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### 3. AXEL HONNETH ON ROLE, FORM AND RESULTS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION REVISITED

#### INTRODUCTION

Honneth's recent essays, *Erziehung und demokratische Öffentlichkeit* (2012a) and *Education and the Democratic Public Sphere* (2015) emphasise public education as a crucial organ to reproducing our democratic societies. His arguments defend the necessity of public education against talk of privatisation (Murphy & Brown, 2012; West, 2014) and the claims made in favour of market economy efficiency, while highlighting the importance of democratic education. According to Honneth, democracy needs a democratically-oriented public education. A democratic society is not democratic if public education is not democratically-oriented. Also, for Honneth, free self-realisation and individual *Bildung*-processes are not possible anywhere else than in a democratic society. In this sense the existence of democratic societies and the individuals' *Bildung* are always at risk when public education follows ideals which are at odds with democracy.

Honneth's ideas of a democratically-oriented public education follow mainly from John Dewey's ideas, although Honneth contends that in order to find the theoretical roots for a democratically-oriented public education we need to revive the philosophical tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey. Revival of this tradition against recent tendencies toward privatisation and market values in schools (e.g. U.S Department of Education, 2010; Carter & Meyerson, 2000; criticised by Ravitch, 2012; Masschelein & Simmons, 2010, p. 668) may be crucial, though this idea is only partly developed by Honneth. By criticising Honneth, I aim to explore how he understands the need for democratically-oriented public education. Honneth deals not with specific pedagogical questions concerning how democratic education should be organised in schools, nor with the role an educator and a pupil have in democratic oriented education – nor even with how Kant, Durkheim and Dewey's coherent philosophical tradition offer solutions for these problems. Honneth's educational discussion concentrates more on the current tendencies which threaten and challenge the truisms of democratic ideals in public education. These threaten to undermine the whole moral foundation of democracy, according to Honneth (2015).

This paper elaborates three pedagogical theorems from Honneth's arguments on public education. They are *the role of public education*, *the form of public education*

and *the results of public education*. These theorems are key components in Honneth's (2012a, 2015) articles and serve to ensure some analytic clarity for the arguments concerning the public education which Honneth derives from the tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey. From Honneth's theorems the second – the form of public education – is the most interesting, because by examining it we can get a practical view of how a democratically-oriented education should be organised in schools and the particular problems that could ensue. That is why this third component is the most elaborated in this paper.

The third and concluding chapter of this paper consider the similarities between Honneth's ideas on public education and those of Habermasian educational thought. Schools should produce participants that are competent in public discourses and capable of autonomous decision-making. However, whereas for Habermas it is crucial that democratically-oriented education generates the discourse principles as an inherent part of our identity, for Honneth it is vitally important that democratic society ensure in the first place everyone's personality development. For Honneth, a confident and fully authorised participant in the public will-formation processes develops only in a democratic society that ensures – via its free and equitable public education – a development of healthy self-relations, i.e. self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. For Honneth, an individual's ability to use and understand Habermasian discourse principles depends on the development of healthy self-relations. Thus Honneth emphasises that the prior task of public education is to secure the development of these self-relations.

By closely analysing Honneth's arguments, and armed with Kant, Durkheim and Dewey's assertions, this article offers some clarifications on how Honneth understands public education to be organised in concert with his recognition theory. It is hoped that this discussion, clarifying the role, form and the results of democratically oriented public education, will result in useful pedagogical outcomes and inspiration for our current school systems.

#### THE ROLE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Honneth aims to revive and raise discussion concerning the role of public education following the philosophical tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey. In this revival Honneth uses Kant's (1899) lectures on pedagogy, Dewey's (1980) *Democracy and Education* and Durkheim's (1961) *Moral Education*. The first theorem Honneth derives from this tradition is that public education represents for all of these philosophers a crucial instrument for the self-perpetuation of democracies. These thinkers share the conviction that only public, and equally mandatory, education for all can guarantee reproduction of democratic societies. In his interpretation of Kant's (1899) lectures on education and Durkheim's (1961) *Moral Education* Honneth (2015) stresses that the cultivation of virtues and habits of democracy cannot be left solely the responsibility of parents. Public education is needed for the sake of equality and to guarantee the self-confidence of citizens – citizens who can, and

will, act voluntarily following democratic morality. For Kant and Durkheim (1961, pp. 145–150) it was clear that the demands and interests of parents must not cross the thresholds of school. Kant (1899, pp. 14–15, 20) asserts that public education is necessary to fill in the deficits of family upbringing (“Familienfehlern”): parents were thought to educate their children to merely adapt to the conditions of society regardless how bad the world may be.

Similarly, Durkheim (1961, pp. 18, 145–147) asserts that only public schools sufficiently develop a child’s sense of shared social rules and duties. He argues in some detail that a child developing solely in the sphere of its family, or with only one educator, will learn to become a carbon copy of that family or educator, never learning to develop his or her own independent personality and thinking.

Dewey elaborates this line of thought as well, asserting that democratic society is peculiarly dependent for its maintenance on a broadly humanistic school education. Dewey contends that democracy can hardly flourish when school subjects are divided into two categories: a practical and simple knowledge for the masses and a more sophisticated education given to the few – knowledge reserved for the specialised cultivated class. Schools should neither serve the interests of families, nor the interests of the market economy. To Dewey’s mind, schools must form a productive relationship with ordinary life, developing critical but useful skills and abilities to children. This productive relationship means, on the one hand, that schools take a keen part in life ensuring that the learning is meaningful, not abstract; and on the other hand, that schools choose and distil cultural content by removing harmful influences and reducing inequalities of ordinary life – thereby improving the future of students. Schools produce not merely skills for life, but represent life itself.

Dewey contends that a truly democratic society provides equal access to the common good for all its members. This means that in a democratic society everyone should have a basic income or livelihood, irrespective of their contribution to the common good. The well-being of the disabled and those unable to contribute anything worthwhile should be assured. Dewey asserts that the institutions of a society should be flexible enough to decrease the class differences and improve everyone’s equal possibilities for contributing to and finding a meaningful way of life. Such a society offers an education which encourages individuals to understand the primary nature of social relationships and to learn the required self-control for democratic coexistence, and also the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder (Dewey, 1980, pp. 105, 126, 199–200).

Honneth underlines how all three philosophers agree that the state has the unique authority to coordinate an educational system which will generate civic capacities and the capacities for democratic action. This authority is democratically legitimate when public education is conceived as a joint civic effort to enable all citizens to exercise equally their political rights. Mounting pressures to change the particular role of public schools should be countered with the philosophical traditions of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey. By viewing these pressures through their eyes, we may understand better how harmful the values proposed for replacing democratic values

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in schools might be (Honneth, 2015, pp. 26–27, see the critics of the values suggested, Ravitch, 2012; Masschelein & Simmons, 2010, p. 668, cf. U.S Department of Education, 2010; Carter & Meyerson, 2000).

#### THE FORM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The second theorem which Honneth elaborates on may be expressed in the following manner: public education can only guarantee democratic society when the form of education in public schools is as democratic as possible. Here the phrase ‘democracy needs democracy’ (Carleheden, 2006; Habermas, 1996), or better, ‘democracy needs democratic education’ characterises Honneth’s (2015) position. This argument is much more problematic than the first theorem, because it is easy to agree with Honneth that reproduction of democratic society depends on a good public educational system, whereas we might not be so convinced that education or pedagogic action in schools need be in the form of democratic action, or that it could ever be so. However, a closer inspection of Honneth’s arguments reveals two contrasting pedagogical traditions to which he refers. Kant and Durkheim emphasise asymmetrical pedagogical starting points, whereas Dewey defines pedagogical relations on more symmetrical grounds. By combining these two contrasting traditions, Honneth finds quite a solid basis for democratic education, where asymmetries and symmetries alternate in interesting ways.

Firstly, taking his point of reference from Kant’s lectures on education, Honneth stresses that schools must reproduce democratic habits in their pedagogy – a pedagogy which is directed by humanistic values and the wellbeing of all humankind. For Kant (1899, pp. 14–15) the basis of such a scheme of education must be cosmopolitan, and this idea of a universal good is never harmful to us as individuals. The ultimate pedagogical goal of schools is to encourage children to commit themselves to a higher morality by taking the perspective of the whole of humankind. This perspective should direct children’s lives so that they learn to live without causing suffering to others and would feel compassion for any other person’s suffering. Kant contends that this empathetic attitude toward the whole of humankind is an awakening experience for youth, who begin to understand their global companionship with others (Kant, 1899, p. 20; also Durkheim, 1961, p. 77).

Secondly, Honneth asserts that one hundred years after Kant, both Émile Durkheim and John Dewey made explicit the link between democracy and education. Honneth (2015, p. 27) interprets Durkheim’s educational ideas as stemming from a Kantian tradition, though Durkheim expresses these ideas more elegantly than Kant does. Durkheim elaborates on Kant’s ideas on discipline as a necessary precondition for learning the social rules of a democratic community. He does this by acknowledging the child’s passions and desires, or the child’s “sensible nature”. Honneth claims that Durkheim uses practical role models and playful activities when describing his idea of discipline. Though discipline is central to moral education, it is not a rough moral disciplining or bodily punishment. Durkheim refuses arguments for physical

punishment in schools. Punishment should never violate or cause harm for a child. According to Durkheim suitable punishments in schools would be, for example, setting limitations and allowing only minor roles for a child in his or her favourite plays and popular activities. Durkheim mentions also that criticism towards a child's inappropriate actions without disrespect and humiliation is functional punishment. For Durkheim discipline consists of many aspects that a teacher should master, like understanding, prudence, sensibility, respect for others and a teacher's commitment to his or her profession and to shared moral rules. For Honneth through this kind of Durkheimian discipline a child should initially come to master, first at a merely habitual level, the rules of democratic existence, and then, only later, learn the practices of democracy in a more rational fashion (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 198–206; Honneth, 2015, p. 27).

Honneth's brief remarks on Durkheim needs further explication, beginning with *discipline*. Discipline is the first and most necessary element of moral education for cultivating democratic habits. Honneth asserts that Durkheim conceptualises discipline more coherently than Kant does with respect to the child's sensible nature. This means that Durkheim does not believe that the nature of a child is something bad or negative, needing to be suppressed and ruled by authority. But like Kant, Durkheim understands that there is always an unresolved antagonism between our inclinations and our reason. For Durkheim there is no creature equipped solely with pure reason. Illusion that pure reason would lead to an autonomy collapses into an individual's instinctual inclinations, effectively sidelining that individual. Thus we cannot ignore passions and desires, but these must be in concert with our duties. No one obeys his duties without the will to do so. Bare duties as such not representing freedom, but we need to have the will and passions towards considerate actions towards other people. Durkheim suggests that cultivation of a child depends on a balanced relation between inclinations and duties. This develops when a child is taught to not suppress totally his or her desires and inclinations, but to learn self-control and moderation; a child should not yield without reservations to all of his inclinations and should understand that there is always a limit beyond which he ought not go (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 95–120, 142).

Honneth believes that Durkheim understands better than Kant 'the sensible nature of the child'. The idea of the sensible nature of a child sharpens through Durkheim's (1961, pp. 134–135) definition of a child's nature consisting of two built-in characteristics: *habit* and *suggestibility*. As a creature of habit a child has a natural desire for repetition. A child wants to repeat certain routines and habits, with these routines becoming almost compulsive. Durkheim explains that, for example, children can repeat a certain game indefinitely and like to have favourite stories to be told over and over again. Durkheim (*ibid.*) argues that discipline is needed to grow and intensify this natural built-in characteristic in a way that would develop the child's taste for regularities, or the desire for repetitions, routines and habits, i.e., create a creature of habit.

Durkheim emphasises a child's natural inclination towards regularity crucial for moral development. When a child learns to attach him or herself to something

external, something other than him or herself, he or she will understand practically the bases of morality. Any act that can be considered a moral act must be directed towards something else than the subject's own interests and egoistic aims. This is why Durkheim calls the morality to be taught to children 'impersonal morality'. 'Impersonal' refers to acts that supersede the person's own interests, where the aims of action are targeted towards others. Durkheim's 'impersonal morality' is similar with reciprocal altruism. According to Durkheim a child's natural desire towards regularity, is naturally altruistic and suggestive of 'impersonal morality'. When a child first learns the simple repetitions and routines, he or she later learns to attach him or herself to other persons and social groups similarly as he or she first attached him or herself to simple objects and habits. In this sense Durkheim (1961, pp. 218–219) asserts that attachment to routines is the basis for solidarity and altruism, i.e., morality in general. Honneth (1995, 2012b) explains in his recognition theory a similar intersubjective development of subjectivity, using Winnicott's object relation theory without, however, referring to Durkheim.

Durkheim's idea of a child's built-in characteristic, *suggestibility*, is described in greater detail than is his idea of a child's desire toward repetitions and habits. Durkheim contends that a child is naturally in a psychological situation strongly analogous to that of the hypnotised subject (1961, p. 139). Commands and instructions which work for a hypnotised person would similarly work well to command and direct small children. The educator and the hypnotist must give simple and clear orders, containing no altering options or hesitations. Durkheim emphasises, like Kant, the need for the educator to be an unquestioned authority for a child. Both educator and hypnotist adopt the imperative tone in their suggestions. Although for Durkheim two conditions – desire for regularity and clear commands – need to be fulfilled by the child in his relationship with parents and teachers, the educator needs to be as discreet as possible when using these powerful pedagogical tools (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 139–143).

The reader will not find from Honneth's (2015) descriptions Durkheim's ideas of a child's natural dispositions or *the desire of regularity* and *suggestibility*, while these being 'the sensible nature' of a child about which Honneth discusses. Durkheim's idea of suggestibility and his analogy of a child as hypnotised subject is a somewhat inadequate or outdated characterisation of the child's nature, although the unambiguous commands for the hypnotised and the child might work similarly in some certain cases. Durkheim's educational ideas would be more deserving of attention if three pedagogical elements of moral education, *discipline*, *attachment to social groups* and *autonomy* are examined as preconditions for 'the spirit of associations' in schools, the spirit which Honneth believes is crucial to democratic education.

Firstly, *discipline* is the primary element of a moral education, generating for children the needed impetus for commitment to social relationships. According to Durkheim the school and classroom are like a minor society and only school can cultivate self-discipline for a child. A disciplined class is like a well-organized

society, enabling happiness and wealth where all voluntarily and willingly find their places. Durkheim contends that children are the first to praise the disciplined classroom. Without discipline, the classroom as well as society in general, turns into anarchy; and children, as well as citizens, will therefore be in a permanent state of impatience with all their inclinations. For Durkheim lack of discipline in the classroom is morally dangerous, because agitation is collective. Discipline should, however, be as discreet as possible and pupils' obedience of moral rules should start from a teacher's own commitment to his profession and shared rules. Durkheim underlines that a teacher should be like a priest, where the priest's highest authority for morality is God, but for a teacher it must be impersonal morality, i.e., a global moral perspective concerning the wellbeing of the whole of humankind. While cultivating impersonal morality, the teacher's actions are not motivated by egoism and children understand that moral principles and morality are not personal to the teacher, but something that supersede and obligate both the teacher and the student. The morality that promotes the global wellbeing of humankind is this kind of morality (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 150–156).

Secondly, a teacher should create possibilities for *the attachment to social groups*, which is the second element of moral education. Durkheim (1961, p. 236) asserts that without schools we could never instil in the child a social sense and that schools should never withdraw from this obligation. For Durkheim schools must teach the skills for attachment to social groups, because the human being is naturally social: we cannot strip away all our sociality, for the more we approach the limits of solitariness, the more unbearable our life gets. Unsocial, egoistic and solitary conditions for humans are unnatural. Durkheim defines the important groups we need to teach our children to associate with as family, nation and humanity. Only if these three groups are actively in a person's life he will develop an intact personality (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 43–44, 72–77, 217).

Similarly Honneth (2013) elaborates important groups to which children must learn to associate. He calls these groups the spheres of social freedom consisting of *personal relationships*, *the market economy* and *democratic decision making*. Central to these social spheres are the forms of mutual recognition *love*, *rights* and *solidarity*. The spheres of social freedom should enable learning processes where individuals understand the vitally important the development of an intact personality is. The intact personality development depends on the necessary forms of mutual recognition love, rights and solidarity that we all need to learn to receive and to give. According to Honneth (2012a, 2013) public education has the demanding task to select and transform educative elements from our existing forms of freedom. The forms of freedom should be taught to children so that they learn to understand how social freedom, love, rights and solidarity must be prior to any other idea of freedom, like negative freedom and reflexive freedom, i.e. moral freedom. Thus public education should somehow contribute to improving and to distilling the educative elements from personal relationships, the market economy and democratic decision making.

Durkheim explains that in cultivating the 'we-spirit,' a teacher should use the full weight of his or her authority. This would entail taking advantage of every occasion in the school where children may sense their unity in a common enterprise. For example, punishments and rewards used in the classroom should be accepted by all students; thus Durkheim suggests that punishment should be collective. Collective criticism and encouragement create a general atmosphere of solidarity, which binds students to their companions as the group becomes conscious of its responsibility for the morality of its members. In school a child should become aware that he is working for everybody and that everybody is working for him (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 235–249).

The third and the highest dimension of moral education for Durkheim is *autonomy*. Autonomy should be based on a scientific explanation of morality, or as Durkheim (1961) puts it 'science is the wellspring of our autonomy and thought is the liberator of will' (pp. 116, 119). Autonomy is scientific rational thinking in the sense that, for an autonomous person, there is no reason to admit anything in the nature of things that is irreducibly irrational –for example, the belief that science can falsify. In schools, the practice of autonomy should not start from the mechanical learning of moral principles or learning moral justifications by imitating the logic of mathematical thinking. Rather a child should learn to understand the rationality of rules; a child must learn to sense the moral authority in the rule which renders it worthy of respect. Durkheim asserts that only by this kind of moral education are we able to evoke a sentiment, or ameliorate morality, on which a wide-spread conscience of individuals should be based. Only this kind of public conscience-basing on rational moral thinking can be the secure basis for a democratic society. According to Durkheim, teaching morality for autonomy is not indoctrination, nor preaching, but explaining and understanding the moral rules (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 121–122, 150–156).

Durkheim (1961, pp. 253–255) criticises Cartesian scientific thinking for narrowing all the premises back to the subject and reducing reality to simplistic facts. Durkheim compares Cartesian thinkers to the mathematician who thinks that we can find and transform by our reason all scientific truths in the form of mathematical principles, i.e., Cartesianism is for Durkheim nothing but the attempt to reduce knowledge of the world to universal mathematics. Durkheim criticises Cartesian simplicity representing more faith than science, when assuming that the mind can draw knowledge out of itself only if the initial hypothesis contains that knowledge implicitly. Verification of the hypotheses is implausible and the idea that the facts of nature are conceivable and, once found, then transformable to law-like facts. Rather, children should be taught the history of science, in order to make them see the prolonged processes behind the discoveries and nature in continuous flux. Cartesianism should not be cast aside; it should instead be reformulated as a rationalist understanding that humans may never achieve complete understanding. At the same time, the unknown areas of our understanding are progressively reduced by science and that there are no limits on this process which continues indefinitely (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 260–265).



Morality, as well as society, must transcend the individual subject. They must be something other than knowledge of subjectivity. Durkheim argues that mathematical sciences based on Cartesian thinking cannot offer a path for a scientific teaching of morality, unlike physical and natural sciences with their complex ways of capturing nature. Here is Durkheim discretely approaching Dewey's position by asserting that the experimental sciences serve as a more prominent model for teaching moral understanding than the rational Cartesian tradition. Durkheim proposes that that the teaching of science should not be a repetition of perceivable facts as in the Cartesian tradition, but rather an initiation into the whole process of science, the experimental method and the constant development of scientific results. Durkheim notes that teaching a scientific understanding of morality differs radically from the metaphor of the hypnotised. First, when cultivating the idea of the discipline, the analogy of the hypnotised and the child seems suitable, but when children are mature enough for scientific understanding, they should break the hypnosis with abstract reasoning and with actual experience. Durkheim takes biology as an example, marvellous at showing pupils the complexity of plants cells and planting in their minds the idea that society is not simply the sum of individuals who compose it. The experimental sciences offer a path for the thinking processes where the ideas on society and morality are not conceived simply by following individualistic premises (Durkheim, 1961, pp. 260–265).

For Honneth, it is a natural step after Durkheim to analyse Dewey's *Democracy and Education* to clarify what autonomy in scientific inquiry at the school-level could mean. In other words, the question is how democratic education as a guarantor of autonomy should be organised in the form of 'communal inquiry'. However Honneth's (2015, pp. 27–28) remarks on Dewey are brief. He notes that Dewey has similar arguments to those of Durkheim, though approaches those concerning education from a Hegelian perspective. In Honneth's (2015) discussion Dewey defines public school as a place where the pupil engages in *communal inquiry*. In schools and through the use of *cooperative learning*, students should actively participate in all school affairs. In this way pupils will become habituated early on to acquiring the spirit of *democratic cooperation*, which will allow them in their adulthood to present themselves as self-confident citizens in the political arena. Honneth's interpretations of Dewey need to be extended in those aspects concerning communal inquiry, cooperative learning and the spirit of democratic cooperation.

Firstly, Honneth's allusion to 'communal inquiry' could be explained through Dewey's idea of *reflective experience*. According to Dewey, in a reflective experience we encounter a problem which triggers our thinking. The most important task for schools is to generate suitable problems for enhancing this kind of thinking. Dewey criticises the thinking actually cultivated in schools, where thinking is considered separately from the matter being thought about. Experience and thinking are excluded from each other, and seen as separate spheres of action in schools. Following Dewey, the problems presented in schools are not genuine problems, but, for example, a teacher's problem or schoolbook problems – not the child's own

problems. For Dewey, any subject in the curriculum should be taught in the most non-scholastic way possible and immediately relevant to skills needed in ordinary life. Dewey emphasises that the situations and skills needed in ordinary life offer children something to do, not something to learn. In ordinary life doing compels children to think; and children learn when actually engaged in an action. Theoretical knowledge or any knowledge not applicable to ordinary life has no place in school. Against this context Dewey hardly need wonder why a child should find so many productive problems and solutions outside of school, but not in school (Dewey, 1980, pp. 160–169, 176).

So communal inquiry as reflective experience must begin from a child's own engagement in the problems of ordinary life. Dewey defines five methodological stages in this process to distinguish it from the trivial *trial and error*-method. The first stage is that we are in a state of a confusion, perplexity, and doubt because we are involved in an incomplete situation, the full character of which is not yet determined. This state could be an innovative and creative stage where the material for hypotheses is gathered. In the second stage the problem develops as hypothetical anticipation, where we start tentatively to interpret the given elements, attributing to them a tendency to effect certain consequences. This is causal thinking, where hypotheses are laid down. *Third* we enter into a state of careful survey where examination, inspection, exploration and analyses of the hypotheses are conducted for clarification. Clarification of the hypotheses should valorise all possible angles of the problem at hand. *Fourth*, is the specification of the tentative hypothesis with the aid of the knowledge from the previous analyses, from stage three. *Fifth* is the state of testing the hypothesis, where we plan a course of action based on our hypothesis and apply it to the current state of affairs. For Dewey the third and the fourth steps distinguish the reflective experience from the trial and error method. These steps make thinking properly an experience (Dewey, 1980, p. 157). Dewey's stages of reflective experience recall Popper's (1989) steps in the falsification process, without, however, being as exact a formulation or emphasising falsifiability. However Dewey's fifth stage provides, in turn, a crucial criterion of demarcation between science and metaphysics.

The process of inquiry outlined above is communal in the sense that, with the methods of reflective experience, schools should form productive relations with the surrounding community and society. Dewey criticises schools for not having this relationship and for being equipped exclusively with theoretical knowledge regarding two problems. Firstly the experiences of ordinary life do not receive the enrichment which schools could offer and, secondly, thinking is reduced to the repetition of half-tested or ready-made arbitrary facts. For Dewey school subjects are important as long as they have enriching effects on our lives; a curriculum should be designed in such a way that school subjects would directly enrich students' lives and would also produce materials that inspire pupil's interests.

Dewey (1980, pp. 241, 250) states that 'as long as any topic makes an immediate appeal, it is not necessary to ask what it is good for'. Similarly he quotes an American

humourist by asserting that ‘it makes no difference what you teach a boy so long as he doesn’t like it’. Dewey combines two ideas. One, that school subjects should concern immediate interests and life of children and, two, that if subjects can do this then they are automatically interesting for children. According to Dewey it is useless to ask about the usefulness of school subjects, because some goods are not good for anything, they are just goods. School subjects should have intrinsic value and are useful even in cases where there is only one student interested in them. For Dewey, only instrumental values can demanded the criterion of usefulness and school subjects should not contain instrumental values.

For Dewey, the subjects taught in schools as well as the historically developed information and knowledge of humankind (e.g. scientific discoveries), are significant and useful only if applicable for advancing, revising and improving our social relations and communal life with each other (Dewey, 1980, pp. 160–169, 199–200, 248–250).

Dewey defines three conditions to forming a productive relationship between school and everyday life: (1) Schools should generate the simplified environment that imitates the life of its surrounding society. This means that, schools should filter and select the educative elements from our cultural heritage and transform them into a more comprehensible form for children. Also schools should provide a logical incrementation of growth from simple matters to complex. (2) We should eliminate as far as possible unworthy features in the existing environment and remove undesirable habits. By this, Dewey means eliminating traditions which are unworthy and unethical. Schools execute the critical task of making society more enlightened – not by embracing all existing achievements, but by choosing those which promote a better future society. (3) Schools should also take on the task of balancing students’ environments, where each individual has the opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he or she was born, thereby living within a broader environment (Dewey, 1980, pp. 24–25).

The second issue which Honneth (2015) adopts from Dewey is the idea of ‘cooperative learning’. In his *Freedom’s Right* (2013) Honneth gives an interesting example of this type of learning as a process of *mirroring* where all family members’ should positively mirror and contribute to each other’s self-relations by using mutual recognition. Honneth argues that when playing with their children, fathers and mothers can see the need to regress to their children’s level of development, just as children can be encouraged in their interaction with their parents to experiment with and try out adulthood. This is for Honneth a peculiar process of *regression* and *progression*, where the generations’ boundaries become blurred and through this act of experimental role-switching the uncontrolled element of our nature is briefly relaxed. Honneth argues that children can experiment and try out an adult’s level of development as they become their father’s or mother’s partner in interaction, while parents can free themselves from the biological circumstances of their age by acting as their children’s play-mates. Honneth contends that this de-differentiation works not only in the imaginations of the family members, but also in their practical

interaction with each other. According to Honneth, when we play with our children or grandchildren we can move forwards and backwards in our organic existence as if our external and internal nature imposed no limits upon us (Honneth, 2013, pp. 170–171).

Dewey similarly expresses ideas on *regression* and *progression* when asserting that a child's state of immaturity should not be understood merely as a negative state which a child must relinquish by fulfilling the ready-made standards of adulthood. Dewey even asserts that for certain moral and intellectual purposes adults must "become" little children. Dewey contends that, in the case of specific scientific and economic problems, we may say that the child should be growing into adulthood. However, adults should be growing similarly towards a sympathetic curiosity, unbiased responsiveness and openness of mind which we easily find in children (Dewey, 1980, pp. 47–55).

Dewey defines more precisely than Honneth the role of the educator in cooperative learning. Dewey contends that the task of the teacher is to make a child think; all the teacher can do is to instigate this learning by providing the conditions for stimulating thought and, by entering into a common or conjoint experience with the learner, by take a sympathetic attitude toward his or her activities. Dewey suggests that a teacher should actively partake in the students learning processes; in shared activity the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without necessarily knowing it, a teacher. Dewey goes even further to ensure that less conscious actors are on either side as teacher giving instructions or learner as receiving instructions they are, the better (Dewey, 1980, p. 167). Here Honneth's idea of 'experimental role switching', where the roles of a teacher and a student are unconsciously switching, is elaborated at the school level by Dewey.

Dewey however, seems to acknowledge the problem of pedagogical asymmetry. For him, a teacher's experiences are far deeper and more specialized than a child's. Thus, similar manifestation of educative problems touch not upon both of them. Dewey asserts that because of these differences in knowledge the teacher should not be occupied only by the subject matter, but should be able to make the subject matter match the pupils' present needs and capacities. Teachers should direct children's experiences in the direction of the experiences of an expert or more experienced person by recognizing the natural course of development and offering situations which involve learning by doing (Dewey, 1980, pp. 190–193).

Thirdly, Honneth derives from Dewey the idea of an early childhood socialisation loaded with *the spirit of democratic cooperation*. Dewey contends that establishing this spirit is to make the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity, so that he or she feels his or her group's success as his or her success and its failure as his or her failure (Dewey, 1980, pp. 18). By this Dewey means that when a child learns the emotional attitude of the group, he or she absorbs the groups' ends and the means to gain these ends properly. Then a child's beliefs and ideas take a similar form to those of the group and he or she will, at the same time, gain the same level of knowledge as the others in the group.

Dewey emphasises that this attitude of group spirit is crucial in schools; all elements of public school, administration, curriculum and methods of instruction of the school should be animated by a social spirit. Dewey (1980, pp. 368) defines two conditions that need to be fulfilled in schools to establish this spirit: (1) The school must itself form a community life, with everything that this implies. Social perceptions and interests can be developed only in a genuine social medium, one where there is reciprocal atmosphere. This reciprocity refers to cooperative learning, where each student contributes towards shared goals and promotes the development of the others in the group to better achieve common goals. By simulating the practices of ordinary life, schools should offer interaction, communication and cooperation. (2) Learning in schools should interrelate with life outside of school in the sense of creating within students the capacity to live as a social member. For Dewey a social member is a person who understands the benefits of living in a social group through his or her duties and advantages. According to Dewey (1980, pp. 369) the conditions for a social spirit are not the external skills to be learned, but rather develops through socialisation process where education and school are active participants of social life.

#### THE RESULTS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

We can outline Honneth's third theorem, the thematic of the 'results of public education' by examining how Honneth considers Kant, Durkheim and Dewey, these three philosophers, being convinced of a correlation between cooperative democracy oriented education and the development of cognitive skills and abilities of a pupil. Following these philosophers, Honneth argues that the more democratically oriented a school is the better the development of the pupil's cognitive skills and abilities; or, to put it another way, the more democratic school is, the better the learning results. In the case of Kant (1899) this correlation becomes apparent when examining these 'better results' developing when schools enable the development of self-confident citizens. Honneth believes that for Kant the task of public education is to guarantee a sufficient amount of self-respect and self-esteem that will allow the individual to act as a self-confident citizen of a republic. The layers of self-esteem are cultivated in schools by teaching Kant's 'mechanical skills', 'pragmatic, prudence' and 'moral autonomy'. These skills contribute to an individual's acquisition of various kinds of self-esteem. For Kant, public school should guarantee that every citizen have access to the key good of 'self-respect' before he or she can participate in republican self-legislation as an equal among equals. For Honneth, Kant's three pedagogical elements – professional skills, civic competence and moral principles – represent the generalised media of social recognition which the young acquire through pedagogical processes, making them aware of their worth in the eyes of others. Honneth explains that through technical knowledge pupils gain respect as individuals; through civic knowledge, pupils gain respect as citizens; and through the acquisition of moral

principles, they earn value in the eyes of the human race (Honneth, 2015, pp. 25–26; cf. Kant, 1899, pp. 30–31).

Honneth finds the correlation described above in Durkheim and Dewey's work as well. These authors define three functions of public education; (1) teaching the qualifications for a profession; (2) compensating gaps in knowledge; (3) preparing pupils for the role of citizen. Of these functions, only the last one is crucial. The professional skills and the compensation of differences in knowledge are thought to develop as a side product of the training of democratic dispositions and cooperative action. In Honneth's (2015) interpretation, Durkheim and Dewey contend that pupils should not learn in schools only quantifiable knowledge and individual rules of right action but, rather, modes of conduct that enable self-confident action within a cooperative community.

Dewey (1980, pp. 125–128) expresses a similar idea, arguing that an efficient educational aim creates the capacity to share in a give-and-take of experience by transforming one's experience into something more worthwhile to others. Any aim that enables a person to participate more richly in the worthwhile experiences of others is an effective educational aim. Dewey contends that if democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, democracy cannot adapt the narrow idea of industrial efficiency for its leading principle, but must offer to everyone the opportunity to develop distinctive capacities. Honneth's interpretations become more evident when Dewey asserts that commodities or beneficial results which come with the "efficient personality" are in the strictest sense by-products of education. According to Dewey the problem of 'contemporary' education is that it transforms the demands of efficiency as the inner nature of man cultivating not humanistic and cultural values. This kind of achievement culture which Dewey calls "anti-culture" (Dewey, 1980, p. 129) produces 'cultural' and 'utilitarian' personality types which exist as inorganic composites in modern society. Cultural persons perform the intellectual and higher tasks, while utilitarian persons perform the manual labour or service – working without the possibility for liberating imagination and critical thought. For Dewey the demands of efficiency should be considered only in the context of what one is in relation to others (Dewey, 1980, pp. 129, 266).

Honneth concludes that the result of public education is a learning process where pupils understand what it means to treat their fellow pupils as equal partners in a shared process of learning and inquiry. These are the skills needed for the regeneration of democratic society, i.e., skills for a communicative practice that fosters moral initiative and the ability to take up the perspectives of others. According to Honneth both Dewey and Durkheim see a close correlation between cooperative democracy-oriented teaching methods on the one hand, and pupil's performance at school on the other. Honneth uses the Finnish school system's success in the PISA survey as an illustration of this correlation: the more schools are democratically oriented, the better cognitive abilities and skills are learnt (Honneth, 2015, pp. 28–29).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper analyses two of Honneth's (2012a; 2015) educational writings, which follow three categorisations: the role, form and results of public education. In the first category, the role of public education, this paper brings forward the idea that education is an inherent part of everyone's civil rights. Following the recognition-based theorems, it is generally agreed that everyone has the right to freedom; and that our collective freedom depends on respecting each other's freedom. Everyone must learn not only that he or she has the right to freedom but also the need to respect the freedom of the other. To establish freedom as an inherent part of democracy all persons must have equal possibilities to partake in public education. For Honneth democratic socialization is a public matter and a public responsibility which must be delivered pedagogically in the schools.

When considering education as a basic human right from the intersubjective standpoint, then even the fashionable liberal idea of public education seems to be commensurable with these premises. However, Honneth's (2013; Fraser & Honneth, 2003) idea of social freedom shows that democratic public education should extend further from liberal perspectives by fulfilling four dimensions of equality: *equal entry*; *equal opportunities*; *equal treatment*; and *equal results* (developed from Carleheden, 2006). Freedom is not achieved only with the liberal idea of education, where public education offers equal right to the same education by guaranteeing it to all, including equal possibilities for entry and equal treatment: it should also take into account the less-talented and those in disadvantaged social conditions. Disadvantaged students should have the right to a better education than others, so that public education will achieve equality in the results (see more Carleheden, 2006, p. 535; cf. Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Honneth expresses this idea about equality in different words, when he asserts that all should have equal rights for developing an intact personality and those abilities for confident participation in the public will-formation, requiring the four dimensions of equality granted in public education.

The second theorem – the form of public education – is examined to improve our understanding of how democratic education should be organised if the tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey is to be taken seriously. Honneth's idea on democratic education contains elements from Durkheim's *discipline, attachment to social groups* and *autonomy* combined with Dewey's idea of *communal inquiry* and *cooperative learning*. This article demonstrates how Honneth aims to combine two contrasting philosophical traditions: on the one hand Kant and Durkheim, who emphasise the educator's authority and discipline, offering insights that democratic values are not something that naturally occurs in children or can be left altogether up to parents; and on the other, Dewey's ideas of communal inquiry and cooperative learning which conceives the pedagogical relation from symmetrical and communicative starting points. In the Deweyan tradition, democratic values seems to be something that grows naturally from within children.

Despite these differences, Honneth outlines Kant, Durkheim and Dewey's educational ideas, which actually approach Habermasian (Carleheden, 2006; Martin, 2012; Pedersen, 2015) lines. It is possible to conclude Honneth's educational arguments concert with Habermasian ideas. Both Honneth and Habermas emphasise the skills or abilities for empathy as essential learning task. Schools should teach to each participant to place himself in the perspective of all other persons. Schools should be places where children learn freely the discussion skills where they need to set the arguments and be able to justify and explain their norms and chosen arguments. This kind of 'democratic education' should teach a shared understanding of rational discussion, where consensus is reached on the grounds of the better argument and excludes every form of violence, threats, external influences and unequal right of the more powerful, or the "right of the stronger". It would be an exercise of non-violent conflict resolution in schools. For children it is the process where pupils learn how to convince and to be convinced by the 'forceless force' of the better arguments (Carleheden, 2006, p. 537; Habermas, 1998; cf. Honneth, 2015).

The third theorem of this paper, the results of public education, analyses the correlation between democratic education and the development of cognitive skills and abilities. This correlation can be expressed thus: the more schools concentrate on improving the development of intact personalities, the better the results. According to Honneth, all three thinkers – Kant, Durkheim and Dewey – agree that the skills underlying the development of self-confidence allow us to receive recognition from others and to give it back to them, making us worthy in each other's eyes. When schools concentrate on the task of securing self-confident citizens, the skills needed for various vocations and successful careers are thought to develop naturally and should never be the main task for public education.

The third theorem reveals Honneth's distinctive position from Habermas' own (1996). For Honneth it is not enough that in democracy the discourse principles become an inherent part of our identity, but instead the intact development of identity that should be secured and prioritized. Competency in public will-formation means not only rights and morality, but an intact personality equipped with self-confidence. For Honneth (1995, 2013), Habermas' (1996) procedural idea of democracy, though significant, fails to explain sufficiently which social institutions are responsible for the socialisation process so that a child's competence in discourse would develop properly? To understand and to be fully capable of using discourse principles, citizens need to have an intact and healthy identity. Thus, discourse ethics need to be complemented with three forms of recognition: *love*, *rights* and *solidarity*. These forms of recognition produce three positive self-relations: *self-confidence*, *self-respect* and *self-esteem*. These are the exact self-relations which public education should produce as its output. Honneth (2015) explores Kant, Durkheim and Dewey to find similar ideas.

Honneth (2013) offers more complicated characterizations to democratic education than Habermas. Honneth introduces the idea that democratic education should enable social freedom. Honneth's 'social freedom' consists of the social mediums such as



personal relations, market economy and democratic decision making. When a child's socialization processes proceeds, these mediums of recognition (briefly, love, rights and solidarity) and mediums of social freedom their intact personality will develop and the child will learn competence in public discourses. Honneth (2013) contends that Durkheim (1961) similarly examines socialisation processes leading to social freedom via *family, nation and humankind*. Honneth (2013, p. 254; also Pedersen, 2015) emphasizes that Habermas is not interested in discussing the normative resources inherent in friendships and family or in considering the market economy as normative praxis, but tends to see positive development in these spheres only as a happy coincidence. Honneth considers things differently: that freedom must be at least partly realized in the intersubjective relations of family and friendships before it can be realized in the market economy and in democratic decision-making.

The problem in Honneth's project is that his idea of social freedom in *Struggle for Recognition* (1995) and *Freedom's Right* (2013) is not clearly connected with his recent educational writings. Honneth contends that when the spheres of social freedom and the corresponding forms of recognition, *love, rights and social esteem* are permanently established, then individuals growing up in these institutions will learn in the course of their *Bildung* process to develop desires and goals that can be satisfied only through the complementary actions of others (Honneth, 2011, pp. 313–317; van den Brink, 2013, p. 24). However, this reader finds no mention in either *Freedom's Right* or in the *Struggle for Recognition* what role public education has in this process. Nor do Honneth's educational writings conceptualise how the forms of recognition and corresponding social institutes should be taken in the context of education. Thus, ideas on democratic education based on the tradition of Kant, Durkheim and Dewey seem detached from Honneth's recognition theory and ideas of social freedom. The connection of education and recognition within the spheres of *personal relationships, market economy and the democratic public sphere* needs further clarification to make Honneth's educational ideas more workable and conclusive.

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