4.3   Takeaways from Case Study 2

As with School 1, THINKING PRO developers met with the teachers from School 2 following implementation so that the teachers could provide feedback on the curriculum and discuss their experiences. During this session, teachers from School 2 discussed effective teaching strategies and described how the curriculum had helped them provide students with a reliable process for verifying information and analyzing news articles. Teacher 2 commented positively on the balance of self-paced elements and larger group discussions. In particular, he noted that the videos helped to teach the kinds of reading and critical thinking skills that "are hard to teach to a full group," so he liked that students could work through the interactive learning videos individually and see their progress through proficiency levels as they improved. Simultaneously, he saw "the variety" within each lesson as contributing to the overall success of the discussions:

> I like that it's quick. You're going from one thing to the next. That's the big thing that kids need. We couldn't do a discussion for an hour. [It works] having it for 10 to 15 minutes and then going on to a video.

In terms of difficulties, teachers mentioned Internet connectivity disruptions throughout the school day that interrupted access to online THINKING PRO resources; however, teachers also referenced that the variety of

offline THINKING PRO activities, such as class discussion and mapping assignments, allowed them to adjust their schedules as needed.

Following the implementation, Admin 2 also commented on the success of the discussions, noting how teachers were able to contextualize the news for students and "expand the perspectives of those that might not come through in one particular article." Referencing the study that had been done on the community around this time, she also observed how the deliberative discourse students experienced throughout THINKING PRO prepared them to act locally and described it as an "opportunity for some pretty rigorous critical thinking, especially in the area of perspective," which she noted was essential given the rapidly changing demographics of the community. She also referred to the importance of students feeling "like they had enough knowledge about what was going on in their community" and concluded that after their discussions, "they knew then if they wanted to become involved in some small way, I think they had a better understanding of how to go about doing that." Thus, as students learned more about their community from the news, local leaders' websites, their teachers, and their fellow students, they became more aware of the need to engage and potential ways in which they could do so.

Admin 2 initially selected School 2 as a potential site for THINKING PRO because she viewed the teachers' collaborative relationships as conducive to implementing a curriculum that promoted shared practice. Following implementation, she spoke about the potential of the curriculum and the onboarding process to promote collaboration in a variety of school environments, noting,

> on days that I would visit and talk with the teachers, and see the students in the classrooms and the hall talking about [THINKING PRO] that really, really solidified in my mind the fact that it could really be successful no matter what district it was implemented in.

Based on these observations, Admin 2 viewed THINKING PRO as a way to provide new opportunities for shared practice among teachers and also enhance existing collaborations among communities of teachers who share common goals.

6.5   Discussion

The perspectives from these two case studies provide valuable insights into how educational institutions can prepare students to engage with democracy while also promoting collaboration within their school community (McCowan, 2009). In the two schools described in this chapter, the THINKING PRO curriculum, with its use of local news articles and deliberative discourse, allowed teachers to address interdisciplinary skills that are foundational for democratic participation using the lens of students' local communities (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003). The implementation of the curriculum met multiple goals for both teachers and administrators by offering new strategies for addressing state and federal standards in the learning areas of English and social studies (Center for Civic Education, 2014; Common Core State

Standards, 2020; NCSS, 2013; NCTE, 2012) and facilitating shared practice within the school community (Thomas et al., 2019).

6.5.1 Empowerment Through Professional Development

The THINKING PRO implementation created opportunities for professional growth and new learning in ways that aligned with teachers' own preferences for professional development. It has been noted that teachers value having the agency to choose their professional development opportunities and prefer activities that allow them to develop shared practices that address everyday situations since they do not often have time for such collaboration with colleagues in their day-to-day teaching schedules (Jones & Lee, 2014; Thomas et al., 2019). In terms of THINKING PRO implementation, administrators in both cases introduced teachers to the curriculum and gave them the opportunity to make informed decisions as they considered how it might meet their professional needs and classroom demands (McCowan, 2009). Thus, the curriculum was implemented in a way that respected the teachers as professionals: first on the part of administrators who gave teachers the choice on whether to participate and, second, on the part of the THINKING PRO curriculum developers who met with teachers prior to and following implementation to promote shared practice and individualization and to optimize the curriculum based on teachers' classroom experiences. Admin 1 also discussed the value of bringing professional development opportunities into the school where teachers could collaborate with their own colleagues rather than sending teachers to conferences or workshops individually. Overall, these practices empowered teachers and strengthened democratic school culture by giving them choice and ownership in curricular decision-making (Tilhou, 2020).

6.5.2 Local News, Local Issues, Local People

Both teachers and administrators alluded to the importance of the curriculum's use of local news articles as reading material, noting that it was pivotal in teaching reading and critical thinking skills while also sparking civic engagement. These findings reinforce calls for democratic education that immerses students in issues that are relevant and actionable in their own lives (Kahne et al., 2016, Kahne & Westheimer, 2003). Teachers observed that local news affected their students personally and that such a connection was vital to piquing their interest. One teacher argued that her students could not tell her "this is boring" during these lessons because the news article they were reading could be about the person sitting right next to them, which "makes it real for them." Additionally, for most assignments students could search for local news articles that interested them, which contributed to a learner-centered classroom environment where students had agency and choice (McCombs & Miller,

2007). Beyond connecting with students' lives and interests, the use of local news and issues placed civic engagement in students' "own backyard." Collaborations between the *New York Times* and high school educators have shown that teens often note a lack of prior knowledge about government or politics as a barrier to engaging with the news (Schulten, 2018). Because local news occurs in a more familiar context, it can be advantageous in giving young learners opportunities to engage with news about which they have more prior knowledge (Feucht et al., 2021, in press; Michaelson, 2020).

The local focus of THINKING PRO also contributed to the prospect of students using their understanding of the news to take informed action. Based on statements from high school students who participated in the *New York Times* "News Diet" challenge, young readers often avoid what they view as the negativity of the news but express more positive feelings about the news when they feel as if there is a course of action to address the issues they see presented (Schulten, 2018). By centering discussions on issues in the school and local community, THINKING PRO gave students more agency to act in confronting and solving problems in a local context (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003; Michaelson, 2020). Further, Admin 2 noted that studies have shown that people in their area participate in local government at very high rates, yet there is a lack of curricula and standards that focus on local civic engagement; thus, curricula like THINKING PRO are vital to prepare students to effectively participate at the local level.

6.5.3   Localized Curriculum

In both case studies, implementing THINKING PRO helped administrators and teachers work toward specific goals based on the differing demographics of their respective school communities. As Admin 1 spoke of the homogeneity of School 1, she noted the need to promote tolerance in this environment, and during the class discussion on the topic of leadership, Teacher 1 stressed themes of inclusion as her students discussed what it meant to be a positive leader (rather than a bully) in their school community, as well as in the political arena. In her reflections on these class discussions, Teacher 1 praised these conversations about local issues as a spark for getting students to "think outside of the classroom" and make these types of connections between the personal and the global. THINKING PRO resonated differently in School 2 due to a focus on the changing demographics of their community. In this case, Teacher 2 was able to bring discussions that had been occurring in the community into the classroom so that students could deliberate about the issues that mattered to them and learn how to take informed action to address local problems (Feucht & Michaelson, accepted). The latter case also demonstrated how class discussions may flourish when teachers scaffold students' knowledge of the community, as was the case when Teacher 2 showed mayoral candidates discussing issues prior to asking students to do the same. Though Teachers 1 and 2 used different strategies to engage their students, both established conditions for deliberative

discourse by decentralizing their own authority and emphasizing the vitality of their students' voices in providing new perspectives and explaining their reasoning (Feucht, 2010; Johnston & Nicholls, 1995; Rawls, 1997; Tilhou, 2020). Further, the success of these differing implementations based on the distinct needs of the two communities reflects the importance of curricula that value and capitalize on teachers' knowledge of their students and the environments in which they teach (McCowan, 2009).

Just as the implementation addressed different goals in regard to community demographics, it also facilitated different types of collaborative discourse between teachers based on faculty experiences and relationships. By integrating professional development and an interdisciplinary curriculum into teachers' own place of practice, teachers were able to incorporate outside perspectives into their own classrooms while also building shared practices with their colleagues who best understood the student population, school goals, and surrounding community dynamics (Garet et al., 2001; Glazer & Hannafin, 2006). At School 1, these collaborations resulted in discussion and coordination of schedules among social studies teachers and an even more extensive expert-novice teacher collaboration between the two English teachers, who discussed assignments, shared resources, and briefed one another on their classroom successes and challenges between class periods. The implementation process in School 2 resulted in cross-disciplinary collaboration due to a school-wide focus on teaching interdisciplinary skills across key areas, enabling collaboration, and preparing students for their future participation as citizens, students, and workers. In each case, administrators and teachers capitalized on existing relationships and knowledge by coming together as fellow members of the school community and adapting the curriculum to serve their local needs.

6.5.4 Obstacles and Recommendations

The THINKING PRO implementation was successful in many regards, but lessons learned throughout the process will enhance future implementations. Both administrators noted the difficulty of recruiting teachers to participate in adopting a new curriculum; however, each found approaches that worked for their school districts. Admin 1 noted that teachers can become tied to a "certain curriculum, scope, and sequence" over time; thus, she offered teachers the chance to preview the curriculum, customize it to their needs, and then make the choice of whether or not to participate. In the end, teachers who adopted the curriculum used between 80% and 100% of its features and observed that many of the lessons in THINKING PRO could be used to substitute or supplement their own lessons in the future. Admin 2 similarly noted that it can be difficult to convince teachers that trying out a new curriculum is worth the investment of class time when they have so many standards to meet each school year. However, she noted that the flexibility of THINKING PRO showed teachers that they do not necessarily have to give up what they are doing; rather, "this is another way that they can weave that extensive piece of reading,

writing, and building critical thinking skills into their content and their units of instruction."

Additionally, Admin 2 purposefully suggested the THINKING PRO implementation in a school where she knew teachers would be enthusiastic about trying something new and noted that if these teachers found the program successful, then they could share their experiences with other teachers. Admin 2 indicated that this teacher-to-teacher testimony would be the most meaningful way of spreading the word about THINKING PRO since it would come from fellow practitioners. Between coordinating the implementation with teachers and selecting teachers who they felt would be receptive to the program, both administrators invested considerable time and effort, illustrating McCowan's (2009) point that "bottom-up development of pedagogical practice" inevitably requires "some degree top-down implementation" (p. 165). At the same time, school leaders must resist overly systematic approaches to implementing curricula and, instead, allow teachers the time they need for consideration, questioning, and collaboration if they are to authentically buy into a new curricular initiative. Despite holding different positions in disparate communities, both of the administrators in this study contributed to the success of the project by understanding and considering the needs of the teachers with whom they worked: they appreciated the everyday challenges the teachers faced, valued their experience as professionals, and capitalized on teacher-to-teacher relationships in adopting THINKING PRO (Jones & Lee, 2014).

In terms of the curriculum itself, the version of THINKING PRO that was implemented in these two cases focused on analytical skills, such as breaking down components of news articles (e.g., claims, evidence, and sources) and the community (e.g., who, what, and where) in order to better understand each piece. Future goals for the curriculum include the development of additional follow-up units to deepen students' critical thinking and participation by moving beyond analysis of news articles and community issues and into critical evaluation of news sources and the creation of plans for informed actions (Anderson et al., 2001; Feucht & Michaelson, accepted; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003; NCSS, 2013). Future plans also include collaborating with external evaluators to obtain more data on outcomes and more rigorously assess the impact of THINKING PRO on students' critical thinking skills.

To make the most of collaborative opportunities, the THINKING PRO implementation process can be revisited as well. Over the course of the original implementation, participating teachers were asked to check in with the curriculum developers on a daily basis to record their classroom experiences and offer insight on how to best optimize THINKING PRO for classroom use. While these exchanges provided valuable information to the THINKING PRO developers and offered teachers a chance to reflect on their practice, future implementations could encourage a more collaborative medium to enhance teachers' reflective thinking and deepen their understanding (Camburn, 2010; Mann & Walsh, 2013). For instance, individual reflection could be paired with or transformed into opportunities for collaborative discourse between teachers through the use of document sharing, discussions, or wikis. In this way, the opportunities for shared practice and customization that contributed to success in the original implementation can be integrated more

purposefully into the process for future teachers. In order to further facilitate shared practice, enable collaborative discourse, support classroom implementation, and share resources, the development of a professional learning community (PLC) for THINKING PRO is also underway.

6.6 Conclusion

The two case studies described in this chapter provide insights into how educators can join together in the effort to prepare citizens to engage with democracy for the common good. THINKING PRO incorporates research-based, ready-to-use instructional videos, activities, and discussion prompts to teach reading and critical thinking skills while also offering elements of flexibility and choice for both students and teachers. In the two cases described, teachers customized this curriculum to fit their students' interests and prior knowledge, to work with their classroom schedule and goals, and to support opportunities for discussion. Systems of democracy are predicated on the idea that nations are stronger when individuals' voices are heard; the same can be said for communities and schools (Dewey, 1916; Rawls, 1997). For this reason, educational initiatives must be grounded not only in research-based practices but also tap into teachers' insights concerning their schools and their students so that the resulting content that they create and deliver is localized, personalized, and relevant to the communities in which they teach (McCowan, 2009; Thomas et al., 2019). When educational institutions support teachers in collaborating to develop practices that encourage students to exercise critical thinking and engage in deliberative discourse about their communities, they empower teachers to make curricula their own and, in turn, empower students to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

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Florian C. Feucht, PhD, is Full Professor of Educational Psychologies and Peace Education at the University of Toledo, Ohio, and the founder of Thinking Habitats. His area of expertise is curriculum development in the overlap of cognitive psychology. Currently, his work focuses on reading comprehension, critical thinking, news media literacy, and civic engagement in high school students.

M. Kate Michaelson, PhD, is a curriculum developer and instructional designer with Thinking Habitats. She has a background in technical writing and English education. Her research interests include high school students' epistemic beliefs about the news, and her current work focuses on strategies for teaching critical thinking and news media literacy.

Regina Rotshtein, PhD, is a curriculum researcher and developer at Thinking Habitats. Her research interests are critical thinking and theory-evidence coordination in contexts of conflicting information. Currently, her work focuses on research design, data collection, and data analysis of the implementation of a curriculum to improve high school students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, news media literacy, and civic engagement.

Sarah Bargardi, MEd, is an educational consultant and curriculum developer with Thinking Habitats. Her research interests include looking at connections between resilience, growth mindset, and college and career readiness. With a background in classroom teaching and instructional coaching, her current work focuses on ways to support educators as they endeavor to teach news media literacy skills and support civic engagement in the high school classroom.

Rebecca Bush, MEd, is an assistant professor of teacher education and also serves as a field instructor of elementary and secondary social studies pre-service teachers at Michigan State University. An active social studies leader with several state and national social studies organizations, she assists teachers K-12 with curriculum development and assessment design.

Julia McBride, MEd, is the principal at Pinckney Community High School in Pinckney, Michigan. Prior to this role, she taught in Chicago and Detroit and spent 6 years with New Tech Network as a school development coach and the director of school leadership. Since earning a specialization in race, class, and gender from the University of Michigan in 2004, her work has centered around empowering adults and students to lead and ensuring all learners have access to what they need to thrive.

Part III
Young Adulthood

Chapter 7
Democracy Learning Through Participation in Upper Secondary Education in Schools and Regulated Company Training

Gabriela Maria Höhns

Abstract This chapter explores the potential of Basil Bernstein's conceptual language for research on education for democratic citizenship (EDC). It focuses particularly on EDC 'learning through', that is, learners' active participation in the development of their present environment, and a democratic teaching-learning pedagogic relationship. With Bernstein's conceptual tools, the chapter investigates the structurally given possibilities and boundaries for learners' participation in institutions, such as upper secondary schools in Sweden and companies in Germany's dual system (DS) of vocational education. It traces limited possibilities for EDC 'learning through' in schools to a fundamental boundary between school and the outside world that may ease academic learning but disadvantages vocational learning. A contrasting systematic and non-circular analysis of regulated German company transmission reveals that, there, social structurings foster learners' active participation in the development of their learning, yet tensions arise between working in the company and learning. Bernstein (Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity, Revised edn. Rowman & Littlefield, Boston, 2000) regards participation as one of three interrelated pedagogic rights and warns not to focus on it to the detriment of, for instance, enhancement. The chapter concludes that education for life in a modern democratic society should offer enhancement and participation for vocational and academic learners, within the relative structural limitations of educational contexts.

Keywords Upper secondary education · Dual system · Realism · Activism · Learner participation

G. M. Höhns (✉)
Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training), Bonn, Germany
e-mail: HoehnsGabriela@gmx.de

137

7.1   Introduction

Much of the literature on participation in education takes the social structuring of education for granted: Education is equalized with schooling (cf., e.g. Reid & Nikel, 2008, p. 39; also Chisholm, 1996, p. 199, with regard to Anglophone countries). Roger Hart (2008, p. 20) characterized schooling as children's removal from participation in communities with adults and their segregation by age, which occurred 'for the past one hundred years or so... in North America and Europe', whereas 'children all over the world traditionally learned with adults through a kind of "apprenticeship", or participation, in work'. Put differently, Hart reminded researchers that scholastic education is locally and temporally contingent and suggested that it could be otherwise. Indeed, in Germany (and in a few other countries), another modality of formal education exists besides upper secondary schooling: the dual system (DS) of vocational education with its roots in medieval craft training. There, the training company is the first transmission site, and the obligatory vocational school comes second. Knowledge (including also skills and abilities), in the DS, is organized by *Berufe* (occupations; the singular is *Beruf*). This chapter investigates, in a systematic and rule-related way, into these two systems of formal education, the scholastic and the DS. It examines their central learning sites, the school and the training company, respectively, as social structures, which establish boundaries for the legitimate pedagogic interaction that takes place within and so open up or limit possibilities for learners' participation in the development of this interaction.

Democracy requires participants, people who actively decide to participate, no matter whether alone or with others, whether deliberatively or as activists, in political contexts and in industrial democracy (cf., e.g. Young, 2001; Walzer, 1999). Educational policy conceives of participation in education as one of the ways for young people's induction into an open and democratic society or for education for democratic citizenship (EDC). In an All-European Study on national EDC policies (Birzea et al., 2004), the Council of Europe called this way of EDC 'learning through' (in contrast to 'learning about', i.e. lessons on citizenship-related subjects, such as processes and structures of political life, and 'learning for': attitudes and soft skills required for democratic cohabitation). Scandinavian countries, in particular, made EDC 'learning through' an express policy goal (cf., e.g. Birzea et al., 2004; Lundahl, 2011; Schnack, 2008).

Democratic teaching and learning approaches imply that learners can and do successfully influence the content of lessons and teaching methods. For young people who choose a vocational pathway and are deemed to be and/or consider themselves, compared to students in academic programmes, more hands-on and practical, 'learning through' or learning by experience should be a particularly suitable form of EDC. Consequently, this chapter puts a special gloss on vocational learners' agency in the teaching and learning relationship within the two institutional settings.

A political declaration of EDC 'learning through' as 'ought-to-be' does not determine results. Birzea et al. (2004, p. 10) revealed a 'real gap between declarations and what happens in practice'. Researchers from Scandinavia, such as Gordon

(e.g. 2006) and Öhrn et al. (2011), traced the obstruction of students' living democracy back to the structurally given possibilities of schooling.

For their argument, Öhrn and colleagues drew on Bernstein's (e.g. 1990, 2000) code theory, after testing several other theories to explain their complex and contradictory findings from an ethnographic study into EDC learning, including 'learning through', in two Swedish schools with both general and vocational programmes. Bernstein's code is a function of classification (more or less strong boundaries, established in power struggles) and framing (more or less strong control over interaction within these boundaries). Thus, the code theory relates agency to social structure and underlying power relations. Öhrn et al. (2011, p. 150) found that students' effective participation in the teaching and learning, in Bernstein's terms, students' effective control over the framing relations, was obstructed by 'the strong classification and framing of upper secondary education', in particular the strong classification of teachers and of knowledge. Simple weakenings led but to a reproduction of the strong realization forms. Consequently, Öhrn and colleagues suggested that the obstruction of students' effective participation or EDC 'learning through' is related to a fundamental principle of schooling, the strong boundary to the external world or what Hart (2008) called children's removal from participation in communities with adults.

This chapter follows Öhrn's and colleagues' reference to Bernstein's code theory and, thereby, adopts a realist philosophy with a primacy of theory over the empirical (cf., e.g. Bhaskar, 1975; Sayer, 1992). Central theoretical concepts are the 'code' just explained and the 'pedagogic discourse', Bernstein's conceptualization of the medium linking macro- and micro-social levels by relaying, through its differential shape, 'patterns of dominance external to itself' (Bernstein, 1990, p. 169). In formal education, such as schooling and regulated company transmission in Germany's DS, an official pedagogic discourse (OPD), created from power struggles at a macro-social level, establishes boundaries for legitimate pedagogic interaction at the micro-level, without determining it. Knowledge, agents and pedagogic communication are fundamental elements of any pedagogic interaction, regardless of an educational system's historic or cultural specificities. Agents, in educational contexts, are transmitters (in schools, teachers; in companies, trainers) and acquirers (in schools, students; in companies, trainees/apprentices). A code analysis of these categories, which uses classification and framing as analytical tools in a systematic, rule-related and non-circular way, permits this chapter to compare schooling and regulated German company training.

Following Bernstein's positioning theory, this chapter regards acquirers, including vocational students and trainees/apprentices, but also transmitters, as competent agents 'working from the basis of his or her own values and commitments within a given structural context' (Moore, 1984, p. 174). Given the different macro-social power relations and the differently shaped pedagogic discourse for schooling and the DS, different boundaries for legitimate pedagogic interaction (framing) and thus different possibilities for acquirers' participation and EDC 'learning through' are expectable. Indeed, prior Bernstein-based research into the DS revealed that in regulated company training, acquirers can and do take control over the pedagogic

interaction (cf. Höhns, 2018, referring to Höhns, 2016, in press, referring to Moore, 1984). When trainees/apprentices successfully influence the teaching and learning, they experience EDC 'learning through', possibly without realizing it. The DS's pedagogic discourse, which conceptualizes transmitters and knowledge as classified, arguably fosters trainees'/apprentices' control-taking.

Participation, for Bernstein, is one of three interrelated 'pedagogic rights', together with 'enhancement' and 'inclusion'. Participation is about 'a practice that must have outcomes. The third right, then, is the right to participate in procedures whereby order is constructed, maintained and changed' (Bernstein, 2000, p. xxff). Like the Council of Europe and Scandinavian policymakers, Bernstein (ibid.) normatively sees participation and its acquisition by experience as a condition for civic discourse and practice. Frandji and Vitale (2016, p. 15f) noted that Bernstein's right to participation exists 'not only at the level of discourse and reflection, but also at the level of practice, both in and beyond school'. They warned, however, against a one-sided focus on 'democracy as a matter of integration and communicative participation' (op. cit., p. 20) to the detriment of enhancement. Put differently, enhancement, which, within Bernstein's theory, implies 'a cognitive and social operation of revision that draws the individual beyond themselves' (op. cit., p. 21), supposedly can be impaired in case of a too strong focus on participation or on EDC 'learning through'. 'Those subject to… [a] limitation of pedagogic democratic rights must be given good reason (and possibly other rights) if they are to have confidence in the present and belief in the future' (Bernstein, 2000, p. xxv). Focussing on the possibilities for participation in different educational contexts, this chapter narrows Bernstein's perspective on pedagogic rights preliminarily but mentions enhancement in passing and in the final discussion.

The chapter, first, explains central concepts of Bernstein's code theory, such as classification, framing, pedagogic discourse and ways of non-circular research with Bernstein's conceptual language. Second, it recaps Öhrn et al.'s (2011) central findings with a focus on students' various attempts to take influence, the means and aspired changes, and on the related activities of teachers, head teachers and other agents. Third, it redescribes these findings in the code theory's conceptual language, as modalities of classifications and framing, and highlights the strong classifications of knowledge and agents as factors obstructing EDC 'learning through' in schools. Next, a summary of Bernstein-based research in Germany's DS (Höhns, 2018, 2019) highlights trainees'/apprentices' self-reported control-taking over the framing relations and its legitimation in the DS's underlying pedagogic discourse and power relations. An ensuing brief analysis of the classifications of knowledge and agents in the DS suggests that these strengthen the position of trainees/apprentices in the company, i.e. empower them. The final section summarizes the different code realizations in schools and training companies and their different effects on learners' pedagogic rights to participation and to enhancement. Arguably, schooling and regulated company training both have their own structural impediments and assets, but education for life in a modern democratic society should offer enhancement and participation for all learners.

7.2 Theory and Method

Bernstein's mode of theorizing and researching is 'a form of sociological realism in the Durkheimian mode. In this respect, it stands apart from both positivism and constructionism' (Moore & Muller, 2002, p. 635). This stance implies a primacy of theory over the empirical and a focus on generative mechanisms, i.e. underlying structures that exist independently of our knowledge of them but that take effect through human agency. One such mechanism is Basil Bernstein's (e.g. 1990, 2000) 'code', a function of 'classification' (relations between, C) and 'framing' (relations within, F). By systematically translating the empirical characteristics of a transmission context obstructing participation, as uncovered by Öhrn et al. (2011), into Bernstein's conceptual language as a realization form of the principle ±C/±F, this chapter switches 'from empirical description to theoretic conceptualization. The difference between these languages is in their generative power in modelling social relations and integrating empirical data' (Moore, 2006, p. 32). To model theoretically and to find in the world realizations of C and F that would foster participation, and to do so in a transparent, systematic and verifiable way, requires an understanding of Bernstein's conceptual language and the rules by which to work with it.

Framing (F) is Bernstein's analytical concept for the locus of control within a division of labour, for instance, in the teacher-pupil relationship in a pedagogic interaction. Framing can take different modalities or strengths, in shorthand: ±F. The recognition rule is: Strong framing implies strong control of the dominant partner in the interaction; weak framing implies participation of the weaker partner. 'Fundamentally framing regulates the distribution of power *within* the pedagogic context over the social order, relation and identity (hierarchical rules) and over the competences to be acquired (discursive rules)' (Swope, 1992, p. 40). Furthermore, Bernstein (1990, p. 108) explained: 'Rules of social order, relation, and identity are embedded in rules of discursive order (selection, sequence, pace, and criteria). The first we have called *regulative* and the second *instructional* discourse' (emphasis original; GH). This means that, together with any instructional discourse, which is describable by the categories selection/sequencing and pacing of learning contents and evaluative criteria, rules of social order and values are tacitly transmitted. The framing strengths of regulative and instructional discourse can change independently. 'But where there is weak framing over the instructional discourse, there must be weak framing over the regulative discourse' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 13).

Classification (C) is Bernstein's analytical concept for boundaries between agents and categories in one set. Boundaries circumscribe the space within which the pedagogic interaction, the framing relation, is situated. Classifications are created in power struggles between agents occupying different positions in a social division of labour. The boundary rule is: 'things must be kept apart: things must be put together… How things are put together depends upon the formulation of the organizing principle to generate a range of forms' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 123f). Depending on the strength or permeability of the boundary, classifications range between stronger and weaker (±C). 'In the case of weak classification there is an

integration of generative principles, whereas in the case of strong classification the principles are kept apart and are differently specialized' (Bernstein, 1990, p. 195). Bernstein's famous 'code' is a function of ±C/±F. This function is itself embedded into a fundamental, basic classification C, which 'could refer to the strength of the classification between education and production, which we consider to be the fundamental classificatory relation of education' (Bernstein, 1990, p 215). This fundamental classificatory relation of education is consistent with Hart's (2008, p. 20) binary of informal learning through 'everyday participatory activities with adults in their communities' as opposed to children's removal from such activities due to the creation of schools.

Within educational contexts, central categories are knowledge and agents. Both are describable by classification values:

- School knowledge can be classified from non-school or everyday knowledge by the form of its curricular organization. Bernstein (2000, Ch. 9) explained that everyday knowledge is segmentally organized, i.e. without a necessary connection between what is learned in the different segments. The classification of school knowledge from non-school knowledge is strong, when the curriculum is organized vertically. This means that 'knowledges' build on each other systematically, with a clear organizing principle, e.g. natural sciences. The classification is termed weaker, when the curriculum is organized horizontally (e.g. in the social sciences, where 'knowledges' are horizontally aligned; cf. Bernstein, 2000, Ch. 9). The 'knowledges' in vocational programmes are per se less strongly classified from everyday knowledge than those in academic programmes, given the fundamentally strong classification between school and the world of work. Yet a vocational programme that transmits a clear identity and prepares learners for a distinct occupation or set of occupations has to organize its knowledges according to an inherent principle, so that knowledge becomes more strongly classified from everyday knowledge than that in a vocational programme leading to more general qualifications.
- Subdivisions of agents are transmitters and acquirers. Teachers are transmitters specialized in pedagogy and thus set apart (classified) from agents outside the school context (C+). This implies the possibility of other categories of transmitters, such as representatives of social groups or company trainers. Students are acquirers in a school context who, when academically strong, are strongly classified (C+) from agents in the world of work and in the local community. Academically weak or disinterested students are weakly classified (C−).

Classifications of knowledge and agents in the DS will be discussed at the end of the chapter:

> As Cs and Fs change in values, from strong to weak, then there are changes in organisational practices, changes in discursive practices, changes in transmission practices, changes in psychic defences, changes in the concepts of the teacher, changes in the concepts of the pupils, changes in the concepts of knowledge itself, and changes in the forms of expected pedagogic consciousness. (Bernstein, 2000, p. 15)

How, for instance, transmitters and acquirers are conceptualized in terms of C and F, what kind of knowledge is valued, what pedagogic consciousness is expected and what psychic defences (opposition) arise, in short, which modality of ±C/±F is actualized in a given society at a given time, depend on the society's dominant principles. These 'specify basic principles of order, relation, and identity, setting at least their outer boundaries and in certain contexts their inner limits' (Bernstein, 1990, p. 196), and are an expression of dominant agents, who are responsible 'for creating, maintaining, and changing official pedagogic discourse' (ibid.). Dominant agents behind the pedagogic discourse (PD) for scholastic education are the state and a 'pedagogic field'. In the DS, dominant agents are the social partners (employers' and employees' representatives together with the state in obligatory consensus) (Höhns, 2016).

The PD manifests itself in the answers that the three educational message systems curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation give to the question, 'Who may transmit what to whom and under what conditions?' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 31). These answers reflect assumptions of the dominant agents about who children (and transmitters, for that matter) are and should become, that is, they create imaginary subjects. Concurrently, they establish a space-time-discourse relation that sets up boundaries for legitimate pedagogic interaction (cf., e.g. Bernstein, 1990, Ch. 5). PD is the principle that embeds the instructional in the regulative discourse. Together with learning contents, PD transmits power relations and positionings through the code:

> Codes with particular classification and framing values are the means available for institutionalizing and relaying the dominant principles of a social formation in formal education. These codes have regulative consequences for the social distribution of their acquisition and for the formation of the consciousness of those who function in the specialized agencies of the field of symbolic control... The form these codes take, their mode of regulation, varies according to the form of the dominant principle (capitalist, collectivist, dictatorship). (Bernstein, 1990, p. 40f.)

For an effective democracy, Bernstein's (2000, p. xx) first condition is, axiomatically, that 'people must feel that they have a stake in society', both in the sense of receiving and of giving something, and 'Second, people must have confidence that the political arrangements they create will realise this stake'. This applies analogously to education: Parents and students must feel that they have a stake, and they must have confidence that the arrangements of the school (or institutionalized education, generally; GH) will realize this stake (ibid.). The arrangements of education are the three interrelated 'message systems', curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, and the 'pedagogic discourse' regulating these systems. Within the construction and articulation of the three message systems, for instance, the categories of transmitters and acquirers are constructed and articulated in terms of Cs and Fs (cf. Moore, 1984, p. 404). The pedagogic discourse and these constructions have to ensure, in a democracy, what Bernstein terms, in keeping with the Council of Europe and other international organizations, the pedagogic rights to enhancement, inclusion and participation for all young people.

With classification and framing as analytical tools, different research directions become possible (cf. Moore, 2006). One direction is systematic research into new

empirical contexts to corroborate and refine the theory or to introduce modifications and changes. For instance, a code analysis of science-education reform texts in different socio-political contexts in Portugal (Neves & Morais, 2001) showed that 'changes in the dominant principles of society give rise, in general, to changes in the sociological messages transmitted by the pedagogic discourse of syllabuses and textbooks' (op. cit., p. 242). Examples for introducing modifications to the theory are Hoadley (e.g. 2006) and Höhns' (2018) research into the framing relations in training companies in Germany's DS. Such research is to be done in a move between deductive and inductive, in an 'iterative dialogue between the data and the theory' (Morais & Neves, e.g. 2010). Bernstein (2000, p. 133ff) speaks of two languages of description, to recognize the theoretical concepts in the empirical world in a non-circular way and to allow the real world to speak back to the theory.

Another approach is the theoretical development of ways of doing education, which are not or not yet known empirically. This means to 'engage... with the world by acknowledging what is absent from it through a modelling of what is present' (Moore, 2006, p. 35). For instance, Moore (1984) theoretically developed an oppositional modality of education. Analysing a study on different forms of community education, Moore identified different categories of publics entering the school: private citizens (such as parents), supervisors, functionaries and representatives of occupational roles. Classifications of transmitters weakened, yet all these categories unfolded their activities under the auspices of teachers. Concurrently, Moore noted a change in the strength of classification of knowledge: The greater the input of these categories, the higher the status of non-school knowledge. Moreover, the degree of control of categories of publics over the transmission process increased (the framing relations weakened) (cf. op. cit., p. 399f). Moore theoretically shifted these classifications further, so that agents from the community, possibly a broad-based socio-occupational community, would direct activities, 'drawing upon the resources of the school… according to their own criteria of relevance' (Moore, 1984, p. 399). This move, Moore (op. cit., p. 406) argued, signifies not just a change of one group of agents to another. Rather it 'signifies a fundamental change in the principle regulating who can be a transmitter and what counts as a valid transmission'. The control over the pedagogic interaction (framing) would concurrently weaken and shift to the acquirers, so that, eventually, 'acquirers elect for membership of categories (and in so doing generate categories)' (op. cit., p. 407). The categories that acquirers would generate are transmitters and educational knowledge. As 'all agents can in principle freely exchange knowledges regardless of social hierarchy' (op. cit., p. 408), in one and the same context, acquirers can be transmitters and vice versa. In short, Moore constructed an oppositional modality of education, unknown to him in reality, from the central categories of education (transmitters, acquirers and knowledge) by denoting their varying modalities of C and F in a study on different modes of scholastic education and theoretically shifting them further, beyond the boundaries of educational (scholastic) orthodoxy. Moore's theoretical model helped to understand puzzling findings concerning acquirers' reported control-taking over the hierarchical relations in German-regulated company transmission (Höhns, 2019).

A third research direction is to develop medium-range concepts as modalities of C and F. For instance, Moore (2006) explained how, from observations in school classes and with a focus on characteristics by which C and F come to show, Bernstein systematically developed the concepts visible and invisible pedagogy. Bernstein (2000, p. 123) stressed that in the framework of his theory, binaries such as these are not ideal types but opposing forms constructed 'by a principle which generates sets of relations by which any one form may be only *one of the forms* the principle may regulate'. In a similar way, this chapter suggests to go beyond Hart's (2008) binary of children's segregation in schooling vs. informal learning through participation. Öhrn and colleagues made plain that relevant characteristics by which C and F come to show are transmitters, acquirers, knowledge and the pedagogic interaction. Their conclusion that the realization of these characteristics as strongly classified obstructs learners' participation permits this chapter to think about and recognize in the world other realization forms of the principle ±C/±F that would, to a greater or lesser extent, enable students' participation. Thus, Hart's (2008) binary of children's segregation in schooling vs. informal learning through participation can become opposing forms.

7.3 EDC in Swedish Schools: Summary of a Study

With a comprehensive ethnographic study, Öhrn et al. (2011) set out 'to develop knowledge about the content and organization of teaching and learning, as well as attempts by students to actively discuss and influence their schooling'. They looked for instances of EDC 'learning about', 'for' and 'through' in upper secondary schools in different Swedish towns and also noted unintended side effects of aspired students' participation in the development of their surroundings. Two schools ran both general and vocational programmes. During 1 year, researchers observed classes in a natural science, a social science and a vehicle programme as well as in a child and recreation programme and interviewed students and teachers individually and in groups. This section summarizes extensive empirical descriptions with a gloss on the 'learning through' and on the categories later to be described in terms of their classification and framing.

In the social science programme, the only programme where the functioning and processes of democracy were part of the curriculum and where, early on in the year, a teacher gave deliberate space for learners' participation, students were not interested in exercising democratic influence in class. Instead, they preferred clear indications of what is a right answer, as this made learning more effective and safer for them. Consequently, in the course of the year, pedagogic practice became more teacher- and fact-centred, as Rosvall (2011a, p. 90) noted. The social science students were 'conceptualized towards a citizen that might be involved later' (op. cit., p. 89). The observations in the social science programme can be called EDC 'learning about' and 'learning for' but not 'learning through'.

In the natural science and the vehicle programme, students' attempts to take collective influence received informal support from teachers, who explained democratic procedures and rules. Nevertheless, in both cases, the attempts failed. The natural science class teacher, whom parents had informed that the students suffered from too rapid advances in mathematics, explained during a class hour how to conduct fair negotiations. Consequently, a delegation set out to negotiate a pace reduction. However, the mathematics teacher replied that his classes were designed for strong students and mathematics had to be taught progressively in a predetermined order, so that nothing could be changed (Hjelmér, 2011a, pp. 40ff, 44). Eventually, the students gave up their initiative.

The vehicle students, in contrast, demanded more mathematics lessons, to compensate frequent cancellations due to teacher's illness. They agreed that knowledge of core subjects such as mathematics was 'essential for the ability to influence career choice, develop economic freedom and develop personal knowledge as a form for capital' (Rosvall, 2011b, p. 104). Put differently, the vehicle students, like the social science students, trusted the validity of the curriculum and that it would contribute to their enhancement, giving them what they needed for their adult life. Nevertheless, their demands remained unfulfilled. What happened? A vehicle mechanics teacher, who, from earlier work experience in industry, knew about trade union meetings procedures, helped the students to turn a class council into a formal meeting. However, for bringing such non-school knowledge into the school, the teacher had already experienced problems, and he requested the students to observe secrecy about who taught them these procedures. A meeting protocol did not materialize, and students took their request to the head teacher informally. The head teacher put the students off and, to the researcher, justified the non-change, regardless of the curriculum and underlying assumptions, with students' high absenteeism in mathematics, that is, with their lack of interest (cf. op. cit., in particular, pp. 102f). In sum, the vehicle students informally learned about (industrial) democracy but failed with their attempt to 'learn through', to introduce a change by way of democratic procedures. For the remaining observation period, the vehicle students 'chose a silent protest… of withdrawing from the lessons' (op. cit., p. 104) and demonstrated an 'apparent progressive passivity' (op. cit., p. 110).

In the child and recreation programme, students' attempts to influence the teaching and learning concerned too rapid advances in computer classes but did not lead to EDC learning in any form. Instead, parents and the class teachers forwarded students' complaints to the head teacher, and she immediately supported the complaint, taking sides against the computer teacher. In individual interviews with the researcher, few students warned about a likely dilution of the curriculum owing to speed reduction. Indeed, one out of five modules was not taught at the end of the year (cf. Hjelmér, 2011b).

In sum, the Swedish study uncovered diverse and contradictory goals and outcomes of students' aspired participation. How democratic behaviour was taught (in class, ad hoc or not at all) seemed to be irrelevant for the success of students' attempts to influence the teaching and learning. On the contrary, the greatest success was achieved in the child and recreation programme, where rules of democratic

participation were bypassed. A re-description in the language of Bernstein's code theory systematically unveils the structural impediments that obstruct students' lived democracy in schools.

7.4   Re-description in the Language of the Theory

In the language of Bernstein's code theory, the Swedish students' activities are attempts of control-taking over the framing relations, more precisely, over the instructional discourse. Indeed, this is what students encounter in their immediate learning environment (although the social science students considered this environment to be not 'real' (cf. Rosvall, 2011a, p. 87f)). Social science students succeeded in strengthening the evaluative rules, at the expense of democratic participation. They exercised conscious nonparticipation. Child and recreation students succeeded in weakening the pacing, at the expense of getting the full curriculum and even bypassing democratic procedures. Vehicle students failed to strengthen the pacing, while natural sciences students failed to weaken it. A Bernsteinian re-description also makes visible what did not happen: Changes concerning the regulative discourse, the teacher-student relationship, were not aspired. What were the classifications that established the boundaries for students' activities? Central categories to be classified are knowledge and agents (students and teachers).

Since a vertically organized curriculum ensures a stronger classification of school knowledge from everyday knowledge than does a horizontally organized curriculum, the natural sciences programme is most strongly classified, and the social science programme less so. This means that the recognition of specific curricular demands is more difficult in the social science programme. From the two vocational programmes in the Swedish study, the vehicle programme transmits a clear identity and directs students towards a distinct (set of) occupations, with general educational subjects such as Swedish, English and mathematics closely related to the vocational qualification (e.g. Swedish for vehicle students). Its knowledges, thus, are more strongly classified than those in the child and recreation programme, which leads to a more general qualification, with a less strong relation, i.e. a more horizontal alignment, between the knowledge segments in the curriculum. Self-reflections of teachers and students and even the distribution of spaces revealed a higher prestige of the more strongly classified (academic) programmes (cf. Rosvall, 2011a, p. 73; Hjelmér, 2011b, p. 54).

More prestigious programmes and more strongly classified curricula are less amenable to dilutions of the curriculum. This explains the failure of the natural science students to weaken the pacing, the success of the social science students to strengthen the evaluative criteria for their less strongly classified, but prestigious, programme and the success of the child and recreation programme students to weaken the pacing and dilute their weakly classified curriculum. But the vehicle students' failure to receive more mathematics lessons still remains a puzzle. As their

curriculum is comparatively strongly classified, they should have reached a different outcome, a compensation for cancelled mathematics lessons.

A consideration of teachers' perceptions of the classification of students from non-students (agents outside the school) eventually solves the puzzle. The natural science teacher perceived his students as being or becoming academically strong (C+) and, consequently, disregarded the students' plea for slower pacing. The social science teacher agreed with his students who saw themselves as aspiring high academic achievements (C+) and adjusted his teaching accordingly (i.e. the pedagogic practice became more fact- and teacher-centred, so that higher achievements would be easier to gain). The head teacher's reference to the vehicle students' high absenteeism in mathematics classes signalled that he perceived them as academically weak and disinterested (C−), notwithstanding the students' self-perception as aspiring high academic achievements to become successful vehicle mechanics and notwithstanding assumptions underlying the curriculum. This explains the vehicle students' failure to receive compensation for cancelled mathematics lessons. In a different school, the head teacher agreed with the class teacher and parents that the students in the child and recreation programme were academically weak and in need of protection (C−), so that a dilution of the computer classes curriculum became acceptable. In sum, in conflicting perceptions about students' classifications, the teachers' perception was dominant. (Head)-teachers constructed the vocational students (with mostly working-class family background) as C− and positioned them not within but outside the curricular knowledge. The success or failure of students' attempts to influence the teaching and learning corresponded with the teachers' perception. In other words, students did not have 'real' power to influence their environment, notwithstanding normative appeals from official policies.

The powerful position of teachers calls for an analysis of who teachers are in terms of classifications to other agents. In the observed schools, all activity, also that of non-teachers, took place under teacher control. Parents talked to the class teacher (of the natural science programme) or to the head teacher to have their concerns dealt with. The vehicle mechanics teacher had got problems for bringing into the school his knowledge about trade union meetings organization and, thus, weakening the boundary between school and non-school knowledge (cf. Rosvall, 2011b, p. 102f). Put differently, he assumed the role of trade union functionary, but such agency was excluded from the school. In sum, the classification between teachers and other agents in the Swedish case is strong. Only teachers are legitimate transmitters.

By now, Öhrn et al.'s (2011, p. 150) conclusion should be very clear:

> Joint initiatives from the students to influence the core of teaching – that is its level, contents and methods – seem to receive especially little encouragement. Such actions constitute a threat to strong classification and framing of upper secondary education. Hence, the defence of teachers' knowledge-based superiority, particularly in subjects with a vertical discourse, still constitutes the greatest obstacle for students' initiation and carrying through of actions aiming to change aspects of education and for other adults in school to interfere and support such efforts of change.

The re-description of the Swedish findings in Bernstein's conceptual language also revealed that a simple weakening of the strong classification and framing of upper secondary schooling is not a solution to create a social structure enabling or fostering EDC 'learning through'. Weak framing led to an unwanted loss of security about learning for the social science students. A weakening of the transmitters' classification was not helpful, either: Parents' activities became effective only with teachers' support, and the vehicle mechanics teacher's trade union experience was suppressed. The comparatively weak classification of vocational programmes and knowledge did not help the vocational students to successfully influence the teaching and learning by way of democratic procedures and gain an experience of EDC 'learning through'. Child and recreation students were treated as a group of weakly classified (non-academic) learners in need of protection from too high demands (although not all of them agreed with the pace reduction, i.e. the group was not homogeneous). An EDC 'learning through' experience, for instance, through negotiations, was not even considered for them. 'Even if [because of the head-teacher's intervention in favour of the students] the power imbalance was shifted to the students' advantage, in practice it led to confirmation of their position as low-achieving students in school' (Hjelmér, 2011b, p. 68). The vehicle students' attempts to take influence also resulted in their positioning as C- and in the positioning of vocational knowledge outside the school's valued (strongly classified) knowledge.

All agents appear to be working competently from the basis of their own values. Both head teachers reproduced the school's fundamental classification, which attributes higher value to academic knowledge, so that a dilution of the vocational curricula became acceptable, and so did the vehicle students with their withdrawal and the child and recreation students. Likewise, the mathematics teacher and the social science students reproduced the school's strong classification and ensuing high value of academic programmes. The quick reproduction of the strong classifications and framings of the central categories agents and knowledge in all four observed programmes suggests that not individuals or categories of agents are to blame for the gap between policy's calls for EDC 'learning through' and what happened in practice. The return to Hart's (2008) ideal-typical school, where students are removed from participation, gives reason to assume that students' participation in the development of the teaching and learning on equal footing with their teachers runs counter the fundamental structuring of schooling, its institutional logic.

Bernstein (2000, p. xxv) demanded that those denied a pedagogic right, such as that of participation, must be given good grounds and possibly other rights, 'if they are to have confidence in the present and belief in the future'. Undoubtedly, good reasons for students' reduced participation are a curriculum that promises enhancement and trust in it. For these reasons, the social science students consciously renounced their right to participate, and the teachers agreed. The vocational students in both programmes, however, were denied not only the right to participate but also right to enhancement by receiving the full curriculum. To call this double denial appropriate and desirable is difficult, if not to confirm the lesser value of manual work, a myth dating back to as far as Aristotle. Today, however, manual workers or children's caretakers are not slaves, as they were in ancient Greece, but members of

a democratic society. Vocational students' effective EDC 'learning through' participation in the everyday teaching and learning might require a step beyond the fundamental boundaries of schooling, closer towards Hart's (2008) traditional 'informal learning through participation with adults'.

7.5   Training Companies in the German Dual System as Contexts for EDC 'Learning Through'

In Hart's (2008) ideal-typical traditional mode of education, agents and knowledge are not removed from the world of work, and acquirers' participation is essential. A Bernsteinian code analysis permits this chapter, to investigate modifications and changes in terms of framing and of classifications of categories in this ideal type, too. The German DS, for instance, differs from Hart's (2008) ideal type, in that an official 'pedagogic discourse' formalizes company-based education. To recall, Bernstein's 'pedagogic discourse' manifests itself in official documents and curricula, such as the Vocational Training Act (with the German abbreviation BBIG), the Trade and Crafts Code (HWO) and the training regulations for approximately 350 *Berufe*. The DS's pedagogic discourse is developed outside the training company, by the social partners, and establishes boundaries for legitimate company transmission (cf. Höhns, 2016). This chapter focuses on the company transmission in the DS, since the company is the first transmission site and the obligatory vocational school and optional other sites come only second (s. 2 BBIG). The categories for the following analysis are the same as in the previous analysis of transmission in schools: transmitters, acquirers, knowledge and the locus of control over the pedagogic interaction (framing relations).

As the Swedish observations suggested, EDC 'learning through' is translatable into Bernstein's conceptual language as acquirers' control over the framing relations. Therefore, findings about the framing relations in training companies serve as a starting point for reflections about EDC 'learning through' in the DS. A retrospective interview study with graduates about experiences during their training (cf. Höhns, 2018) provided first insights into the range of possible framing modalities that can occur in regulated company training. The study's overall aim was to uncover possible interrelations between difficulties in the career path and prior company training experiences. Therefore, respondents with non-linear labour-market entry trajectories were selected from a two-percent random sample of all employees in Germany with an oversampling of labour-market entrants from vocational education, including unemployed persons. Given the study's intention to identify potential negative effects of the social structuring of company learning on graduates' careers, respondents were excluded who had undergone atypical forms of training. This concerned company-based training courses outside the regulations of BBIG/HWO and atypical apprenticeships/trainings where learners did not spend the majority of their overall training time in real workplaces but in either training

workshops in big companies or in schools, as in the case of training-place creation measures. Methodologically, these exclusions ensured equality of the classifications of the transmission context and of discourse. The remaining 30 respondents had acquired different *Berufe* in differently sized and organized companies. A small team of researchers, including the author of this chapter, henceforth we, ensured comparability of the narrated experiences by redescribing them in a systematic and rule-related way, following Morais and Neves (e.g. 2010), in Bernstein's conceptual language as modalities of framing. This meant several rounds of theoretical coding of the interviews, development of an indicator, by which framing comes to show in the interview codings (the data), and development of typologies, each showing four different strengths of framing and corresponding descriptors derived from the data. For the purpose of this chapter, EDC 'learning through' acquirers' control over the pedagogic interaction, the very weak framing modality is central.

With the study's focus on problematic labour-market entry trajectories, we expected to find a strong dominance of trainers, abuse of trainees/apprentices for other than learning tasks and other obstructions for learning. However, against expectations, the data included not only narrations about different strengths of transmitters' control over the pedagogic interaction but also about acquirers' alleged control-taking over the discursive and even the hierarchical rules. This contrasted starkly with a multitude of Bernsteinian studies in school contexts, such as those by Morais and Neves (e.g. 2010), and also with the Swedish study presented above, where control over the discursive and hierarchical rules was always found to be in the hands of the transmitter (teacher), while acquirers' control was, at most, only apparent. Yet, after a critical assessment of these narrations, we discarded explanations, such as responses' desirability or respondents' overconfidence in their own agency. The legitimacy of trainees'/apprentices' control-taking became plausible when we considered the DS's specific 'pedagogic discourse' and the specific power relations underlying its creation.

A brief example illustrates how a macro-micro relation in the DS explained acquirers' control-taking over the pacing. BBIG states an overall duration of training (2–3 years) but allows for a reduction or extension of the overall training time, even for admission to the final examinations without any apprenticeship, all under conditions specified in detail in BBIG and subsequent legislative acts. BBIG also states that the competent body[1] shall reduce the overall training time 'upon a joint application by trainees and training employers' and extend the period 'in exceptional cases… on application by trainees' and after consultation of the training employer. Other regulations concern temporal relations within company transmission. For instance, the individual training plan (an obligatory part of the training contract between trainee/apprentice and training company) may allow for flexible realization, under consideration of the trainee's/apprentice's abilities, the particularities of the training site and the partial and overall goals of training. In sum, these

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[1] Competent bodies are chambers of crafts and trades, chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of agriculture, chambers of lawyers, etc. (s. 71 BBIG).

numerous legal regulations, concerning the overall training time and the temporal relations of individual training courses, give sound reason to state that the OPD in the DS individualizes time (cf. Höhns, 2016). The OPD of scholastic education, in contrast, regulates a homogenization of pupils in time (cf. Bernstein & Diaz, 1984) or children's segregation 'from children of other age groups than their own' (Hart, 2008, p. 20). The OPD's individualization of time made interviewees' claims about their own control-taking over the pacing of learning trustworthy and plausible, notwithstanding their disagreement with findings from Bernstein-based research in school contexts. From the perspective of EDC 'learning through', the DS legally anchors a high degree of trainees'/apprentices' participation with regard to a central aspect of pedagogy, the temporal relation.

The picture is similar for trainees'/apprentices' control-taking over the other discursive rules of Bernstein's 'framing', the selection/sequencing of learning content and evaluation criteria (see Höhns, 2018). In sum, the findings from the interview study with graduates from the DS all point in one direction: The OPD legitimizes trainees'/apprentices' control-taking over the discursive rules. This fosters acquirers' influencing the learning contents and speed and their acquisition of evaluation criteria. Interviewees' narrations provide evidence that trainees/apprentices can and do successfully realize participation in their company learning.

Furthermore, we excavated from the interviews two bundles of narrations where trainees/apprentices claimed to have taken control over the hierarchy in the transmitter-acquirer relationship – something the Swedish students had not even aspired to. One bundle concerned trainees'/apprentices' choosing (by personal and technical criteria) who to learn from. This means that the officially assigned trainer was not always and not necessarily the person whom a trainee/apprentice turned to with questions, in Bernstein's terms, the transmitter. The other bundle concerned trainees'/apprentices' training others, especially in the final year. This implies a flattening of the hierarchy between transmitters and acquirers and a change of roles. While respondents' overestimation of their agency might lie behind the first bundle of narrations, the second bundle was difficult to explain away. The interview guide did not contain questions about training others. That is, 8 of 30 respondents spoke about training others (first-year trainees, interns, etc.) self-directedly and very much as a matter of course. The two bundles of narrations finally became plausible, when we took into consideration Moore's (1984) oppositional mode of education (cf. Höhns, 2019). To recall, in Moore's mode beyond the boundaries of scholastic education, agents from a broad-based socio-occupational community direct educational activities and acquirers are equipped with power to create categories (transmitters and knowledge). Put differently, acquirers' control-taking over the hierarchical rules is thinkable in an educational system directed by a broad-based socio-occupational community. In the DS, as is well known, the social partners are jointly responsible for the construction of curricula for company training, for examination organization and implementation and for monitoring the pedagogy in training companies. These characteristics point in the direction that the DS is a real-world case of Moore's (1984) oppositional mode of education. The DS, then, is also a case where acquirers elect what to learn, when and from whom and where they can be

transmitters in the same context where their trainers are transmitters. From here, we considered trainees'/apprentices' alleged control-taking over the transmitter-acquirer relationship and their reports about teaching others as plausible. Both are traceable to the specific power relations underlying the DS.

In sum, interviewees' surprising claims that, during their company training in the DS, they took control over the discursive and the hierarchical rules of framing are plausible:

- With the social partners as central agents directing the pedagogic discourse on all social levels in obligatory consensus
- In view of special provisions of this pedagogic discourse concerning time, content and criteria of company transmission

From the perspective of EDC 'learning through', then, the DS's specific underlying power relations (the social partners) and the specific PD, which these agents created, facilitate a more democratic teaching-learning relationship, a social bond where acquirers grow into a position on equal footing with their trainers. Acquirers are empowered to choose who to learn from, what to learn and when. Interview narrations confirmed that trainees/apprentices take these structurally given possibilities and participate actively in the development of their learning environment, for instance, by asking for new and additional learning contents, establishing points of time for showing their skills, electing who to learn from and teaching others. Whenever trainees/apprentices succeed in doing so in a contextually adequate way, they gain an experience of EDC 'learning through'.

Since the Swedish school study revealed the strong classification of transmitters and of knowledge as obstructing EDC 'learning through', this chapter casts a glance on these categories in the DS in terms of their classification. The DS's pedagogic discourse classifies trainers from ordinary workers in a company by bringing them in a relationship with all the agents and agencies involved in the DS. In a trainer aptitude course, company trainers are 'to become able to deal with the complex relationships between company, trainees/apprentices, employee's representative organs and competent body; that is, to completely master the pedagogic *Beruf* discourse' (Höhns, 2016, p. 216). However, the pedagogic discourse establishes boundaries of legitimacy without determining the pedagogic interaction or a trainer's other activities within and beyond the company. In the set of four-scale typologies, which we developed from the above-mentioned interviews and in which trainees'/apprentices' control-taking describes the very weak modality, the very strong framing modality is characterized by the trainer's absolute control over the trainee/apprentice. She/he 'gives no time to learn, just presses to work' or 'selects tasks arbitrarily, regardless of the training plan and of apprentice's wishes' (cf. Höhns, 2018). Put differently, in this modality, the trainer does not act like a trainer and deprives the trainee/apprentice of his/her status as learner. With regard to the pedagogic discourse, we termed this modality illegitimate. The classification between trainers and trainees/apprentices, respectively, and other agents in the world of work is broken down, and the trainee's/apprentice's possibilities for learning, including EDC 'learning through', are blocked. Consequently, strong control

and repair agencies, such as the competent bodies, are most significant to ensure the preservation and reproduction of the pedagogic discourse and the classification of transmitters (and of acquirers, for that matter) in changing circumstances within and beyond the training company. Further research with an improved database should elucidate company trainers' activities and their effects on trainees'/apprentices' control-taking and EDC 'learning through', as well as the role and functioning of the competent bodies.

The knowledge transmitted in DS training is classified from the knowledge residing within the training company, as the latter requires supplements to amount to the complete *Beruf* knowledge. Supplements are provided by a vocational school (with obligatory attendance), and in other, optional learning venues, such as inter-company training, or by collaboration with other companies. Moreover, the creation of the framework curriculum for company transmission and the examination regulations and organization lie outside the training company, in the hands of the social partners. Divergences between the knowledge transmitted in the vocational school or other learning venues and that transmitted in the company support trainees'/apprentices' critical reflection: They have to decide between different ways of thinking about and doing things. The aforementioned interviews with DS graduates revealed that trainees'/apprentices' control-taking often occurred during examination preparation. Then, the divergence between the knowledge within the company and that required to become a member of the *Beruf* community becomes salient. For instance, a specialist in the hotel business (interview ID number 8304172), in her report on examination preparation (line 163 in the interview transcript), mentioned a skill required for the examination that did not occur in everyday work in the training company:

> Basically, we [trainees] knew, what was to come up [in the final examination; GH], … and in times of preparation for exams, we had our usual work shifts, but one could say, here, now it is quiet, then I practise such and such. We also could ask special things. Well, I went straight up to our trainer, the head of the banquet section, and said: I want to practise setting a round table for a four-course meal. This does not always come out symmetrically. Well, the problem was, of course, that we did not always have all the cutlery which is there in the vocational school. There was really everything there. Then we had to improvise a bit. But well, then she always checked.

In other words, the skill to be tested in the examination for specialists in the hotel business (setting a round table) required equipment (special cutlery) that the interviewee's training company did not have. The interviewee, however, was aware of this and found a way to make up for that lack. She realized that setting a round table is a context-dependent task. A printer (interview ID number 27211285; transcript lines 296–302) reported an even deeper gap between work requirements in the training company and the examination requirements:

> I prepared myself by asking my boss, if I could also come in on Saturdays, into work, and sit in the break room or in the office and from somewhere get preparation questions for the intermediate examination for example. …
> I then always asked the employees 'what's this?' and 'what's that?' In most cases they were not able to give me an answer. Even those who had just finished their training and

were printers, too…, they continued the contract of one because he was very, very good. He'd passed his exam two years before and I asked him… And he wasn't able to give me an answer because [in the examination regulations; GH] everything had changed again and was different to what he had learned. He had actually had the same teacher [in the vocational school; GH] but had no idea what I was talking about (laughing).

In Bernstein's terms, this interview extract shows that the knowledge (including also skills and abilities) required to master a *Beruf* (here: printer with the elective qualification flexo-printer) is to some extent set apart (classified) from the everyday knowledge in the training company, and the new examination regulations for printers that the interviewee referred to strengthened this classification even more.

The classification between *Beruf* knowledge in the DS and the everyday knowledge in the company, evidently, fosters the trainees'/apprentices' responsibility for their learning. It stimulates their activity also beyond working in the training company, for instance, to get hold of the examination regulations, of questions and examination tasks from earlier years from either the vocational school or the relevant competent body. Moreover, the classification of knowledge impels trainees/apprentices to seek support for their examination preparations from colleagues and superiors within the training company in a contextually adequate way, which implies the development of (in psychologistic terms) political skills. Eventually, the classification challenges trainees/apprentices to think beyond the local context of the training company and to regard their tasks as context-dependent. Thus, a strengthening of the classification of *Beruf* knowledge from everyday knowledge in the company encourages trainees'/apprentices' control-taking over the framing relations. If this control-taking is consistent with EDC 'learning through' (as the Swedish research findings suggested), then the boundary between *Beruf* knowledge and company knowledge fosters EDC 'learning through'.

7.6 Summary and Discussion

This chapter explored the potential of research with Bernstein's conceptual tools classification (C) and framing (F) to investigate the structurally given possibilities and boundaries for learners' participation in institutions, such as upper secondary schools in Sweden and training companies in Germany's DS. In line with democracy education policy and research, the chapter considers students' and trainees'/apprentices' participation in the development of the pedagogic relationship in their respective educational institution to be a way of EDC learning ('learning through'). The chapter drew on ethnographic findings in Swedish schools with academic and vocational programmes (Öhrn et al., 2011) to pinpoint that:

- EDC 'learning through' participation in the development of the present environment can be translated into Bernstein's conceptual language as acquirers' control-taking over the framing relations and, in particular, their discursive rules.

- The categories transmitters, acquirers and knowledge, in their particular realization mode in schools (strongly classified from the world of work), obstruct EDC 'learning through'.

The chapter argued that a simple weakening of the school's strong classifications and framings was not helpful to foster EDC 'learning through' students' participation, since:

- A weakening of F led students to a feeling of uncertainty about their learning and to their request to strengthen the framing, i.e. to their conscious refusal to participate.
- A weakening of the strong classification of school knowledge concurred with a devaluation of vocational knowledge and of the students in vocational programmes. In response, the valued school knowledge's strong C was reproduced.
- A weakening of the strong transmitters' C (activities from other agents than teachers) was excluded from the school.

The repeatedly observed quick reproduction of the strong framing and classifications after attempts to weaken them reveals that the obstruction of students' effective participation in the teaching and learning is not the fault of individuals or categories of agents but a matter of a fundamental principle of schooling, its institutional logic. Bernstein (1990) and Hart (2008) agree that this fundamental principle is one of segregation or classification between education and the world of work.

To characterize a given context, obstructing EDC 'learning through', such as schooling, as a locally and temporally contingent realization form of the principle $\pm C/\pm F$, permitted this chapter to systematically think of other realization forms that might foster EDC 'learning through' and to identify such a form in the real world. This move steps beyond the boundaries of schooling and into the German DS of vocational education, which, unlike Hart's (2008) informal learning by participation in communities with adults, is regulated by an underlying OPD and, therefore, can be termed an alternative mode of formal education.

Drawing on interviews with DS graduates, the chapter showed that trainees/apprentices can and do successfully take control over the discursive and even over the hierarchical rules of the framing relation and that the DS's OPD and underlying power relations legitimize such control-taking. If acquirers' control-taking over the framing relations is consistent with EDC 'learning through' participation, then, in the DS, trainees/apprentices practice EDC 'learning through', presumably, without realizing it. The DS's classification of trainers from other employees/workers in the world of work and the classification of knowledge from that residing in a training company arguably foster trainees'/apprentices' control-taking. Further research with an improved database should investigate the trainers' perspective on company transmission and their possibilities and limitations to obstruct trainees'/apprentices' control-taking in the tensions between a training company's everyday logic of production and the logic of enhancement (drawing trainees/apprentices beyond themselves and the local environment). The effects of control and repair agencies on the realization of the trainees'/apprentices' enhancement and on their EDC 'learning

through' participation should also be scrutinized. Finally, to corroborate or refute the consistency between trainees'/apprentices' control-taking over the framing and their effective EDC 'learning through' participation, further research should investigate whether such control-taking correlates with later political or trade union activity.

In making its argument, the chapter consciously and systematically submitted itself to Bernstein's conceptual language and the assumptions underlying Bernstein's constructs. Thereby, it follows a multitude of researchers all over the world who work productively with Bernstein's constructs, such as the code and the pedagogic discourse (see Ch. 6 'Codes and Research' in Bernstein (2000) and the list of publications from international Bernstein symposia in the reference list). Clearly, the descriptions that this chapter created in the language of the code theory do not exhaust the full picture of what goes on in schooling and in company-based training. However, the conceptual language permitted the chapter to draw comparisons between differently structured forms of education in terms of interrelations between macro-social power relations, micro-social pedagogic interaction and learners' positioning. It helped the chapter to investigate the structural boundaries of schooling and of the DS as two formal educational contexts with different possibilities and limitations for learners' 'enhancement' and 'participation'.

Bernstein and researchers in his tradition stress that the pedagogic right to participation exists not only at the level of discourse and reflection but also at the level of practice, both in and beyond school. This suggests that a modern society should offer all learners opportunities for enhancement and for EDC learning, including 'learning through' participation, within the relative structural limitations of educational contexts. A modern society with a complex division of labour needs to include not only deliberative academics but also well-educated and self-assured hands-on activists.

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Gabriela Maria Höhns works as researcher in the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and
Training, Bonn, Germany. Her research focus shifted over time from evaluation to competence
acquisition to transitions from vocational education to work. She developed a special interest in
educational sociology and, in particular, in Basil Bernstein's code theory. She published Bernstein-
based analyses of different aspects of Germany's Dual System of vocational education and train-
ing. She is a member of the Educational Research section of the German Sociological Association.

Chapter 8
Participation and Identity Development in a Multicultural Academic Context in the Higher Education Institutions: Palestinian-Arab Social Work Students in Israel

Romain Jammal-Abboud (ORCID)

Abstract In recent decades, social work around the world has become associated with the challenge of taking care of dealing with political-cultural minority groups. However, in Israel, the discourse on developing professional identity in social work students in general and social work students of political and cultural minorities, in particular, has not been given enough consideration in the professional academic socialization process. In this chapter, I will take a closer look at the personal growth, possible cultural tensions, potentially threatening experiences, and coping strategies of Palestinian-Arab social work students in the academic socialization in Israel. *Culturally*, Palestinian-Arab social work students are often torn between two value systems: the collectivist-religious values of Palestinian-Arab society that endure despite the modernization process of recent decades and, conversely, the individualist-secular values of Jewish majority culture in Israel. *Politically*, the Palestinian-Arab students in Israel interact as members of an indigenous minority group in a country deeply divided along ethno-national and cultural-religious lines. The chapter is based on a study that retrospectively examined the experiences of Palestinian-Arab students of family social work and their attitudes and perceptions toward the process of developing their professional identity. The findings point to the importance of the participation of Palestinian-Arab students who are Israeli citizens as social work students in Israeli academia for promoting a critical, multicultural learning environment.

R. Jammal-Abboud (✉)
School of Social Work, Zefat Academic College, Zefat, Israel

The Bob Shapell School of Social Work Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
e-mail: Romaina@zefat.ac.il; Romainmia@Tauex.tau.ac.il

161

8.1   Introduction

Like Israel in general, Israeli academia is characterized by national, sociocultural, and political heterogeneity. It represents a multicultural context, in which various groups struggle for participation given partial and inconsistent application of a critical multicultural approach. The various colleges and universities have faced the challenges and opportunities represented by this heterogeneity by adopting such an approach but have done so insufficiently. Israeli schools of social work, in particular, are rising up to the challenge of the critical multicultural approach that focuses on the political transformation of power relations and the revision of the dominant discourse that reproduces the status quo, as opposed to the humanist-individualist approach. As the social work profession is committed to a vision of sociocultural change and particularly to cultural sensitivity designed to promote values of social justice and equality, the limited application of the multicultural approach stands out particularly in social work schools, where Palestinian-Arab participation is limited on several levels, as shown below.

The challenge of coping with the multicultural context is heightened when it comes to Palestinian-Arab students due to two major characteristics. The first is their cultural uniqueness, given that culturally, Arab social work students are often torn between two value systems: the collectivist-religious values of Arab society that endure despite the modernization process of recent decades and, conversely, the individualist-secular values of Jewish majority culture in Israel. Consequently, Palestinian-Arab students often feel themselves somewhere along the normative continuum from collectivism to individualism (Blit-Cohen & Jammal-Abboud, 2016), a sense of liminality that affects many areas of their lives and often poses a challenge to their personal, cultural, and professional identity (Azaiza, 2013; Haj-Yahiya & Sadan, 2008; Seginer & Mahajna, 2003).

The second is the political tension due to the intractable Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Both act as obstacles for the participation of this group in social work studies, which is critical for providing social services to the Arabic-speaking population that is disproportionately in need thereof.

In terms of opportunities, the participation rate of Palestinian-Arab students in social work studies is among the highest in Israel (Council of Higher Education Israel, 2020). Nevertheless, the actual experience of being a Palestinian-Arab social work student can be far from multicultural and more likely dichotomous and conflictual, in a multicultural or rather bicultural context that may at times be less than democratic (Jammal-Abboud, 2021; Nadan, 2017; Nadan & Ben-Ari, 2014). This leaves these students normatively and politically divided among and within themselves – individualism or collectivism, participation or cooptation, Western theory

or culturally sensitive practice? This chapter discusses the obstacles, challenges, opportunities, and copings experienced by this group during their studies.

8.2 The Social Work Learning Environment: Participation in Theory and Practice

In social work and professional socialization, several aspects merge (Barretti, 2004): the worker's societal expectations, confirmation of the role social workers expects to play during their practicum, and their cultural background (Miller, 2013). Socialization consists of three periods: the pre-academic period, formal socialization during the studies, and the practicum (Barretti, 2004; Miller, 2010). Three elements are integrated in these periods: professional values, attitudes, and identity (Miller, 2010, 2013).

In Israel, the student body is highly heterogenic, a fact that has implications on training. According to Freund, Blit-Cohen, and Dehan (2013), variables such as cultural background, religion, and political attitudes also have implications on students' professional values. In a reality of cultural-political difference on the one hand and universal professional concepts on the other, socialization is a challenging process, which might place obstacles on the way to full participation.

In encouraging participation, academic socialization for the profession of social work in Israel follows three approaches to multiculturalism. The critical or contextual multicultural approach argues that workers should be educated to think and behave in a multicultural way (Shabtay, 1999). This approach views culture and society as engaged in constant conflict, rather than harmony and consensus (McLaren, 1995), and treats difference as requiring political or affirmative action out of commitment to social justice and minority participation (Estrada & McLaren, 1993).

The conservative multicultural approach, which is still dominant in Israeli academia, including social work schools, seeks to force minorities such as the Palestinian-Arabs into a proverbial melting pot and impose liberal and individualist values on the collectivist Palestinian-Arabs society.

In between those two extremes lies the liberal approach that seeks greater minority participation, without acknowledging the power relations inherent to its disadvantage, emphasizing the opening of opportunities for individuals rather than the cultural adaptation of the curriculum or learning environment (Nadan, 2017; Nadan & Ben-Ari, 2014; Roer-Strier, 2016).

At least at the declarative level, the critical social work approach has become a distinct concept in the profession's discourse since the mid-1990s (Ife, 1997; Rossiter, 1996). Weiss, Levin, and Krumer-Nevo (2014) pointed out that this reflects various radical, feminist, and anti-suppressive approaches. In keeping with this approach, Shapiro (2010) argued that the exclusion of minority groups during their training process is not just a cultural and ideal one but also represents exclusion

from political power. In Israel's multicultural reality, Palestinian-Arab students engaged in their professional socialization process must readjust themselves to a context that labels them members of a cultural and political minority, making successful participation a challenge (Strier & Abu-Raiya, 2019). In addressing that challenge, the mission of Israeli social work schools that open their gates to participation by Palestinian-Arab students should be to promote a learning environment shaped according to the critical multicultural approach and the contextual social work approach. But is that so?

In practice, such critical, contextual discourse is silenced not only in Israeli society in general but also in social work schools. This is clearly in opposition to the ideals of the social work profession (Nadan & Ben-Ari, 2014). Silencing contradicts the goals of the International Association of Social Work Studies and forestalls the emergence of a discourse about beliefs, superstitions, and inherent privileges.

Social work education in Israel is still predominantly based upon knowledge and values developed in Western, Euro-American, and postindustrial societies (Azaiza et al., 2015; Jammal-Abboud, 2020). During their academic socialization, social work students in Israel usually encounter Western individualistic values and humanist-universal approaches of social work (Al-Issa, 1995; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997; Jammal-Abboud, 2013, 2020). Although this knowledge is of relevance for social work in Israel, it does not fully apply to the experiences and values of minority groups and help in appropriately and adequately preparing students for the complex multicultural and political situation that they will encounter in practice. It quite often leads to feelings of confusion and alienation in Palestinian-Arab social work students (Al-Krenawi, 2002). According to Strier and Abu-Raiya (2019), Palestinian-Arab social work students are constantly challenged to cope with these tensions and readjust themselves during their socialization process.

Courses that may allow students to reflect internally about their values and compare them to the professional and social values of general society do not exist (Azaiza et al., 2015; CSWE, 2014). Concepts of social justice, inclusion, and exclusion and anti-oppression practices which are advocated in various countries (mainly in Europe and Australia) for professional socialization in social work are yet to occupy the proper role they deserve to have in Israel, in the setting of social work training (Shapiro, 2010). This lack disrupts the process of developing the active participation capacity and has long-term professional implications for social work students from Palestinian-Arab society. Rabinowitz and Abu Baker claim (2005) that the academic institutions in the country refrain from integrating Palestinian-Arab students and see them as outsiders distanced, solidified, and non-integrative. This reality leaves in doubt the effectiveness of the formal knowledge learned in social work for students from Palestinian-Arab society.

8.3   Formal Knowledge as an Opportunity or Obstacle

Also known as explicit knowledge, formal knowledge acquired in academia serves as the source for professionally unique theories and labeling (Antes & Clarke, 2012; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Wah, 1999; Yoed & Levin, 2007). Social work students' formal knowledge contributes to three development processes: first, their professional identity – establishing an inner dialogue between their acquired formal knowledge and their personal idealistic-cultural world versus the values of the profession as a tool to accomplish self-belief. Second, their acquired knowledge reduces uncertainties (Hart & Liu, 2011). And third, it allows social work students to retrospectively conceptualize the learning process as enhancing a transition from experiencing feelings of helplessness to feelings of increased control and competence as active and initiative persons.

Again, this ideal is somewhat removed from the realities in Israeli social work schools. The ability of the formal knowledge acquisition process to foster participation by acquiring a professional identity, reducing uncertainties, and feeling empowered is dubious. While theoretically the process is designed to support active participation as both students and professionals, in the Israeli learning environment as described above, this proves challenging, as further attested by the social workers below. This leads us to our main research questions: how do Palestinian-Arab social work students experience their participation and identity development in the multicultural Israeli academia?

8.4   Methodology

Based on the grounded approach (Creswell, 1998; Mills et al., 2006; Strauss, 1987), the first and foremost aim of this research is to develop a theoretical model for explaining the development of identity and professional knowledge in Palestinian-Arab social workers and for retrospectively establishing and conceptualizing their experiences and concepts during the various steps of their socialization and doings.

8.4.1   Participants and Procedure

This study is part of a larger, recently completed dissertation on the development of professional knowledge and identity of Palestinian-Arab social workers in Israel (Jammal-Abboud, 2020). Data were collected during the years 2016–2017 through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 30 Palestinian-Arab social workers (28 women) working with the Palestinian-Arab population in the field of family and child welfare in Israel's Haifa and the Northern District. The interviewees included social workers in a variety of welfare areas, who have all studied their profession in

Israel. Their age ranged from 35 to 60 and all had more than 10 years' experience. They reported on their academic socialization and the subsequent practice. Two- to 3-h interviews were conducted at the participants' social welfare institutions, audio-taped and transcribed by the author – herself a Palestinian-Arab social worker and lecturer. The participants were recruited using criterion and maximum-variation sampling (Patton, 2001). This approach deliberately samples a small number of participants experiencing the phenomenon in question, with the final sample size determined according to the research objectives (Padgett, 1998) – 30, in this case. According to my assessment, theoretical saturation was already achieved by the 25th interview; five more interviews were held to ensure saturation.

After obtaining the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Haifa, I contacted social service department directors to obtain their approval for conducting interviews with some of their employees.

Prior to the interviews, the participants signed informed consent forms (Patton, 2001). They were assured that they had the right to avoid answering questions and to stop the interview at any time, as well as that their confidentiality be protected (in the Results section, the names used are all pseudonyms). The interview guide included the general research question, as well as specific questions related to conflicts and ways of coping. Additional questions arose from the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee. According to Spradley (1972) and as applied in this study, an interview should include three types of questions: (1) open, theoretical questions, for example, "Did the common cultural background have an effect on the professional interaction between you and your Arab welfare clients? If so, how did it impact your professional relations?; (2) classification questions designed to understand how interviewees organize their knowledge and to verify tentative hypotheses that arise during the interview, for example, "What characterizes your professional coping with conflicts between the individualistic and collectivistic approaches?"; and (3) comparison questions designed to distinguish between different meaning dimensions presented by the interviewer, for example, "What characterizes situations where Arab social workers manage to integrate collectivist and individualistic values?"

8.4.2   Data Analysis

Data were analyzed according to the grounded theory approach in four stages: careful reading of transcripts followed by open, axial, and oriented encoding (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The aim was to develop a theoretical framework that describes and explains the development of professional knowledge and identity of Arab social workers. Trustworthiness was ensured by following the recommended methodological steps of data analysis (Maxwell, 1996) and through peer reviews and co-ratings (Sikolia et al., 2013).

Data analysis began with *open coding* (LaRossa, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At this stage, the focus is on identifying and defining initial categories (Strauss,

1987). Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) describe this process as separating between events and actions, examining and conceptualizing them in full, and comparing them and raising questions. This way, conceptually similar events form categories and subcategories. Accordingly, I carefully read and reread each interview to form a holistic view of the data, prior to their categorization in the formal analytic process (Agar, 1980). In addition, I asked "why questions," leading the analysis in different and unpredictable directions (Shkedi, 2003). In the process, themes or units of meaning arose from the raw data.

The next analytic stage was *axial coding* – the analysis proceeded based on the "axis" of the categories already formulated, while constantly adjusting them (Givton, 2001). I proceeded with the analysis on two levels: (1) identifying each category's characteristics and its relations with emerging subcategories and (2) determining the relations across the categories.

The final stage in the grounded theory analysis involves *oriented encoding*, or the formulation of a substantial theory (Fassinger, 2005). In the process, the researcher integrates the data around key themes and finally proposes a theoretical model (Creswell, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Walker & Myrick, 2006). This stage also involves reiteration and reevaluation of the original categorization. For example, in formulating my themes, I merged two categories relevant to the core of the phenomenon under study – "the learning experience as a positive one" and "the learning experience as a negative one" – into the category of "knowledge acquisition process" or, on a higher level of conceptualization, the theme of "personal growth and challenging threat" in the process of acquiring social work knowledge. Overall, two themes were formulated, as presented below.

8.5 Findings

8.5.1 Positive Experiences

The essence of Arab social workers' positive experiences was described in three aspects: personal, normative-cultural, and professional.

8.5.1.1 Personal Experiences

The first aspect of the students' professional experiences is personal:

There are things […] in social work that strengthen your personality, enlighten places and subjects you were not aware of before your studies […] as well as in inter-personal relationships. (Samah, 43)

On the personal level, the process of knowledge acquisition broadens our horizons and accelerates a process of self-awareness. On the interpersonal level, it develops tools and competences that nurture and help the interviewee's general

conduct with people: those "strengthening" and "enlightening" things bear witness to the participants' need for strengthening and their craving to experience the meaning of their professional doings and embrace their identity.

8.5.1.2 Normative-Cultural Experiences

The second of these three positive aspects is normative-cultural, as expressed below:

> Suddenly you become exposed to other cultures […]; when you enter university […] there are other cultures […], other truths […] to be tolerant […], not to judge them. (Mero, 42)

Two elements of this emotionally positive experience are prominent: the first, being exposed to the other, a person who is different than the speaker, and the second, a non-prejudicial acceptance and awareness of cultural norms which are other than the speaker's. It is exemplified by the expressions "suddenly," "exposed," and "other truths." The culture of the other is covert; however, through a learning process, cultural otherness is exposed and is self-contained. The sudden nature of the exposing experience brings evidence of that which is culturally covert in the other, for the intensity of surprise.

8.5.1.3 Professional Experiences

Other participants emphasized the professional aspect. For example:

> The basis, skeleton of social work which I studied in university, still accompanies me […], I really loved the profession with its articles and explanations about human behavior […]. (Naela, 53)

> They put more emphasis on the parts of political changes, on the part a social worker plays in societal change, and thus the studies gave us feelings of empowerment, competence to generate change, even a faith that can move mountains. (Layla, 45)

The acquired knowledge serves as a "skeleton" for the knowledge that accompanies them, serving to understand the human behavior from birth to death. The "basis" is like a steady, confident standing, the potential to build above that same basis, and the metaphorical portrayal of knowledge as a "skeleton" that holds the entire body, without which such an orientation capability could not have existed and, on the other hand, it's only an initial one that won't suffice.

To conclude, the contribution of the study of social work for Arab students becomes evident in the changing of their self-perception and in strengthening their self-confidence in generating change in the world. This brings to mind Jesus' parable of the mustard seed, in which he tells his disciples that if they had had faith the size of a mustard seed, they could move mountains. Knowledge that integrates faith during the consolidation of the social work students' professional identity shapes their professional identity as a competent one.

8.5.2 Negative Experiences in the Process of Knowledge Acquisition

Some participants talked about their negative experiences in the process of knowledge acquisition, as irrelevant and harmful, as challenging both personally and culturally, and as marginalizing.

8.5.2.1 Knowledge as Irrelevant and Harmful

One student described the irrelevance and harm of the knowledge acquired as follows:

> You are not learning in the university in order to go out and work in the Arab society […]; it is 20 percent helpful, no more than that […]; castles in the air. […] universally but very doubtful how they can help the Arab society! Certainly! […]. And the worst thing was that we were taught [knowledge, skills] that could potentially cause harm […like] social change. […there was] nothing about cultural-sensitive knowledge. (Gana, 42)

Knowledge that turns out to be socially irrelevant to the Arab group, not only is it worthless, but it may also be misleading. Severity increases when a student or social worker is trying to act in a Western psychodynamic individualistic way of thinking and thus may cause harm. Such knowledge claims for a social understanding which is humanistic-liberally oriented toward social empowerment and fundamental change and toward a "radical" political-social practice. The tenets of this orientation conflict with the values of Arab society.

8.5.2.2 Knowledge That Challenges the Student Culturally and Personally

The experience of knowledge as threatening and challenging their worldviews and their personal-cultural norms was described by one participant as follows:

> Suddenly a contrast was made […] in my studies that stood against where I am living and in which society. […] to rebel […] am I allowed? What are the limits of my freedom to act in the face of the conflicts I feel? Where am I and where are my father and mother? […if] I'm allowed to take decisions both in my personal life and professional life, will my parents [even] still have a role? […] Knowledge creates discourse […] and thrown me for a loop] […]; you need much more than a B.A. […] instability on the personal level, and then […] I chose a path for myself […] areas I was afraid of entering like independence, freedom, female empowerment [… and I used to] practice discreetly without sharing [… which played havoc… and decreased] my intellectual and emotional impartiality to learn and achieve more. Then we weren't aware [of this subject…]; I knew I needed a professional supervision in order to connect better with my studies, but I never received such guidance. (Amera, 37)

In the process of considering and internalizing information, the student is in a position of learning and antagonism, between the known and the different. For her,

the difference means a conflict due to contrasts that may lead to a subversive sway discourse that shakes what is steady and known during her consolidation of new social identity, which affects the socially-culturally personal identity. It is imperative for students to separate from the authoritative roles in their lives and from a familial-societal reification on their way to independence. Fears and apprehensions are expressed toward three things: firstly, losing ones' parents' custody and their educational legacy; secondly, the implications of losing such custody; and thirdly, apprehension and fear that parents might be hurt by aspects of what is permitted and prohibited when replacing the agents responsible for these prohibitions and approvals. The words above ratify Arab students' dilemmas in the context of the efforts the Arab collectivist society invests in societal control by enforcing a list of prohibitions and sanctions on potential infringers.

Some participants linked the Arab students' difficulties to internalize information and to be high achievers with the ideological, moral, emotional subversive sway they experienced during the process of professional socialization. Their efforts and delving into trying to resolve these conflicts that stemmed from that upheaval are independent and demanding and do not spare them enough space for impartiality and academic achievements. Loneliness in this process is double-edged: in their facing the entire threatening experience and in the misery inflicted by their impartiality and non-achieving. The two expressions that reify the experience of misery are, firstly, *practicing discreetly*, referring to sparing others information about her development, since her development contains elements of betrayal in values and contains internalization of forbidden values. Secondly, the use of the statement "needed professional guidance" is based on her dependency, a value in Arab society, for the purpose of obtaining approval for one's doings.

8.5.2.3   Marginalization by the University

[… I was] training in my first year with a Jewish supervisor and so were the second and third years […I practiced] in Arab population […and was] I was offered no cultural understanding and sensitivity. (Wajde, 42)

[…] my supervisor in the third year was also an Arab-speaker. The language, knowledge, and closeness to my own way of life greatly enhanced my learning, I felt safe, in good hands which I understood only after I began to work. There is paucity of cultural-related material. In that he was like the university namely he [only] allegedly supplied some adjusted materials [for the Arab population], compared with the university that totally ignored [this]. (Amera, 37)

The supervision experience is important for social work students in molding their professional socialization. For the first participant, her supervisor during practicum seemed as if she lacked knowledge and awareness of how to understand and include students, their needs, and their target population's needs in the setting of a cultural difference, and she seemed to disregard the intercultural encounter. That feeling imposed on this speaker a double-edged experience: firstly, being distressed during the study experience, and secondly, coping with this distress. The second

participant emphasized the cultural competence or the mutual cultural background of the practicum supervisor compared with the experience of marginalization. The supervisor was like the university in that he only allegedly supplied some materials that were adjusted to the Arab population, compared with the university that totally disregarded the issue. But comparable to the university, the supervisor did not gather cultural-adjusted knowledge and tools and all the more so tools for coping with the cultural background conflict. The participant's expressions like "I felt safe, in good hands" compared with "in that he was like the university" bring evidence about duality: cultural mutuality as imparting cultural space in their cultural partnership; however, it was not enough for setting off the learning process and professional identity.

Some of the research participants talked about lacking cultural competency:

> I met loneliness in various ways during my studying period, and I waited, […], and never did they support us in the context of our cultural distress. (Alies, 50)

This represents a marginalization of the other, the Arab student, and their needs, resulting in disappointment, frustration, loneliness, helplessness, and anger, cultural incompetence during the process of socialization as part of the aggressive political context in the process of socialization.

> The parallel process I felt following my studies molded me as I'm [now] but in a difficult and sway in a way. It is most important that we don't forget the society we come from so we are more attentive to the small sensitivities of our clients and refuse to be swallowed by a western theory even during practicum during our studies and later on in the field. (Wallaa, 54)

This quote brings up important issues of professional identity and professional practice. Responsibility is given to students to mold their own professional identity, but in distressing conditions, students that have hardly ever been out in the world now have to face a demand to form and create personalized knowledge tailored to their target population – "a swaying experience." Expressions such as "we won't forget the society we come from" and "refuse to be swallowed" both reflect the subversive effect on Arab students' identity and also a struggle to keep their identity intact.

In conclusion, these findings reveal the vast dominance the humanist-universal approach holds in social work education and in professional practicum. This dominance of the humanist approach and discourse which are spread in academic institutions does not allow legitimacy for the critical social work approach. In the same manner, Arab social worker interviewees refrained from any criticism of their professional practice; therefore the unique identity of social work in the context of Arab society in Israel is absent from these interviews.

8.6   Discussion: The Contextual Academic Conflict

The research findings unfold the deep roots the humanist-universal approach in social work holds during BA training. Such dominancy compared with the peripheral role of more critical approaches decreases the availability of multicultural knowledge in social work education and hampers minority participation. The critical approach identifies a mechanism of suppression of social work as a means of political silencing (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012; Weiss, 2005). The literature on the subject points out that the multicultural critical social work approach does not play a central role in the social work curriculum in Israel. Furthermore, it suggests the dominance of Western discourses and the context of cultural and political tensions between the Jewish majority and Arab minority (Azaiza et al., 2015). The case of the Arab minority students in schools for social work in Israeli brings forth the repercussions of the dominance of the former approach over the latter. The process of acquiring the profession is conditioned as a successful one only if learners self-define themselves at its end as professionals that belong to the group of social workers and if they are able to accept, internalize, and utilize the core values of the profession, its knowledge, and interference methods (Patchner et al., 1987; Valutis et al., 2012).

The findings underline various aspects as delaying the goal of the socialization process, thereby obstructing active participation. Students may feel expectations to internalize their professional socialization in social work and to apply it, but at the same time, they may also realize a demand to make an ideological-cultural inversion, because of the intensive inter-ideological conflict that confronts them with feelings of alienation and the centricity of cultural socialization values. Their ideological personal-cultural conflict merely stems from belonging to the Arab society in Israel, which is torn apart by the conservative collectivism-individualism binary (Haj-Yahiya & Sadan, 2008; Al-Krenawi & Jackson, 2014; Azaiza, 2013; Dwairy, 2002; Azaiza et al., 2015).

The personal-cultural conflict turns into a cognitive-academic one when it concerns educational contents and professional values. This conflict occurs firstly at the level of the students' experience when they persist in their training without working it through and conceptualizing it. Retrospectively, the meaning of learning values is understood through their experience that heightens the conflict between wanting to learn the profession and their alienation toward values that command them to mold their personal-cultural identity as a condition for full participation.

The critical approach characterizes Arab students' social status as a dual ascribed status and as a reflection between social power and social positioning and discourse (Healy & Link, 2005; Ife, 1997). Thus, a fundamental question about the essence of the profession of social work should be raised: the mission of social workers in Arab society is socially complex and paradoxical in the gap between modernity and tradition. The critical approach might have stressed the linkage which is evident in the findings, a linkage between an orientation to stay away from knowledge and

discussion on the political-cultural context and to ignore Arab students' distress in their professional socialization.

The findings point to a curriculum that avoids coping with the theoretical and experimental conflicts that may stem from differences between the profession and source cultures – from their differences and conflicts (Graham, 2002, 2005) – and a curriculum that does not understand Arab culture in its political essence, its norms and knowledge, and its links between knowledge and power (Weiss, 2005). University is conceptualized as a place that refrains from dealing with knowledge and issues concerning culture and politics (Wahler, 2012). This missing link inflicts an identity crisis, anxieties in Arab students during their studies that might have implications later on when they have to deal with cases that concern both issues, due to lack of tools and capabilities (Nadan & Ben-Ari, 2014). What this means, in fact, is that the students' future participation as professionals is hampered by their own lack of multicultural sensitivity, despite being ideally positioned to provide culturally competent social work to members of their own society.

Moreover, according to the findings, there is insufficient reflection of critical approaches during both processes, learning and professional rationalization. Thus, for example, when participants were asked to reflect on their cultural-political contexts in practicing social work in the Arab-Israeli context, only a few considered political issues of social power, social justice, and multiculturalism. Most of them considered these contexts through the spectrum of humanist-universal approaches which are dominant in social work in Israel. Such inconsideration might speak for the dominance of Israeli social work discourse that mostly avoids facing the political-cultural-economic contexts in Israeli society (Mansbach, 2005). The influence of the dominant academic discourse reflects the perpetuation of the hegemonic discourse, because of the role academia plays as a training tool of the state and its inspection stratagem. Such reproduction of the dominant discourse in the academic realm is aligned with this orientation of social work, being conceptualized as a professional institution (Mirsky et al., 2019).

Some interviewees raised issues of pressures and political conflicts that stem from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Azaiza et al., 2015). Others avoided questions about academic contents, their experiences, and generally about political issues due to a sense of being peripheral, preferring to avoid conflicts and not being active participants.

Foucault emphasizes methods of professional disciplines in installing power relations into professional identity and simultaneously in perpetuating these power relations (Mansbach, 2005). The research implications suggest instead a professional socialization as a realization of social power that shapes social workers' professional identity in general and that of Arab social workers in particular, in a way of adhering to the dominant and normative purpose and discourse. Another aspect of this analysis is socialization as liberating from the ideological-complying space of Arab society, i.e., the participants' encounters, theoretically and experientially, during their education contributed to their exit from their source culture to an encounter with Western concepts and theories, into examining themselves, their culture, and their cultural norms, a process that allowed for self-searching and an

independent examination, a passage from a conformist-oriented cultural space to a different space that advocates for various issues like independence, intellectual, emotional, and behavioral reflection.

8.7   Conclusions

To conclude, the acquiring of explicit knowledge in university is the basis for the interviewees' unique professional development. The interviews revealed that social workers experience crises during the process of acquiring the profession for two main reasons: firstly, due to insufficient critical multicultural knowledge in the discourse between majority and minority, and secondly, insufficient support during their practicum in the context of a collectivist society and due to providing them with practices fit for the individualistic society. These crises affect their participation, leaving it partial and contested at best.

The process of professional-academic socialization of Arab students is distinctively challenging and complex. From the critical social work approach, it can be understood that this process is one that preserves both the hegemonic-professional discourse within a cultural-universal context and social power relations in the context of social work positioning and refrains from coping with issues of minority-majority relationships in the Arab-Jewish context. Such insufficient resources for coping with these challenges result in partial participation and the perpetuating of hegemonic practices of interfering in social service bureaus. The research findings strengthen a concept that sees the acquired knowledge in the realms of dominant discourse as contributing to the students at various levels: personal, interpersonal, professional, and knowledge acquisition, all of which accompany students throughout their professional lives.

This research, in the same manner as all qualitative research, does not aspire to present a generalization but to reach a closer recognition of the uniqueness of the case presented (Shkedi, 2003); although the findings represent the retrospective experiences of family social workers, the findings of this research do not purport to represent all the experiences of social workers in this field.

Another limitation is the characteristics of the research sample that focused on family social workers and consisted of Arab female workers from social service bureaus in the north of the country. To receive a more diverse viewpoint, it is necessary to research social workers during several stages of their professional socialization, e.g., Arab students, male social workers, teachers and supervisors, key persons, and policy-makers. Likewise, a similar study should be done in the Bedouin sector or in the south as well, to contribute to the cultural group uniqueness, i.e., Bedouins compared with social workers in the north.

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Romain Jammal-Abboud has a PhD in social work and is a lecturer and researcher. She has been the director of a parent-child center, a psychosocial therapist & a supervisor of students & social workers. Her research is devoted to the development and welfare of children and families and to the professional development and education of social workers in the multicultural context of Israel.

Chapter 9
Youth on the Move?
On the Transformation of Political Engagement in the Second Modernity

Paul Eisewicht and Nico Maximilian Steinmann

Abstract For the last 30 years, it has been assumed that young people are becoming increasingly "apolitical". This article first traces the basis of this assumption and discusses political engagement against the background of reflexive modernization. The thesis of this article is that the above assumption is more a methodological artefact than a reliable finding. This is because processes of social transformation alter political participation and make it methodologically difficult to assess. This work traces this transformation of political action on the basis of relevant and prominent studies on the political or (civil) social engagement of young people in Germany. In doing so, it addresses the complexity inherent in comparing individual study results and identifies trends in youth political action to show that civic engagement is becoming more dynamic, more fragile and less culturally stable and is challenging organizational forms of political engagement to create low-barrier means of engagement.

Keywords Political engagement · Political action · Youth studies · Research review

P. Eisewicht (✉) · N. M. Steinmann
Department of Social Sciences, TU Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany
e-mail: paul.eisewicht@tu-dortmund.de; nico.steinmann@tu-dortmund.de

9.1 Introduction: Apolitical Youth or Committed Young People?

Until a few years ago, the attestation of an (increasingly) apolitical youth was considered largely accurate – at least in terms of interest in parliamentary politics (Gürlevik et al., 2016, p. 8ff.; Helsper et al., 2006, p. 12). Three findings from surveys on political engagement and interest may attest to this.

First, there has been persistently lower voter turnout among young adults: in the 2017 German federal election, as well as the 2014 European election in Germany, the 21–24 age group had the lowest voter turnout, just ahead of the 25–29 age group. This was followed by the under-21 age group and then the 30–34 age group (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2014, 2022). Against the backdrop of a general decline in voter turnout, evidence of low turnout among young adults is widely found for elections in developed democracies (Bhatti & Hansen, 2012; Franklin, 2004; generally described as a "political life cycle model": cf. Cabarello, 2014, p. 456).[1]

Second, there is a low level of involvement in political parties, associations and NGOs: young adults (up to age 30) are significantly under-represented in German political parties, especially the two major parties, the CDU/CSU and SPD (Niedermayer, 2020).[2] Likewise, the youth organizations of major parties have seen a considerable decline in membership numbers (Wiesendahl, 2002, p. 8). Young adults also have a slightly lower level of activity than other age groups in regard to other forms of participation, such as trade union and association memberships (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018, p. 353).

Third, there is a low level of interest in political issues among young adults: along with their lower voter turnout and declining engagement, young adults in Germany express levels of political interest that are consistently below the average level, although the gap fluctuates (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018, p. 351).[3]

Taken together, these findings paint a picture of increasingly apolitical, disinterested and uncommitted young adults who are labelled as a social problem and a challenge to democratic states. It is still true that:

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[1] In addition to age, the level of education (a higher level of education correlates with higher level of participation) and social integration into clubs, organizations and families (a higher level of integration correlates with a higher level of participation) are considered decisive factors (Franklin, 2004, p. 16). Gender (women show higher turnout) also seems to have an influence here (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung et al., p. 346). That is, single, educationally disadvantaged young men typically exhibit the lowest voter turnout.

[2] In addition to age, women and less-educated, lower-income occupational groups are also under-represented in all parties. However, the proportion of women is slowly increasing in all parties (see Niedermayer, 2020; Klein et al., 2019).

[3] Here, too, there are drastic educational effects (e.g. political interest among people with a high school diploma is 50–60% with an average of approximately 30%; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018, p. 351). An older survey of students from North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony supports this perspective: more than one in two students in Saxony stated that they had little or no interest in politics. In North Rhine-Westphalia, the figure was 43%. In contrast, only 11% and 14% were very or fairly interested in politics, respectively (Krappidel & Böhm-Kasper, 2006, p. 35).

> The decline in political interest among the younger generation poses the risk that the dwindling of charitable and altruistic involvement in associations, parties, clubs and others will visibly erode the foundation of democracy. (Hurrelmann et al., 2004, S. 43; author's translation)

If we focus on electoral participation and club/party membership as "traditional" markers of political participation, we can certainly find indications of political apathy.[4]

Two findings are worth noting here, however, that paint a more complex picture of youth engagement. First, the effects that have been described can be observed across all age groups (and across all Western democracies). In general, there is a trend towards declining voter turnout in Germany (at least until the 2013 federal election), from a high of 91.1% in 1972 to a low of 70.8% in 2009, with a slight increase to 76% in 2017 and 2021. This is equally true for party membership (which has fallen from approximately 3.5% of the German population in 1990 to less than 2%) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018, p. 357; cf. Ehrhart & Sandschneider, 1994, p. 445). That is, when considering society as a whole, the apparent trend of political apathy may be an effect of societal transformations and may not be a youth-specific phenomenon (on the conception of youth, see 9.3.2). Studies that focus only on adolescents and young adults can be misleading in this regard (due to a lack of comparability with other age groups). In contrast to other population groups, "the youth" are subject to special social attention by youth associations, research institutes, etc., so naturally, certain social trends are more likely to be classified as youth-specific problems. This becomes clear, for example, when we look at changes in media use. Adults also use digital media and smartphones, and they frequently consult less serious journalistic sources and rely more on social media for information than their young counterparts do (e.g. see Andree & Thomson, 2020); however, this phenomenon seems to be less frequently investigated and problematized than such activity among young people. At the very least, youth policy research findings must be contextualized against the backdrop of wider social transformation processes (see Chap. 2).

Second, there is a gap between young people's interest in and perceived relevance of political participation and their actual participation behaviour. Most studies show a high willingness to engage in political participation – from signing petitions to joining strikes (e.g. see Krappidel & Böhm-Kasper, 2006, p. 35ff.; Böhm-Kasper, 2006; Gaiser & Rijke, 2007). The Shell Youth Studies have also revealed a high level of political interest among young people (despite the low point in 2002).[5] However, a high level of political interest correlates strongly with high

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[4] For example, the 2002 Shell Youth Study (Hurrelmann et al., 2004), referring to possible methodological narrowness, states, "It is possible that the young generation is very much socially engaged and politically interested, but in doing so, it is leaving behind previously common paths" (Hurrelmann et al., 2004, p. 43; author's translation).

[5] Here, 47 and 45% described themselves as either strongly interested or interested in 2015 and 2019, respectively, while the number of those who saw themselves as not interested at all seemed to decrease over the long term, shrinking from 29% in 2002 to 18% and 20% in 2015 and 2019, respectively. However, the proportion of interested young people is approximately 10% points lower than it was in the 1984 and 1991 surveys (Albert et al., 2019, p. 49f).

political involvement (Albert et al., 2019). Approximately one in three German youths say that being politically active is important, and only approximately 39% do not consider it important. There are hardly any differences between male and female youth in these assessments. In contrast to the high level of interest and the importance attributed to it, a lack of knowledge about specific forms of participation and sources of information about how and in what arenas they can influence political decisions appears to be an obstacle to translating this interest into concrete participation (Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V., 2013). In some ways, this reveals a differentiated perspective on the nature of young people's political interest. While trust in democracy and interest in political participation are high, there is less faith in the effectiveness of individual parties and the government (see Ehrhart & Sandschneider, 1994, p. 447; Gürlevik et al., 2016, p. 7). Therefore, it is not so much a "disenchantment with politics as a disenchantment with politicians and parties" (Gürlevik et al., 2016, p. 12; author's translation). Here, a gap between the generally high approval of democratic legitimacy (young people appreciate the democratic system) and the assessment of low democratic efficiency in implementing democratic processes is apparent (Pickel, 2002, p. 88). This is expressed by choosing not to vote, protest voting and exhibiting low (party) organizational commitment (in the case of young people eligible to vote). If, however, a large proportion of young people are politically interested and ascribe great importance to their own political involvement but trust in politicians and parties as well as participation in elections remain low, the question arises as to how young people (want to) become involved.

9.2 Theoretical Background: Youth and Political Engagement in the Mirror of Reflexive Modernization

9.2.1 Social Transformation Processes and the Individualization Thesis

The tendencies of declining formal organizational political participation described in Chap. 1 follow the conceptualization of general social modernization processes. Modernization means the following:

(a) "De-traditionalization" (Giddens, 1996) or "disembedding" (Giddens, 1995) from traditional affiliations that have been taken for granted and the associated behavioural securities (here, traditional and conventional forms of political participation).
(b) The resulting pluralization of orientation patterns (such as multioptionality, Gross, 1994), norms, social affiliations and meanings (here, the pluralization of the opportunities for and goals of participation).
(c) The promotion of individualization processes (Beck, [1986] 2016), wherein people continually create their own respective "tinkering existence" (Hitzler &

Honer, 1994) out of these diverse, juxtaposed, nonhierarchically ordered potential meanings and participation according to their resources.

(d) In the absence of a superordinate instance of orientation, personal decisions are aligned with individuals' own experiential expectations and ideas of what constitutes an experience-rich, beautiful life (cf. Schulze, [1992] 2005). The frames for orientation follow the dynamics of "liquid" relationships and group bonds.

In tracing these social tendencies, one finds that political engagement is becoming more dynamic and fragile, culturally less stable and in some ways increasingly tied to "liquid" (Bauman, 2009) or "post-traditional communities" (Hitzler, 1998). Post-traditional communities bring together like-minded people of all social backgrounds (and even age groups). They are partly stabilizing but often rather short lived. Thus, they are more suited to the requirements and problems of modern life than traditional social ties or rigid forms of organization.

In this sense, individualization should always be understood in terms of a double logic: it provides options for action (e.g. in career choice, religious participation and membership in or affiliation with parties, associations, scenes, etc.), but a choice must nevertheless be made. On the other hand, choosing a course of action requires (at least temporarily) that other options are not pursued, and as a result, there is a risk that these other options would have led to greater satisfaction, happiness or the like (experience orientation always includes a risk of disappointment; cf. Schulze, [1992] 2005, p. 14). The supposed (action) security offered by traditional ties becomes fragile as a result of the growing number of options and the individual's self-responsibility for his or her final action orientation. As a result, over time, the life phase of adolescence and the accomplishment of the developmental tasks it entails have become more individualized, more closely tied to one's own resources and those of one's family and neighbours and fundamentally more fragile and dynamic.

Overall, modernization has led to not only a "dissolution of political boundaries" (Kahlert, 2005) but also a "dissolution of youth boundaries" with regard to coping with typical developmental tasks (cf. Hurrelmann & Quenzel, 2013; see also Spannring & Gaiser, 2008). Due to the complexity of these tasks – the assumption of the adult roles of citizen, consumer, partner and worker – the traditional certainties and routines in these transitions are collapsing, resulting in the expansion of orientations among youth; thus, it is apparent, as Smets (2015) argues based on the low voter turnout of young people, that young people today are taking on the role of conventionally politically engaged citizens much later than their predecessors did.

9.2.2 Youth Political Participation

Particularly with regard to political issues, young people are influenced in a polarized way. Klaus-Jürgen Scherer describes this in the context of socialization in the following way: "On the one hand, youth is the object of socialization influences; it

is about the question of how the young generation fits into society. On the other hand, youth is an active factor of social change; it is a question of the young generation entering society trying to reshape it according to its own ideas" (author's translation, Scherer, 1988, p. 17). Young people's political engagement is described either as desirable and innovative or as a threat to the social order (Eisewicht, 2019). On a positive note, researchers studying young people see them as seismographs that indicate social problems as well as future social trends (Quenzel & Mathias, 2008; Kurtenbach, 2013).

The stability and order of democratic systems rely on having educated, responsible and committed citizens. The lowest form of political engagement is exercising one's right to vote and thus legitimize political elites. Further (direct) political engagement comes in the form of public discussions, demonstrations, etc., which are considered necessary to ensure that the interests of citizens are sufficiently taken into account. Indeed, "beyond its immediate role within a democratic system, political participation is seen as a value in itself increasing citizens' self-confidence, social and political skills as well as their social and political integration" (Spannring & Gaiser, 2008, p. 12). It is therefore hardly surprising that research from an international perspective has verified that the lack of interest in political issues and low level of engagement are seen as a threat to democracies (Furlong & Cartmel, 2006, p. 121).

Organizations such as parties, churches, associations and clubs play a major role in the (political) socialization of children and adolescents, as these life stages are when values and value orientations are passed on and existing structures are reinforced. Nevertheless, Reingard Spannring (2008) points out that based on European data, young people prefer individualized forms of participation to formalized opportunities for participation. This observation is mainly supported by the fact that organizations (a) fail to dedicate sufficient attention to youth-specific issues and perspectives and (b) offer them only superficial involvement. Existing power structures and organizational structures are seen as obstacles to youth engagement (Spannring, 2008; cf. for parties also Hackett, 1997). Our (main) interest is in analysing the conjectured changes in forms of political engagement by means of a review of German language studies.

9.3   Research Interest and Methodological Considerations

9.3.1   Research Question and Design

The aim of this research was to clarify and classify three aspects of political engagement among young people with regard to the existing literature on the German context:

(a) What methods are used to examine political (or by extension civil/social) engagement, and what are the consequences of this methodological choice?

(b) How interested are young people in politics, and what is their relationship to political institutions?
(c) What conclusions can be drawn about the changing forms of young people's political involvement?

To systematically answer these questions, we conducted a literature review of quantitative studies and publications that focus on the political engagement of adolescents and young people. The first step was to collect works on youth political engagement in Germany. To this end, we did the following: (a) we searched databases (Google Scholar, Google Books, Google Talk-to-Books, university library catalogues, ResearchGate, etc.) for publications (overviews from textbooks, monographs, anthologies, journal articles, study reports) using various terms and combinations of terms (political/civic/social engagement/participation/action of youth/young adults, etc.). (b) Then, we aggregated the references in the articles to identify commonalities and build a citation network. (c) Next, we reviewed papers for their relevance to the field, eliminating papers that merely extended or adapted a previous survey (i.e. that were not "new" studies in the context of the sample). (d) Last, the final sample was selected from the remaining papers according to three criteria: (I) their level of acceptance in the field (determined via citations), (II) their detail (via extensive operationalization and item batteries) and (III) their organizational anchoring (determined via their association with renowned youth research and/or survey institutes, as well as federal ministries). The final sample therefore does not include all the studies reviewed (or originally found) but represents a theoretical sample of independent, relevant studies. In the course of our work, this sample provided a foil against which we developed our argumentation.

The aim was to provide a comprehensive overview of the political engagement of young people and the surveys that have been conducted to examine this. Generally, the approach can be seen as a form of research synthesis or (integrative) research review that focuses on empirical work (Cooper, 1998, p. 3). For this procedure, it was fundamental that the final sample of studies examined political or (civil) social engagement and/or action. After we explicitly searched for studies that dealt with young people and their engagement or political action in general (such as the Shell Youth Studies or the Youth Study Baden-Württemberg, 2020), we added studies such as the German Volunteer Survey. Therefore, we did include studies that included young people as a group in their analyses and presentations even if they were not explicitly focused on this age group. The resulting pool of studies and publications included 18 different surveys (in terms of basis of their respective data). Some of the studies had follow-up surveys or were conducted on a regular basis, and the data from these studies were taken into account in the analyses but were treated as a single survey.

In the analysis, we identified which age ranges were applied and, above all, how political or (civil) social engagement was operationalized in each survey. In particular, we focused on forms of organizational engagement (in parties, churches, citizens' initiatives, NGOs, etc.) and nonorganizational engagement (signature campaigns, demonstrations, movements, buy- and boycotts, etc.).

9.3.2 Methodological-Conceptual Problems

With regard to the political participation of young people, two methodological and conceptual problems arise, especially in building an overview of various studies: first, how to operationalize and define youth, and second, how political participation is understood and surveyed. The way these issues are handled in studies varies widely, pointing to the need for further methodological-theoretical considerations regarding the life phase of adolescence and the understanding of modern democracies, which are greatly affected by the specific approach taken. In this article, with a focus on Germany, we attempt to outline overarching tendencies that are more apparent in a comparative, critical synopsis of various studies than in an examination of isolated figures. In doing so, we are also concerned with the theoretical classification of these trends against the background of contemporary modernization processes and their consequences for the life phase of adolescence and the transition to adulthood (Chap. 2).

On the Concept of Youth Quantitative studies in particular – which offer advantages in terms of objectivity and especially in panel and longitudinal studies, comparability – necessarily quantify youth in terms of social structure. Accordingly, a wide variety of age ranges and cohorts are constructed. For example, the first report on children and young people commissioned by the German government (1961) defined people aged 15–25 as young people, while the 16th report on children and young people (2020) included people aged 12–27. The first Shell studies (known as Emnid studies), which began in the 1950s, included 15- to 24-year-olds (Zinnecker, 2001, pp. 244, 259); today, the Shell Youth Study includes young people between 12 and 25. In contrast, the Sinus Youth Study (launched in 2008) covers only young people between 14 and 17 (in line with the legal definition and distinction in SGB VIII §7 between children under 14 and "young adults", who are between 18 and 26). Therefore, some studies include adolescents in the narrower sense of the term (14–17), others include children 10 years of age and older (Maschke et al., 2013), and still others include young adults up to 29 years of age (DJI Youth Survey; cf. Table 9.1). Only in the case of 17-year-olds is there consensus that they should be regarded as adolescents.

This is a general problem for comparability – but a particular problem for examining attestations of political interest and political participation. Political interest generally increases in adolescence, as do opportunities for participation. If younger respondents are surveyed, for example, certain forms of participation, such as voting in elections and attending demonstrations, fall steeply in comparison with the findings for a survey of older "young people" (cf. on elections Political Youth Study by YouGov Deutschland GmbH, 2017, and Gille, 2020, based on the DJI Survey AID:A 2014;[6] on demonstrations Hoffmann-Lange & Gille, 2013). It is therefore difficult to make statements on reliability and ensure comparability across studies;

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[6] The age range considered here is 16- to 32-year-olds.

Table 9.1 Overview of German language youth studies and their age delimitations

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	…34
Emnid/Shell 1950-70er					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
1. Jugendbericht 1961					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
KuJB 2020			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Shell 2002			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
DJI Survey 1995/1997/2003			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Jugend.Leben 2012/NRW Kids 2001	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■												
Sinus 2008–2020					■	■	■	■													
FES/DJI/infas Jugendstudie 2015					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Kinderhilfswerk 2012	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■													
Freiwilligensurvey 2017 Sonderauswertung					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Junges Europa (ab 2017)						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Jugendbeteiligung BaWü 2019					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■									
Jugend BaWü 2020			■	■	■	■	■	■	■												
Wir 2020					■	■	■	■	■												
Jugend will bewegen 2020					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
BRAVO/YouGov 2017					■	■	■	■													
On3-Jugendstudie "Dein 2020"					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Jugendstudie Bayern 2019						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

this is aggravated by the fact that many studies are individual studies that focus on young people, further impeding comparisons with other age groups.

On the Concept of Political Engagement The operationalization of political participation is relatively complicated. As mentioned in the introduction, political participation can be narrowly defined in terms of voter turnout and party membership. However, broader definitions include forms of participation such as involvement in NGOs and/or clubs, although this often leads to more questions: for example, do only NGOs, unions or certain clubs count, and is membership and involvement in, say, a sports club political involvement or not?[7] Did the study include or focus on

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[7] For example, in the 2019 Shell Youth Survey, the only option listed "club" is given, so this option includes sports clubs; participating in signature collection or signing an online petition, on the other hand, is not inquired about. In the German Volunteer Survey, on the other hand, the option

political engagement or participation (e.g. the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 according to Gille, 2020; the Jugendstudie Baden-Württemberg, 2020, the Political Youth Study by Bravo & YouGov, YouGov Deutschland GmbH, 2017), social engagement (e.g. the On3 Youth Study "Dein 2020") or both (e.g. in the Shell Youth Studies)? When comparing studies, it is always important to consider how they surveyed specific forms of engagement, such as participation in a citizens' initiative. For example, the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 asked about participation in a citizens' initiative within the last 12 months, and the Political Youth Survey by Bravo & YouGov 2017 asked whether respondents agree with the statement "I participate or have participated in a citizens' initiative". The 2014 German Volunteer Survey, on the other hand, asked about the extent to which people have participated in citizens' initiatives, and the 2019 survey asked whether people have "participated in a political party, political group or citizens' initiative".

In addition to this variety in methods for assessing electoral participation and party membership, there is a clear lack of agreement about how to record other forms of formal organizational participation. This also applies to nonformal forms of participation. However, there is relative agreement that demonstrations are an appropriate indicator of political participation (e.g. in the German Volunteer Surveys, DJI Surveys and the Political Youth Study by Bravo & YouGov, 2017). Furthermore, a "fringed" picture emerges: are signature campaigns and online petitions considered political participation (as in the 2014 Volunteer Survey, Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2014)? Are online activities considered too low threshold to be recorded? Furthermore, are participation in political discussions or following parties and politicians on social media proof of political participation (YouGov Deutschland GmbH, 2017, Jugend will bewegen, 2020)? Beyond this thematic operationalization (what counts as political involvement?), there are also differences in the scales for the answers, the effects of which are discussed here. For example, is political interest or engagement surveyed in as a binary dimension (yes/no) or are there gradations (e.g. three or more response options)?[8]

"club" is not provided, and in the Bravo/YouGov 2017 Political Youth Study, membership in a club is only considered in the context of contact points on political issues.

[8] For example, the Baden-Württemberg 2020 Youth Study asks, "Do you get involved in political issues in your environment (school or place of residence)?" with the response options of "Yes", "No" and "No answer", and the 2019 Shell Youth Study asks, "Are you active in your free time for social or political goals or simply for other people? Please go through the following list and tell me if you are personally involved in the following", with the response options "Often", "Occasionally" and "Never". Similarly, the Shell Youth Study surveyed political interest and provided the following response options: "Very interested", "Interested", "Not very interested", "Not at all interested" and "Don't know/no idea", while a study on the political interest of students in North Rhine-Westphalia and Sachen provided five response options: "Very interested", "Fairly interested", "Somewhat interested", "Not very interested" and "Not at all interested" (cf. Krappidel & Böhm-Kasper, 2006). The Bravo/YouGov 2017 Political Youth Survey asks about political interest in a similar way (response options include "Very strongly", "Fairly strongly", "Moderately", "Less strongly", "Not at all") but also provides the response option "Don't know/no idea".

The combination of the two research fields of youth and politics thus gives rise to a highly complex array of survey possibilities that produce correspondingly diverse and widely scattered results and make it difficult to obtain a clear picture of the situation. In our opinion, this calls for a broader and deeper debate on the – sometimes changing – understanding of what youth (e.g. Heinen et al., 2020) and political participation (Kahlert, 2005) conceptually mean.

9.4 Results: Young People's Political Interest and Transformation of Political Engagement

In order to trace the possible changes, we focus on three topics: interest in political engagement and trust in political actors and institutions, engagement in formal organizational contexts and nonformal engagement. Finally, we contextualize these findings within the (theoretical) background of contemporary diagnostic analyses outlined herein.

9.4.1 Political Interest and Trust

While political interest was still at 57% in 1991 according to the Shell Youth Study, this reached a historic low of 34% in 2002 and has since stagnated at around 47% (Albert et al., 2015) or 45% (Albert et al., 2019).[9] In contrast, the perceived importance of political involvement is somewhat lower. In this metric, however, there has been a clear change in recent years: in the three surveys between 2002 and 2010, only 20 to 23% of young people considered their own political involvement to be important, but in the 2015 and 2019 surveys, this figure was approximately 33%. Similarly, findings regarding the perceived popularity of being involved in politics show that such involvement is still considered "out" by the majority, although this seems to have gradually softened in the two most recent surveys (Albert et al., 2019).

A higher level of political interest is associated with a higher level of commitment (cf. Gille, 2020, p. 7). Inequalities among young people are very pronounced, especially along lines of education level and gender. Boys are considered to be more interested in and committed to political issues than girls are (YouGov Deutschland GmbH, 2017; Krappidel & Böhm-Kasper, 2006; Shell Youth Studies).[10] Older youth are more interested and more likely to participate in demonstrations, for example,

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[9] The values for level of political interest sometimes differ significantly: for example, the TUI Foundation study 2019 shows only 36% of young people are very strongly or strongly interested, while the data from the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 identify 32% of 12–29-year-olds (cf. Gille, 2018) as "very strongly" or "strongly" interested, respectively.

[10] Notably, 41% of boys and only 20% of girls say they are "very strongly" or "fairly strongly" interested in politics (Bravo & YouGov, 2017). Similar results emerge when looking at political

than their younger counterparts (Hoffmann-Lange & Gille, 2013), and youth with higher levels of education are more interested and engaged than youth with lower levels of education (regarding interest, see the Shell Youth Studies; Krappidel & Böhm-Kasper, 2006; regarding engagement, see Junges Europa, 2018; Gille, 2020; for a general overview, see also Gille, 2018).

Approval of democratic state systems[11] and interest in political participation (see the Albert et al., 2019; Jugend will bewegen, 2020; Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V., 2013) is then contrasted with distrust in political parties. Parties have always elicited a distinctly low level of trust. What is interesting here is the observation that the German government, like the United Nations, is trusted much more than parties. Environmental protection groups are trusted even more than the German government, followed by the German armed forces, trade unions and citizens' initiatives (Albert et al., 2019, p. 93). Similar results can also be found in the Young Europe 2018 study, which reveals, for example, that EU institutions, as well as trade unions, the parliament and the government, are trusted more than parties (Junges Europa, 2018, p. 50f). A low level of trust is also evident in the fact that approximately 70% of young people (tend to) agree with the statement "I don't think politicians care what people like me think" (cf. Albert et al., 2019). Consequently, it can be concluded that young people are definitely dissatisfied with current politics – or at least political parties.

9.4.2 Conventional Engagement: Voting Behaviour, Party Political Involvement and Association Activities

With regard to voting behaviour, three phenomena are of interest: the low voter turnout mentioned at the beginning, the preference for "smaller" parties and voter volatility. With regard to the low voter turnout among young people, it is certainly debatable which effects come into play here (e.g. cohort or life-phase effects, social transformations). What is certain, however, is that low initial voter turnout within an age cohort typically has a negative effect on turnout in subsequent elections (and does not lead to rising turnout in later life phases; cf. Franklin, 2004), since the "sense of obligation to vote […] is usually acquired in the socialization phase" (Cabarello, 2014, p. 455; author's translation).[12]

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interest in North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony, where the difference between boys and girls is 11 percentage points (Krappidel & Böhm-Kasper, 2006).

[11] For example, according to Bravo/YouGov 2017, 71% are satisfied with democracy as a form of government, 68% see democracy as the best form of government, and only 4% consider other forms of government to be better. Strong levels of satisfaction are also evident in the 2019 Shell Youth Study, in which 77% of young people state that they are "very" or "rather satisfied" with democracy in Germany.

[12] Franklin (2004) argues that lowering the voting age to 18 has a negative effect here and that either a lower (e.g. voting rights at age 16) or a higher voting age could have a more positive effect.

Furthermore, it is also evident that the proportion of young voters who vote for and are members of "smaller" parties[13] is greater than the proportion of such voters in the overall population (Niedermayer, 2020, p. 30f.). However, compared to the population as a whole, young people (aged 16–20) also remain under-represented in the "smaller" parties – the liberal FDP, the Left Party and the Green Party Bündnis90/ Die Grünen – but their share among supporters of these parties has increased significantly in recent years over their share among SPD and CSU/CDU supporters. The representation of 21- to 25-year-olds has even risen to such an extent that in 2019, an almost balanced ratio is found, and in the case of the Left Party, they even appear to be overrepresented (ibid.).

In addition, young people show a decline in party loyalty, stronger voter volatility (for more on this, see Schoen, 2014) and an increasing in interest in "smaller" parties.[14] Switching parties between elections as well as between voting and not voting is sometimes seen as a sign of political disinterest or another problem (Ehrhart & Sandschneider, 1994, p. 445). In general, party-switching rates between federal elections have been increasing since the 1990s (cf. Schoen, 2014), and approximately one-third of voters are considered switchers (Weßels, 2011). Young people in particular (according to the Jugendstudie Bayern, 2019, p. 21ff.), more than other age groups, see themselves as swing voters, and the overall proportion of swing voters is increasing. According to the Bavarian Youth Study, 65% of respondents still saw themselves as regular voters in 2005. This proportion fell to 60% in 2010, 55% in 2016 and 52% in 2019. In contrast, self-identification as a swing voter rose from 33% in 2005 to 40% in 2016/2019.

With regard to other organized forms of participation (NGOs, trade unions, associations), the data are less clear (cf. Chap. 1 on methodological and conceptual problems). The Shell Youth Study shows that associations account for the largest share of organizational involvement (40% in 2002, 47% in 2010, 37% in 2019), followed by youth organizations, aid organizations, citizens' initiatives and political parties. Youth organizational activities, however, declined from 19% in 2002 to 9–12% in subsequent years, only recently (2019) increasing again to 13%. Other areas of activity, such as involvement in a religious community (2002 15%, 2015 13%, 2019 15%), trade union (2002 2%, since 2010 3%), rescue service or volunteer fire department (2002 7%, 2019 8%) and political parties (until 2019 at 2%, 2019 at 4%), have stagnated at a low level for almost two decades. At least in 2019,

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With a lower voting age, the sense of obligation to vote can be stabilized via socialization processes such as those that occur at school. Franklin argues that at 18, moreover, individuals face many important decisions (e.g. choice of university or career) that loom over them and have a hindering effect.

[13] In the 2021 federal election, the vote shares for 18–24-year-olds were as follows (ordered by size): Greens 23%, FDP 21%, SPD 15%, Union 10%, Left 8% and AFD 7%. In addition, a group of smaller parties together received 15% of the youth votes, whereas only 3.2% of the over-70s cast votes for smaller parties (national average, 8.7%).

[14] In the 2021 federal election, for example, the youth vote (18- to 24-year-olds) share of the CDU/ CSU fell from 25% to 10.8%, while those of the FDP and the Greens increased significantly by 7 and 10 percentage points, respectively (Der Bundeswahlleiter, 2022, p. 17).

however, involvement in NGOs or aid organizations rose from 4–5% (2002/2015) to 8%.

9.4.3 Nonconventional Engagement

With regard to nonorganizational involvement, the data situation becomes even more confusing in that this is not always surveyed. For example, the Shell Youth Studies ask about social involvement in clubs, schools, parishes, youth organizations, aid organizations, trade unions, political parties and citizens' initiatives, all of which are types of organizational involvement. Nonorganizational involvement, on the other hand, is recorded only via the items of "self-organized project/project group" (11–15% from 2002 to 2019) and "solo/personal activity" (32–39% from 2002 to 2019). Where more numerous items are found (including the DJI Survey AID:A, Volunteer Survey), different dimensions are sometimes chosen or are mixed together. For instance, the DJI Survey AID:A separates participating in signature collection or online protest activity, which raises the question of the category to which online petitions belong, as these are recorded separately from signature campaigns within the "Young Europe" initiative (in 2018 and 2019 but not in 2020 or 2021).

9.4.4 Summary

In summary, an initial list of various forms of extraorganizational participation can be identified:[15]

- *Signature campaigns/petitions*: 34% of 16- to 32-year-olds (according to the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 cf. Gille, 2020, p. 7; signature collection); 37.1% of 14- to 29-year-olds (according to the Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 2019, p. 240); 38% of 16- to 26-year-olds (according to Junges Europa, 2019, p. 64).
- *Buy- and boycotts*: 20.8% of 14- to 29-year-olds (according to the Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 2019, p. 237); 29% of 16- to 32-year-olds (according to the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 cf. Gille, 2020, p. 7); 33% of 16- to 26-year-olds (according to Junges Europa, 2019, p. 64).
- *Participation in discussions*: 15% of 16- to 32-year-olds (according to the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 cf. Gille, 2020, p. 7); 17% of 16- to 26-year-olds (according to Junges Europa, 2019, p. 64).
- *Demonstration participation*: 14% of 16- to 32-year-olds (according to the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 cf. Gille, 2020, p. 7); 18% of 16- to 26-year-olds (according

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[15]Young Europe also records active campaign support (16%) and party donations (13%); the Volunteer Survey, on the other hand, still records contact with politicians (5.4%).

to Junges Europa, 2019, p. 64); 20.2% of 14- to 29-year-olds (according to the Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 2019, p. 237).[16]

It is worth noting that in addition to these various forms of participation, particularly in the wake of the climate activists' Fridays for the Future demonstrations, participation in demonstrations has received special attention in social discourse and has also been highlighted in many youth studies and generational attestations. Empirically, however, they tend to be a rarer practice among young voters – petitions, boycotts and participation in discussions are more frequent forms of participation. In addition, there are digital forms of participation, which are recorded differently than other forms:[17]

- For example, the DJI Survey AID:A 2014 surveys participation in online protests (23% of 16- to 32-year-olds, according to Gille, 2020, p. 7) and participation in political discussions (9%).
- The Volunteer Survey (Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 2019, p. 209) asks about the use of social media (blogs, platforms, forums, wikis; 53.4% of), the creation of newsletters and online reports (19.9%), homepage support (14.3%), online fundraising (15.5%) and online consulting (7.3%) in the context of volunteering among 14- to 29-year-olds.
- Young Europe (Junges Europa, 2019, p. 65) captures digital engagement most broadly, with questions about liking political posts (44% of 16- to 26-year-olds), participating in online petitions (42%), forwarding others' posts (36%), commenting on others' political posts (18%), distributing their own posts (19%), using government-sponsored civic participation platforms (10%), contacting politicians online (9%) and making political blog posts (7%).
- The Vodafone study (Jugend will bewegen, 2020, p. 14) asks only about digital forms of participation such as sharing or liking political posts (42%), discussing political topics in private messenger groups with friends and family (39%), commenting on political posts (20%), posting memes/gifs/videos on political topics (14%), writing new posts (7%) and participating in online discussions of political organizations (6%) among 14- to 24-year-olds.

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[16] In the Bravo and YouGov Youth Study (2017, p. 10), only 7% of the 14–17-year-olds surveyed responded affirmatively to the statement "I take part in demonstrations". Thus, the proportion of young people taking part in demonstrations varies considerably between 7% and 20%. Not only is there assumed to be an age effect here (Hoffmann-Lange & Gille, 2013), since the Bravo Study has comparatively younger respondents, but an effect of the question (on the question problem, see Chap. 1) is also assumed.

[17] The 2017 Bravo and YouGov Youth Survey asks about signing online petitions (answered in the affirmative by 26% of 14–17-year-olds), participating in political discussions online (17%) and following parties and politicians on social media (15%).

This reveals a range of diverse practices and low-threshold forms of participation[18] and, above all, indicates that there is still no consensus regarding the framework for assessing digital social engagement.[19]

9.5 Discussion: Engagement Beyond Formal Organizations? Trends in Political Action Among Young People

If we look at the studies of the last 20 years that have dealt with the political engagement of young people in Germany, we find – despite the numerous differences in the specific results – that traditional participation through electoral participation and membership in associations is still at a comparatively high level but is continuing to lose relevance (albeit more slowly than many studies would have us believe). Here, the involvement of young people is an early sign of the way long-term changes in civic engagement and political participation will likely manifest. The first Volunteer Report (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2001, p. 120) spoke of a "crisis of volunteerism" – referring to "traditional" volunteerism in associations, religious institutions, political parties and trade unions that have fixed membership and require a high level of commitment. This assessment is largely confirmed by the overview of the most encompassing studies, although it is clear that continuous additional research is needed here. It is misleading to infer a disenchantment with politics, a "lack of interest in a fixed object of politics" (Hurrelmann et al., 2004, p. 219) and a self-centred pragmatism on the part of young people (see the question about the generation of "ego-tacticians" ibid., p. 31). Additionally, comparisons to other age groups are especially lacking because, as mentioned, other age groups show similar effects. Seemingly, a more fitting explanation is the "dissolution of [political] boundaries" (ibid., p. 43). This means that new, more ephemeral, dynamic, nonorganizational forms of participation are emerging, but they nevertheless rely on individual opportunity and risks and thus perpetuate inequalities.

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[18] A wide variety of communication platforms are used for this purpose, although there is considerable variation between the studies that survey them. For example, according to the Vodafone study (Jugend will bewegen, 2020, p. 18), 54% of the young people surveyed (14–24 years old) use private messengers for political statements; according to the TUI study (Junges Europa, 2019, p. 66), only 17% use the messenger WhatsApp for political engagement. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Facebook (26% TUI; 31% Vodafone), Instagram (28% TUI, 31% Vodafone) and YouTube (17% TUI, 21% Vodafone) in particular are relevant platforms, with Twitter (12% TUI, 10% Vodafone) and Snapchat (7% TUI, 7% Vodafone) being less relevant. TikTok has not yet been considered in such surveys, which is indicative of the dynamics in the field.

[19] Thus, participation in political discussions online is surveyed consistently. In turn, political discussions with family, in school and with friends should also be included, as, for example, the 2017 Bravo and YouGov Youth Study (2017, p. 8) does (it found that 76% of 14–17-year-olds talk about politics in school, 57% with family and 47% with friends, whereas only 17% say they discuss political topics online).

Christof Ehrhart and Eberhard Sandschneider (1994, p. 449) also point out that high voter turnout and party membership alone are insufficient evidence that a democracy is stable. Rather, these forms of participation seem increasingly less suitable ways to become involved and express dissent (hence the persistently low voter turnout and increase in party swapping), whereas protests, demonstrations and other forms of nonvoting participation are suitable for this purpose (Ehrhart & Sandschneider, 1994, p. 455; Hirschman, 1970, p. 118ff.). Consequently, purely formal organizational markers of political participation are not suitable for making an adequate assessment of the state of political participation.

> Corresponding spaces of participation and protest represent differentiated political action spaces in the pluralized society beyond the established political institutions endowed with decision-making power. The political participation of young people in these arenas is at odds with the stagnation of their markedly low participation in elections and their reluctance to engage in party politics. As studies on youth volunteering have shown for some time […], it is subject to other forms of participation: targeted, short-term, non-binding political participation thereby becomes a project of asserting a specific interest in the context of individual political decision-making contexts. (15th Children and Youth Report, 2017b, p. 107; author's translation cf. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2001, p. 120)

Looking at the studies, it can be stated that for a long time, atypical political activity among young people was simply overlooked in the literature. This was simply because studies often focused on traditional forms of political involvement, such as parties and associations, including NGOs, which stagnated at a consistently low level. What was overlooked were alternative, low-threshold forms of political action in mostly digital spaces that initially attracted little interest, especially among older people. The idea of online communities as stages for political articulation hardly seemed conceivable. This has changed in recent years, as digital political engagement has come into sudden and shocking focus. This therefore explains the kind of "overreaction" in the breadth of surveyed digital participation and purely digitally focused studies. Digital spaces are well-suited for low-threshold, project-based and time-limited forms of participation. This suitability stems from easy-to-perform actions in digital spaces, such as likes, retweets, hashtags and online petitions, and may grow into participation in demonstrations and protests in nondigital public spaces. Low-threshold, digitally mediated participation is often associated with negative connotations such as clicktivism or hashtag activism. In social protest events, however, such participation serves as a catalyst through which, for example, purely online protests are quickly and widely carried into social discourse, e.g. the "#Aufschrei" debate in 2013, which sought to highlight everyday sexism and spread from Twitter to daily newspapers to prominent national talk shows before disappearing relatively quickly. In 2017, a similar effect was observable with the "#MeToo" movement. Neither of these was a youth-specific phenomenon, as both were largely carried by young adults. Without the great digital attention moderated by comparatively "small" participations through likes and reposts, these discussions might have been less effective. Simple participation, in particular, is based on the work of a smaller organizational elite, whose intensive and extensive engagement

enables the spontaneous, short-term participation of others. Such forms of participation are highly dynamic and fragile, often swing rapidly between growth and decline and lead to spatiotemporally fragmented and stretched fields of discourse via on- and offline forms.

However, the new forms of political participation can be described not only as nonformal and low threshold but also as characterized by an experiential and lifeworld orientation. In addition, with the eventization of protests (cf. Betz, 2016), the simple fun and promise of a memorable experience stemming from engagement are becoming increasingly decisive factors (cf. Jugendwerk der Deutschen Shell, 1997, p. 83).

> Experience orientation is the most immediate form of the search for happiness. The opposite action type is the action pattern of deferred satisfaction, which is characteristic of saving, long-term courtship, tough political struggle, preventive behaviour of all kinds, hard training, a busy life, renunciation and asceticism. In actions of this type, the hope for happiness is projected into a distant future; in experience-oriented action, the aspiration is directed to the current situation of action without delay. One invests money, time, activity and expects the equivalent value almost at the same moment. With the project to experience something, however, man sets himself a task at which he can easily fail, and this the more intensively he devotes himself to this project and the more he associates with it the meaning of his life in general. (Schulze, [1992] 2005, p. 14; author's translation)

As an everyday activity, this orientation also reinforces short-term participation and rapid (re)exit from various forms of participation. In turn, this makes the motive of self-realization (cf. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2001, p. 121; Cabarello, 2014, p. 456) more significant than obligations. This then leads to a third change – that of lifeworld-related forms of participation. Thus, youth are primarily engaged in topics that they consider relevant or pressing in their own environment. In this context, independent work that is less restricted by organizational guidelines and has a direct relationship to the topic in the real world or to the people most affected or involved becomes a more favourable form of participation and experience. Together with low-threshold forms of participation and, above all, flat hierarchies, self-efficacy in one's actions is thus brought to the fore (as codetermination; Jugendwerk der Deutschen Shell, 1997, p. 325; cf. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2001, p. 121), which threatens to be quickly lost in associations and party hierarchies. Thus, in the "new" engagement, individual relevance is intertwined with social issues:

> In this sense, the new social movements (environment, peace, women) are, on the one hand, an expression of the new danger situations in the risk society and of the emerging contradictions between the sexes; on the other hand, their forms of politicization and problems of stability result from processes of social identity formation in detraditionalized, individualized life worlds. (Beck, [1986] 2016, p. 120; author's translation)

With reference to the tendency of individualization described above, we can say that the demands placed on young people if they want to participate and those placed on organizations and people who want to support young people in doing so are intensifying. On the one hand, young people must have the skills to determine for themselves what they want to do, given the confusing nature of the opportunities for

participation, and they must also be motivated to seek out and pursue appropriate opportunities. They must have or develop the relevant skills and abilities to seize opportunities for participation and use them effectively, and finally, they must feel entitled to participate – even when other young people or adults seek to deny this right to participation. In short, they must want to, be able to and be allowed to participate (cf. Pfadenhauer & Eisewicht, 2015). In particular, the lower participation rates among socially disadvantaged groups, such as young people with a migration background or young people with a low level of education, and the increasing influence of education and socio-economic status on the engagement of young people can be seen as an indication of the corresponding prerequisites for participation (cf. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 2019), which tend to increase and thus promote social inequalities. On the other hand, "conventional" organizations need to reflect on the extent to which they can and want to take up these changing and pluralized forms of and motives for political engagement in an organizational way and to what extent young people deem such actions are appropriate, i.e. whether their corresponding offerings are considered an adequate and appropriate match for young people's participation motives and practices.

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Paul Eisewicht, PhD (Sociology), is research fellow in the Department of Social Sciences at the Technical University of Dortmund. His work focuses on qualitative methods, the sociology of consumption, and youth culture research. He is currently the spokesman of the section for sociology of youth in the German Sociological Association and editor-in-chief of jugendszenen.com.

Nico Maximilian Steinmann, M.Ed., is research fellow in the Department of Social Sciences at the Technical University of Dortmund. He is currently working on a research project on personal and algorithmic purchase advice in the digital (curated shopping). His work focuses on non-standard methods, (digital) consumption phenomena, and youth sociology.

Part IV
Adulthood

Chapter 10
Workplaces as Learning Environments: How Participative Practices in Enterprises Provide Learning Opportunities for Employees' Democracy-Relevant Orientations and Behaviors

Christine Unterrainer (iD)**, Wolfgang G. Weber, Thomas Höge, and Bettina Lampert**

Abstract The present contribution focuses on the democratic socialization potential in business organizations. Based on Kohlberg's (Moral education. Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, 1985) theory of moral education and his just community approach and Pateman's (Participation and democratic theory. Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1970) spillover hypothesis, we investigated if learning environments in organizations, that offer participative practices for employees, are positively related to employees' solidarity at work, moral, and democratic orientations/behaviors. Two cross-sectional, self-report questionnaire studies were conducted: study 1 investigated 308 employees in democratically structured enterprises indicating that individually perceived participation is positively related to employees' democratic engagement orientation. This relation was partially mediated by employees' perceived socio-moral climate and solidarity at work. Study 2 investigated 178 employees in hierarchically structured enterprises. The results revealed that individually perceived participation is indirectly related to employees' moral behavior via a socio-moral climate and employees' moral self-efficacy. Both studies demonstrate that workplaces can provide democratic learning opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making in democratically and hierarchically structured enterprises.

C. Unterrainer (✉) · W. G. Weber · T. Höge
Institute of Psychology, Applied Psychology I, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
e-mail: christine.unterrainer@uibk.ac.at; Wolfgang.Weber@uibk.ac.at; Thomas.Hoege@uibk.ac.at

B. Lampert
Institute of Psychology, Applied Psychology II, University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
e-mail: bettina.lampert@uibk.ac.at

205

10.1 Introduction

Employee participation is a common management tool and a well-researched construct in the field of work and organizational psychology and related scientific disciplines. Seminal theoretical models consider employee participation as a working resource which has positive effects on employees' job motivation, job satisfaction, job engagement, and health (Chamberlin et al., 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Karasek et al., 1981; Locke & Schweiger, 1979; Michie & Williams, 2003). However, in reality, the range of employee participation in concrete organizational decision-making varies a lot. Hence a wide scope of participative practices exists in business organizations. This ranges from very low levels of employee participation such as employee voicing behavior (e.g., Morrison, 2011) or participation in job-related decisions (job autonomy, cf. Hackman & Oldham, 1976) to very high levels of participation such as having direct influence over far-reaching tactical and strategical organizational decisions (Weber et al., 2009, 2020) or through the existence of democratic enterprise structures (Unterrainer et al., 2011; Weber et al., 2008).

However, research on employee participation is often limited to employees' job control or autonomy (e.g., reviews by Miller & Monge, 1986; Spector, 1986; Theorell, 2004; Wagner & Gooding, 1987; Wagner et al., 1997). As such, employees can decide on job- or task-related issues at a shop floor/operational level but are excluded from tactical or (far-reaching) strategic decisions at an organizational level. These decisions are mostly taken by CEOs and top management. The present paper goes beyond a focus on the operational/shop floor level and refers to the following substantial participative structures and practices: (1) democratic enterprise structures, (2) individually perceived participation in decision-making, and (3) a supporting, participative organizational climate (perceived socio-moral climate). By investigating whether these three substantial participative structures and practices represent a potential learning environment for employees' democracy-relevant orientations and behaviors, we intend to reduce the existing research gap concerning the societal effects of organizational democracy.

1. Democratic enterprises are characterized by structurally anchored employee participation (SAEP). SAEP is defined as a binding organizational decision structure that entitles a substantial number of employees (at least one third) to participate directly (e.g., in general assemblies, meetings, or votes) or through their elected representatives (e.g., on representative boards) in making decisions on strategic or tactical issues (Unterrainer et al., 2011; Weber et al., 2020). The degree of SAEP in a particular enterprise can vary and can be identified with a validated typology of nondemocratic/democratic enterprise structures

(Unterrainer et al., 2011; Weber et al., 2008). Examples include worker cooperatives, employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs), or social enterprises which employ the core ideas of deliberative democracy. Democracy is rarely a genuine component of corporate structures and tends to be the exception rather than the rule in business practice. Nevertheless, democratic enterprises do exist. In the present paper, we investigate employees in democratically structured enterprises (study 1) as well as in conventional, hierarchically structured enterprises (study 2).

2. Employees' individually perceived participation in decision-making reflects the employees' de facto participation in short-term (operational), medium-term (tactical), and long-term (strategic) decisions. This participative practice goes beyond the operational level of participation such as job autonomy or control. It encompasses substantial organizational issues, e.g., participating in decisions on the election of supervisors, personnel planning, or major capital investments (Weber et al., 2020).

3. The perceived socio-moral climate is another democratic practice of interest. It represents employees' perception of a supporting, participative organizational climate that includes principles of communication, teamwork, and decision-making (Weber et al., 2008, 2009; Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2013). Five components are postulated as constituting a socio-moral climate (Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2013; Weber et al., 2008): (1) open confrontation of the workers with conflicts, (2) reliable and constant appreciation and support by supervisors and colleagues, (3) open communication and equal cooperation, (4) trust-based allocation of responsibility corresponding to employees' capabilities, and (5) organizational concern for the individual.

The positive effects of participative structures and practices on employees' work-related (proximal) outcomes like job satisfaction, commitment, or motivation are well-established in work and organizational psychology. There are far less empirical studies which take a broader perspective by investigating participative practices in relation to more general (distal) outcomes which are important for the development of democratic, healthy, and sustainable societies. Therefore, it is vital to nurture the moral, prosocial, and democratic competencies of all citizens (Dollard, 2015). Pateman (1970) revealed the educative potential of workplaces for nurturing such competencies. Her spillover hypothesis states that participative and democratic practices in work organizations can enhance the (further) development of employees' prosocial and civic attitudes as well as their behaviors in everyday life outside the work domain.

Hence, the aims of our paper are firstly to take a closer look at the relationship between participative practices and employees' solidarity and moral self-efficacy at work (= proximal work outcomes). And secondly, we investigate the relation between participative practices and more distal outcomes like employees' democratic orientation and moral behavior beyond the workplace. These relationships will be analyzed at the individual level in workplaces with high (democratic enterprises) and low (conventional enterprises) structural participation.

10.2 Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

10.2.1 Participative Practices

In the following, we will describe individually perceived participation in decision-making and a perceived socio-moral climate as participative practices which are related to employees' democracy-relevant orientations and behaviors.

10.2.1.1 Individually Perceived Participation in Decision-Making

According to Weber et al. (2020, p. 5), individually perceived participation "reflects the degree of employees' actual and direct participation in strategic or tactical decision making as perceived by the employees themselves." This definition is based on the seminal IDE studies on workplace participation in European countries in the late 1970s and beginning 1980s (IDE, 1981). The IDE studies examined the de facto participation in short-term (operational), medium-term (tactical) and long-term (strategic) decisions. Strategic decisions are long-term decisions of high importance to the whole company, e.g., major capital investments, budget planning, election of the CEO or the company board, and initiating a new product or service. Tactical decisions refer to medium-term decisions of high importance to parts of the enterprise or are of moderate importance to the whole firm, e.g., election of supervisors, differentiation of wages, process improvements, or personnel planning. Operational decisions pertain to short-term decisions of high importance to the respective worker/workplace, e.g., decisions on work scheduling, on changes to the amount of work that has to be done, or job order planning and control (Weber et al., 2009; Wegge et al., 2010).

Individually perceived participation must not be confused with the democratically organized structure of an enterprise, as reflected by SAEP (see above). The democratic structure determines the rules, procedures, and rights related to employee participation, whereas individually perceived participation represents the extent to which these rights are actually transferred to the individual employee (= de facto participation). The structure may be a necessary condition for individually perceived participation, but even within a democratic enterprise, the de facto participation can vary between employees (IDE, 1981; Weber et al., 2020). For example, not all employees are entitled or willing to participate equally in organizational decisions (e.g., employees in a worker cooperative who are not cooperative members). On the other hand, in enterprises without an "official" democratic structure, several employees may nevertheless have the possibility to participate in organizational decision-making at a higher level due to a more informal participative and appreciative social climate. Indeed, a recent meta-analysis (Weber et al., 2020) showed that democratic organizational structures and individually perceived participation correlate only to a moderate degree.

10.2.1.2 Perceived Socio-Moral Climate

The perceived socio-moral climate represents a sub-domain of the organizational climate and refers to the employees' perception of organizational practices and procedures. The five aforementioned components of the socio-moral climate include principles of communication, teamwork, and decision-making which are assumed to specifically shape the moral and prosocial development of the employees (Weber et al., 2008, 2009; Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2013). The origins of this construct are Kohlberg's (1985) just community approach and Hoff et al.' (1991) as well as Lempert's (1994) concept of the moral atmosphere at work. The just community approach focuses on structural components of educational settings (mainly in schools) that enable the moral development of children. Of central importance is the establishment of forums in which principled, fair solutions to problems of everyday school life can be discussed and joint decisions on the rules of conduct and problem-solving can be made (Kohlberg, 1985; Oser & Althof, 2001; Power et al., 1989). Thus, democratic forums build an organizational environment that can promote democratic citizenship and responsibility by involving pupils in everyday democratic practices ("learning by doing"). This should foster democratic orientations, competencies, and behaviors, namely, complex social perspective taking, moral judgment competence, and responsible action. In just community schools, these prestructured democratic practices of the participating pupils are supported and guided by teachers who act as mentors and advocates of the just community principles (Lind, 2013, 2016).

Studies comparing just community schools with conventional schools identified higher levels of moral atmosphere and moral reasoning among pupils in the just community schools (Power & Higgins-D'Allesandro, 2008). The research group around Lempert (1994) firstly investigated the occupational context as a potential socialization field in terms of a learning environment for moral and prosocial development. In a 10-year longitudinal study, Hoff et al. (1991) found the moral atmosphere in the workplace to be a key driver of employees' moral development (Lempert, 1994). With respect to the relationship between individually perceived participation and a socio-moral climate, Kohlberg's (1985, see Power et al., 1989; Power & Higgins-D'Allesandro, 2008) studies suggest that high involvement in organizational decision-making represents an important antecedent for the socio-moral climate. This is particularly true for enterprises, in which forums for direct democratic participation already exist. In such forums employees are involved in strategic and tactical decision-making and interact on matters that concern their everyday working life or future, discussing problems, and developing proposals to solve them. The more employees take part in such forums of democratic decision-making and the more complex the decisions are, the more likely it is that characteristics similar to a just community can develop (in the sense of Kohlberg, 1985; Power et al., 1989) and attributes of a pronounced socio-moral climate will emerge.

Against this background, it can be suggested that high involvement in organizational decision-making may represent an important antecedent for the perceived socio-moral climate within the organization. Recent meta-analytical results (Weber et al., 2020) support this suggestion. Thus, our Hypothesis 1 reads as follows:

H1: Individually perceived participation is positively associated with employees' perceived socio-moral climate.

10.2.2 Relevant Democratic Orientations at Work (Proximal Outcomes)

In terms of relevant democratic orientations at work, we investigated employees' solidarity and employees' moral self-efficacy at work.

10.2.2.1 Solidarity at Work

Solidarity at work (Flodell, 1989) characterizes employees' orientations taking into account their own behaviors as part of a communitarian network of collective action. It includes workers' readiness to join together in opposing unfair treatment by management. It is probable that in democratic organizational environments, individuals are more frequently confronted with positive social models (e.g., through their elected representatives or participating peers). This in term encourages them to adopt work-related prosocial orientations and related orientations and behaviors such as solidarity through social (incl. vicarious) learning. With respect to democratic enterprises, Weber et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis found only four studies that showed direct or indirect positive relations between organizational participation and prosocial work behaviors. Moreover, Weber et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between structurally anchored organizational democracy and employees' self-reported solidarity at work.

Referring to social learning theory (Bandura, 1979) and supported by the results of cross-sectional studies (Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2013; Weber et al., 2008, 2009), we propose that a perceived socio-moral climate can also play a role in the development of prosocial orientations and behaviors at work such as solidarity because it may evoke a mutual understanding among employees, perspective taking, and corresponding helping behaviors. Taken together, we propose the following:

H2a: Individually perceived participation is positively related to employees' solidarity at work.
H2b: Employees' perceived socio-moral climate is positively related to employees' solidarity at work.

10.2.2.2   Moral Self-Efficacy at Work

Moral self-efficacy is defined "…as an individual's belief in his or her capabilities to organize and mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, means, and courses of action needed to attain moral performance, within a given moral domain, while persisting in the face of moral adversity" (Hannah et al., 2011, p. 675). According to Bandura (1997), the development of self-efficacy may be traced back to three main sources: performance accomplishments (personal mastery experiences), vicarious experience (observational learning), and verbal persuasion (feedback from important others). Democratic practices offer employees the possibility to frankly discuss conflicts of interest and challenging decisions, as well as experience the successful effects of joint decision-making. This may provide employees mastery experiences to develop their self-efficacy. Democratic practices also imply that employees have to reach agreement even on controversial issues which often have moral implications. Furthermore, the substantial involvement of employees in important organizational decisions provides possibilities to observe and understand how other employees successfully solve moral problems in the sense of being social role models. Additionally, a perceived socio-moral climate, which emphasizes esteem, cooperation, and tolerance of mistakes, may foster the exchange of ideas, and employees can adopt successful moral solution strategies.

According to our best knowledge, no study has yet investigated democratic practices as possible antecedents of moral self-efficacy. However, some recently published studies provide evidence that ethical leadership, leader moral humility, and coworker support (which all include components of participative practices) were positively related to employees' moral/ethical self-efficacy (e.g., Lee et al., 2017; Owens et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2017). Few other studies have examined the relationship between ethical/team climate and other forms of self-efficacy (e.g., Shacklock et al., 2011). In all of those studies, the relationship was positive. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

H3a: Individually perceived participation is positively related to employees' moral self-efficacy at work.
H3b: Employees' perceived socio-moral climate is positively related to employees' moral self-efficacy at work.

10.2.3   Relevant Democratic Orientations and Behaviors Beyond the Workplace (Distal Outcomes)

We investigated two more general relevant democratic orientations and behaviors of employees beyond the work domain: democratic engagement orientation and moral behavior.

10.2.3.1 Democratic Engagement Orientations

Employees with high democratic engagement orientations are open to different opinions, cultures, and ways of living, advocate minorities' rights, are willing to defend democratic institutions, and engage in protest and civic activities (e.g., Bibouche, 2003). Democratic engagement orientations can be subsumed under the societal tradition of the three democratic core values, freedom, equality, and brotherhood/sisterhood, and are conducive to a democratic society (e.g., Feierabend & Klicperová-Baker, 2015). Democratic core values and orientations develop throughout a person's whole life span. This starts in childhood and youth with the development of empathy and prosocial behavior during the course of direct interactions and goes on in adolescence and adulthood with the development of cosmopolitan, humanistic behavioral orientations. Due to the centrality of work in the lives of people, the workplace is a key institution in society for citizen education (Greenberg et al., 1996). Pateman (1970) pointed with her spillover hypothesis to the educative effect of participation at work. Accordingly, participative practices encourage employees to collectively plan and decide on important issues in the workplace. Thereby employees can experience political efficacy which may enhance the (further) development of their prosocial and civic attitudes or behaviors over time. However, before such democratic and civic attitudes can spillover from the work into the societal domain, participative practices in enterprises will act as stimulants within the work domain itself (e.g., in terms of solidarity at work).

Only a few studies investigated the spillover hypothesis. Research reviews by Carter (2006) and Greenberg (2008) provided limited support for the spillover effect. Weber et al.'s (2020) meta-analysis, however, revealed moderate positive effects between individually perceived participation and civic/democratic orientations or behaviors in democratically structured enterprises. Some studies in conventional firms (e.g., Lopes et al., 2014; Timming & Summers, 2020) have supported the spillover hypothesis by showing that individual participation in mainly operative decisions was significantly related to employees' civic orientations and behaviors. Empirical studies on the mediating effects of a perceived socio-moral climate on civic behaviors are missing. Only a few empirical cross-sectional studies concerning organizational democracy, socio-moral climate, and employees' community-related orientations are available indicating modest support and inconsistent findings (Weber et al., 2008; Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2013; Wuestewald, 2012). Based on the theoretical considerations and empirical evidence stated above, we propose the following:

H4a: Individually perceived participation is positively related to employees' democratic engagement orientations.
H4b: Employees' perceived socio-moral climate is positively related to employees' democratic engagement orientations.
H4c: Employees' solidarity at work is positively related to employees' democratic engagement orientations.

H4d: The positive relationship between individually perceived participation and employees' democratic engagement orientations is serially mediated by employees' perceived socio-moral climate and employees' solidarity at work.

10.2.3.2   Moral Behavior

Core characteristics of moral behavior are concern and consideration of the needs, interests, and welfare of others (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Strobel et al., 2017), based on "universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights, and of respect of the dignity of human beings as individual persons" (Kohlberg, 1968, p. 2). During the last centuries, numerous different theoretical models (cognitive, intuitive, or affective models) emerged to explain the development of general moral behavior and moral behavior within organizations (Haidt, 2001; Hannah et al., 2011; Kohlberg, 1968, 1984; Rest et al., 1999). We rely on well-established cognitive development models initiated by Kohlberg (1968) and extended by Rest et al. (1999) and Hannah et al. (2011). Cognitive development models suggest that individuals' internal cognitive processes (such as moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, moral identity, or moral self-efficacy) are the main drivers of moral behavior. Those cognitive processes may be stimulated by social interactions, participation in moral action, and the community/institutional context (Shao et al., 2008). This is in line with the already mentioned just community approach (Kohlberg, 1985; Power et al., 1989). In the occupational context, Lempert (1994) found practices of discursive behavioral regulation, respectful communication, and taking over responsibility to be important antecedents of employees' moral development. As already outlined, participative practices such as individually perceived participation in decision-making and a socio-moral work climate are characterized by discursive processes. We suggest that one route from participative practices to moral behavior is the development of moral self-efficacy. Only if a person believes that he/she has the power to successfully produce effects by his/her action will he/she be motivated to put in the effort to take the action for a specific behavior (Bandura, 1997).

Studies in the educational as well as the work context showed that structural democratic features and a socio-moral climate positively impact on the level of individual moral reasoning and the willingness to act prosocially and in a socially responsible way (Hoff et al., 1991; Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2013; Power et al., 1989; Schooler et al., 2004; Weber et al., 2008, 2009). In a similar vein, an ethical climate and ethically/humility-oriented leadership have been identified as important routes to individual moral reasoning, prosocial orientations or behavior, and the prevention of unethical behavior at work (Arnaud & Schminke, 2012; Owens et al., 2019; Trevino et al., 2006). Empirical studies establishing the positive relationship between employees' moral self-efficacy and prosocial/moral behavior have only emerged recently (e.g., Lee et al., 2017; Owens et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2017). However, these studies did not address moral behavior outside the workplace in the

sense of Pateman's spillover hypothesis. Taking our theoretical and empirical arguments together, we propose the following hypotheses:

H5a: Individually perceived participation is positively related to employees' moral behavior.
H5b: Employees' perceived socio-moral climate is positively related to employees' moral behavior.
H5c: Employees' moral self-efficacy is positively related to employees' moral behavior.
H5d: The positive relationship between individually perceived participation and employees' moral behavior is serially mediated by employees' perceived socio-moral climate and employees' moral self-efficacy.

The hypothesized relationships are summarized in Fig. 10.1 (study 1) and Fig. 10.2 (study 2).
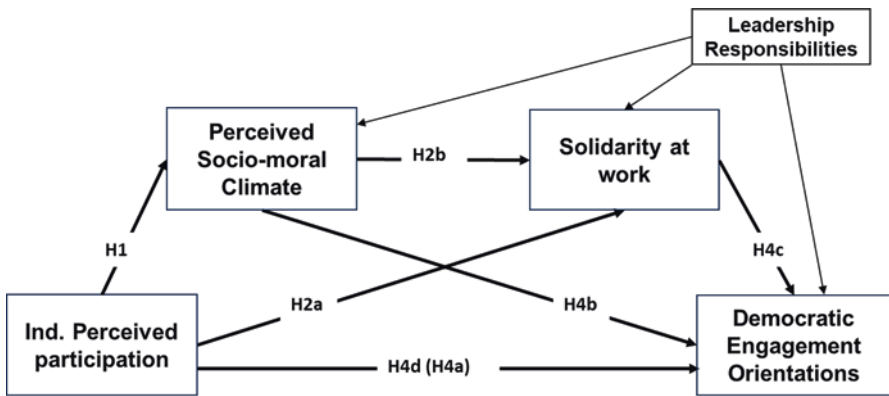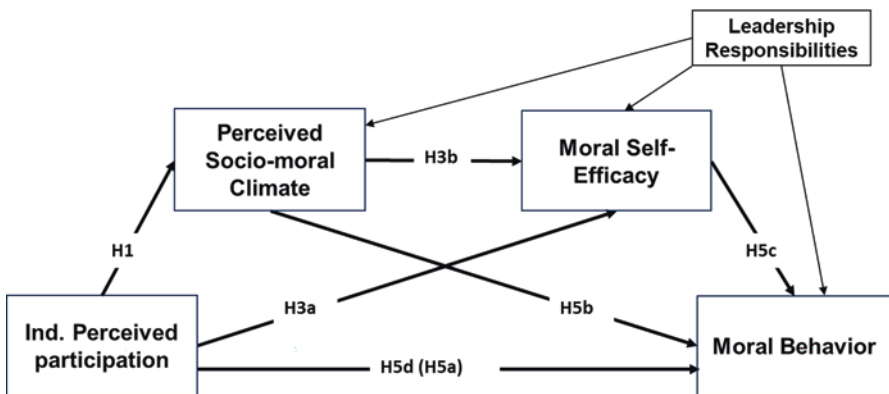

Fig. 10.1 Hypothesized model in study 1

Fig. 10.2 Hypothesized model in study 2

10.3 Method

10.3.1 Study 1: Democratic Enterprises

10.3.1.1 Sample and Procedure

Study 1 was conducted within the ODEM project. We collected data from German-speaking employees in 22 enterprises with different levels of democratic structures in Austria, Germany, and North Italy (South Tyrol). Based on an empirically proven typology (Unterrainer et al., 2011; Weber et al., 2008), five different types of democratic enterprises were identified: three social partnership enterprises, three conventional worker cooperatives, two democratically structured worker cooperatives, seven democratic reform enterprises, and seven self-governed employee-owned enterprises (for more details, see Unterrainer et al., 2011; Weber et al., 2008). All enterprises were for-profit enterprises. Out of 593 distributed self-report questionnaires, 333 were returned (response rate, 56%). Due to missing information on leadership responsibility, the final sample was comprised of 308 participants. Thirty-one percent of respondents were female, 69% male. Most respondents were aged between 30 and 45 years (58%), 19% were younger than 30 years, and 23% were older than 45 years. With regard to the education level, 40% had no high school diploma, 25% held a high school diploma, and 35% had a university degree. Sixty-five percent did not have leadership responsibilities. Findings shown here represent a secondary analysis of the data that underlie the study by Weber et al. (2009).

10.3.1.2 Measures

Individually Perceived Participation
We measured individually perceived participation using Weber and Unterrainer's (2012) Perceived Structure of Organizational Democracy Questionnaire. It records employees' subjectively experienced active participation in operational, tactical, and strategic decision-making. The long version used in study 1 covers 43 items. Sample items include direct participation "in job order planning and control" (operational decisions), "in hiring or dismissal of workers" (tactical decisions), and "in major capital investments" (strategic decisions). Based on the influence power continuum (IDE, 1981), responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = I am not involved at all; 2 = I am informed about the matter beforehand; 3 = I can give my opinion; 4 = my opinion is taken into account; 5 = I take part in the decision-making with equal rights.

Perceived Socio-Moral Climate (SMC)
We assessed employees' individual perception of SMC with Weber et al.'s (2008) Socio-moral Atmosphere Screening (SMA-S) instrument (14 items) in study 1. The SMA-S measures four subscales of SMC: (1) open confrontation with conflicts, (2) reliable appreciation and support, (3) open and free communication, and (4)

trust-based assignment of responsibility. We used the overall SMC score and not the subscale scores. Each question was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A sample item is "In our organization, honest mistakes can be forgiven."

Solidarity at Work

Solidarity at work was measured with 13 items comprising positive and negative indicators of solidarity vs. competition and egoism. Eleven items were taken from a scale by Flodell (1989). Two additional items refer to employees' readiness to defend colleagues against unfair treatment by a supervisor and to support colleagues in other firms who are in trouble. Each respondent was asked to indicate what she/he would advise a new colleague concerning topics of solidarity in the workplace. Sample items include "If colleagues fail to complete their work, you should help them" and "Everyone who wants to be successful in their working life has to enforce against the other's interests" (reversed). The respondents had to answer on a 4-point Likert scale: 1 = I would recommend by no means, 2 = more or less I would not recommend, 3 = More or less I would recommend; 4 = I would recommend in every case.

Democratic Engagement Orientations

Democratic engagement orientations were assessed with 10 items of Bibouche's (2003) scale that measures participants' international, democratic orientations and engagement. It describes individuals' tendency to act in a community-oriented fashion to support the poor and members of minorities to bring about more justice in their everyday lives. Sample items are as follows: "Our prosperous nation has to take responsibility for poor nations," "A viable democracy is inconceivable without political opposition," and "Everyone should sacrifice some of their time for the good of the region or country." All items were administered on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

10.3.2   Study 2: Conventional Enterprises

10.3.2.1   Sample and Procedure

For study 2 we used a convenient sample consisting of 178 working individuals from Austria and Germany. The self-report questionnaires were administered as an online and paper-pencil survey using a snowball procedure via private persons and the social media channels. Twenty-eight participants were removed due to missing values on entire scales. Male and female employees were nearly equally represented (49% male and 50% female). Almost the majority held a university degree (46%), 24% held a high school diploma, and 30% had no high school diploma. The employees were on average 36 years old (SD = 11.99), and 61% of them did not have leadership responsibilities.

10.3.2.2 Measures

Individually Perceived Participation
In study 2 we used a short version of the Perceived Structure of Organizational Democracy Questionnaire (Weber & Unterrainer, 2012) which comprises 24 items (see Appendix).

Perceived Socio-Moral Climate (SMC)
In study 2 we assessed employees' individual perception of SMC with the German 21-item version of the Socio-moral Climate Questionnaire (SMCQ; Pircher Verdorfer et al., 2015). The SMCQ is a further developed version of the SMA-S (14 items) used in study 1. The SMCQ measures five subscales of SMC: (1) open confrontation with conflicts, (2) reliable appreciation and support, (3) open and free communication, (4) trust-based assignment of responsibility, and (5) organizational concern. Again, we used the overall SMC score and not the subscale-scores. The answer format ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A sample item is "In our organization, honest mistakes can be forgiven."

Moral Self-Efficacy
We measured moral self-efficacy with eight items by asking participants about how convinced they are in their ability to solve moral problems or dilemmas well at work. Three items were taken from May et al. (2014) and were slightly adapted. One item was taken from Arnaud and Schminke (2012), and four items were taken from Fischbach (2015). A sample item is as follows: "Making ethical decisions in an organization is well within the scope of my abilities." Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Moral Behavior
We assessed moral behavior with nine items taken from Strobel et al.'s (2017) moral behavior scale. The items measure moral behavior in terms of moral sensitivity in action which means according to Strobel et al. (2017, p. 44) that "…each item was supposed to describe a behavior for which at least a moderate level of moral sensitivity would be needed." Hence the questions ask individuals if they actively consider the well-being of others in their actions and decisions. A sample item is "I actively exchange views with others (e.g., at work) in order to figure out what effects my behavior actually has or might have on others." Each question was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

10.3.3 Analytical Approach

We tested all proposed hypotheses (total, direct, and indirect effects) in study 1 and study 2 with the Process tool (Hayes, 2018) in IBM SPSS 26.0. Model 6 allowed us to assess the sequential mediation models. Process applies bootstrapping that does not assume the assumption of normality and is recommended for testing indirect

effects (Hayes, 2018). We conducted 5000 bootstrap samples for bias-corrected 95% bootstrap confidence intervals and used the heteroscedasticity-consistent standard error HC3 (Davidson-MacKinnon) suggested by Field (2013). When zero is not included in the 95% confidence interval, a significant indirect effect is supported. Having leadership responsibilities or not was entered as a control for both mediators and for the outcome variable for two reasons: (1) the percentage of supervisory function was quite high in both studies (study 1, 35%; study 2, 39%). (2). Supervisors especially in conventional enterprises are often provided with more formal decision-making rights than their subordinates.

10.4   Results

10.4.1   Study 1: Democratic Enterprises

10.4.1.1   Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We performed four different CFAs to examine whether the investigated constructs are empirically distinguishable from one another. Table 10.1 shows the CFA results of the four-factor measurement model and its comparisons with a three-factor, two-factor, and one-factor model. Comparing all the alternative models with the hypothesized model, the use of chi-square difference tests revealed that the hypothesized four-factor model best fits the data [$\chi^2(216) = 467.78$; $p < .001$; CFI = .905; TLI = .889; RMSEA = .062].

10.4.1.2   Hypothesis Testing Study 1

Table 10.2 displays descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's α reliabilities in democratically structured enterprises (study 1).

Table 10.3 illustrates the unstandardized estimates of all path coefficients and the 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals (95% CI) of the proposed sequential mediation model in democratically structured enterprises (study 1). Hypothesis 1, which stated a positive relationship between employees' individually perceived participation and employees' perceived socio-moral climate (path a1), is supported ($b = .24$, $p < .001$). The results also revealed significant positive relationships between individually perceived participation and employees' solidarity at work (path a2) ($b = .08$, $p < .001$) as well as between perceived socio-moral climate and solidarity at work (path d21) ($b = .14$, $p = .005$) providing support for Hypothesis 2a and 2b. The total (path c) ($b = .26$, $p < .001$) and the direct effect (path c') ($b = .14$, $p < .001$) of individually perceived participation on democratic engagement orientations are significant and positive, supporting Hypothesis 4a. Hypothesis 4b stated a positive relationship between perceived socio-moral climate and democratic engagement orientations (path b1). This b1 path was not significant ($b = .06$,

Table 10.1 Confirmatory factor analyses of the measurement model in study 1

		χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δ df)
1.	Hypothesized four-factor model	467.78	216	2.17	.905	.889	.062	
2.	Three-factor model[a]	511.50	219	2.34	.890	.873	.066	43.73*** (3)
3.	Two-factor model[b]	1030.69	221	4.66	.695	.650	.109	562.92*** (5)
4.	One-factor model[c]	1432.27	222	6.45	.544	.480	.133	964.49*** (6)

Note: $N = 308$; ***$p < .001$. *CFI* comparative fit index, *TLI* Tucker-Lewis index, *RMSEA* root mean square of approximation; [a]solidarity at work and democratic orientations combined into one factor; [b]solidarity at work and democratic orientations combined into one factor and individually perceived participation and perceived socio-moral climate combined into one factor; [c]all four constructs loading on one single latent factor

Table 10.2 Correlations, means, and SDs of main variables (study 1)

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Gender[a]	–	–								
2.	LR[b]	–	–	−.11*							
3.	Education	4.94	1.89	.03	−.13*						
4.	Age	38.92	9.89	−.02	−.19**	.17**					
5.	IPD	3.32	1.17	.08	−.48**	.31**	.43**	(.98)			
6.	SMC	3.71	0.60	−.10	−.10	.18**	.10	.42**	(.89)		
7.	SOLI	3.29	0.39	−.04	−.03	.32**	.18**	.28**	.31**	(.78)	
8.	DEO	4.66	0.66	−.06	−.11	.46**	.28**	.41**	.32**	.62**	(.80)

Note: [a]1 = female and 2 = male; [b]1 = yes and 2 = no; Cronbach's α reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal. $N = 308$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$
LR leadership responsibility, *IPD* individually perceived participation, *SMC* perceived socio-moral climate, *SOLI* solidarity at work, *DEO* democratic engagement orientation

$p = .360$); hence Hypothesis 4b was not supported. The significant positive relationship between solidarity at work and democratic engagement orientations (path b2) provides support for Hypothesis 4c ($b = .91$, $p < .001$). Finally, Hypothesis 4d stated a sequential mediation between individually perceived participation and employees' democratic engagement orientations via a socio-moral climate and employees' solidarity at work. The computed indirect effects provide support for Hypothesis 4d. Due to the nonsignificant b1 path, the indirect effect 1 (path a1*b1, individually perceived participation via perceived socio-moral climate to democratic engagement orientations) was not significant ($b = .02$, 95% CI [−.02; .05]). However, the indirect effect 2 (path a2*b2, individually perceived participation via solidarity at work to democratic engagement orientations) ($b = 07$, 95% CI [.03; .12]) and the sequential indirect effect 3 (path a1*d21*b2) ($b = .03$, 95% CI [.01; .06]) were significant. The control variable leadership responsibility was only significantly related to perceived socio-moral climate ($\beta = .13$; $p = .012$), indicating that employees without leadership responsibilities perceived a higher socio-moral climate than employees with leadership responsibility. Leadership responsibility was not significantly related to solidarity at work and to democratic engagement orientations (Fig. 10.3).

Table 10.3 Testing indirect effects in democratically structured enterprises (study 1)

Step	Variable	Path	b	SE (HC3)	p	95% CI
1 (X ➔ Y)	IPD ➔ DEO	c	.26	.03	<.001	[.19, .33]
2 (X ➔ M$_1$)	IPD ➔ SMC	a_1	.24	.03	<.001	[.18, .31]
3 (X + M$_1$ ➔ M$_2$)	SMC ➔ SOLI	d_{21}	.14	.05	.005	[.04, .24]
	IPD ➔ SOLI	a_2	.08	.02	<.001	[.04, .12]
4 (X + M$_1$ + M$_2$ ➔ Y)	SOLI ➔ DEO	b_2	.91	.08	<.001	[.74, 1.08]
	SMC ➔ DEO	b_1	.06	.07	.360	[−.07, .19]
	IPD ➔ DEO	c'	.14	.03	<.001	[.07, .20]
Indirect effect 1 (X ➔ M$_1$ ➔ Y)	IPD ➔ SMC ➔ DEO	$a_1{*}b_1$	.02	.02[a]		[−.02, .05][b]
Indirect effect 2 (X ➔ M$_2$ ➔ Y)	IPD ➔ SOLI ➔ DEO	$a_2{*}b_2$	.07	.02[a]		[.03, .12][b]
Indirect effect 3 (X ➔ M$_1$ ➔ M$_2$ ➔ Y)	IPD ➔ SMC ➔ SOLI ➔ DEO	$a_1{*}d_{21}{*}b_2$	.03	.01[a]		[.01, .06][b]

Note: $N = 308$; coefficients are unstandardized; c = total effect; $a_1{*}b_1$ = indirect effect 1; $a_2{*}b_2$ = indirect effect 2; $a_1{*}d_{21}{*}b_2$ = indirect effect 3; c' = direct effect
[a]Bootstrapping standard error of the indirect effect; [b]Bootstrapping confidence interval of the indirect effect
IPD individually perceived participation, *SMC* perceived socio-moral climate, *SOLI* solidarity at work, *DEO* democratic engagement orientation

Figure 10.3 provides a graphical overview of the standardized coefficients of the sequential mediation model.

10.4.2   Study 2: Conventional Enterprises

10.4.2.1   Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Like in study 1, we performed four different CFAs to examine whether the investigated constructs are distinguishable from one another. Table 10.4 shows the CFA results of the four-factor measurement model and its comparisons. Also, in study 2, the hypothesized four-factor measurement model best fits the data [$\chi^2(263) = 418.02$; $p < .001$; CFI = .918; TLI = .906; RMSEA = .058] indicating that the discriminability of our investigated constructs is given.

10.4.2.2   Hypothesis Testing Study 2

Table 10.5 presents descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's α reliabilities in hierarchically structured enterprises (study 2).
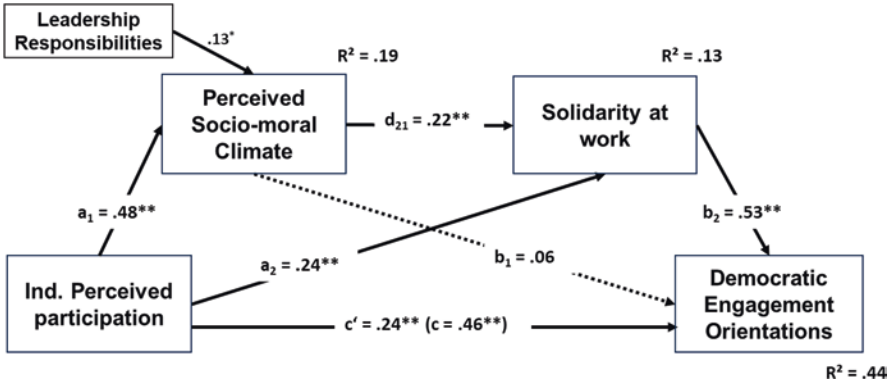
Fig. 10.3 Serial mediation model in democratically structured enterprises (study 1)
Note: $N = 308$; coefficients are standardized; $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$; control variable (on mediators and DV), leadership responsibilities

Table 10.4 Confirmatory factor analyses of the measurement model in study 2

		χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δ df)
1.	Hypothesized four-factor model	436.07	262	1.66	.908	.894	.061	
2.	Three-factor model[a]	527.43	265	1.99	.861	.842	.075	91.36*** (3)
3.	Two-factor model[b]	707.75	267	2.65	.766	.737	.097	271.68*** (5)
4.	One-factor model[c]	987.64	268	3.69	.618	.573	.123	551.57*** (6)

Note: $N = 178$; $***p < .001$. *CFI* comparative fit index, *TLI* Tucker-Lewis index, *RMSEA* root mean square of approximation; [a]moral behavior and moral self-efficacy combined into one factor; [b]moral behavior and moral self-efficacy combined into one factor and individually perceived participation and perceived socio-moral climate combined into one factor; [c]all four constructs loading on one single latent factor

Table 10.5 Correlations, means, and SDs of main variables (study 2)

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Gender[a]	–	–								
2.	LR[b]	–	–	−.12							
3.	Education	4.58	1.57	−.03	−.08						
4.	Age	36.06	11.98	.07	−.27**	−.01					
5.	IPD	2.42	0.77	−.04	−.53**	.31**	.17*	(.93)			
6.	SMC	3.32	0.76	−.13	−.07	.18*	−.06	.46**	(.94)		
7.	MSE	3.87	0.64	−.11	−.24**	.02	.05	.40**	.36**	(.84)	
8.	MB	3.49	0.52	−.27**	−.14	.07	.10	.21**	.18*	.40**	(.70)

Note: [a]1 = female and 2 = male; [b]1 = yes and 2 = no; Cronbach's α reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal. $N = 178$; $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$
LR leadership responsibility, *IPD* individually perceived participation, *SMC* perceived socio-moral climate, *MSE* moral self-efficacy at work, *MB* moral behavior

Table 10.6 Testing indirect effects in hierarchically structured enterprises (study 2)

Step	Variable	Path	b	SE (HC3)	p	95% CI
1 (X → Y)	IPD → MB	c	.12	.06	.056	[−.00, .25]
2 (X → M₁)	IPD → SMC	a_1	.58	.08	<.001	[.42, .73]
3 (X + M₁ → M₂)	SMC → MSE	d_{21}	.21	.08	.014	[.04, .38]
	IPD → MSE	a_2	.19	.08	.025	[.02, .36]
4 (X + M₁ + M₂ → Y)	MSE → MB	b_2	.30	.07	<.001	[.16, .45]
	SMC → MB	b_1	.02	.06	.745	[−.10, .14]
	IPD → MB	c'	.02	.06	.769	[−.11, .14]
Indirect effect 1 (X → M₁ → Y)	IPD → SMC → MB	$a_1{*}b_1$	.01	.03[a]		[−.05, .08][b]
Indirect effect 2 (X → M₂ → Y)	IPD → MSE → MB	$a_2{*}b_2$	.06	.03[a]		[.01, .12][b]
Indirect effect 3 (X → M₁ → M₂ → Y)	IPD → SMC → MSE → MB	$a_1{*}d_{21}{*}b_2$	.04	.02[a]		[.01, .07][b]

Note: N = 178; coefficients are unstandardized; c = total effect; $a_1{*}b_1$ = indirect effect 1; $a_2{*}b_2$ = indirect effect 2; $a_1{*}d_{21}{*}b_2$ = indirect effect 3; c' = direct effect
[a]Bootstrapping standard error of the indirect effect; [b]Bootstrapping confidence interval of the indirect effect
IPD individually perceived participation, *SMC* perceived socio-moral climate, *MSE* moral self-efficacy at work, *MB* moral behavior

Table 10.6 depicts the unstandardized estimates of all path coefficients and the 95% bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals (95% CI) of the proposed sequential mediation model in hierarchically structured enterprises (study 2). Hypothesis 1, stating a positive relationship between employees' individually perceived participation and employees' perceived socio-moral climate (path a1), was also tested and supported (b = .58, p < .001) within hierarchically structured enterprises. Employees' moral self-efficacy at work correlated positively and significantly with its hypothesized predictors individually perceived participation (path a2) (b = .19, p = .025) and perceived socio-moral climate (path d21) (b = .21, p = .014) providing support for Hypothesis 3a and 3b. The total (path c) (b = .12, p = .056) and the direct effect (path c') (b = .02, p = .769) of individually perceived participation on employees' moral behavior are positive but not significant, providing only modest support for Hypothesis 5a. Hypothesis 5b stated a positive relationship between perceived socio-moral climate and moral behavior (path b1). This b1 path was not significant (b = .02, p = .745), indicating that Hypothesis 5b was not supported. The significant positive relation between moral self-efficacy at work and moral behavior (path b2) provides support for Hypothesis 5c (b = .30, p < .001). Finally, Hypothesis 5d stated a sequential mediation between individually perceived participation and employees' moral behavior via a socio-moral climate and employees' moral self-efficacy at work. The computed indirect effects provide support for Hypothesis 5d. As a result of the nonsignificant b1 path, the indirect effect 1 (path a1*b1, individually perceived participation via perceived socio-moral climate to
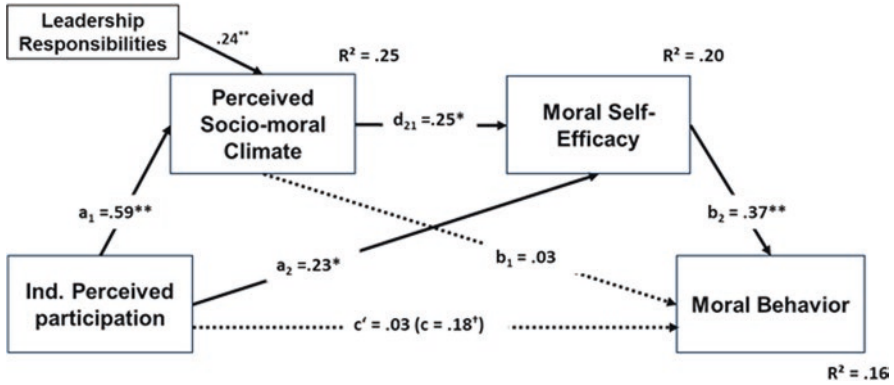
Fig. 10.4 Serial mediation model in hierarchically structured enterprises (study 2)
Note: $N = 178$; coefficients are standardized; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$; control variable (on mediators and DV), leadership responsibilities

moral behavior) was not significant ($b = .01$, 95% CI [−.05; .08]), whereas the indirect effect 2 (path a2*b2, individually perceived participation via moral efficacy to moral behavior) ($b = .06$, 95% CI [.01; .12]) and the sequential indirect effect 3 (path a1*d21*b2) ($b = .04$, 95% CI [.01; .07]) were significant. Similar to study 1, the control variable leadership responsibility was only significantly related to perceived socio-moral climate ($\beta = .24$; $p = .003$) and not to moral self-efficacy or moral behavior (Fig. 10.4). The positive relation indicates that employees without leadership responsibilities perceived a higher socio-moral climate than employees with leadership responsibilities.

A graphical overview of the standardized coefficients of the sequential mediation model within hierarchically structured enterprises is presented in Fig. 10.4.

10.5   Discussion

10.5.1   Summary

Most of the hypotheses were supported in both studies. In democratic enterprises (study 1), individually perceived participation correlated positively with employees' perceived socio-moral climate, solidarity at work (directly as well as indirectly via socio-moral climate), and employees' democratic engagement orientations beyond the workplace (directly and indirectly via socio-moral climate and solidarity at work). In hierarchical enterprises (study 2), individually perceived participation was also positively related to employees' perceived socio-moral climate, employees' moral self-efficacy (directly and indirectly via socio-moral climate), and employees' moral behavior beyond the workplace (only indirectly via socio-moral climate and moral self-efficacy).

10.5.2 Theoretical Implications

The two presented studies support the idea that participative practices in business enterprises constitute a potential for employees' democratic socialization (Weber et al., 2009). In accordance with several researchers (e.g., Kohlberg, 1985; Lempert, 1994; Oser & Althof, 2001; Pateman, 1970), the workplace is an important institution that can act as a learning environment for participation and the further development of employees' democratic and civic orientations. Where employees have the possibility to participate in substantial organizational decision-making, they experience a strong socio-moral climate not only in democratic enterprises but also in more conventional, hierarchically structured enterprises. Participative practices provide employees with the mastery and vicarious learning experiences that are important for the development of solidarity and moral self-efficacy in the workplace. Solidarity and moral self-efficacy at work as work-proxy indicators are in turn important prerequisites for the more distal effects, such as employees' engagement in democratic/moral orientations and behaviors beyond the working context (Bandura, 1997; Pateman, 1970).

Pateman's spillover hypothesis (1970) provides a reasonable argument for how the workplace may act as institution for citizen education. Through participative practices, employees collectively plan, discuss, and decide on important issues in the organization. Thereby, they can experience political self-efficacy at work which may enhance the (further) development of democracy-related orientations beyond the work domain over time. However, not only can such socialization effects be responsible for a positive correlation between participative practices and the democratic, civic orientations of employees but also organizational selection and self-selection effects (discussed by Weber et al., 2020). This means that organizations may hire employees who fit in well with the values and culture of the enterprise (organizational selection) or that employees may choose to work in enterprises that correspond with their personal preferences and orientations, e.g., people who are strongly oriented toward civic life and the common good may try to work in enterprises where such values are appreciated and practiced (self-selection). We cannot completely rule out the possibility that such organizational and self-selection effects were present in our study. However, our findings on hierarchically structured enterprises provide some support against the thesis of a strong self-selection effect. Also, in hierarchically structured enterprises, where employees did not choose the workplace because of its democratic structure or where enterprises did not hire employees because of their democratic culture, participative practices were positively associated with employees' moral self-efficacy and in turn with their moral behavior outside the workplace. This supports more of a socialization effect than a selection effect.

In accordance with previous studies (Lee et al., 2017; Owens et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2017) and Bandura's social cognitive theory (1997), study 2 supports the notion that moral self-efficacy is significantly related to moral behavior. However, previous studies investigated the effects of employees' moral self-efficacy only on

moral/ethical behavior in the workplace (e.g., Lee et al., 2017; Owens et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2017). The present study provides empirical evidence that moral self-efficacy is not only associated with moral behavior at work but also with employees' general moral behavior beyond the work context. This result is fully in line with Pateman's (1970) spillover hypothesis.

10.5.3   Limitations and Future Research

A first limitation of this study refers to the measure of moral behavior which was only assessed in the nonwork context but not in the workplace. Future studies in the context of organizational participation should investigate moral behavior at work and beyond the workplace simultaneously to provide even stronger support for the spillover hypothesis. Additionally, we were not able to empirically compare outcomes between the democratic and conventional enterprises by hypothesis testing, since we measured different constructs in study 1 and study 2. Furthermore, longitudinal and quasi-experimental study designs are necessary for providing causal evidence of the hypothesized models. The cross-sectional design of the present studies is a clear limitation, and the results have to be interpreted carefully with respect to causality. Another limitation of the present studies refers to the single-source self-rated questionnaire design. Even though we were able to show the distinctiveness of our measured constructs by comparing different CFA models, social desirability may have affected participants' answers and inflated correlations.

10.5.4   Practical Implications

Participative practices in the workplace actually seem to encourage more democratic orientation/behavior by employees. At an organizational level, frequently occurring quality circles, occupational health and safety committees, department meetings, dialogue conferences, general assemblies, electable company councils, or employee ownership build just some examples of how to provide employees with more power and decision-making authority in an enterprise (Weber et al., 2020). However, in introducing such changes, both management and employees have to be prepared and involved in the process. Management must be willing to share power and responsibility with employees, while employees need to have the competence and the motivation to take part in organizational decision-making. Therefore, courses and training should be offered, and employees should be given enough time to share knowledge and have constructive discussions in meetings. Additionally, management should motivate employees and encourage them for participation in decision-making (Unterrainer et al., 2017). However, participation in decision-making in the company might also reach its limits. For example, it is possible that employees do not want to be motivated to participate in strategic or tactical

decisions. They simply want to get their work done and not have to think about their work at home. Knowledge sharing as a precondition of participation in decision-making might also be more difficult for other employees, in particular for people with cognitive impairments. Thus, it is essential that information is accessible and understandable, e.g., through providing easy read documents and making sure that they have a voice. Moreover, participation in decision-making on an operational level would also have to be feasible for employees who lack motivation or competence. Operational decisions concern, for example, how the individual workplace can be designed, whether working hours can be adapted to the needs of the employees or whether it is possible to determine the sequence of work assignments for oneself. These participation processes have been shown to address autonomy as one of the core basic human needs and to satisfy it, at least in part, in the work domain (Gangé & Deci, 2005).

If participative practices were successfully implemented, not only could enterprises benefit but the society too. This is because employees would not only show more solidarity at work but also develop moral efficacy in general which in turn could lead to enhanced democratic orientations and moral behavior inside and outside the workplace. For example, such processes may prevent employees from pursuing unethical behavior and also encourage them to stand up and protest against misconduct. Employees with high moral self-efficacy dare to speak out grievances, e.g., technical problems or production failures, even against resistance, particularly when the health of the consumers might be at risk. Such democracy-relevant behaviors and orientations would be significant in preventing future workplace scandals like the kind that occurred at VW, Enron, or General Motors. Moreover, by developing employees' moral capacities and their understanding of social issues as well as encouraging civic engagement among employees, companies can sustainably promote social well-being and counteract antidemocratic tendencies in society. Global threats to democratic systems through "postdemocratic" economistic and populist erosion were raised by socialization researchers in different disciplines (e.g., Crouch, 2004).

10.5.5 Conclusions

In view of the prominent global crises, whose causes can be found in practices of the capitalist economic system and in neoliberal policies, the need for a socio-ecological transformation of society is becoming increasingly apparent (Exner, 2019; Giegold & Embshoff, 2008). Participative structures and practices in enterprises may play an important role in such a societal transformation. Globalization-critical movements like the Economy for the Common Good (Felber, 2010) or the Solidarity Economy (Exner, 2019) provide concrete approaches toward a socio-ecological transformation. The Solidarity Economy movement explicitly

emphasizes the importance of democracy in business organizations. The Economy for the Common Good movement assesses collective ownership, employees' actual codetermination, an appreciative working climate, and solidarity and moral behavior as core components of a common good balance sheet (Felber, 2010). Scientific engagement with and advancement of such grassroot initiatives are promising since they expand learning places for participation, deliberation, and democracy which are crucial for developing a future oriented toward the common good as well as social and environmental sustainability.

Appendix

Short Version of the Perceived Structure of Organizational Democracy Questionnaire (Weber & Unterrainer, 2012) (POPD-S).

Instruction In which of the following areas of decision-making do you participate directly within your team, work group, participatory body, etc.?

1 = I am not involved at all.
2 = I am informed about the matter beforehand.
3 = I can give my opinion.
4 = My opinion is taken into account.
5 = I take part with equal weight.

Strategic Decisions

1. Changes in corporate governance or mission statement, charter, statutes etc.
2. To pass the budget of your firm (including equity capital formation, extent of shares, contributions of capital of the employees, profit distribution).
3. Major capital investments (e.g., an additional production line, a new branch).
4. Major changes in the way one or more departments are organized (restructuring).
5. Election of members of a supervisory board, supervisory body.
6. Election of chief executive(s) or members of the managing board.
7. Admission of new shareholder, stockholders, and equity holders (e.g., members of a cooperative or of a partnership).
8. Establishment of principles of marketing.

Tactical Decisions

1. Production planning or sales planning, planning the business mix, or planning the palette of services of your firm.
2. Innovations (e.g., development of extensive improvements of technology, work organization, product or service).
3. Purchasing of new operating resources, operating media, and equipment (e.g., machinery and tools, PC).
4. Election or delegation of representatives of your department/work group into a participating/representative board or commission, etc. of your firm.
5. Appointment of a new head of department/division.
6. Recruitment/dismissal of employees.
7. Differentiation of wages or salaries (changes in how much a certain grade/wage group shall earn).
8. Changes in the system of labor time.

Operational Decisions

1. Job order planning and control.
2. Personnel placement and task distribution (who does what at which workplace).
3. Activities within your unit designed to save costs.
4. Changes of the amount of work that has to be done.
5. From when to when one's working hours are (e.g., beginning of work, overtime, shift schedule).
6. Improvement in physical, ergonomic, or organizational work conditions of one's workplace (e.g., noise, security, health, tool, room partitioning, layout).
7. Whether one can follow a vocational training course (during work hours).
8. Whether one is transferred to another job within the firm.

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Christine Unterrainer is a researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Psychology, University of Innsbruck, Austria. She holds a PhD in work and organizational psychology from the University of Innsbruck. Her main research areas include organizational democracy and climate, participative leadership practices, and employee orientations and behaviors (e.g., employee participation and voice, employees' prosocial and democratic orientations, and employee well-being). Just recently she published a meta-analysis about the effects of organizational democracy on individual, organizational, and societal outcomes.

Wolfgang G. Weber is Full Professor of Applied Psychology, Institute of Psychology, University of Innsbruck (Austria). He is a co-founding member of the Organisational Participation in Europe Network (OPEN) and of the *Journal Psychology of Everyday Activity*. His research activities include publications about employee participation and democracy in organizations, sociomoral work climate, socialization of prosocial and civic behavior, humanization of work, and the development of work analysis instruments. He has also published on phenomena of social alienation based on concepts of critical theory and cultural-historical activity theory.

Thomas Höge is a senior researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Psychology, University of Innsbruck, Austria. His main research areas include organizational democracy, socio-moral organizational climate, neoliberal ideological beliefs at work and beyond, psychological aspects of workplace flexibility from a life-conduct perspective, occupational health and well-being, and the integration of critical theory into work and organizational psychology.

Bettina Lampert is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Psychology, University of Innsbruck (Austria), with expertise in work and organizational psychology. Her research interests include occupational health psychology with a focus on working conditions, emotion regulation in the workplace, detached concern, employee well-being as well as client service quality outcomes, and health promotion interventions. Her current research examines how empathy and detachment (detached concern) in human service work impact on meaning in work, occupational self-efficacy, and employee well-being.

Chapter 11
Organization and Participation. Aspects of a Dialectical Relationship

Thomas Wendt and Sebastian Manhart

Abstract The paper discusses the reciprocal relation between organization and participation. Modern society depends on organizations even though, and precisely because, they simultaneously constrain and enable opportunities for individuals. Individual demands for societal participation are referred to participation in organizations and are also generally realized in an organized form. Claims to individual participation can only be enforced in a rationally expectable and verifiable way through order-forming procedures. Normative ideas of participation, which proclaim societal participation as simple taking part but dispense with the articulation of comprehensible, i.e., regular, offers of implementation, oppose such a logic of proceduralism. Participatory procedures in organizations, however, become part of a functional context in that they serve the organizational structure building and, in particular, the structure-guided generation of productive variations. Organization and individual are mutually dependent on each other and together constitute the dialectic of modern society. In conclusion, the relationship between organization and participation is discussed as a fundamental educational problem as well as a teaching task of organizational education.

Keywords Organization · Participation · Organizational education · Social theory · *Bildung*

T. Wendt (✉)
Department of Organizational Education, Trier University, Trier, Germany
e-mail: wendtth@uni-trier.de

S. Manhart
Department of Organizational Education, University of the Armed Forces Munich, Neubiberg, Germany
e-mail: sebastian.manhart@unibw.de

11.1   Introduction

Modern society and democracy are dependent on the regulatory capacities of organizations. With the help of organizations, jobs are provided, opportunities for consumption are opened up, educational requirements are consolidated, or legal and political participatory demands are enforced. Simultaneously, companies, nonprofit organizations, or government institutions offer opportunities for the fulfillment of individual life aspirations. However, the functional logic of organizations stands in contrast to claims to equality and democracy, individual participation, and development. This also applies when participation is organized in a targeted manner.

Organization is based on the differentiation of regulations that systematically limit individual possibilities in order to coordinate process steps based on the division of labor and to integrate them into a coherent entity. Participatory processes are becoming increasingly popular in organizations and not just in the current era. Corresponding demands and claims are not only made by employees or by trade union actors, scientific or journalistic observers, but are also regularly formulated in theories of management, by the management staff of concrete organizations or by organizational consultants. In this context, participation is often seen as an antidote to a multitude of supposed or actual organizational pathologies: hierarchical power development, disempowerment of employees, structural rigidity, anonymity and emotional coldness of bureaucratic processes, motivation problems of employees, and their alienation from meaningless technical processes based on division of labor are just a few examples. On the other hand, this corresponds to a multitude of political, educational, but also economic expectations of participatory processes, which are only vaguely described as hierarchy removal, de-bureaucratization, democratizing citizen participation and organizational team building, innovation, personalization, individualization, and empowerment to assume personal responsibility. The following remarks do not aim at disputing these expectations or at putting the demand for participation and participatory design of organizations ad acta. After all, what would be the alternative? However, it seems useful, not only from the perspective of organizational education, to make clearer that participatory procedures in organizations are inevitably used by them to build up their own structures. Organizations expand in the realization of participatory demands, because basic values of modern society, such as individual equality and justice, are subject to specific threats, especially in participatory dynamics, against which, in turn, their procedural regulation is relied upon. In constitutional democracies, therefore, participation without organization is just as impossible as organization without participation.

The reciprocity of complexity construction and reduction by means of participatory organization and organized participation is just as constitutive for modern democratic society as the constant work and critique of these conditions. Organizations are therefore the definitive educational environment in constitutional democracies, and democracy is realized predominantly through participation in organizations. This education also includes a better understanding of the interrelationship between

participation and organization, in order to avoid being permanently disappointed by the failure to realize expectations of participation that are too high. Relativizing a normative perspective on participation can help to avoid a premature understanding of the complexity of modern organizational society as insufficient. Instead, it is a matter of gaining an understanding of the inherent logic social order of democracy against the background of existing authoritarian and anarchic alternatives. Organized democracy is always more, but also always less, than what can be imagined and hoped for.

In order to systematically illustrate this relationship, the article first outlines the complexity of modern society, which is based significantly on the form of modern organization (1). Modern society is dependent on organizations, although and especially because they restrict and enable individual possibilities at the same time. Individual claims to societal participation are always related to participation in organizations and are also generally realized in organized form (2). Rationally expectable and verifiable claims to individual participation can only be enforced through order-building procedures (3). This logic of proceduralism is countered by normative notions of participation that proclaim social participation as simply taking part. In most cases, however, the formulation of comprehensible, i.e., regulated, offers of implementation is avoided (4). In organizations, participatory procedures become part of a functional context in that they serve the organizational structure building and, in particular, the structure-guided generation of productive deviations (5). Organization and individual depend reciprocally on each other and constitute the dialectic of modern society together. The article concludes by summing up the remarks and classifying them as a basic educational problem (6).

11.2 Participation Between Organization and Society

Societal complexity is founded in a principle that uses the reduction of complexity to build its own complexity: organization (Manhart & Wendt, 2020). Contemporary society is an organizational society. Organizations enable the parallelization of a multitude of simultaneous action executions (Wendt, 2019, 2020). They enable and foster communication and coordination among absentees (Luhmann, 2000; Manhart, 2009), and they do so simultaneously because their operating principle is based on linking motive generalization and behavioral specification of their members (Luhmann, 1975). Regardless of the respective motivations of the subjects involved, guidelines for action are addressed to them. In this way, activities that are aligned with a purpose are coordinated in parallel as well as sequentially. Organizations abstract from individual characteristics in order to integrate themselves as an overall entity out of process steps based on the division of labor. Addressing specific expectations and enforcing imperatives for action differentiate organizations from their environment (Baecker, 2001). In this way, organizations lead to a considerable expansion and specification of the social division of labor. At the same time, organizations function as central generators of complexity in society

by constantly multiplying simultaneous options and executions for action through processes of structure formation (Wendt, 2019, 2020). This multiplication of possibilities presupposes the enforcement and multiplication of constraints (Luhmann, 2000; Nassehi, 2011, pp. 193–237; Wendt, 2016). In this respect, organization, regulation, and complexity appear almost as synonyms. The functionally differentiated society generates and stabilizes a variety of inscrutable regulatory networks through organizations. Behind social constraints and limitations, therefore, there are often effects of organizational structure formation. Their elimination or processing regularly takes place with the help of new regulations that are implemented by and in organizations. Organizations are both solution and problem generator in dealing with complexity.

For the individual, society is realized primarily through participation in organizations. It is no coincidence that a globally widespread educational program serves to enable individuals to participate in organizations: participation in the school as an organization. Organization means, and this especially applies to schools and the practice of teaching, preferring orderly procedures to individual spontaneity and emotionality. Learning this not only requires at least 12 years of school and countless standardized leisure activities, but it also does not succeed without an individualizing variation. Their very complexity therefore makes organizations central educational entities that enable not only organized education but also an individualizing *Bildung* as a form of reflexive self-organization (Manhart, 2009; Manhart & Wendt, 2021; Wendt, 2020, 2021b, c).

In democratic systems, this organizational education unfolds along the tension between regulation and participation. Democracy does not only mean a certain organization of the government, but it also presupposes numerous organizations of political decision-making, executive as well as legislative functions and their administration. However, democratic participation and the granting of equal access opportunities are not typical structural principles of organizations; rather, they generate inequalities (Luhmann, 1994), which mostly appear more than less legitimate. The organizational logic of formally regulated membership legitimizes the inclusion of a minority of certain individuals to the detriment of a majority that remains excluded. Internally, organizations are based on hierarchical relationships of superiority and subordination. Only the exclusionary regulation of responsibilities and hierarchies creates stable organizational patterns. Vertical coordination and horizontal differentiation hinder processes of peer exchange. Organizations enable individual participation under certain conditions but systematically prevent it in almost all other cases for precisely this reason (Udy Jr, 1959).

From this perspective, organizations function as social generators of inequality, since general claims to equality and participation and their organized realization always contradict each other (Luhmann, 1994). Organizations are a traditional object of criticism for this reason (Hartz, 2011). On the other hand, it is often attributed to diffuse social powers, e.g., economic or power-political interests or simply personnel inadequacies, which is a result of the functional logic of organizations. The organized division of labor thus systematically generates forms of alienated labor (Marx, 1974), which to this day serve as a contrasting foil for discourses of its

humanization. However, to understand the organization merely as an expression of an economy-based context of power (Türk, 1995) marginalizes its complex inherent logic. However, the prominence of organizations in modern society results in the need to deal productively with this logic and the resulting constraints in order to pursue individual interests. A more differentiated, normatively illusionless understanding of participation could be helpful here.

11.3 The Organization of Political Participation

In view of their society-wide prevalence, especially in democratic systems, and the ambivalent experiences that are associated with them, the tension between organization and participation cannot actually come as a surprise. It was noticed early on and is therefore one of the classic topics of political philosophy, but it rarely appears with the central focus on organization. Organizations (states, parties, companies), however, do not treat all individuals equally, not least because of the necessary selectivity of membership (Luhmann, 1994). Additionally, organizations function through relationships of superiority and subordination, meaning that they systematically provide different authorizations for each member to participate in information and decision-making. In a society of political and legal equals, these differences can only be legitimized by clearly demarcated, juridified social units – which are primarily organizations. Since the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, demands for democratic participation and decision-making opportunities, as well as the claim for equal and, at the same time, individualized access opportunities, have come up against the formally unsuitable structural principles of organizations (Wendt, 2021c). A structure-building and political discourse-driving spiral of demands and disappointments has been playing out in modernity ever since, producing new problems and disappointments, and thus further demands with each improvement in participatory access. The claim for more participation is not only addressed toward organizations and thus presupposes them as problem-generating. Solving the organization-induced participation problems of modernity is expected from nothing other than the more differentiated regulation of increasingly individualized conditions for access and participation, their impersonal and regular evaluation, and the coordination of the necessary communications and processes, in other words, by means of more organization. This relationship is codified by juridification, which involves the legal safeguarding of claims and the legitimization of solutions through formalized procedures (Luhmann, 1969). Different approaches could only be found beyond the social form of the organization, and digitalization may offer corresponding opportunities (social networks, platforms, etc.). However, the task at this point is to make clear the structurally given situation of modern organizational society at the beginning of its digital transformation.

The regulation of responsibilities and modes of communication (Manhart, 2021, p. 213 f.), which is fundamental for organizations, is a prerequisite for the production of relatively stable patterns of social order (Barnard, 1970), from whose

obvious contingency the typical social unrest and dynamics of modernity arise. Organized structure formation enables the certainty of expectations to plan and coordinate processes, while at the same time it coproduces the demand for their controlled change. In doing so, the organization's regulated and excerpted access to its members simultaneously generates their increasing sensitivity to individual deviations and demands. Through position-specific behavioral specification and motive generalization (Luhmann, 1975), the organization ensures that the coordination of a multitude of simultaneous actions succeeds and, against this formalized background, at the same time, increases the sensitivity for the perception of the diversity of individual practices and demands. Vertical coordination and horizontal differentiation hinder processes of peer exchange just as much as they undermine the possibilities of participation as an individual, which produces corresponding claims, since in the organization only a certain cutout is of interest, namely, the personalized agency acting in the organizational sense. Expectations of behavior addressed to the members are generally binding even in their specification as concrete activities and without reference to individual interests and sensitivities. In this respect, organizational structures abstract from the individual differences of the participants (Wendt, 2020, p. 39). On the other hand, only organizations systematically allow everyone to be equal in that they treat everyone differently, for example, employing them in different jobs, paying them differently, or evaluating them in some other way. Educational organizations such as schools, in particular, constantly work with the productive observation of the alternation between formal equality and distributive justice. The claim to equal education and individual promotion is opposed to the claim of individual entitlement (Parsons, 1959). This relationship is very similar in politics. The productive tension generates social as well as individual dynamics through the integration of different claims to equality and justice as an organization, on the one hand; on the other hand, their systematically incomplete realization is repeatedly criticized up to the rejection of any form of organization (Manhart & Wendt, 2020). Historically, this tension has been handled by changing the forms of participation in organizations, relativizing it as a societal conflict for specific time periods and social locations.

Already in the ancient polis and then again in the early Enlightenment, there is a discussion about the limitation of the territorial size of a functioning republic. The idea was to keep the organization of politics in the form of a state and thus the administrative regulation of participation as manageable as possible or to prevent it entirely. At a certain size of the territory and a certain number of participants in the polity, a coordination of communication among absentees and their actions becomes necessary as a formal procedure. What is needed is a formal legal regulation of participation that is independent of the performance of the individual. Consensus building among attendees is possible only with a very small number of authorized persons, so this coordination can hardly be accomplished in any other way than by means of organization. But this changes the way collectively binding decisions are made. It becomes procedural and control-sensitive, which in turn places quite different demands on the participants, because their lasting participation now depends

on additional prerequisites and conditions but above all on the acceptance of this situation and the concrete formal procedures.

The ancient polis countered this tendency by placing its members under the condition that they had to have leisure to negotiate the common good, since this was the only way to ensure the interest-free full inclusion of the citizen who was not distracted by gainful employment. The fact that this criterion is not just mixed up with the power interests of wealthy circles in connection with census suffrage in the republics and territorial states of modern Europe is as correct as an exclusive attribution of corresponding regulations to these interests misses the organizational problems in political discourses (Manhart, 2011, p. 217ff.) that are reflected in them. Democracy has been endangered from the very beginning not only by economic power and interests but above all by the organized expansion and formal safeguarding of its form. Especially Hannah Arendt has repeatedly emphasized the problems of an organized, what she calls an administered, politics. Her reading of the classics of American constitutional literature (Adams, Jefferson, Madison) is done less with a view to her unquestionable economic interests than to dealing with the inevitable problems of representing and advocating interests in mass democracies, which are problems of participation in organized politics. Arendt's criticism of the various forms of political representation, of the administration of interests in bureaucracies and parties, and her repeatedly emphasized sympathy for spontaneously emerging caucus democracies (Paris Commune, the Soviets of the Russian Revolution, and the councils of the German Revolution of 1918) arise from a deeply rooted skepticism of any organization of politics (Arendt, 1970, pp. 36ff.; 1972, pp. 44ff.; 1994, pp. 272ff.), especially its modern legal-bureaucratic form (Arendt, 1970, pp. 80 f.). At its core, it is a well-founded but rather vague skepticism regarding the alternatives to the organizability of individual participation. Arendt's demand for more participation is clearly opposed to the organization of politics. It is clear that she is not interested in more organization, whether as a state or a party and its administrative bureaucracies. But it remains undetermined how things should be done differently.

The exclusivity of membership, another central structural element of any organization, is particularly evident in the consequences of states because, unlike other modern organizations, they handle this membership not only internally but also externally in an exclusive manner. States usually not only regard the membership role of the citizen as a prerequisite for participation, but they also individualize this attribution in an exclusive form by not providing for membership in another state as a condition for the active use of these opportunities, usually as an explicit condition. Against the background of general and equal human rights, the fact that all nonmembers are more or less excluded from these political and social participation opportunities (e.g., welfare state benefits) can only be justified because they, in turn, are citizens in other states with likewise exclusive participation rights there. Although the citizens of each state are equal insofar as they participate in its rights and goods, the inequality of the various states among themselves is the source of a variety of injustices such as different economic opportunities or different social participation rights. The existence of a multitude of organizations in and outside

politics and thus the exclusivity and inequality of participation rights are the normal case in modern societies. This structural inequality of organization-related participation is relativized in its tendency to exclude individuals by the fact that it releases an immense number of different organizations for simultaneous membership for the individual. Consequently, only in rare cases does this inequality emerge as a specific organizational problem in the political debate. It is hardly considered as a structural condition of organized problem-solving. This narrowing of perspective is a problem of most demands for more or improved participation, at least insofar as they address specific organizations. Modernity, at least so far, does not provide for any other form of participatory society building with similar legitimacy and social scope of its services.

In the case of political participation, this problem only becomes particularly clear. Only a few alternatives seem conceivable at present and are being discussed in the political debate besides the formation of completely new social forms: a rejection of any kind of organization in politics, which in the case of democratic orientations, would bring us back to an antiquated face-to-face communalization in a possibly technology-supported, manageable circle, a hope for charismatic leadership figures or anarchist concepts, or the expansion of the organization of politics into a world state that no longer knows any exclusivity of membership. The option of a "world republic," however, was already considered unlikely by Kant, precisely because the various existing state organizations cannot have any interest at all in their self-sacrifice (Kant, 1998, p. 212 f., BA37, 38). The situation has hardly changed in this respect since then. Quite independently of this, however, it seems questionable anyway whether such an all-encompassing state organization would be desirable in any other respect. The current discussion about a crisis of democracy (Buchberger & Mittnik, 2019; Decker, 2017; Mouffe, 2018), at any rate, predominantly focuses on the other side of these alternatives. Participation, the search for new forms of engagement, is therefore not an alternative to the state organization of politics, even if populist critiques repeatedly give this impression (Manhart & Wendt, 2020). Rosanvallon is not the only one to speak of a complication of democracy through new participation strategies as a response to its crisis (Rosanvallon, 2017). Participation and organization also increase each other here. In the absence of an alternative proposal for social order, it is important, both politically and educationally, that the demand for more participation does not promise anything other than changed and presumably more complicated forms of organization. In order to ensure the legitimacy of these forms, it is essential to repeatedly explain why this is the case.

11.4   Participation as Organization

As what has been said so far applies to organizations in general, demands for more participation can also be found in many other areas of society and are part of the core of criticism of organizations. Looking only at the structure of organizations,

they appear as places of generally binding, standardized regularity, and procedurality. The accompanying overestimation of planning possibilities and the assumption of smoothly functioning structural automation have led to a cascade of critiques of organizational rationality in the past (Brunsson, 2006). Since individuals are unpredictable as a consequence of their nontransparent motivations, their participation means that organizations are not reduceable to their structures. Gaps in regulation and control are filled and opened up by employees' own initiative, and formal and informal processes complement each other to form organizational dynamics (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 2017; Von Groddeck & Wilz, 2015). Technological developments, such as digitalization (Wendt & Manhart, 2020), are constantly changing conditions, limiting the scope for action, closing gaps in regulation and control, and opening up new opportunities and forms of participation elsewhere. The insight into the internal organizational limits of planning therefore always promotes the search for new participation procedures for organizational design and their expectant use. These forms of participation, however, also follow the rules and structural principles of the organization.

Organizations always face very specific and therefore predictable difficulties and dilemmas in the use of participatory approaches. The regular issue is a construction and reconstruction of regulatory structures by means of participatory procedures (Manhart et al., 2020), whose implementation by employees is readily motivated by great expectations, such as the democratization of organizations or the simplification of processes. Increased participation and individual opportunities for participation, however, cannot be realized without a further enhancement of organized complexity. Problems caused by organization are followed by more organization, and this means that problems of growing complexity are followed by their increase. Resolving this tension through participatory democratization of the organization cannot succeed, but this does not exclude its legitimate transformation, for which reason corresponding ideas of organizational governance have been repeatedly negotiated and implemented since the beginning of management theory (Wendt, 2020). The antagonism between organizational expectations and individual demands is inseparable from its social form as a principle of the organization. With the flattening of hierarchies, the democratization of competencies and new forms of work organization, the criticism of an alienation of work, and the bureaucratic disciplining of employees do not disappear. The fact that individual differences are increasingly important in participatory settings (Manhart et al., 2020) does not change this. The reason is that this individualizing differentiation in the evaluation of employees is based on the increase in the selectivity of their perception and internal organizational relevance (Manhart, 2016, 2018, 2019). The increased scope of action for employees implies a higher degree of responsibility and self-organization, which are often criticized as progressive entrepreneurialism (Baecker, 2014; Bröckling, 2007; Pongratz & Voß, 1988). The structural complexity and social logic of the organization are once again marginalized in favor of a one-sided critique of economization.

The goal of dissolving organizationally established restrictions and limitations (Whyte Jr., 1956) through participation is closely linked to the idea that the end of

hierarchy and the exclusionary effect of competences make it possible to pacify the organization and its structural conflicts. In practice, however, procedural processes and the resulting inadequate consideration of individual needs are repeated (Berglund & Werr, 2000). As a result, participation can only be understood and further developed in the context of organizational imperatives for action and structural requirements. Participation is an ongoing task. Its realization as a normative claim cannot come to an end. The conflict between person-independent structure formation and person-dependent participation cannot simply be resolved, and the structural logic of organizations – hierarchical-horizontal coordination and specifying-exclusive distribution of competencies – cannot simply be replaced (Stanley & Zammuto, 1992). Without a regulated and structured creation of social contexts, it is impossible to participate in them in a sustainable way. Participation can therefore only be participation in prestructured contexts. Verifiable participation can only exist in organizations and only as an organization, i.e., within the framework of decision-based regulatory structures. Consequently, more participation presupposes not only a change but also a differentiation and thus a multiplication of regulations, which results in exactly an expansion of organized sociality. So far, this dilemmatic constellation could not be changed under the analog technical preconditions of communication and coordination among absentees. The function and meaning of participation should therefore be explained over and over again in view of the inherent logic of the organization and the demands of the individual and society.

11.5   The Normative Form of Participation

Although the structural logic of organizations, their hierarchical-horizontal coordination, specifying-exclusive distribution of competencies, and equalizing motive generalization do not allow resolving the tension between planned structural determination and chance-sensitive participation, a productive way of dealing with this constellation is possible. The ability to do this is a central individual, political, as well as educational competence in an organizational society. Without antagonizing organization, individual, and participation, the question of the reasons for the increasing cultivation and normative charging of interactionist immediacy can be answered more clearly. Participatory organizational structures meet the demands for individual self-determination, self-efficacy, and self-realization and are also a structurally necessary moment for the further development of organizations. To see this more clearly, it is worth taking a critical look at the normative expectations associated with participation. Participation is usually understood rather one-sidedly from the perspective of the individual, measured by his or her actions and judged normatively. This tendency reinforces an individualistic understanding of education; in this, communitarian and liberalist conceptions of society and politics are surprisingly alike. Relativizing some of the assumed assumptions serves also to prepare an organizational educational synthesis, whose elements are addressed in the two concluding parts of the article.

Participatory practices function as a normative projection and as an outlet for complexity-reducing interpretations and criticisms of organizations (Zanoni & Janssens, 2004). High normative expectations are generally attached to participation, which is often only vaguely connected to the issue at hand, precisely because participation can look very different in practice. The term thus reveals nothing about what more participation might actually mean. This quite typical quantifying way of speaking is problematic because everyone participates in some form of social context at any time. The issue is not made any clearer by calling for more participation in organizations. It appears clear that this cannot mean that employees are more closely supervised and directly controlled by regulations and instructions, but this cannot be because they would not actively participate in organizational processes under these conditions. Also the distinction between active and passive does not really contribute to this. Following instructions is, of course, an activity, what else. It obviously concerns qualitatively different forms and conditions of participation. However, it seems easier to demand more rather than other forms of participation, which would require specifying exactly what the participation is about.

Taking a look at some of the expectations of participation, it is frequently the case that a diffuse notion of community serves as a goal – or, more precisely, as a contrasting idea. Face-to-face interactivity in groups then implies emotional participation, mutual recognition, and personal bonding up to a harmonious, friendly, but always meaningfully motivating interaction, which can easily be contrasted with the regulation-dense, bureaucratic, solely factual organization that prevents any spontaneity and personal involvement to the point of senselessness. Actually, long since shelved pairs of opposites such as community and society (Tönnies, 2010) or system and lifeworld are reactivated in the background here, which completely normatively overload every concrete form of participation.

More unspecific references to Wenger's concept of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) also belong in this context. Wenger's differentiated criteria clearly show that organizations cannot simply be understood as a composition of different communities of practice, which is also reflected in corresponding methodological approaches (Mensching, 2017). The criteria of such communities do not apply to many participatory processes anyway. Organizations cannot be understood as communities of practice. Interactions and group formation occur in organizations in a variety of ways, but their conditions of emergence and continuation cannot be understood without reference to the inherent logic of organizations (Mayo, 1960). In addition, doubts about corresponding references apply to a large number of group forms in connection with participatory procedures.

Assuming open interactive arrangements as participatory contexts, it is easy to see that these require considerable internal as well as external regulation for their sustained functioning. Participation cannot be reduced to a diffuse form of (co-) making that does not accept any guidelines or forms. After all, results are expected, and costs incurred must be settled and can be justified. Disregarding the justifiable selection of participants and the regulated forwarding of results, it follows from the intended weak regulation and openness of participatory situations that quite different personality traits prove to be effective in group dynamics and relevant for their

success than is the case in the more strongly regulated organizational environment (Mischel, 1968). This holds considerable potential for social conflict and at the same time undermines any notion of a diffuse, hierarchy-free community building. Instead, there is significant need for regulation of participatory interaction contexts. Supervising compliance with these regulations requires the establishment of control instances and the active moderation and handling of interpretive and group conflicts, which amount to the further expansion of the organization, not its dismantling.

Apart from these far-reaching claims, participation is also anything but normatively unproblematic. It is not necessary to be quite as skeptical as Niklas Luhmann, who points out that collective decisions are more important for modern democracies than the way they are made (Luhmann, 1990). However, it is undeniable that groups of people who, for example, are affected by the consequences of an organizational decision as hazards become risk-takers by means of participation, without the participants always being aware of this. When individuals are involved in participatory processes, such as citizen participation or codecision processes in companies, an organized hazard that was originally not self-responsible becomes a risk that must be individually assessed and that is, above all, culpably attributable to each individual (Whitehead, 2017). As a result, the participants in this process can also no longer simply resist these co-organized hazards, because they are now and will be made responsible through participation. To criticize this solely as a relief strategy for organizations and decision-makers would be too simplistic. In educational terms, therefore, it is a matter of preparing for this inevitable distribution of responsibility from the organization to the individuals involved (Manhart, 2021). That applies both to the individuals involved and to the management, because both participate fully in what is happening. Personal autonomy is evident on both sides in being able to deal constructively and explicitly with the manifold external determinations that are always present. Last but not least, only a recognized imposition of responsibility can be rejected with lasting effect (ibid, p. 322). Making an autonomous decision requires clarity about this shift from general danger to individual risk as a side effect of any participation, and this is even before entering into the process. The expectation that participation will eliminate supposed contradictions, such as those of self-determined participation and externally determined regulation, of freedom and coercion or of equality and justice is often formulated to promote change but obscures these consequences and challenges. Consequently, it is important to relativize these contrasts on the basis of a more complex understanding of organization and society.

Participation always requires the mutual coordination of individuals as well as of individuals and organizations. Participation is thus a form of integration that implies an imposition of change for the individual as well as for the organization. Knowing about organized structures of regulations and the ability to deal with this specific complexity have to be learned. This can also prevent overly optimistic expectations of participation from leading to massive disappointments, which are becoming increasingly important in modern society, for these disappointments foster a rule-averse, anti-organizational attitude typical for populist attitudes, which should not

be pandered to with unrealizable promises and a normatively one-sided ambition (Manhart & Wendt, 2020). This is especially true because contemporary organizations can no longer avoid participatory procedures, not only politically-normatively but also functionally.

11.6 Individual and Organizational Consequences of Participation

Organizations are using participatory methods to generate the potential for change and the inner restlessness that they need in order to continue their own operations, but which they are unable to anticipate in terms of planning. Increasing pressure to innovate and the global network effects of the digitalization are pushing this development further. Chance therefore becomes a central element of planned productivity and innovation in many management approaches and organizational management practices (Wendt, 2021a). Participatory methods such as microlabs, structured debating, innovation labs, dialogic spaces and learning, open space, Future Search, or World Café (Brown, 2009; Brown & Isaacs, 2007; Owen, 2007, 2008a, b; Page, 2007; Schieffer et al., 2007; Steier et al., 2008; Weisbrod & Janoff, 1995) rely on the unknown potential for variation of the individuals involved to compensate for the blind spots of any planning and the inadequacies of organizational regulation. The popularity of participatory methods can also be seen as an organized response to the criticism of the rationality of the organization. What cannot be targeted precisely by planning is now to emerge through the forced participation of individuals in the gaps of organizational rules and regulations (Schröer & Wendt, 2018). In this way, the dichotomy of dependence and independence of persons, which constitutes the structure of organizations, becomes reflexive.

What has so far been formulated unilaterally as pressure from outside, however, meets an organization that has long been prepared. Digitalization is making it increasingly possible to automate social structures by technical means, which is why organizations can dare to experiment with the openness of self-generated leeway (Manhart & Wendt, 2019; Wendt, 2020; Wendt & Manhart, 2020). The organization can only engage with the contingencies of the individual because it can both afford and benefit from these. The better the organization succeeds in the fixed coupling of decision-making structures, the more it relies on individual deviations as a resource for innovation (Stark, 2009). Transitioning to flatter hierarchies and a reduced level of action specifications, the change from input to output control, does not mean that the organization abandons the idea of making the contingency of the employees' thinking and behavior available. Only at the price of self-sacrifice could organizations refrain from functionalizing this communicative as well as psychological participation of the individual for their own continuation. It is therefore a matter of planning them. In settings specifically provided for this purpose, these individual deviations are made possible as contingencies, registered, evaluated, and

selected for continuation. This seemingly valorizes the dimension of the individual in organizational execution, as already happens in the context of nondirective interaction-based approaches to counseling (Wendt, 2016, 2019). Nevertheless, this contingent dynamic of social interaction is also systematically set to continue the processes of organizational structure formation (Turco, 2016). Every individual variation and every individual expression of creativity must be socially connectable and connected to the organizational structures; otherwise it will disappear as quickly as it came into being. Much of what is negotiated and emerges in these settings therefore remains irrelevant, both organizationally and individually. What is changing is the kind of organizational regulation that is oriented toward the controlled production of contingencies (Wendt, 2020). Systematically, the organization turns to the individual idiosyncrasies that have been mostly excluded so far but have always been unavoidable in practice, to search them for creations that can be transformed into organizationally relevant innovations. The problem of containing these contingencies, however, is amplified when systematic reliance is placed on the deviance dynamics of collaborative practices.

In the course of participatory methods, the control of the ideas generated as well as the individual and social dynamics is extremely difficult and time-consuming in terms of communication. This applies particularly to the management of disappointment. Not every (good) idea and not every individual insight are used further in the organization. Certainly not the spontaneity and randomness but also the emotional meaningfulness (Weick, 1995) of a successful collaborative dynamic (Schein, 1985) can be taken over into the everyday process regulation of the organization. Organizations do not continue as group dynamic events but through and as structural regulation. The zone of deregulation in organizations is therefore specifically regulated, i.e., primarily limited in terms of location and time. Both the organization and the remaining employees, as well as the staff participating in participatory-collaborative processes, must learn to cope with the change between the different contexts and their various emotional as well as cognitive demands. With the claim to engage in individual creativity in order to now also be able to (co-)organize innovations, the organization does not associate a lasting and certainly not an undivided opening for the fulfillment of subjective wishes and ideas of the employees. The logic of the organization dictates that the encouragement of and attention to individual contingency cannot be had without a further increase in the organizational ambition for management and control (Wendt, 2020).

11.7 Participation as *Bildung* of the Individual and the Organization

Modern organization development is closely linked to classical forms of educational theory (Wendt, 2021b). The principle of context management is methodologically applied on both sides. If the randomness of communication and interaction

processes is used in participatory methods to systematically generate innovation (Manhart & Wendt, 2019; Wendt, 2020, 2021a), it is a matter of an already well-known (organizational) educational constellation: *Bildung*. The described effects of exploiting social complexity, however, relate not only to the individuals involved but also to the organization. The term *Bildung* refers to the individual's ability to deal productively with his or her own and others' complexity (Manhart & Wendt, 2021), which also describes the internal relations of the reflexively self-organizing social form of organization. The chance-sensitive, participative shaping of organizational structures enables the productive handling of self-generated complexity not only on the side of the individual but also of the organization. Participating individuals in chance-driven interactions contribute to this self-organized random event, as does the ongoing decision-making and updating of organizational structures. This shaping of social dynamics into a chance-based, recurrent self-referentiality of organization (Wendt, 2021b) corresponds very precisely to the classical understanding of education as found at the end of the Enlightenment in Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and discourse forming in Wilhelm von Humboldt or Jean Paul (Manhart, 2011). While there it is still about the individual relationship of intentional engagement with the world and its resistant complexity, which always exceeds any intention, *Bildung* for organizations brings the self-organizing reaction to the intentional generation of the unintentional in its own complex structures to the term (Manhart, 2003, 2009, 2011, p. 427ff.). Against the backdrop of digitization, which allows an increasingly successful fixing of structures and thus also a maximally inflexible fixing of processes (Wendt, 2020; Wendt & Manhart, 2020), organizations are currently still dependent on the deliberate exploitation of existing gaps in control and formalization by individuals, but especially on the planned generation of deviations in participatory group arrangements, in order to continue their dynamics (Manhart et al., 2020).

Under these conditions, organizations are not simply open arenas of democratic participation and equality for individuals. They rather become educated collective actors themselves, who organize themselves through a reflexively handled, intentionally generated, complex social coincidental process. The expectation exists regularly, and it is also intensively observed that participation leads to sustainable structural changes among the subjects involved, but the effects on the side of the organization remain underexposed in terms of organizational education. The interactive random events in group dynamics are also used to increase the complexity of the organizational structure, as is the case with individuals. On the side of the individual, the entanglement of organizational and individual connection logics in participatory processes fosters the development of desired abilities, which in educational-political contexts are often described as responsibility, autonomy, and self-reflexivity. From the organization's perspective, however, the individual's *Bildung* is not the sole purpose and goal of this organization-internal educational context. The relationship and the difference between individual creativity and organizational innovation illustrate this (Manhart et al., 2020). The organizational educational design of participatory organizational structures relies on this productive handling of the complexity generated by the participating individuals, in which

individual creativity and organizational innovations occur simultaneously, i.e., along the same event in parallel. Balanced participatory organizational structures can foster both individual and organizational competencies (Schröer & Wendt, 2018), which modern democracies with their diverse organizations and institutional networks of regulations depend on.

The (organizational) educational task is to prepare for this context by conveying a realistic understanding of organization and participation and to clarify the conditions for successful organizational and individual *Bildung* as forms of reflexive self-organization. Form, function, and inherent logic of modern organization are central to the understanding of current societal conditions, to which digital platforms, alone or in hybrid combination with analog organizations, will probably be added in the future as an alternative form of social coordination of participation (Seemann, 2021). The promise of a nonregulatory freedom, which emphasizes the opposition of organization and participation, is in any case of little help in any of these forms of regulatory networks. Rather, a euphoric-normative version of participation effectively prevents opportunities for insight and participation, especially if it is one-sidedly understood as merely dismantling resistant regulations. Concrete conditions of execution, beyond the mere possibility of a participatory-emotional now, then not only play no role but are permanently suspected of motives and are thus systematically disavowed. Conditions of content or form imply determinations, which are the core of this imagination of participation. Not only populists like to take up the resulting individual disappointment (Manhart & Wendt, 2020). A realistic understanding of democracy cannot be achieved without an intensive practical and theoretical analysis of the inherent logic of organizations. To better understand the *Bildung* of the organization is a prerequisite for being able to productively apply this structure-building process as organizational education. Organizations and social networks of regulations could also become more popular again politically, especially as they are so complex as educational contexts.

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Thomas Wendt (Dr. phil.) teaches and does research at the University of Trier. His work focuses on the digital transformation of organization and society, organization and management theory, and counseling in and of organizations.

Sebastian Manhart (Prof. Dr.) teaches and conducts research at the University of the Armed Services in Munich. His work focuses on the history and theory of educational semantics, the history of science and universities, as well as the theory and history of calculative practices with special regard to their significance for organizational education.

Part V
Advanced Adulthood and Old Age

Chapter 12
Participation and Civic Engagement in Scotland: The Importance of Contributions from Older Adults

Lorna J. Philip, Andrew S. Maclaren, Claire Wallace, and Krzysztof Adamczyk

Abstract Over a quarter of all adults in Scotland give freely of their time as volunteers and support a diverse range of organisations, activities, services and facilities. Analysis of Scottish Household Survey data elucidates patterns of volunteering among older people in Scotland, and the nature of formal and informal volunteering in different rural communities is illustrated by revisiting data from completed research projects undertaken in rural Scotland. Findings highlight geographical differences in volunteering, with rates consistently higher in rural than urban Scotland. Older people, 'young old' adults in particular, are identified as a key reservoir of rural volunteers, supporting civic, recreational, cultural and heritage organisations embedded in rural communities. They also help to run services that meet the needs of diverse groups and people of all ages within the community. The decline in volunteering observed over the past decade coupled with changes associated with neoliberal and localism agendas represents a potential threat to the sustainability of many rural areas, especially those already struggling to deliver key services. Findings point to a need for a better understanding of how older volunteers support

L. J. Philip (✉)
Geography and Environment, School of Geosciences, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK
e-mail: l.philip@abdn.ac.uk

A. S. Maclaren
Health Services Research Unit, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK
e-mail: andrew.maclaren@abdn.ac.uk

C. Wallace
School of Social Science, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK
e-mail: claire.wallace@abdn.ac.uk

K. Adamczyk
Centre for Health Data Science, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland, UK
e-mail: krzysztof.adamczyk@abdn.ac.uk

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255

civil society in rural communities and what measures could help support rural civic action in the future.

12.1   Introduction

Thousands of citizens across Scotland regularly give freely of their time to support a very wide range of organisations, facilities and activities which provide opportunities for participants of all ages to lead inclusive and meaningful lives. Referred to variously as the *third sector* or *civil society*, the current 'catch all' term to describe organisations with a social purpose, whose remit is to help others and to improve the lives of individuals and communities, is the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. With a remit to help others, often undertaking roles designed to improve the lives of individuals and communities, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is large and diverse. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations recently estimated that, in Scotland today, there are about 40,000 active voluntary organisations. Their activities include, for example, social care, culture and sport, community, economic and social development, health, housing and the environment. Around 1.26 million people – more than a quarter of adults – volunteer every year in Scotland (SCVO, 2020).

An increasing number of these volunteers have been older people (Wardell et al., 2000). Through efforts often led by older citizens, existing structures, activities and facilities have been supported, and new ones have emerged, helping to keep rural areas socially, economically and culturally sustainable. Our argument in this chapter is that older people are particularly active in rural areas and many rural services depend upon this 'grey labour'. This volunteering 'increases social and civil participation, empowers communities, and reduces loneliness and isolation' (Scottish Government, 2019a, p. 6), but evidence suggests that it may also be under threat.

This chapter explores forms of participation and civic engagement among older people who live in rural Scotland and reflects on how these activities shape attributes of contemporary rural society. It aims to contribute to filling the knowledge gap about the nature and extent of the rural VCSE sector initially addressed by Woolvin (2012) and Woolvin and Rutherford (2013). We explicitly examine attributes of older adults in the rural VCSE sector and consider how engagement with the VCSE changes as people transition through what is known as the third age (55–70) and fourth age (70+). Recognising Hall and Skerrat's (2010, p. 47) observation that 'the work of the voluntary sector, in all its guises, is essential to the sustainability and resilience of rural communities', the chapter examines the contemporary volunteering landscape and considers how the presence of an active VCSE ecosystem facilitates participation in community events and activities and, in turn, provides opportunities to rural residents that give meaning to life and support individual and community well-being.

The text below is structured as follows. First, we introduce the VCSE ecosystem in the UK with a focus upon attributes of the Scottish sector. Next, we present an account of formal and informal volunteering and wider expressions of participation in civic society across rural Scotland. We then turn to a brief discussion of the projects and methods this chapter draws on, outlining our use of the Scottish Household Survey and three projects based across Scotland, in the Western Isles, Bute and East Lothian.

12.2   Theoretical Background

12.2.1   Helping Others and Improving the Lives of Individuals and Communities: The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Ecosystem

The development of organised volunteering in the UK was originally associated with newly formed religious and charitable organisations, such as the British Red Cross, that emerged during the nineteenth century; in the twentieth century, the UK's voluntary sector became increasingly secular and formalised. The volunteer population grew in the post-war period, 'influenced, encouraged and enabled' by the policies of successive Westminster administrations (European Commission, 2010, p. 3). The neoliberal political agenda that emerged in the UK in the 1980s has promoted a diminished role for the state and encouraged the development of endogenous solutions to service delivery, either implicitly or explicitly. This was followed in the first decade of the twenty-first century by the 'localism' agenda which has further shaped public service reform, pushing for local, often community-level, decision-making and responsibility for service delivery. Localism, combined with the 'co-production' of services, encouraged 'a greater expectation of participation at the level of the individual, family and/or community in the shaping and delivery of public services' (Woolvin & Rutherford, 2013, p. 10). These movements have seen the VCSE sector become increasingly responsible for providing goods and services that were once the preserve of the state and the private sector. Some communities have responded enthusiastically to these structural changes, developing a vibrant VCSE sector and in so doing have earned the epithet 'good citizen community' (after Woods, 2005), perpetuating narratives that rural communities should be able to help themselves. Others have struggled to mobilise, secure external funding and plug gaps left by private and public sector restructuring (Skerratt & Steiner, 2011).

Changes associated with the neoliberal and localism agendas have affected urban and rural areas alike. In rural communities they have evolved in tandem with other changes that are altering the character of rural places and the rural population. Demographic ageing has been most pronounced in rural areas, with implications for demands on health and social care services and the size and composition of local labour markets. Familial spatialities have changed: many older rural adults have no

close relatives living locally who they can turn to for informal care and support. Migration dynamics, along with associated population churn, have disrupted idyllic assumptions that posit rural communities as places where everyone knows everyone else. The almost ubiquitous adoption of digital technologies has transformed all domains of life, including facilitating the creation of virtual 'communities of interest' that may have diluted involvement in, and obligations towards the maintenance of, 'communities of place' (Wallace et al., 2017). Access to essential services has become more challenging across rural society as private sector premises (e.g. banks, post offices, local grocery shops, pubs) have closed and public services have become increasingly centralised (Rural England, 2017; Scottish Government, 2010).

Rural communities are assumed to express neighbourliness, community spirit and a tradition of volunteering (Wenger, 2001), an ideal environment for a thriving VCSE sector. The rural VCSE sector is certainly active; it has increasingly become responsible for delivering core services that underpin the socio-economic sustainability of many rural areas as opposed to offering activities that supplement those delivered by the public and private sectors. For example, many rural communities themselves have initiated responses to help ensure that those in need of formal and informal care and support, including older people, receive it (Munoz et al., 2014; Skinner & Hanlon, 2016). There are numerous examples of rural community groups taking over responsibility for running local shops and community assets like halls and woodlands, delivering services such as community transport and managing activities such as community-owned renewable energy projects whose income in turn funds local groups and initiatives.

12.2.2 Rural Areas, Demographic Ageing and Volunteering

Demographic ageing is a global phenomenon, most widespread in high-income countries (Ezeh et al., 2012; Bloom et al., 2015). Rural areas are experiencing demographic ageing faster than urban ones (Hanlon & Skinner, 2016; Scharf et al., 2016; Edmondson & Scharf, 2015), through a combination of outward migration of young people, declining fertility rates and in-migration of mid-age and older people. This phenomenon leads to questions around the sustainability of rural ageing for rural communities (Keating, 2008) and furthers what Joseph and Cloutier-Fisher (2005, p. 137) have identified as the 'double jeopardy of vulnerable persons in a vulnerable community'. This double jeopardy stems from the widespread challenge of maintaining and delivering services in rural areas being compounded by demographic ageing increasing the numbers of older individuals placing demands upon, for example, health and social care services.

However, rather than just being dependents, older people are often sources of volunteer pools which leads to 'older voluntarism' (Colibaba & Skinner, 2019) where 'individual, older volunteers' activities and voluntary organisations featuring an older volunteer base provide essential services and supports to ageing communities' (Colibaba et al., 2021, p. 287). Communities which require support to respond

to the demands of an ageing population often need to draw from a pool of older individuals to provide support. Burgeoning research around, and within, rural studies has critically engaged with rural ageing and voluntarism (Skinner & Hanlon, 2016), its relation to the overall diversity of human experience in rural communities (Ryser & Halseth, 2014), responses to ageing (Warburton, 2015), community development (Winterton & Warburton, 2014; Skinner & Hanlon, 2016) and more generally sustainability of rural communities amidst such demographic change (Colibaba & Skinner, 2019; Davies et al., 2018; Jones & Heley, 2016; Gieling & Haartsen, 2017). More recent critical work has focussed on how voluntarism in rural communities does not necessarily represent a form of inclusion and questions whether it enhances sustainability and promotes community development. It can also be a source of marginalisation for some older people, highlighting, further, the geographic complexity of rural spaces and places and demographic change associated with ageing (Scharf et al., 2016; Skinner & Winterton, 2018; Skinner et al., 2016). Research has highlighted the place of volunteering by older people and the ways in which voluntary organisations focus upon supporting older people (Skinner & Hanlon, 2016; Walsh et al., 2020; Burholt et al., 2013). Such critical views are important as they demonstrate the increasing reality of precarity experienced by many in later life (Grenier et al., 2020), as in ageing rural communities 'the demographic reality of ageing rural populations means that most rural volunteers are older residents themselves, often coping with the precarity of age-related health and mobility issues combined with the burden of care and burnout associated with rural volunteering' (Colibaba et al., 2021, p. 290).

12.2.3   The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector in Scotland

It is useful at this point to offer some definitions of terms that will be referred to below within the Scottish context. Volunteering is something an individual does by choice, 'a choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary' (Scottish Government, 2019a, p. 19). *Formal* volunteering is 'the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, group and organisations, communities, environment and society at large' (Scottish Government, 2018, p. 202). *Informal* volunteering is 'unpaid help given as an individual directly to people who are not relatives' (Woolvin, 2012, p. 2). Participation is understood as 'getting involved' by, for example, attending events, supporting local activities and supporting fundraising efforts. Each of these activities are expressions of community engagement. Patterns of volunteering within the VCSE sector vary between age groups and by gender; in contemporary Scotland, mid-life and older adults volunteer more than younger adults, and women are more likely to volunteer than men (cf. Woolvin & Rutherford, 2013; Philip et al.,

2003). There are also geographical variations, with a tradition of volunteering being especially strong in rural areas (NCVO, 2019). Philip et al. (2003) reported that about 30% of those aged 65–74 years in rural Scotland had given time for charitable and other local groups in the preceding year (based on an analysis of 1999 and 2000 data from the Scottish Household Survey), a rate almost a third higher than for the same age group living in non-rural Scotland. Rural areas across the Global North have aged faster than urban areas (Philip et al., 2012; Office for National Statistics, 2018; Currie & Philip, 2019). In Scotland, with a population of approximately 5.5 million, those aged 65 and over now make up 19% of the total, a proportion that has increased by a third over the last three decades (National Records of Scotland, 2021). The median age of those living in Scotland is 42, but this ranges from 38 in large urban areas to 47 in accessible rural and 51 in remote rural Scotland (ibid.). Demographic attributes and historic patterns of rural volunteering suggest that there is a large pool of potential volunteer 'grey labour' available to support the VCSE ecosystem across rural Scotland.

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the umbrella group representing the VCSE sector. It reports that the Scottish voluntary sector encompasses about 40,000 organisations, about half of which are formally registered and regulated voluntary organisations. Their combined annual income is about £6 billion. About 1.4 million people volunteer every year, contributing to the well-being of people and communities nationwide. Voluntary organisations are very diverse, ranging from 'small local grassroots community groups, arts and sports clubs, pre-school day care and village halls to culture and arts venues, and major housing, health and social care providers' (SCVO, 2020, p. 3). SCVO also reports that about a quarter of Scottish charities do not have any paid staff. However, 107,432 individuals were employed in the sector in 2018, three quarters of whom were based in urban areas. The sector with the largest number of paid staff is social care (48,209, 45% of all paid positions), and combined, the housing, culture and sport and health sectors employ another third of the total. Rural Scotland has a higher number of formally registered and regulated charitable organisations per capita than urban Scotland; 43.7% of all such voluntary organisations are found in rural Scotland, yet rural Scotland is home to less than a quarter of the nation's population. The number of charities per 1000 people in 2018 was 5.2 in Scotland's predominantly rural local council areas and 3 in predominantly urban areas. Most Scottish charities, four in every five, work at a local level and most have an annual income of less than £100,000 which infers that the scale of their activities is small.

Sitting alongside activities undertaken by the 'formal' VCSE sector are a myriad of informal voluntary activities, actions undertaken by individuals to help others such as informal lift giving, grocery shopping for an elderly neighbour or a group of neighbours organising a beach clean-up. Combining estimates of formal and informal volunteering reported in the 2018 Scottish Household Survey, Volunteer Scotland (2021) suggests that 48% of adults in Scotland have volunteered in the previous year, contributing 361 million hours of help and £5.5 billion to the Scottish economy. However, behind these seemingly positive attributes, the voluntary sector was facing a number of challenges by 2019. Two decades of austerity politics were

managed through the reduction of funding from central to local government, and this led to the starvation in resources at a local level, severely weaking the role that local governments could play. This particularly affected the voluntary sector, which had relied on local authority grants in various forms to feed their activities. Voluntary organisations started to become fearful for their future (Wallace & Beel, 2021).

12.3   Research Questions and Methods of Research

To explore forms of participation and civic engagement among older people living in rural Scotland, three questions have been developed to guide our research. These questions have either never been addressed in the literature or have not been tackled with respect to the contemporary situation:

Research question 1: What is the pattern of volunteering among older people in Scotland?

Research question 2: How has the pattern of volunteering changed over recent decades?

Research question 3: How does volunteering take place in different rural communities?

Our hope in interrogating these questions is to start to develop a better understanding of how formal and informal volunteering shape attributes of contemporary rural society.

The first two research questions are addressed using quantitative longitudinal surveys. Our quantitative research uses data from the Scottish Household Survey to review overall trends of volunteering between 2011 and 2018 and, focussing on 2018 data, examine age and urban-rural attributes of volunteering and wider civic participation. The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is an annual, cross-sectional survey that has collected information about the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals from across Scotland since 1999. It is the most authoritative source of information about adult volunteering in Scotland. Produced annually since 1999, it has consistently evidenced that volunteers are most likely to be female; hail from higher socio-economic and income groups; live in less deprived areas; be healthy and non-disabled; be either in self-employment, part-time work or in education; and live in a rural area (Scottish Government, 2019b). Here our new analysis of weighted SHS 2018 data[1] has

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[1] The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is an annual, cross-sectional survey that provides robust evidence on the composition, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of private households and individuals; it asks questions of a random sample of people in private residences in Scotland. The SHS 2018 data we analyse reports attributes of a sample of 9661 Scottish adult residents. Weights are applied to all data presented here. SHS data is available to bona fide researchers from the UK Data Service at https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/ where the 2018 entry is catalogued as https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8617.

allowed the development of a more detailed account of older, rural adults' engagement in the VCSE ecosystem than has been presented in previous research.

The third research question draws upon qualitative research from three studies undertaken in rural Scotland to illustrate features identified in the SHS data and to provide further insights into the ways in which older rural adults participate in, and engage with, their communities. Two of the projects were explicitly concerned with topics aligned with processes and outcomes of rural demographic ageing: Philip and colleagues' ESRC funded retirement transition migration research (see Philip et al., 2013; Philip & MacLeod, 2018) and Maclaren's doctoral ethnographic research (see Maclaren, 2018, 2019). The third study, undertaken by Wallace and Beel, studied volunteering and cultural heritage in the Outer Hebrides (see Beel et al., 2017; Wallace & Beel, 2021).

12.4 Results

12.4.1 Quantitative: Patterns of Volunteering in Scotland

Most recent SHS data indicate that about a quarter (26.5%) of the adult population in Scotland provided unpaid help to groups and organisations in the12 months prior to being surveyed in 2019. As shown in Fig. 12.1, rates of volunteering in rural areas have been consistently higher than those in urban areas since 2007, but overall, rates of volunteering seem to have declined. The Scottish Government (2019a, p. 26) observed that 'historically, rural areas of Scotland have had significantly higher adult volunteering rates compared to urban areas'. Yet while much can be said about national volunteering rates, a detailed analysis of rural volunteers and older volunteers in rural areas proves difficult. In many survey-based studies, sample sizes are
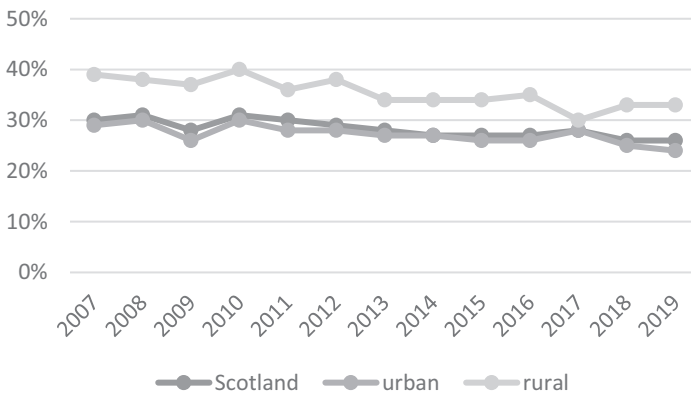

Fig. 12.1 Volunteering rates in urban and rural Scotland, SHS 2007–2019. (Figure prepared using data presented in Maltman et al., 2019 and Scottish Government, 2020)

simply too small for such specialised subpopulations to be extracted for analysis (see Smith, 2019), and booster samples or separate, focussed studies are rare. In our own analysis of weighted SHS 2018 data, there are only 523 rural volunteers of whom 208 are over the age of 55.

In this section, we aim to provide an overview of the landscape of volunteering in Scotland in order to contextualise the case studies that follow. We hope that by exploring some national patterns of volunteering, identifying urban/rural as well as age group patterns and drawing albeit limited conclusions about older rural volunteers, this overview will allow the reader to situate our detailed case studies in the context of the wider pre-COVID Scottish volunteering milieu.

Figure 12.1 confirms the findings of Woolvin and Rutherford (2013) who reported higher volunteering rates in rural than urban areas, even when income and other demographic differences were controlled for. This is consistent with Scottish Government reporting on SHS volunteering data over the years and most recent findings published by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (2021).

Also, from the Scottish Household Survey, we know that in 2018 adults in Scotland in the 35–44 age group were the most likely to volunteer (33%), followed by those aged 45–59 and aged 60–74 (both 28%). Those aged 75+ were the least likely to volunteer (19%), with those in the 25–34 age group (21%) being the second least likely. We also know that, except for those aged 75+, women were on average more likely to volunteer than men across all age groups.

In order to look at both age and urban/rural status, we update Philip et al.'s (2003) analysis and compare their figures from SHS 2000 with our analysis of SHS 2018 data (Table 12.1). As reported above, there has been a nationwide decrease in volunteering rates across Scotland since 2007. Older rural adults remained more likely to volunteer than their urban counterparts. Volunteering rates among rural 55–64- and 65–74-year-olds were the same, with about a third reporting they had volunteered in the past 12 months. Urban rates follow a similar trajectory except for the 64–74 age group which saw an increase in volunteering by five percentage points.

Table 12.1 Formal and informal volunteering rates (%) by urban and rural and age groups in 2000 and 2018

| | Age group | Participated in formal volunteering in last 12 months | | Participated in informal volunteering in last 12 months |
		2000	2018	2018
Rural	Under 55	41	35	42
	55–64	33	34	39
	65–74	33	34	46
	75+	17	22	27
Urban	Under 55	26	26	39
	55–64	24	22	40
	65–74	23	28	42
	75+	14	18	27

Source: Authors' analysis of SHS 2018; Philip et al.'s (2003) analysis of SHS 2000

This pattern aligns with attributes of older volunteers reported in the literature which suggests that individuals in the retirement transition and recently retired age groups are more likely to volunteer than those in the oldest age group. Although rural volunteering rates in the 75+ age group were lower than for other age groups, they increased between 2000 and 2018 by five percentage points. A similar increase in volunteering was observed for the over 75s in urban areas, although the proportion of those aged 75+ who volunteered in urban Scotland in 2018 was still lower than the rural rate. Interestingly, while rural volunteering rates for the 55–64 and 65–74 age groups remained stable over time, they decreased for those under 55 by six percentage points. This is not the case for urban volunteering rates where there was no change for those under 55 between 2000 and 2018.

A sizeable proportion of the Scottish population also undertake informal voluntary activity (39%). Such activity might include helping another person (but not a relative) with shopping, bills, car or home maintenance, household chores, babysitting, advice or support with completing forms or writing letters, providing transport, to improve a skill or be more active or even to just keep in touch with someone at risk of being lonely. These seemingly minor activities make a huge difference to individuals and communities, and the ways in which informal volunteering supports and enhances the lives of people of all ages should not be underestimated. Rates of informal volunteering are higher than formal volunteering but follow a similar pattern across age groups and urban/rural locations.

Not all volunteers make an equal contribution; some provide support more frequently and devote much more of their time than others. Maltman et al. (2019) developed categories to classify the 'intensity' of volunteering recorded in successive waves of the SHS: low intensity (less than 5 h per month), medium intensity (6–15 h per month) and high intensity (16+ h per month). We have used this categorisation in our analysis of 2018 SHS[2] and examined 'intensity' of volunteering by age. Urban and rural differences are unremarkable, and the sample size is unfortunately too small to interrogate the older rural volunteers separately. Despite these limitations of the data, we confidently identify a 'civic core' of volunteers – 18.5% of high-intensity volunteers delivered 67.6% of all volunteering hours in Scotland (Tables 12.2 and 12.3). This phenomenon is markedly amplified as we move up the

Table 12.2 Percentages of volunteers by volunteering intensity and age group (hours volunteered in past month)

	Scotland	under 55	55–64	65–74	75+
<5 h	55.5	61.4	48.3	41.0	44.1
6–15 h	26.0	23.6	30.6	30.8	29.7
16+ h	18.5	15.0	21.1	28.2	26.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Authors' analysis of SHS (2018)

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[2] We report percentage of volunteering 'intensity' as a proportion of volunteering adults only as this was the subset of the SHS data we worked with.

Table 12.3 Percentages of total hours contributed by volunteering intensity and age group (hours volunteered in past month)

	Scotland	under 55	55–64	65–74	75+
<5 h	9.8	12.7	8.5	5.0	7.1
6–15 h	22.5	25.3	24.7	16.0	20.1
16+ h	67.6	62.0	66.8	79.0	72.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Authors' analysis of SHS (2018)

age groupings. Not only were those in older groups volunteering more frequently than their younger counterparts, but the high-intensity volunteers (28.2% of those who volunteer) contributed 79% of all volunteering hours provided by the 65–74 age group.

While the general characteristics of the volunteer are known, it is much harder to pinpoint those of the older, rural one. Notwithstanding the problems of sample size for analysis of such a specific subpopulation, we do know that rural areas had much higher volunteering rates across all age groups. The 'civic core' contributes the most effort, and it is markedly bigger in older groups. Given that the average age of those living in rural Scotland is higher than that for the nation as a whole, we speculate that volunteering efforts of older rural adults have the most impact. Moreover, the volunteering rates in local authority areas classed as 'predominantly rural' were almost all notably higher than those classified as 'predominantly urban'. Our own case studies, to which we turn now, fall into such predominantly rural local authority areas where volunteering rates are especially high. These include the Isle of Bute (located within the Argyll and Bute authority), islands in the Outer Hebrides (in the Western Isles/Na h-Eileanan Siar authority) and East Lothian on the mainland.

The quantitative findings point to general patterns of volunteering among older people in rural areas. However, in order to understand the attributes of older rural volunteers in more detail, to answer our third research question, we now turn to present findings from more detailed qualitative research.

12.4.2 Qualitative: Volunteering in Rural Scotland – Evidence from the Isle of Bute

Responses to the household survey conducted on the Isle of Bute as part of the retirement transition project provide details of how adults on the island contributed to the production of civic or public goods through volunteering for a variety of groups and organisations. A third of respondents lived in households where at least one adult was a volunteer for at least one group or organisation. The names of groups reported in survey responses were coded to align with categories used in the SHS. Volunteering was most common in groups falling under the *local community or neighbourhood groups*, *physical activity*, *sports and exercise*, *hobbies and*

recreation and *culture and heritage*. Two thirds of the volunteers were aged 55 and over. Those in the 65–74 age group were twice as likely as the 'young old' and 'older old' to be volunteers. Most of those who volunteered for *local community or neighbourhood groups*, which included a community land company, a social enterprise, the community council,[3] a village improvement group, village hall committee, the local Rotary Club branch and the local branch of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute, were aged 65 and over. Numerous community development trusts, community housing trusts, community interest companies and social enterprises that run local services and facilities have been created across rural Scotland in the past decade or so. These organisations are playing an increasingly important role in supporting the resilience and sustainability of rural communities. Based on evidence from sources such as the SHS and data generated through research such as the retirement transition project, it is clear that the voluntary efforts of older adults are essential to their success. Volunteering for *culture and heritage* groups on Bute, such as the local museum, natural history society, Highland Games organisation and conservation trust, was dominated by the over 55s. People of all ages were involved in supporting the organisation of groups in the *hobbies and recreation* category, with those aged 75+ the most likely to be involved: examples of supporting a local art club, horticultural society, astronomy group, musical groups and a bridge club were reported.

Volunteers fulfil a wide range of activities including, for example, holding positions on a group's committee, campaigning, fundraising and generally helping out. 2018 SHS data report that men were slightly more likely than women to act as a committee member or as a trustee, and older adults were much more likely than younger adults to hold such formal roles in groups and organisations. Office or administrative work was also most likely to be undertaken by those aged 60 and over. Men and women of all ages reported that they would generally help out as required. Older adults on Bute were most likely to be involved with *care work (e.g. providing meals, cleaning and dressing)*, and this was commonly through the local branch of the Red Cross who provided a meals on wheels food delivery service on the island.

Philip and MacLeod (2018) noted that there is an environment on the Isle of Bute in which island residents can easily participate in leisure and other social activities. Those who get involved in various types of community and civic activities contribute to both the recreational and amenity value of the island, creating and sustaining valued place-based attributes. Opportunities to participate and become involved in the running of a wide variety of groups and organisations create a milieu that long-term and more recent residents value. As a woman who had lived on Bute most of her adult life and who was interviewed during the retirement transition research observed, 'Bute is the kind of place that if you want to be a part of groups, it's still quite easy. You can be a part of as many groups as you want or you can be your own person'. This milieu exists because many older adults give freely of their time to

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[3] In Scotland, community councils are the lowest formal tier of government.

support the operations of a wide variety of groups and organisations that provide facilities, services and support to others. In turn, this provides opportunities for local residents to participate in civic engagement and foster social interactions.

12.4.3   Qualitative: Volunteering in the Outer Hebrides – Heritage and Community

The Highlands and Islands of Scotland have had traditionally high rates of volunteering (Beel et al., 2017). Our research in the Outer Hebrides between 2013 and 2018 bears this out. In these remote and scattered communities, membership of the historical associations was at very high levels. Such groups (Commun Eiachdriadh) formed the hub of many small settlements where members met on a regular basis to compile and consolidate the local heritage, much of which was intangible, taking the form of place names, recipes, rolls of honour and lineages associated with crofts and fishing boats. Communication and local knowledge were required to keep these associations alive. This passion for local heritage sprang partly from an indigenous commitment to the Gaelic language tradition and allowed incomers to the islands to contribute to their local community by committing themselves to heritage group activities.

The historical associations provided more than history for their members. They often established museums in former school buildings, no longer required for their original purpose because demographic change meant there were not enough children to keep them open. From these community spaces, cafes were opened, shops were created, and in one village, even a petrol station was constructed (people had to travel many miles to find such a facility otherwise). Some also operated prolific publishing operations. Much of this work was undertaken by volunteers, who also staffed the various facilities (Wallace & Beel, 2021). Even cemeteries were organised through community co-operation. Communities coming together as volunteers led in some cases to bids for community ownership of assets such as property and land, something made possible under Scottish land reform legislation. Successful bids require considerable mobilisation of community resources over a number of years (McKenzie & Fiorna, 2013). People living on islands and remote mainland locations perhaps form these kinds of community enterprises due to the fact that they have to help each other because, otherwise, there are no services or facilities available. Such communities are often resourceful in their use of self-help solutions, for example, by rigging up their own broadband transmitters where these were lacking (Wallace et al., 2015). Heritage formed a common interest, especially for older community members, whose memories and tacit knowledge were valorised.

12.4.4   Qualitative: Rural Life, Ageing and voluntarism – Stories from East Lothian

Older people in rural East Lothian also mobilised around community networks. Fieldwork undertaken in North Kirkton[4] in 2017 illustrated the way in which both informal and formal volunteering were embedded in everyday life. These connections were often seamless and incidental. For example, Robert, aged 70, had been an accountant by trade and had regularly 'done the books' for several of the villages' various voluntary groups. The interviews with him were continually interrupted by other community members calling him on the phone. What Robert's story illustrated is people are 'infrastructure' (as Simone (2004) phrases it) in rural communities like North Kirkton: they have the social and economic capital to get things done and are willing to take the time during their day to network, liaise and share information. Interviews with many older residents of North Kirkton illustrated the networks of voluntarism that exist and the dense network of ties through which they work. Robert himself had never intended to hold formal voluntary positions, but his professional qualifications as an accountant meant his expertise was sought out and he was co-opted onto various committees. This example also illustrates how formal and informal forms of volunteering intermesh in practice.

Numerous examples of encounters, spontaneous offers of care and support and informal voluntarism were observed in North Kirkton, illustrative of practices and networks that created a 'landscape of care' (Milligan & Wiles, 2010).[5] One such network was found among churchgoers, consisting primarily of older people (and as members of the congregation would remark, a group that is 'getting older still'). The church offers an institution where an organisational community exists both spatially and socially and through which landscapes of care emerge via, for example, offers of a lift to and from church being made to those who did not drive. Practices of care were also found to extend to friends and family. A number of those who participated in the research recalled they had moved to North Kirkton for this very reason, to be available to look after family, either their young grandchildren or their own older parents. Low-level 'keeping an eye on one other' actions, seemingly mundane everyday practices, are important within the context of rural ageing. They form part of the story of growing older in a rural context for those who give and receive informal support, are a layer of the rural ageing experience directly linked to the informal volunteering landscape reported in the SHS and are an important facet of what older people think it means to age in a rural place.

The development of spontaneous landscapes of care via informal volunteering helps to create age-friendly communities (World Health Organisation, 2007; Lui et al., 2009; Centre for Ageing Better, 2017), responses to demographic ageing advocated in public policy. Both the UK and Scottish governments have developed

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[4] North Kirkton and names used are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

[5] 'Informal care' has been reported in the rural studies literature for older people and beyond (Newhouse & McAuley, 1987; Kay, 2011; McKenzie et al., 2010; Orpin et al., 2014).

policies that advocate age-friendly communities; examples include 'Active Ageing' (Department for Work and Pensions, 2015; see also Jones & Heley, 2016) and 'Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population' (Scottish Executive, 2007; see also Joint Improvement Team, 2014). These policies would not work without the informal networks of care that already exist within communities, networks that rely upon older adults voluntarily giving their time to help others (Milligan & Wiles, 2010).

Extending the notion of 'people as infrastructure' (Simone, 2004) within a landscape of care provides an example of how older people can be supported to continue living in rural communities as they age and how integral voluntarism is to allowing older people to age 'in place'. There is an argument to be had about the assemblage of the village, ageing, rurality and voluntarism that has provoked these situations to emerge and a political argument to be had over the value of living in rural spaces as 'good places to live' (Scottish Government, 2018). It also highlights how North Kirkton, and the other places referred to in this chapter, might be considered 'good citizen' rural communities where social capital expressed through voluntary actions is harnessed for wider community benefit (Woods et al., 2007). However, not all rural communities have similar levels of social capital, and in consequence, they may be unable to develop an environment that supports age-friendly communities from within.

12.5   Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has explored forms of participation and civic engagement among older people who live in rural Scotland, and in so doing, we have contributed to addressing the knowledge gap about the nature and extent of the rural VCSE sector. We set out to address three research questions in this contribution. Below we reflect on how these questions have been addressed, discuss the implications of our findings, note the limitations of our research and point to opportunities for future work.

The first question asked: what are the patterns of volunteering among older people in Scotland? Our findings illustrate the importance of both formal and informal volunteering for older people, especially those living in rural areas. We have shown that rural areas had higher rates of volunteering than urban areas and this was higher in the older age groups. We have highlighted the fact that older residents are a key reservoir of volunteers: indeed, volunteering in rural Scotland depends on a 'civic core' of older people, most of whom may be described as 'young old'. This 'grey labour' helps to make sparsely populated rural areas with remotely located and attenuated services sustainable for these populations. The second question asked: how have patterns of volunteering changed? We have identified a general decline in volunteering across Scotland over the past decade in all age groups and in urban and rural areas. However, rates of volunteering remain higher in rural areas than elsewhere.

In response to our third question – how does volunteering take place in rural Scotland? – it is clear that there are key actors within rural networks who participate in multiple and overlapping ways that include both formal and informal styles of volunteering. These volunteers support civic, recreational, cultural and heritage organisations embedded in rural communities and help to run services that meet the needs of diverse groups within the community. Combined, these efforts help create sustainable communities and help to form 'landscapes of care' that allow those of all ages, but older community members in particular, to lead meaningful lives in rural places.

Our findings could be interpreted as painting a positive picture of volunteering promoting rural cohesion. However, evidence of several threats to the VCSE landscape is apparent. There is evidence that fewer people volunteer compared with a decade ago, with implications for the delivery of a wide range of services the VCSE sector is responsible for. As we have shown, volunteering in rural areas in particular is kept alive by the 'young' old. Rates of volunteering decline as individuals progress through their 70s; therefore we cannot assume that an ageing rural population creates a larger pool of volunteers. The ageing of already older rural populations might stretch the VCSE sector beyond capacity as more individuals require support at a time when the number of volunteers is declining. In addition, continued cuts to local authority funding which in turn have reduced the amount of grant funding available to community groups might create more gaps in rural infrastructures, ones which volunteers alone cannot fill. With an increasing older population and changing generational cultures, what will the formal and informal landscapes of care look like 20 or 30 years from now in villages like North Kirkton? Are the next generation of older adults going to be as concerned with looking out for their neighbours, as exemplified in support for the meals on wheels service on Bute, as today's older people? If more of our lives are lived online, will we continue to look out for our neighbours and continue to support local heritage initiatives – important spaces for the preservation of Gaelic language and culture – in the Western Isles? Alongside threats to the VCSE landscape, we must also acknowledge that cohesive communities where formal and informal volunteering is the norm do not exist everywhere. The capacity of a rural community to develop and sustain a VCSE sector depends on many things including, for example, population size, age profile, distance from urban centres, economic characteristics, social capital and openness to innovation. For decades the VCSE sector has balanced social, economic and environmental needs, but 'it has been heavily stretched in the years leading up to the [COVID-19] pandemic as the onus of responsibility for provision of many local services has fallen back onto communities themselves' (Phillipson et al., 2020, p. 4). The scope and scale of third sector activity across rural Scotland is wide (Woolvin, 2012) including owning and managing community assets (e.g. buildings, land, woodlands, fishing rights) and providing and running community-owned services (e.g. community shops, pubs, transport). A cynical interpretation sees the neighbourliness, community spirit and tradition of volunteering that stereotypically characterise rural Britain becoming an excuse for the state assuming rural communities will 'do it themselves'. We suggest caution: portrayals of idyllic rural communities should not

be used as a smokescreen which obscures the reality that rural *and* urban communities need services and facilities whose provision cannot be left to volunteers alone.

The threats and challenges noted above have been overshadowed by the new crisis posed by the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns this entailed from March 2020 onwards. The inaccessibility of many services during lockdown and the forced residential immobility as people were made to work from home, found themselves furloughed, sick or shielding, and required to 'remain local' meant that communities were thrown back on their own resources. This resulted in an explosion in formal and informal community volunteering – at least in some rural communities. For example, the community action co-ordinated by the Grampian COVID-19 Assistance Hub involved statutory services such as the police and third sector organisations including the Red Cross working alongside approximately 350 other groups to help 4000 people with food box deliveries, welfare visits and other assistance. There were far more volunteers than were actually needed, a ratio of about 3:1. In the village of Insch, the volunteers were organised through a Facebook page initially, and their activities included collecting prescriptions, shopping, general care of vulnerable community members and dog walking services, often providing vital support to older adults who were shielding. Again, there were twice as many volunteers as were actually called upon (Wallace et al., forthcoming). Similar initiatives sprang to life in other parts of the UK (Coutts, 2021). With the COVID-19 pandemic bringing profound changes to the day-to-day functioning of society, have the rural VCSE sector and the individuals who are essential to its successful operation demonstrated an ability to withstand, adapt and innovate? It is not clear if this outpouring of voluntary activity was sustained much beyond the first lockdown in 2020 and the later easing of COVID-related restrictions and return to work. Was this a temporary response to an emergency or a sign of a general revitalisation of community life? Current labour shortages may mean that surplus time needed for the volunteer economy dries up, and with a likely return to austerity and rising prices, will people be so willing to share their time and resources in the future? Questions such as these around how rural places will emerge from the pandemic are ones that we will need to face in the future (Maclaren & Philip, 2021).

All research has limitations, and in our case, at least two issues limit our interrogation of volunteering in contemporary rural Scotland. Although the SHS represents a significant resource for understanding broad trends and changes over time with respect to volunteering, the rural sub-sample is small which hinders more sophisticated urban – rural – age comparison than we were able to report here. Our suspicion is that there are certain types of communities that foster volunteering and civic participation and others that do not, but we could not show this using the quantitative data available. A limitation of our qualitative studies, aside the fact that they were studies where accounts of volunteering emerged alongside other topics during interactions with participants and they were not designed as comparative studies, is that they describe volunteering and civic action in rural areas where these traditions were rich and embedded. They were cemented by the fact that these were attractive, self-selecting and rather privileged communities where respondents often chose to live (having retired there) and were cemented with ethnic, linguistic and historical

connections. We did not consider rural areas where there were lesser degrees of volunteering, where people did not want to move to or were depleted by out-migration and thus left with limited human capacity to support a VCSE sector.

Limitations notwithstanding, our study points to the importance of understanding the role of older people in rural communities as both caregivers and care receivers, given the demographic greying of the rural population. It indicates that a research-informed understanding of the way civil society works in rural areas is key to their sustainability. In the face of the roll back of the state and the likely curtailment of welfare spending in the future, it is important to understand both the strengths and limitations of the third sector in rural communities as a resource. Policies to facilitate and support this kind of rural civic action would be important to manage this sustainability, but it is also important to investigate why it might be declining at a time when it is needed more than ever. There is considerable scope for further research, quantitative and qualitative, exploring the evolution of the VCSE sector in rural Scotland and in other national contexts.

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Lorna J. Philip is Professor of Geography at the University of Aberdeen. A rural social scientist, Lorna's research focuses on contemporary rural life, especially change induced by rural demographic ageing, migration as a driver of change, and new forms of exclusion associated with rural digital divides.

Andrew S. Maclaren is a research fellow in the Health Services Research Unit at the University of Aberdeen, having previously held a teaching fellowship in the Department of Geography and Environment. Andrew's interests lie in cultural, political, and social geographies with a particular focus on everyday life, ageing, and rurality.

Claire Wallace is Professor of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen. She has been involved in rural research for many years with a special interest in quality of life and digitalization. She is currently working on projects to do with cultural tourism to rural areas.

Krzysztof Adamczyk is a research fellow in health data science at the University of Aberdeen. He is currently completing his ESRC-funded doctoral research on subjective experiences of upward social mobility of Aberdeen Children of the 1950s cohort. He is a sociologist and has an interest in the cultural and health dimensions of class divisions, especially in the context of contemporary social mobility trajectories, as well as mixed-method study designs, longitudinal analysis, and data linkage. During his PhD study, he completed an internship with the Scottish Government where he worked in the Scottish Household Survey team.

Chapter 13
Democratic Care in Nursing Homes: Responsive Evaluation to Mutually Learn About Good Care

Marleen D. W. Dohmen, Johanna M. Huijg, Susan M. W. Woelders, and Tineke A. Abma

Abstract In a transition from paternalistic to democratic care, Dutch nursing homes are expected to concentrate on the well-being of their residents and to align care with residents' significant others. Although this way of working is affirmed in nursing home policies, care staff experiences difficulties with providing democratic care in practice. In co-creation with care staff ($n = 110$) throughout 11 nursing homes in the Netherlands, we therefore developed the *enjoying life* approach, plan, and training program. A responsive evaluation was completed including observations, conversations during and outside training sessions, and semi-structured interviews with care staff, residents, and significant others ($n = 81$). The *enjoying life* approach values the participation of all people involved in the care process and strives for person-centered care by learning from each other through sharing narratives and building personal relationships. This is in line with democratic care's notion that good care starts in the lifeworld of care receivers and is the result of an intersubjective dialogue between care receivers and their caregivers. In this chapter we present our learning experiences with the *enjoying life* project and discuss implications for the democratic potential of organizations. We show that the participation of residents and significant others within the care process can lead to a mutual understanding of what is deemed "good" in a specific situation. However, this requires the cultivation of an organization culture wherein different and sometimes conflicting perspectives on what good care entails are acknowledged and a space is created to engage in dialogues about good care.

M. D. W. Dohmen (✉) · J. M. Huijg · S. M. W. Woelders · T. A. Abma
Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, AA, Leiden, The Netherlands

Department of Public Health and Primary Care, Leiden University Medical Center, ZA, Leiden, The Netherlands
e-mail: dohmen@leydenacademy.nl; huijg@leydenacademy.nl; woelders@leydenacademy.nl; abma@leydenacademy.nl

277

13.1   Introduction

The Dutch long-term care sector is moving from a rather paternalistic way of work-
ing, i.e., professional caregivers determine what is needed based on their knowledge
and expertise, to more democratic ways of caregiving, in which the wishes and
desires of care receivers have a central place. Furthermore, it accompanies a shift
from a main focus on health, protocols, and evidence-based practice to more empha-
sis on well-being, relationships, and person-centered care (Health and Youth Care
Inspectorate, 2019; Verbeek-Oudijk & Koper, 2021). From a quality perspective,
nursing homes are expected to deliver care and support that focus on the well-being
of their residents and to align these with residents' significant others (Dutch National
Healthcare Institute, 2017; Nolan et al., 2003). To this end, residents and their sig-
nificant others should be able to participate in the care process, which can be
described as democratic care (Tronto, 2016). Although this way of working is
affirmed in nursing home policies, care staff experiences difficulties with providing
democratic care in practice (Bolscher, 2018; Roelofsen & Bouwmeester, 2018).
This is not surprising, as the participation of residents and significant others in the
care process needs constant deliberation on a microlevel (between care staff, resi-
dents, and significant others), mesolevel (between care staff and managers), and
macrolevel (for internal policy and/or the reporting of quality of care to supervisory
bodies).

To support nursing home organizations in the transition from paternalistic to
democratic care, we developed the *enjoying life* approach: a care ethic and narrative
approach to the delivery and evaluation of care (Huijg, 2019; Leyden Academy on
Vitality and Ageing, 2019). The term *enjoying life* is used to indicate that nursing
home care should not focus on older people's limitations and needs but that it should
be about contributing to older people's personal well-being so that they are able to
enjoy their life, despite their limitations. Moreover, *enjoying life* is emphatically not
only about the experience of positive feelings but also about creating space for nega-
tive feelings. Fundamental to the approach is the participation of residents and their
significant others in the care process; their needs and wishes form the departure
point for the care given, and residents and significant others are from that moment
on actively involved in the process of care to attune care to dynamic needs
and wishes.

The *enjoying life* approach includes four elements. The first element is about get-
ting to know the resident's identity, including their personal wishes and desires. In
the approach, the identity of the resident will emerge and will be recreated within
the personal relationships with care staff and significant others (Brown Wilson &
Davies, 2008; Ricoeur, 1994). The second element is about the importance of using
information on residents' wishes and desires as a starting point for providing care

and support. The third element entails sharing and documenting experiences with the care and support provided to inform an intersubjective dialogue about good care and the evaluation of quality of care. Within these experiences, dilemmas may be encountered, because care staff, residents, and significant others can have different perspectives on what good care entails (e.g., freedom versus safety or well-being versus health). Furthermore, these experiences provide information on how to attune care to the wishes and desires of the resident. With this feedback loop, the caring process is never completed.

In this anthology the focus is on developing and cultivating the democratic potential in organizations. 'Demos' is about empowering and giving voice to people. It is precisely the participation in dialogue about good care that has the potential to enable people in nursing home organizations to develop a space in which democratic learning processes are cultivated. The question we want to answer in this chapter is as follows: what can we learn from the democratic care processes as part of the *enjoying life* approach in Dutch nursing homes to better understand the democratic potential of organizations? We start with our theoretical lens on democratic care, followed by a description of the *enjoying life* project completed in the Netherlands over a period of 2 years. Subsequently, we will present the findings and main dilemmas from the perspectives of care staff, residents, and significant others. In the discussion we reflect on the meaning of our findings for the cultivation of the democratic potential within nursing homes and organizations more generally.

13.2 Democratic Care as a Theoretical Lens

Creating space for the voice of the resident can be seen as a first step toward democratic care (Tronto, 2013, 2016). Joan Tronto (2013, 2016) describes democratic care as care that is based on the intersubjective understanding between care receiver and caregiver. This intersubjective understanding is a dynamic process wherein the voice of the care receiver is the only way in which the caregiver is able to address the care receiver's needs and take responsibility for care. By means of an intersubjective dialogue about good care, the care receiver and caregiver collaboratively determine what good care is (Tronto, 1993). In this dialogue there is space for reflection on health, protocols, and professional expertise, as well as the personal well-being, identity, and desires of the care receiver. As significant others are important for the well-being of residents, Hilde Lindeman (1995, 2007) emphasizes the role of the residents' significant others within the care process. We consider democratic care therefore as the intersubjective understanding within the triad care staff-residents-significant others.

As set out above, the *enjoying life* approach is foregrounding the personal narrative of nursing home residents to adjust care to the value-commitments of an individual. It is assumed that these value-commitments (notions on what matters to someone) shape the identity of a person and the wishes and desires of a person dependent upon others for care and support. It is thus relevant to know a person well

to adjust care to what this person needs and wants at a certain moment in time (Abma et al., 2012). This foregrounding of the narrative and particularities of a person resonates with care ethics. Care ethics is an interdisciplinary field that moves from Kantian reason and moral obligations to perception and experience: putting lived experience in everyday situations at the center of attention (Laugier, 2015). Care ethics departs from the underlying notion that ethically sound care cannot be universally defined. What good care entails always depends on the particularities of a situation: the person involved, the moment in time, and the location. Furthermore, the complexity of a caring situation often entails a myriad of values, which may conflict. In a caring situation, many persons are involved, such as the resident, significant others, and care staff but also (para)medics and other organization members. All these people have different perspectives on what good care in a particular situation looks like based on their value-commitments. The value plurality and involvement of various participants with their own perspective on a situation thus require a detailed and in-depth understanding of all values and perspectives that matter in a particular situation, to attend well to the actual wishes and desires of a person and to determine what is the best action in a certain situation (Abma et al., 2009).

Besides a focus on the lived experiences and particularities of a situation, care ethics follows a relational-moral approach to care. Basically, this means that what good care is shaped in and by relationships between a care receiver and caregiver. It is the nature of the caregiver-care receiver relationship, and not the rules or procedures, that are foregrounded when it comes to good care. According to Tronto (1993), good care in an ethical sense is a two-way affair; it cannot be given in a paternalistic nor parochial way. Someone needs to be open to and responsive to the care given. Tronto calls this democratic care:

> good caring implies intersubjectivity; good care is the outcome of a dialogic process between caregiver and care receiver, and cannot be decided upon for someone. Good care is attuned to needs and the outcome of a joint, democratic decision. (Tronto, 2016)

Good care requires a relationship of trust (Sevenhuijsen, 2000). The development of trust takes place in and during a cyclical caring process, in which Tronto (1993) distinguishes four phases and accompanying virtues. These phases and virtues correspond with the elements of the *enjoying life* approach. In the first phase ("caring about"), the caregiver recognizes the necessity of care, a process that requires the virtue of attentiveness. This corresponds with the first element of the *enjoying life* approach (i.e., getting to know the resident's identity, including their wishes and desires), which requires care staff to pay attention to the resident with an inquisitive attitude. Learning about the wishes and desires of the resident then makes a moral appeal on care staff to try and answer to these needs. In Tronto's (1993) cyclical caring process, this is the second phase ("taking care of"). Here, the caregiver accepts responsibility for the identified needs and determines how to respond to these needs, which requires the virtue of responsibility. The third phase

("caregiving") is characterized by a direct meeting of care needs, which requires the caregiver to possess the virtue of expertise. These two phases together form the second element of the *enjoying life* approach, where the caregiver uses (i.e., accepts responsibility) what they have learned about the resident's identity as a basis for providing care and support (i.e., their expertise). Finally, in Tronto's last phase ("care receiving"), the care receiver responds to the care and support given, something that requires responsiveness. Residents' and significant others' responses to care play an important role in the third element of the *enjoying life* approach, which centers around sharing and documenting experiences with the provided care and support to inform an intersubjective dialogue about good care. In order to enter into this dialogue, care staff needs to be attentive to these experiences, starting the cycle over again. The fourth element of the *enjoying life* approach (i.e., making dilemmas explicit) does not correspond directly to one of the phases in Tronto's (1993) cyclical caring process. Rather, it is a theme that can occur throughout all phases as the people involved may have different value-commitments.

13.3 Development of the *Enjoying Life* Approach, Plan, and Training Program

From 2017 to 2019, the *enjoying life* approach and the *enjoying life* plan and training program were developed in close collaboration with care staff of 11 nursing homes within the Netherlands. Within each organization, one team of ten care workers was involved. The *enjoying life* project focused on developing and piloting of the approach, plan, and training program. Implementation was studied in another project (2019–2021). Here, we only report on the pilot project.

The *enjoying life* plan was developed as a tool for the *enjoying life* approach. The aim of the plan was to support care staff to structurally pay attention to residents' wishes and desires, to use these for providing care and support, and to use personal experiences of residents and their significant others to inform the intersubjective dialogue about good care. The *enjoying life* plan was developed with the intent to amplify the prevailing and more medically orientated care plan and included gathering narrative information on the resident's identity; designing a care and support strategy focusing on well-being; learning from experiences with care from care staff, residents, and significant others; and reflecting on moral dilemmas (see Fig. 13.1). The *enjoying life* training program was developed to acquaint care staff with the *enjoying life* approach and to collaboratively explore how to incorporate the approach in their daily care and reporting routines. Each training session was facilitated by two members of the research team. Training sessions were also used to gather feedback on care staff's experiences with the *enjoying life* plan, as to further develop it in co-creation.

KNOWING | FACTS	KNOWING | NARRATIVES
DOING | MEDICAL CARE	DOING | WELLBEING
ACCOUNTABILITY | STANDARDIZED	ACCOUNTABILITY | EXPERIENCES
DILEMMAS	

Fig. 13.1 The *enjoying life* plan (right) as a supplement to the traditional medically oriented care plan (left)

13.3.1   Participants

The 11 nursing homes were diverse in their size, philosophy, characteristics of the residents, management style, organizational processes, and supervisory bodies. They were located in different parts of the Netherlands. The nursing homes that participated in our projects were part of our network, and/or they were partners of the involved healthcare insurers. The nursing homes were selected based on their motivation to participate in the project and to enhance democratic care processes.

In each organization one team of ten care workers (*n* = 110) participated in the *enjoying life* project. They received the complete training program (for details see below) and co-created the *enjoying life* plan with us. The care workers of these teams, interacting with residents on a daily basis, had an important role in the project, which corresponds with care ethic's relational-moral view that quality of care is defined in and by the relationship between the caregiver and care receiver. Other care professionals (e.g., paramedics, medics, psychologists), as well as members of the client council, managers (e.g., team leaders, quality managers, HR managers), and directors, were informed about the project and the *enjoying life* approach in the group sessions.

13.3.2   Contents of the Enjoying Life Training Program

13.3.2.1   Doodle Me Tool Sessions

The training program included five Doodle Me Tool (Slaets, 2017) sessions. Within these sessions, care staff were trained to get to know the resident by entering into a personal relationship and having open conversations with them, instead of using standard questionnaires. Furthermore, they were trained to incorporate their

findings into a collage: a "Doodle Board," which invites curiosity and conversation when hung on the wall of the resident's apartment (Slaets, 2017).

13.3.2.2   *Enjoying Life* Plan Sessions

Subsequently, three *enjoying life* plan sessions were held. Within these sessions, care staff were trained to create an *enjoying life* plan for each resident with a Doodle Board. In between sessions, care staff worked with the *enjoying life* plan in their daily routines. During the sessions, staff provided feedback on what did (not) work well. In this way, the researchers and care staff jointly defined what should (not) be included in the minimal standard *enjoying life* plan throughout the project.

13.3.2.3   Group Sessions

In between the Doodle Me Tool and *enjoying life* plan sessions, three group sessions were held. The aim of these sessions was to inform others outside the care staff team, such as other care professionals (e.g., paramedics, medics, psychologists), members of the client council, managers (e.g., team leaders, quality managers, HR managers), and directors, about the project and the *enjoying life* approach. During group sessions discussions were held about the benefits, difficulties, sustainability, and future of the *enjoying life* approach.

13.4   Methods

13.4.1   *Action Research*

The *enjoying life* approach, plan, and training program were developed in collaboration between researchers and care staff throughout the project. In this process, we followed the cycle of action research (i.e., plan, act, observe, reflect). We started off with a theoretical philosophy (i.e., the approach) and ideas on how to acquaint care staff with this philosophy (i.e., the plan and training program). We tried and tested these ideas, and by means of observations and care staff's feedback during the project, we continuously evaluated and adapted the approach, plan, and training program. Moreover, not all of the 11 care organizations started their participation at the same time. Lessons learned in one organization could thus be employed in other organizations.

 The contents of training sessions were regularly informed by care staff's needs as we started each session by asking them how they were doing, which often determined the specific focus for that session. We further adapted to the needs of the people in practice, for instance, by providing extra sessions when desired.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, the contents of the *enjoying life* plan were developed in co-creation with care staff during the *enjoying life* plan sessions. As such, the development of the *enjoying life* approach, plan, and training program was focused on supporting democratic processes as much as it was a democratic process in itself.

13.4.2   Responsive Evaluation

Essentially, the project facilitated an ongoing dialogue about what good care should be, which further informed the principles of the *enjoying life* approach, in turn affecting the contents of the *enjoying life* plan and training program. We used a responsive evaluation (RE) approach to guide the dialogue between the stakeholders involved in the *enjoying life* project (i.e., researchers, care staff, other care professionals, managers, and directors). RE aims to enhance the personal and mutual understanding of the different stakeholders involved in an intervention for practice improvement and to facilitate a mutual learning process (Abma et al., 2016). It is grounded in a hermeneutic philosophy and focuses on the meaning of the intervention for the different stakeholders involved. RE assumes that stakeholders have diverse interests and perspectives, and the approach aims to bring them together to foster democratic decision-making (Simons & Greene, 2018). Key is the notion that the meaning of experiences comes forward through narratives (Abma, 2000). RE appeared very suitable for the aims of our project and resonated very well with the relational and care-ethical orientation of the *enjoying life* approach (Abma et al., 2020). Moreover, the narrative approach of RE resonated well with the importance of narratives within the *enjoying life* approach (Abma, 2000).

13.4.3   Data Collection

In addition to the process described above, observations, conversations during and outside training sessions, and semi-structured interviews were used to map the lived experiences of care staff, residents, and significant others with regard to the *enjoying life* approach. One hundred and ten care workers were involved in the training sessions, and 24 care workers (2 male, 22 female), 29 residents (3 male, 26 female), and 28 significant others (7 male, 21 female) took part in a semi-structured interview. Participants of the interviews were recruited and selected by the research team. The interviews had a conversational style and focused on the well-being, wishes, and desires of individual residents and the preferred role of related care workers and significant others with regard to the care and support for residents. Participants chose where the interviews took place, of which most chose the surrounding of the nursing home. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 min and were tape-recorded after consent and fully transcribed.

13.4.4 Data Analysis

In the analyses of the observations, informal conversations, and interview transcripts, we used the care-ethical framework as a lens of understanding the lived experience of care staff, residents, and significant others with regard to the *enjoying life* approach. Analyses and interpretation of the findings were discussed in the research team, of which two were trainers of the *enjoying life* approach.

13.5   Findings

13.5.1 Perspectives on the Enjoying Life Approach and Project

Overall, care staff was enthusiastic about the approach and indicated that the *enjoying life* plan is easy to use, meets their objectives in work, and helps them to focus on what matters most to their residents and to make choices (together with significant others) that enhance residents' well-being. In addition, they indicated that the *enjoying life* approach contributes to their own happiness at work. For most of them, providing care based on the wishes and desires of residents was one of the main reasons to start working in care in the first place. Moreover, the *enjoying life* approach was received very well by the residents and their significant others, as well as managers and directors of the organizations (Huijg, 2019; Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, 2019).

Care staff was not only positively impacted by working with the *enjoying life* approach and plan but by participating in the project itself as well. Being a part of the project empowered the teams, as they realized that being able to provide care in a democratic way was the reason for them to start working as a caregiver. Their active involvement in shaping the definition of good care gave rise to the realization that they as care staff had an important role in changing limiting factors on a meso- (e.g., protocols) and macrolevel (e.g., monitoring systems), as well as the motivation to do so.

13.5.2 Democratic Care in Practice

13.5.2.1   Getting to Know the Resident's Identity

Within the *enjoying life* approach, getting to know the resident's identity, including their wishes and desires, is the starting point for person-centered care. While care staff often indicates that they deliver person-centered care based on residents' wishes and desires, we found out that this is not always the case. The context and culture of a nursing home direct care staff's attention toward medical problems,

standardized norms, and protocols and away from attuning care and support to a resident's unique situation. Therefore, we trained care staff in creating space for the voice of the resident, literally (i.e., taking the time to sit down and listen) and emotionally (i.e., using their heart when caring for residents). Furthermore, we encouraged them to have open conversations with residents about what matters most to them, in the here and now. Care staff indicated that having such conversations enhanced their personal relationships with the residents and that this facilitated getting to know the resident's identity:

> We knew that one of our residents was once an important person in Africa, but we never realized just how much he liked to talk about this. When I asked him about it, his face lit up. During our conversations he told me about his adventures. And I found out that when he became frail, he had to return back to the Netherlands from his mission. I personally think he would have preferred staying there. (care staff, narrative shared during a training session)

After being informed about the experience of their colleague, the care staff started approaching and greeting the resident in a way that fits with his identity (i.e., his status in Africa). Because of the acknowledgment for a part of his identity that was very meaningful to him, the resident became much more cheerful and kind to care staff and other residents than before.

This example indicates the importance of getting to know the resident's identity, including their wishes and desires. However, it can be hard to unravel these wishes and desires when residents are cognitively impaired, something that is more the rule than the exception in Dutch nursing homes. In the case of a resident with talking difficulties, one of the care workers told us the following:

> It was a challenge for me to start an open conversation with this resident, because he suffers from dementia with talking difficulties. As a consequence he does not tell much about himself and he gives short answers to our questions. During the conversations in his room I got to know so much more about him than I ever thought I would. He also told me he prefers to drink black coffee, but since we always ask him 'do you want coffee, with sugar and milk?' he drinks that. When we ask him open-ended questions he feels free to tell us what he wants. (care staff, narrative shared during a training session)

From this example, it becomes clear that care cannot be democratic until there is space to recognize different voices and listen to them, including the voices of people who are less able to express themselves verbally. The example illustrates that it may take an extra effort to understand and make sense of what someone wants or desires. The care worker had to take a genuine interest in the person and visit him in his own environment to find out that he preferred black coffee instead of the coffee they kept offering him. The effort she placed in getting to know the resident strengthened their relationship of trust. The care worker also found out that closed, straightforward questions were leading and did not leave enough room for the resident to express what he preferred. This shows that good intentions are not enough; space for the voice of the resident has to actively be created by those with the power to do so.

13.5.2.2 Using the Narrative When Taking Care

Learning about the wishes and desires of the resident makes a moral appeal on the care staff to try and answer to them. Taking these wishes and desires as a starting point for the delivery of care can contribute to positive experiences with physical care and support, personalized activities, important relationships, and emotional support. Learning about the wishes and desires of the resident is never completed and takes place in the act of caring itself as well, by reflecting on the care actions and being sensitive and responsive to the resident's reaction. How being sensitive and responsive is a prerequisite for the well-being of residents is clearly visible in the following example:

> My husband was a piano teacher, but due to a brain hemorrhage 20 years ago, he could no longer play the piano. He was also a choirmaster. When his Alzheimer's got worse, he moved to this nursing home. They tried a variety of musical activities, but they were not for him. Since a few months he receives music therapy in his room. Partly because of what I told them; I really like that they do something with my suggestions. My husband loves it, he is completely in his element. I am really happy. He would not be better off at home. (significant other, narrative shared during an interview)

The information shared by the significant other helped the care staff to act upon the wishes and desires of the resident. However, there are also situations in which the people who are involved in the care process have differing perspectives on the wishes and desires of the resident, which make it difficult to define good care. The following fragments, all revolving around the same resident, provide examples of such situations:

> There are situations where we clash with family. What they think is good for their loved ones, differs from what we think is good for them. For example, there is one resident here whose family will not allow us to give her tea. 'She only likes coffee, not tea', her children tell us. Yet, when I ask what she would like to drink, she thinks about it and sometimes answers that she wants tea, but the children forbid us to serve it. It's also because this resident can have a hard time saying no. If you put tea down in front of her, she'll drink it, because she doesn't want to be a bother. In fact, the other day, she said she wanted tea and then I asked her again and she said 'no, no tea.' (care staff, narrative shared during an interview)

> [Significant other]: "My mother has always had the idea that she is not good enough and that she can fail as a person. So when people ask her things, she doesn't answer them. She is searching how to please the other person."
> [Interviewer]: "She still does this?"
> [Significant other]: "Yes, she still does. Well, not with us children she doesn't. Then you can hear very clearly what she does and does not want. Saying no. We saw in the nursing home, to our dismay, we indicated everything, but six months later she was still sitting with a cup of tea in front of her. I said 'she doesn't like tea.' But if you don't ask her… and even if you did ask her, she might say 'yes, that's exactly what I like.' This idea of having to be grateful for everything." (significant other, narrative shared during an interview)

> Take the musical days. From the beginning, the daughters said that their mother doesn't like music. Yet, I see her enjoying it. One of the daughters comes here every Wednesday to prevent her mother from going to the musical afternoon. Their mother dances to the music! I see it happen, but the daughters are not open to it. We don't want what the daughters want. It's sad for the resident, because you really have to deprive her of things.

> Recently, we had a theatre performance here, with songs. The resident enjoyed it and the daughters were there too. Then, during the interval, the daughter said: 'Oh how lovely this is, but my mother hates it. I'm taking her somewhere else.' Should we keep doing these kinds of activities with the resident, it will cause problems when the daughters hear about it. (care staff, narratives shared during an interview)

These examples show that providing democratic care becomes challenging when those involved have different understandings of what good care entails. The examples outline that care staff and significant others did not come to an agreement on what is needed and desirable for the resident. Their conflicting interpretations stem partly from their varying orientations and relationships with the woman in question. The significant others reason from their personal and lifelong relationship with their mother and find it important to protect her identity. They know what she valued and did not value in life (not tea, not music) and want to keep this as it was. The care staff reasons from the here and now and notices how the resident enjoys music and sometimes prefers tea. It appears to be difficult for the significant others and the care staff to find a way to communicate about their respective understandings, which has caused for misunderstanding and mistrust to exist between the two. The example implies that care can only be democratic when you realize that in certain situations there may be different perspectives on good care and that when this occurs extensive deliberation between those involved is needed to determine the right thing to do.

13.5.2.3   Using Narratives to Evaluate Care

The definition of a good life differs from person to person. What is good for a unique resident in a specific situation may not be good to others. That is why the *enjoying life* approach focuses on personal wishes and desires. However, traditional care evaluation models lack this person-centered focus. They impose standardized norms and protocols and as a result do not offer information on an important aspect of the quality of care: the lived experience.

The *enjoying life* approach aims to further democratize the care process by capturing narratives on personal experiences with care from multiple perspectives (care staff, residents, and significant others). These narratives can be used to inform an intersubjective dialogue about good care on the microlevel (between care staff, residents, and significant others), mesolevel (between care staff and managers), and macrolevel (for internal policy and/or the reporting of quality of care to supervisory bodies). Our assumption is that using narratives to evaluate care is not only more democratic but also leads to results closer to the lived reality of the people it is all about than when approached in a nondemocratic way.

When care staff, residents, and significant others are open to sharing and discussing their personal experiences with each other, they may learn more about each other's perspective. The following example illustrates how this can be beneficial for the quality of care:

> One of our residents likes to smoke. His family provides him with a daily supply of cigarettes, the same amount he used to smoke at home. But because of his dementia, he depletes this supply very quickly. He lights one cigarette after the other, because he forgets that he just smoked. We discussed how to solve this problem with his wife and came to the agreement that we as care staff would keep the cigarettes with us and that he could ask us for a cigarette every time he would like to smoke. But after a while it turned out that the resident was not happy with this at all. He came up to me and told me how he felt treated like a child by having to ask for a cigarette every time. I understood him, but I also explained to him why we came to this agreement. He understood my point of view as well and agreed that him having the cigarettes himself was not an option. This time, to solve the problem, we sat down with him and his wife to think of a solution. We agreed upon giving him 5 cigarettes each time he asks, so that he doesn't have to ask for them as often. He was much happier with this arrangement. (care staff member, narrative shared during an informal conversation)

In this example, the cycle of using narratives in the daily care practice is nicely laid out. Care staff is attentive to a potential problem in the resident's life and takes responsibility to come up with a solution. They try it out, to which the resident responds. The care staff is attentive to this response and adjusts their approach. This again leads to a response on the side of the resident (the resident is satisfied), to which care staff is attentive once more (the approach is continued).

Trying out new things and being attentive to the other's response are an important aspect of the *enjoying life* approach. The cycle that emerges from this is never completed. Wishes and desires may change, and what was deemed good at one point may not be deemed good later on. Democratic care thus inherently entails a dynamic process: it is not about reaching the best end result but about a continuous striving to be better and listening to other voices in order to do so. In the example above, the care worker and the resident were able to improve because they were open about their own experience as well as to each other's perspective, enabling them to learn from each other. Exactly how important open communication is when it comes to working with personal experiences is further emphasized in the following examples:

> The other day, the daughter of a resident came to visit her. When we went into the room afterwards, we saw that the daughter had used a marker to scratch out her brother from the resident's Doodle board. The daughter and her brother have a very bad relationship, so she didn't want him to be on it. It was hanging on the wall, framed, and she took it down to scratch him out. If you don't agree with it, you can at least come and talk to us, can't you? In any case, I don't think it's right that she would scratch out her brother because of their relationship, considering her mother wanted him to be on the Doodle board. We spent a lot of time and energy on it and for her to just come in and vandalize it… It has hurt us very much. (care staff member, narrative shared during a group meeting)

> My mother is a perfectionist. Always has been. So when I saw that the care staff had made a spelling mistake in my brother's name, I took the liberty to correct this. Then afterwards, they became incredibly mad at me. I don't know why it is such a big deal for them. I did it for my mother, I know that she would have wanted it to be correct. She always wanted everything to be correct. (significant other, narrative shared during an informal conversation)

Both the care staff and the significant other feel that they are acting in the best interest of the resident, but due to a lack of communication between them, their perspectives on this common goal stay unknown to the other party. Both their voices remained unheard, resulting in a mutual misunderstanding.

13.5.2.4   Making Dilemmas Explicit

Dilemmas such as well-being versus health or freedom versus safety occur regularly when providing and receiving care. In fact, they are inevitable, as we saw in the *enjoying life* training sessions as well. In every session, care staff told us how they experience situations in their daily work where conflicting values are at play. When thinking about democratic care, the mere occurrence of a dilemma is not an important indicator of quality. Actually, if care becomes more democratic, more dilemmas may come to the surface as a result of the myriad of values involved. So, it is important to consider how such situations are handled. In the *enjoying life* approach, dilemmas are made explicit. By discussing dilemmas and carefully considering the different perspectives and options with each other, care staff, residents, and significant others can come to an agreement on what is the "best choice" for the situation. How making a dilemma explicit can lead to a democratic process in which every voice is heard is illustrated in the following example:

> One of our residents was often very sad and kept asking about her home, she wanted to go there again. After consultation with the family, we did not think it was a good idea to take her to her home. We were afraid that she would not want to return. As she remained sad and kept asking for her home, we held a moral deliberation and looked at the dilemma from different perspectives. The outcome of the moral deliberation was to take her to her old home after all. We then drew up a plan and also thought about what we would do if she did not want to go back. In the end, this proved to be completely unnecessary and we now pay regular visits to her old home. As soon as she comes home, she sits down on a chair and enjoys herself. When we let her know after a while that it is time to get going, she just comes along. She is so much less sad on the ward. (team leader, narrative shared during an informal conversation)

In learning to offer democratic care, it is not only important to have a dialogue about what is good in this specific situation but also to think about how we can conduct such an ethical dialogue with each other. Making dilemmas explicit becomes more difficult if there is no culture or structure in an organization for reflecting on experiences and conflicting values (i.e., if the how is neglected). The following narrative exemplifies how not having such a culture or structure can impede the ability to offer democratic care:

> There are some things here I disagree with. For example, there is a lady living here who can walk semi-independently and who really wants to walk, but needs extra supervision when doing so. Because the care staff doesn't really have time for that, they gave her a wheelchair with a fixed tray [meaning she cannot get up out of the wheelchair independently]. I think that is really bad. She really wants to walk, she talks about it all the time! It also plays a role that she often starts to walk when she is feeling restless, which causes a lot of unrest for the other residents on the ward. So that's another reason why they fixed her tray. I don't really agree with it, they are not listening to this resident's wishes and desires at all. But then again, I'm not going to start a discussion about this, if they all agree. (care staff member, narrative shared during an informal conversation)

The example also illustrates how complex dilemmas can be; freedom versus safety, the interest of the individual versus the interest of the group, and the interest of the resident versus the interest of care staff are all at play here. With so many interests at play, it is all the more important that a structure is established in which all voices can be heard and all perspectives considered.

13.6 Discussion: Lessons Learned About the Democratic Potential in Organizations

The question that we wanted to answer in this chapter is as follows: what can we learn from the democratic care processes as part of the *enjoying life* project in Dutch nursing homes to better understand the democratic potential of organizations? We have described how the project led to the inclusion of the voices of all involved in a care situation (care staff, residents, and significant others) and how this improved the quality of life of residents. Care staff became motivated to get to know residents and began to pay attention, listen, and respond to residents and significant others. Sharing personal experiences within the triad care staff-residents-significant others contributed to a democratic learning space. Below we will describe the lessons learned.

Lesson 1 The democratic potential in organizations is constituted by those in power to create a space for the voices of people in a vulnerable situation.

Democratic care is grounded in relationships and requires a genuine interest to get to know nursing home residents and to acknowledge their voice and narrative, even if they cannot easily express themselves verbally. It includes a deliberative effort of the care staff to make sense of what a resident wants, an attitude of attentiveness and openness, and entering an experimental-relational space (Bos & Abma, 2018). This is the space wherein a care worker dares to leave their comfort zone to find new ways of relating with a resident. This new way is about entering a personal relationship, to which one can relate to and take examples from their personal life. The support and encouragement of colleagues and managers help to make such a step and learn to relate differently. As one care worker put it:

> I thought about how I would like to be approached if I were the resident [not being able to talk and lying in bed all day]. This is when I started thinking about her as being a good friend. Now, when I enter her room feeling like she is my good friend, it is easy for me to open up my heart and relate to her in a personal way.

An important learning experience that lights up from the findings is not to take for granted that one thinks one understands a resident. In her description of the "art of understanding," Karin Dahlberg (2019) points to the risk of being carelessly understanding, a situation wherein people reason from their own lifeworld and pre-understanding and make definite what is indefinite too quickly. This is also what we experienced in the *enjoying life* project. Before the training, most care staff indicated that they already knew their residents quite well. However, after finishing the training, they were surprised to find that having an open conversation with residents about their needs and desires in the here and now and investing in a personal relationship surfaced important new knowledge.

Democratic care requires an open and alert attitude and a kind of slowing down of the evolving understanding in order to see the person and his or her lifeworld. Instead of following the sometimes strong inputs from one's own pre-understanding, validated by one's colleagues, one must redirect one's perception onto the person who needs care. Instead of a quick decision of what someone is or needs, care staff must systematically and carefully scrutinize the road to the judgment of understanding.

The important lesson we draw from this is that the democratic potential in organizations is stimulated and made possible by those with the power to create a space for the voices of the people that are served by the organization (in the context of a nursing home, this is often the care staff). This is a relational process wherein those with power are willing to create a safe space to hear and listen to the voices of people who are served. This safe space is one of encouragement, without judgment and without commentaries or interruptions. Key is the notion that the other person is unique and "other" than oneself.

Lesson 2 The democratic potential in organizations is constituted by acknowledging a variety of voices and the need for a structure and culture to listen to and discuss differences.

Democratic care is not only a matter of attending and listening to the voices of residents but also to other voices as well. Firstly, the voice of residents' significant others is important to attend to (Lindeman, 1995, 2007; Nolan et al., 2003; Nordt, 2012). Often, significant others have been taking care of their loved ones before they moved to the nursing home. They know the resident's personal wishes and desires, as well as their preferences with regard to care and support. As a consequence, they can provide information to guide the care process and share experiences with the care that is delivered.

Attending and listening to the voice of significant others are not always easy for care staff, as both use different ethical discourse (Lindeman, 1995, 2007). It is therefore not surprising that many moral dilemmas in nursing homes relate to the various perspectives of family and care staff (van der Dam et al., 2011). Finding the time to

sit down and talk about these dilemmas and exploring each other's point of view are not at all easy in the context and culture of high work pressure and a heavy workload such as the nursing home. This may often lead to situations wherein the voice of significant others is not sufficiently recognized (Roelofsen & Bouwmeester, 2018; Bolscher, 2018; Nordt, 2012).

Secondly, care staff also needs to explore and work with various ideas about good care between themselves. Democratic care influences the collaboration with colleagues within the same team – because what if an individual team member takes responsibility for providing care based on wishes and desires but their colleagues do not? – but also across teams, such as with (para)medics. An example is the dietician who may not feel taken seriously when wishes and desires (e.g., eating cream pie) are given center stage over physical needs and health (e.g., sticking to the diet the dietician recommends). Providing care and support following wishes and desires (instead of physical needs) may be difficult for the (para)medics and may even lead to conflict between colleagues within the nursing home.

Following the *enjoying life* plan, these differences between staff members (i.e., dilemmas) should be made explicit to be able to provide good care. However, care staff is to a large extent dependent on the context of the nursing home to be able to do this. When changing toward democratic care practices, including creating space for the voice of residents and significant others, it is therefore important for organizations to also create space for care workers to share their experiences with the new way of working. They may need support in communication with residents and significant others, encounter difficulties in collaboration with colleagues, or experience barriers with existing more paternalistic protocols. The quality of the working life in nursing homes reflects the quality of care; providing a good working environment for staff contributes to good care for residents (Van der Borg et al., 2017).

The acknowledgment of a variety of voices introduces new values and perspectives. These are not always easy to deal with, as the interpretation of what constitutes good care can differ greatly (Abma et al., 2009). One of the challenges encountered in practice is the lack of a structure or culture to discuss these differences. As a result, people may not understand each other's point of view, and conflicts may escalate. In the *enjoying life* project, we have seen that in several instances this led to heated debates. One way to deal with differences in values and perspectives in a fruitful manner is a moral case deliberation: a conversation in which participants can share moral dilemmas in a group of critical friends, within the triad care staff-residents-significant others, or between care staff and managers (Abma et al., 2009; van der Dam et al., 2013). Organizing such conversations may enhance a culture in which it is normal to discuss differences. Establishing such a culture takes time and requires participatory involvement from multiple parties. This may form limitations if time is not available or parties are not willing. Moreover, discussing differences in values and perspectives is not particularly easy. Therefore, care staff needs to receive training and coaching on how to deal with these differences and how to conduct an ethical dialogue on good care.

Lesson 3 The democratic potential in organizations transcends the micro-relationships and has implications for the meso- and macrolevels.

In this chapter we focused on micro-relationships, but democratic care is constituted by the larger organization. For example, getting to know the resident's identity and wishes and desires takes time, which is often said to be scarce within the walls of a nursing home. When democratic care is implemented on microlevels, it should also be supported in the larger organization. If not, a misfit is the result, leading to care staff feeling stressed, because they are aware what residents and significant others want but cannot offer them the associated care and support (van der Borg et al., 2017). Preventing such a misfit starts with a discussion on the level of the organization, which should then be extended to the larger system of long-term care monitoring and accountability in which care organizations are embedded.

As democratic care does not only call for adaptations on the microlevel but on the meso- and macrolevel as well, a process of cultural change on different levels within and outside the nursing home organization is required (Snoeren et al., 2014). It affirms that democratic care is not solely a personal undertaking but should manifest itself in institutions (Engster & Hamington, 2007). Besides the training of care staff, organizations should adapt their working processes and (electronic) documentation system to fit with the new way of working. Furthermore, supervisory bodies should accept new methods of accountability of quality of care (Council for Public Health and Society, 2019; van de Bovenkamp et al., 2017). Using personal experiences of care staff, residents, and significant others to evaluate care provides new, more democratic forms of narrative accountability (Leyden Academy on Vitality and Aging, 2019), potentially affecting accountability policy, which is indispensable for a sustainable change toward person-centered care (Council for Public Health and Society, 2019; van de Bovenkamp et al., 2017). As a consequence, the implementation of democratic care entails a situational learning process in which many stakeholders are involved.

13.7   Conclusion

The activities within the *enjoying life* project have provided us with a multitude of examples of democratic care. From these examples we can learn how to enhance democratic potential of nursing homes specifically and other organizations in general. We conclude that the democratic potential in organizations is constituted by those in power to create a space for the voices of people in vulnerable situations. Furthermore, the democratic potential in organizations is grounded in the acknowledgment of a variety of voices that are all equally valid and worth to be explored through dialogue and the sharing of experiences. For a fruitful way to deal with differences in organizations, structure and culture are needed, a safe space where perspectives can be explored without judgments and interruptions. Finally, we conclude that the democratic potential in organizations transcends the micro-relationships and has implications for the meso- and macrolevels. Without the support from management and policy and adaptations in working procedures and

accountability systems, the democratic potential in organizations may start to grow but will not blossom. In other words, democratic care is constituted by a caring, democratic organization and a democratic learning process.

As such, a limitation of our study is that it was not an implementation study and therefore did not focus on the meso- and macrolevels. The positive impact of the *enjoying life* approach on care staff, residents, and significant others does not necessarily equate to successful working with the approach on an organizational or systemic level. We are currently addressing this limitation by exploring the requirements for and consequences of providing democratic care for the entire chain of care. We do this by studying the implementation of the *enjoying life* approach within two nursing home locations, the interaction between the nursing homes and their supervisory bodies, and the development of a method in which the voices of different stakeholders involved in the care process can be used for the evaluation of care. Furthermore, we believe it would be relevant to investigate the impact of democratic care on the relationships within the triad care staff-residents-significant others.

Another limitation of our study is that the chosen method (action research) and the small sample size did not allow for hard conclusions about the generalizability of the findings and the efficacy of working with the *enjoying life* approach. However, this was also not the goal of our study; the objective was to have a dialogue within nursing home organizations about good work and good care, rather than finding a definite answer to the question: "does this work?" Moreover, the findings presented in this chapter do allow for naturalistic generalization (Abma & Stake, 2014). The thick description of the studied cases can help readers to determine to what extent the analyses and reflections are transferable to their own contexts.

We would like to end this chapter by emphasizing that investing in good care means investing in attention and relationships, in reflecting and learning, and in developing trust. All of this takes guts, not just in the daily care practice. It takes courage on the part of administrators, managers, and supervisory bodies to give care workers the space to use their invaluable knowledge and experience to do what is good and to remain attentive, open, and responsive to the perspectives of significant others and residents.

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Marleen D. W. Dohmen is a PhD candidate at Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing, a knowledge institute based in Leiden, the Netherlands. She conducts participatory action research in the context of the nursing home, together with care workers, residents, and their significant others. In current projects, she is studying the possibility of using narratives of personal experiences with care as an indicator of its quality, as well as exploring perspectives on and strategies for improving the cooperation and relationships within the triangle of care worker-resident-significant other.

Johanna M. Huijg (Josanne), PhD, is a senior researcher at Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing. Her research aims at improving the quality of life of older people by specifically focusing on meaningful ageing. Together with her colleagues and older people themselves, Josanne conducts participatory action research to enhance the space for the voice of older people, the attention for their possibilities and ambitions, and their heterogeneity and individual identity. Within her research, narratives, dialogue, learning by doing, and reflection have a central place.

Susan M. W. Woelders, PhD, is researcher at Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing and Leiden Medical University (LUMC) in the Netherlands. She has a background in organizational anthropology and conducted her thesis on patient participation in healthcare and research settings. She was involved in many participatory research projects in different sectors. In her work, she focuses on bringing together knowledge and perspectives, in order to facilitate a mutual learning process and come to new insights. In her research, she aims to open spaces for the perspectives and knowledge of all involved, especially people in marginalized positions.

Tineke A. Abma, MSc, PhD, is Professor of Participation of Older People at Leiden University Medical Center, and Professor of Participation and Diversity at Amsterdam University Medical Center. Prof. Abma is also executive director of Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing in Leiden. She is a member of the International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research (ICPHR) and director of the International Longevity Centre (ILC) NL that is part of ILC Global Alliance. Prof. Abma has published extensively in the fields of patient participation, participatory action research, and responsive evaluation. Her work has been awarded for its social value impact. Her new books include *Evaluation for a Caring Society* (JAI Press, Charlotte, US, 2018) and *Participatory Research for Health and Social Wellbeing* (Springer, the Netherlands, 2019).