Book Review

Democratic education: Comparative book review of two handbooks

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Today, social science research is increasingly organized in transdisciplinary fields. Democracy education provides a perfect example of such an "emerging field" (C, 7). The tension between democracy and education can be connected to a long list of key problems to which more or less established trans-disciplinary "fields of work" or sub-disciplines respond: global citizenship education, inclusive citizenship education, education for sustainable development, environmental education, human rights education, children's rights education, peace education, intercultural learning, anti-racist education, right-wing extremism prevention, moral learning and just community, media education, religion and democracy education, gender issues and diversity education, and socio-economic education. This list could easily be extended. Democracy education seems to be a catch-all term, with open edges and at any time in danger of becoming unspecific.

The connection between "democracy and education", firmly established with John Dewey's epoch-making work (Dewey, 1916; see Horne, 1932; Phillipps, 2016; Waks, 2017), has a long tradition in all political systems that classify their civil culture as democratic. The multiple "polycrisis" of the present, which are reflected on in relation to democracy, have led to a volume of publications on democratic education that is difficult to keep updated. The project of democratic education is booming in practice while simultaneously emerging as an academic field. In this optimistic yet somehow confusing situation, readers may be interested in two recently published handbooks that promise to structure both the scientific and practical areas or, more modestly, to provide at least some kind of intermediate result.

Handbooks are considered a "daunting endeavour" (C, XI), because they aim at nothing less than to provide orientation in a subject area. The first handbook, published by the renowned Cambridge Handbook series, is anchored in the Anglo-American context. The second handbook up for comparison was published by the Wochenschau Verlag, based in Frankfurt am Main, with a wide range of publications in the field of social studies and didactics (civics, history, geography, economics and school pedagogy). At the moment, the latter is currently accessible to users with academic German reading skills only. A comparison might be promising as three internationally highly experienced editors of the Cambridge Handbook currently have their academic homes at universities in "old Europe" (Dortmund, Amsterdam and Paris). They authentically bring in the Anglo-American tradition and "philosophy of education" (*Bildungstheorie*), which has been unfairly marginalized in German discourse on political education.

Editing handbooks on democracy and education seems to be a fairly male domain. The Cambridge Handbook contains 35 articles, written by 54 authors, about 80% male; the *Wochenschau* handbook contains 62 articles by 68 authors, about two-thirds male.

The internal structures of both manuals are similar. In the following comparative analysis, I will start from the *Wochenschau* handbook's structure. Seven thematic "fields" are differentiated, and the four analogous "parts" of the Cambridge Handbook are listed in brackets: (1) Definitions [What is democratic education and why should we care? Philosophical and normative foundations], (2) history [historical perspectives], (3) international aspects, (4) state of research, (5) places, (6) forms, (7) subject-related and conceptual intersections [key topics and concepts; challenges]. The *Wochenschau* handbook concludes with an extensive essay titled, "From Head to Feet. An attempt on the future of democratic education" (*Vom Kopf auf die Füße. Ein Versuch über die Zukunft der Demokratiepädagogik*, W, 771-794) by Peter Fauser, one of the initiators of the funding program on democratic youth engagement and co-organizer of the German school prize (*Deutscher Schulpreis*). In the Cambridge Handbook, an editor's introduction partially takes on this function: "*What is democratic education and why should we care*" (C, 3-9). The Cambridge Handbook provides a useful index at the end, sorely missed in the Wochenschau handbook.

In the seven thematic fields I try to identify trends and to mark gaps which, from my knowledge and perspective, might contain high potential for the future of democratic education and related research programs. For this purpose, I repeatedly determined the frequencies of terms and word combinations in the digital editions of both handbooks; The results returned by the search function are given in parentheses (n=x). For digital readers, it might be interesting to start a comparative journey of discovery themselves. The following comments are comprehensive impressions of my readings, without the very diverse individual contributions being able to be adequately appreciated and discussed in detail.

1.   DEFINITIONS

Conceptual self-assurances can play an important function during educational reform processes and in a field of discourse that is conflictual due to the nature of the subject ("contested" C, n=30). This is exemplified by the German controversy between democratic education and political education, which can already be classified as a historical discourse (W, 154-183). The connection between democracy and pedagogy is conceptualized with different semantics in English and German.

Due to the broad semantic scope of the English word "education", which in German can include both the concepts *"Erziehung"* and *"Bildung"* (Lohmann, 2022), the compound "democratic education" (n=757) dominates in the Cambridge Handbook. The German term *"Bildung"* sometimes remains untranslated (n=20), but with three exceptions these are references to German-language titles. Other compounds are used less frequently in C, including democratic learning (n=1), democratic socialization (n=2), democratic virtues (n=13) or democratic teaching methods (n=17). Combinations such as democratic mind, democratic character or democratic pedagogies cannot be found (n=0). The word "didactic(s)" (n=3) is also rarely used in English. Overall, C sets a clear emphasis on practices of upbringing *(Erziehung)* and related educational theory: "In the first place, democratic education, in its broadest sense, expresses what we hope will result from our efforts to educate the next generation." (C, 4)

In the *Wochenschau* handbook, at least eight "composites with democracy" (W, 36) struggle for interpretive sovereignty in German academic language: democracy paedagogy (*Demokratiepädagogik*), democracy education (*Demokratieerziehung*), democracy learning (*Demokratielernen*), democracy education (*Demokratiebildung*), democracy awareness (*Demokratiebewusstsein*), democracy didactics (*Demokratiedidaktik*), democracy politics (*Demokratiepolitik*) and the process-oriented substantiation democratization (*Demokratisierung*). In terms of science policy, the preferences, frequencies and uses of these composites are linked to different disciplinary networks and paradigms. The title of the *Wochenschau* handbook is based on the "umbrella concept" of democracy paedagogy (*Demokratiepädagogik*, W, n=560), and it will be exciting to see whether this remains the case in future editions or will slide over to *Demokratiebildung*. The more formal term democracy learning (W, n=32) largely replaces that of (political) socialization, which was the guiding principle in the 1970s decade of critical-emancipatory education (*kritisch-emanzipatorische Erziehung*) – a period of educational reform, that is surprisingly only remembered very cautiously in both handbooks. To describe individual cognitive domains, the term *Demokratiebewusstsein* (democratic consciousness) (n=14) or *Bürgerbewusstsein* (citizen consciousness) (n=8) is used, especially by a group of authors associated with the Institute for Didactics of Democracy at the University of Hanover. The composite *Demokratiedidaktik* (n=28) seems to be less common. Important questions of democracy-related knowledge (*Demokratiewissen*, political, digital or media literacy, n=14) remain largely undiscussed. Surprisingly, the term democracy education, more traditional in German and the obvious starting point for Dewey (1916; Gloe & Grammes, 2020), tends to be avoided

by German-speaking authors today (W, n=52). The trend in many contributions favours "Demokratiebildung" (W, n=317) and is diffusely mixed in the spectrum of meaning with umbrella terms like "citizenship" (W, n=366), which remains untranslated, or translated as "aspects of *Bürgerbildung*" (W, 19). "Citizenship" is mixed in the composites with citizenship education (W, n=170), global citizenship (W, n=70) or inclusive citizenship (W, n=27) (see Sant, 2018). In conclusion, in terms of science policy, it seems neither sensible nor promising to strive for a standardized use of terms. This makes it all the more important to differentiate and endure the conceptual tensions in their respective contexts of use.

2.   HISTORICAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Democracy education is structurally tied up in a tension between national citizenship and a cosmopolitan perspective. From a historical perspective, democracy education has, therefore, been a transnational movement from the very beginning. Transatlantic educational travelogues from eastward and westward travellers in search of a democratic school go back to the 19th century (Hylla, 1929). Joel Westheimer, the only author, who contributes to both handbooks, gives a good example of this tradition and contains some interesting autobiographical notes on teaching democracy (W 320f.). The selection of classics in the Wochenschau handbook, including John Dewey and Janusz Korczak, makes a statement that democracy education aims at more than a national enterprise. As "significant figures in the history of political and educational thought" (C, 4) the Cambridge Handbook adds separate chapters to Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore and the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire - the latter being an important source of inspiration for critical education (*emanzipatorische Pädagogik*) in West Germany during the 1970s, even no longer mentioned today in the context of democratic education (W, n=0). In the Wochenschau handbook, four area reports on the UK, USA/Canada, Australia and Austria provide information about the national status of democracy education. The Cambridge handbook does not use this comparative approach (in contrast, compare the structure in Arthur et al., 2008). It is noticeable that the country reports remain largely focused on organizational history, the implementation of formal specialist teaching policy and the accompanying educational policy struggle for adequate representation in school timetables. The reports deal with "development trends in political education in Austria" (W, 293ff.), with the "introduction of citizenship education as a compulsory subject" in England (W, 303ff.) and "Democratic Citizenship Education in the School Curriculum 2010-2018" for Australia (W, 338ff.). In these country reports, the German discourse on democracy education appears to be fixated on its national competitor, the feared enemy "political education". Or that it was an academic proxy debate, as if the controversy, which, according to other contributions, had finally been largely pacified in Germany, had now been relocated abroad. A good example of how the construction of an educational "abroad" has always been used strategically as a national educational policy argument.

Due to the structure of their subject matter, pedagogical problems regarding democracy

can only be reflected on trans-nationally. Democracy education must break through the strict boxes of so-called methodological nationalism. From an educational philosophy standpoint, all students must always feel addressed and included. The formula for inclusive citizenship education ultimately addresses this educational mission of human rights, the ability to generalize and address mankind, and to be aware of the individual child at the same time.[1] Among the classical educational theories of modernity, different educational figures reflect on this, representing specific role models of the citizen: the pilgrim (*Johan Amos Comenius*), the newcomers (*Hannah Arendt*) or the host (*Jacques Derrida*) (Ode, 2022). Learning about democracy is systematically tied up in a relationship between multiple orders of belonging, especially the tension between citizenship and cosmopolitanism (*Weltbürgerschaft*). The relevant curricular program could be succinctly described with the paradoxical formula "Human nationality!" The critical reflection of power questions the generalizability of educational concepts and requires the systematic incorporation of post-colonial approaches in democratic curricula: How can the subaltern speak in the political classroom of a democratic school (Spivak, 2008)? Post-colonial perspectives provoke the question of the extent to which democratic education results in a hegemonic, "Western" discourse, perhaps even an elite project. The Cambridge handbook addresses postcolonial perspectives on democratic education (C, 494-511) as well as corresponding hot topics such as constitutional "patriotism" (C, 377-394). In the *Wochenschau* handbook, the only recently started reception of post-colonial discourses in regard to pedagogical reflections is cautiously reflected (W, 354). Educational policy debates over the representation of voices critical of racism are not visible, which becomes particularly evident in the area study on the USA/Canada, where a global social movement such as Black Lives Matter and Black Studies as a curricular topic are only mentioned once (W, 328). The same applies to the voices of indigenous groups in the country report on Australia (W, 333-346). The Cambridge Handbook keeps much more aware of these debates.

The shift from intercultural education to trans-cultural education is still little addressed. The contribution to democracy and human rights education of the Council of Europe (Reference Framework Competences for Democratic Culture) in the *Wochenschau* handbook provides an important transnational counterpoint to national language "container thinking" (W, 308-319). Is it in connection with this, that the topic of human rights education is only discussed in general and not in detail on a case-by-case basis of individual children's rights? (W, 308-319; 387-394; C, 346-360) Strangely, human rights education and democratic education still seem like two alien enterprises.

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[1] The appropriateness of the attribute "German" has only begun to be discussed in the German Society for Democratic Education.

3.   RESEARCH

Regarding the state of the art of research, both handbooks present predominantly quantitative empirical studies that aim to explain the effects of democratic education offerings within the currently prevailing psychological paradigm (offer-and-use-model) of educational research. One reason for this prevalence may be found in the "handbook" format, which gives only limited space for detailed presentations of educational case studies characteristic of qualitative empirical approaches. In the overall narrative and fluent, mostly pleasant to-read, yet academically demanding style of the Cambridge Handbook, the normative case studies on democratic educational conflicts from the Harvard group around Meira Levinson set a remarkable standard (C, 129-145). Collected from expertise, these case studies have been iteratively evaluated in teacher training. Such participatory research approaches can open up new forms of public science and participatory communication of knowledge. In the *Wochenschau* handbook, the article on sports and democracy (W, 615-634) reports an ethnographic case study ("Jackson") of club football and street football. It demonstrates exemplarily, how even a "handbook" type of text might counteract the trend to neglect "qualitative" studies oriented towards social understanding.

The state of research regarding democratic education mainly focuses on the criterion of "participation" in both handbooks. The Magdeburg Manifesto's[2] set of criteria, which is only mentioned in the *Wochenschau* handbook (W, n=17), displays a broader understanding and adds transparency, legitimacy, inclusion, and efficiency, the latter of which can be easily read as sustainability. Such a broader set of criteria allows a more specific reflection of well-known pedagogical antinomies. In keeping with the usual rhetoric of such state-of-the-art reports, the conclusion is that "it has not yet been possible to establish a topic-related research landscape in the broadest sense" (W, 209) in order to then call for further empirical studies on the effects. "More of the same!" - even that would be an indicator of the successfully achieved standard of a well-established normal science.

Findings explaining social inequality in the education system are part of the core content of democratic pedagogical reflection on social justice in both handbooks. Every reform program in the educational system must allow itself to be questioned from a democratic perspective as to how findings on social inequality are related to participatory forms with respect to the acquisition of knowledge and associated authoritative claims to factual truth in the classroom. How does an "open" learning environment relate to the compensation of social inequality, to disadvantages in political socialization and socioeconomic status? The research article "Social inequality and willingness to participate in politics among young people" (W, 261) contains a short, easy-to-miss passage that refers to three English-language research papers on the effects of an open classroom climate. They contain considerably explosive findings. The first study suggests a positive, compensatory effect. The second study states a negatively reinforcing trend, which in plain language means that open "democratic" educational learning formats favour children from parents

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[2] https://degede.de/abc/magdeburger-manifest/

with an affinity to given standards of school culture - think of wide-spread formats of democratic learning such as service learning, self-guided projects (W, 696ff.), or school competitions (W, 746ff.). The third study weighs the factor of unequal access to schools with an open classroom climate and, therefore, arrives at a typical "as well as" formulation. If the second finding about an amplification effect of "open" classroom climate could claim even a grain of reality, this to him who has shall be given (the Matthew principle) meant a disaster for democratic education and its ample promise(s) for optimization (W, 263). Is deliberative democracy something of an unintentionally and structurally conservative model, effected from the inbound structure of its teaching methodologies? Promoting democracy education would then trigger habitual elements of distinction and flawless classism (ethnography from international "elite" schools Lundberg, 2021). However, classism is not yet a relevant keyword in either manual (W, n=1; C, n=0). Do the widespread "progressive" cooperative, digital and "open" learning cultures at school mean more than a metaphor? Evidence that doing democracy unintentionally may trigger doing (social) difference must be examined through critical reflection of the accompanying optimization imperatives, as well as the underlying expectations on educational impact. A simple "back to schooling" will not be a solution either. If we identify democracy didactics as the crucial gap below, can a reflection of these connections in the classroom compensate for the effect?

4.   PLACES

The Wochenschau handbook explores the potential of a spatial paradigm for democratic education in a separate sub-chapter called "Places" (*Orte*). Using metaphors, the current educational "landscape" is described as a "rich and heterogeneous field" (W, 30), schools as sites of democracy (C, 357), *integrierte demokratische Bildungslandschaften* (W, 787). In the Wochenschau handbook, places are structured both vertically along an ideal path of democratic socialization - from daycare to primary and secondary schools, vocational training and universities, including teacher training and adult education - as well as horizontally as a network of democratic educational "landscapes", described as "spaces of opportunity" (*Möglichkeitsräume*). This axis is linked to opening approaches to school-based social work and intensified cooperation between schools with youth welfare services and various other civil society organizations.[3] So-called "democratic schools" form their own educational province (W, 566ff.; C, 148f. regarding Alexander Neill and private schools succeeding Summerhill).

The German discourse is largely structured by a distinction between three levels of democracy learning: democracy as a form of experience for an individual's way of life (*Lebensform*), as a social form of civil society (*Gesellschaftsform*), as a form of rule

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[3] Other socialization institutions such as juvenile detention centers, the military service or volunteer services were discussed in a previous edition of the Jahrbuch Demokratiepädagogik (2018) with a focus on democratic educational landscapes.

(*Herrschaftsform*). This useful distinction based on Dewey, originally introduced to German discourse by political scientist Gerhard Himmelmann (W, 43-51, not mentioned in C) unfortunately became entrenched in a shortened, container-spatial interpretation only. The three "levels" were mapped one-dimensionally to the expanding concentric circles in ascending levels of education from primary to upper secondary school (see Tables W, 50 and 637), rather than using them as analytical aspects in each educational situation. The Cambridge handbook uses the distinction between education in and education about democracy (C, 149ff.).

As a relatively new player in the field, organizational pedagogy (*Organisationspädagogik*) comes in. This educational sub-discipline addresses the question as to the extent to which it is the "functional systems - i.e., institutions of society ... that learn" (W, 25). Organizational pedagogy is able to address democratic learning on the level of civil society. Spoken in terms of political science, democratic education cannot be conceived without a theory of institutions. In the Wochenschau handbook, this question comes into focus indirectly as the organization of the school workplace through school management is considered a "democratic investment" (W, 558ff.). The Cambridge handbook addresses as "democratic" or "transformative" leadership in schools and elsewhere. The student perspective on their own workplace - the student's "profession" - is discussed under the topic "student agency" (W, 539ff.), and takes up a lot of space in the Cambridge handbook in the context of current academic debates about recognition and identity. What stands out as a gap is that despite the claim to include social work as a relevant field, the central places of human employment, companies and businesses, are only discussed cautiously in both handbooks. A corresponding tradition of the Marxist-materialist political-economic theories of education in the post-1968s, which reflected the transitions between factory work and learning work, appears to have been broken off. This also applies to the respective "forms of circulation" of knowledge. Vocational education is shortly addressed only once in an annotation, with a connection to the Chinese gulag (C, 522). In the Wochenschau handbook, the article on vocational schools misses the chance to discuss the specificities and potential of the German "dual system", the cooperation between companies and schools in vocational education and training. This finding is surprising in that on the company side, educational elements and democratic expectations are embedded in innovative, "agile" forms of work and decision-making, thus creating a new balance between leadership and participation. These topics closely linked to questions of democracy education are intensely discussed in practical in-company training or trade union (youth) educational work, academically in theories of business administration, human resource management, management sciences or sociologies of work.

Another aspect of the connection between profession and learning has not yet been addressed. The question of how democracies and learning can be related might also be applied to the daily work of politicians within democratic institutions - politicans as political educators. Policy research on parliaments, public administration, courts and so on reconstructs the micro-politics of interaction and public communication as more or less

adaptive learning systems. From a normative perspective, democracies draw their legitimation from the ability to learn permanently. Current debates on epistemic bubbles (W, n=1, C, n=5), fake news (C, n=4, W, n=5), conspiracy (C, n=17; conspiracy narratives and ideologies W, n= 9), populism (C, n=82, W, n=24[4]) and other effects of social media and digitalization can be read as a discourse about the democratic quality of the public sphere as a kind of open "political classroom". This aspect applies to studies of collective learning in social movements; Fridays for Futures is often mentioned as an example in the German context (W, n=12; C, n=0). A re-read of classical as well as modern theories of democracy as systemic learning theories could be rewarding: "In the workshop of democracy, we are all apprentices" (Rosanvallon, 2021, p. 351).

5.   FORMS (E.G. METHODS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING)

"Innovative traditions of action and learning" (W, 15) have been constitutive for democratic education from the very beginning. The Wochenschau handbook structures these methods into three groups:

(1) classroom methods of democratic speaking such as deliberation, rhetoric, debate, philosophy with children;

(2) extracurricular formats such as project work, service learning/learning through engagement, self-education;

(3) institutional forms of participation such as student representation, class council, participatory performance assessment, funding from foundations and public student or school competitions.

The Cambridge handbook implicitly addresses such forms as methods of teaching, methods of learning, or democratic methods, for example, in the concise overview of the empirical findings on debates and deliberation (C, 298-310).

In connection with teaching and learning and in addition to the predominant perspective on participation, dialogue (C, n=97; W, n=89) becomes a necessary basic concept in democratic education. Classroom dialogues are characterized through the speech act of "convincing". They differ qualitatively from training and instructions characterized through the speech act of "persuading." As a normative concept, dialogue implies a fundamental openness to its results - a question widely discussed within reflection about what is controversial and what are non-controversial topics. The Beutelsbach consensus is widely discussed in the German context (W, n=27; C, n=0), the Cambridge handbook discusses terms like indoctrination, impartiality, deliberation, controversy, and others. In this normative perspective, dialogue is systematically prevented in political classrooms of so-called "educational states" and authoritarian systems. From a didactical point of view, this causes a natural affinity of education for democracy with so-called "radical" or agonistic theories of democracy; the political theorist Chantal Mouffe (W, n=7; C, n=82) named

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[4] Donald Trump mentioned explicitly in C (n=14) and W (n=8). The Cambridge handbook reflecting populist challenges to Democratic Education (C, 512-530, written by a Swiss-German based author).

frequently as a protagonist in both handbooks. In sum, in classroom teaching and learning, the dialogue might be the more appropriate concept compared to the "high value concept" of participation (Wegerif, 2022). The dialogic pedagogies of encounter and recognition, the oeuvre of Paolo Freire, Martin Buber or Celestin Freinet, would need to be re-examined from such perspective.

A somewhat fashionable concept of "deeper learning" (W, 194ff.; C, n=0; Valencia, Parker, & Lo, 2023) is based on the core didactic elements "voice" and "choice". It seems to be largely congruent with the traditional concept of comprehension-intensive learning (*verständnisintensives Lernen*) and the traditional Deweyian idea of genetic learning. A deep and "sustainable" understanding of meaning can best develop when a subject matter is studied in the process of becoming (cf. Hodgson, Vlieghe, & Zamojski, 2022). This clearly indicates that democracy education cannot be achieved without specific didactic reflection on the "subject matter" and the epistemic composition of knowledge. In this sense, the considerations on epistemic violence, criticism of racism and decoloniality, primarily discussed in the Cambridge handbook so far, should be taken up in more detail. How can the subaltern speak in political classrooms? This question, originally raised by the Indian scholar Gayatri Spivak (C, n=4; W, n=2), can give specific meaning to the criterion of participation with regard to democratic-oriented teaching in the global political classroom.

6.   "INTERSECTIONS" AND THE FUTURE: AN OVERARCHING READING IMPRESSION FROM BOTH MANUALS

"In a handbook of democratic education one is likely to encounter mostly optimistic assessments of the value of democratic education." (C, 550) However, a reflexive democratic pedagogy that claims to have competence in educational policy will have to look self-critically at its own successes. "Intersections" (*Schnittmengen*) is the title of a corresponding subchapter with 14 articles in the Wochenschau handbook, the corresponding subchapter in the Cambridge handbook discusses "challenges" with 10 articles. From a comparative cross-reading, I will highlight five ideas that both manuals reference, although sometimes only in passing. These intersections and challenges might become future foci of intensified reflection on democracy and education:

1) Political socialization - "instantaneous water heaters" for the democratic mind: The rich tradition of Anglo-American political socialization research as well as (educational) developmental psychology is strangely represented only very cautiously in both handbooks. In the Cambridge handbook, prominent researchers such as Lawrence Kohlberg on moral judgment or James Youniss on peer group relations and friendship have no entry (C, n=0). In the Wochenschau handbook, the article "Democratic Attitudes of Young People" promises an interdisciplinary program about identity formation and developmental tasks, addressing disciplinary fields like developmental psychology, socialization theory, political systems theory and cultural research (W, 267f.). However, in the course of the article, this program is not spelt out any more and empirical findings by Jean Piaget,

Lawrence Kohlberg, Robert Selman or James Youniss are omitted. In connection with the practical application of the just community approach, only the stages of moral learning are presented (W, 440ff.). The discourse on political socialization may have been transferred to new interdisciplinary areas such as childhood studies, some of them discussed in the context of democratic preschool education and early childhood education. Could a revival of political socialization research mean a gain for democracy education? The next two points - voting and social education - give examples.

2) Voting act - decision making as learning momentum: An overarching impression in both handbooks is that compared to the deliberative element ("voice"), the very moment of democratic decision itself, the act of voting ("choice"), remains a blind spot. There already is some empirical evidence and evaluation from political science regarding the widespread formats of junior voting and the associated voting applications (stemwijzer, Wahl-o-mat), which are used as educational tools. Elections of class representatives, both on a classroom and school-wide level and accompanying election campaigns could be more systematically researched from the perspective of democratic education (cp. Changqing, 2012). This also applies to the numerous "executive" decision-making moments that arise practically daily, e.g., in the implementation of projects or service learning. The degree of pedagogical freedom for students to have (thematic) choices and say in the learning process (W, 199) remains a challenging question. Some aspects are discussed sceptically as an "epistocratic challenge" for democracy and democratic education (C, 551-573). Pedagogical instruments and models such as the "participation cube" or the "participation staircase" could help to depict the educational process under "the rule of the knowledgeable and knower". Teaching and classroom practice (*Unterricht*) that pretends to be educative (*erziehender Unterricht*) has to take the indispensable and demanding position of "the Third" (matter or object) into account. A graduated, process-oriented idea of participation could help to answer the classic question Immanuel Kant (C, n=10, W, n=28) raised in one of his lectures on education: What is freedom like in the face of coercion? (*Wie kultiviere ich die Freiheit bei dem Zwange?*)

3) Social education - a quest for social intelligence: Quite a few of the intersections and challenges that are discussed today as education for democracy were treated in the 1960s and 1970s under the heading of social education and learning. To the extent that this assumption lays down a relevant lead, it could be worthwhile to revisit these numerous practical and theoretical discourses from the past. In the Cambridge handbook, social education only appears once as the title of the academic journal *Theory and Practice in Social Education* or as a reference to the integrative subject called Social studies in American schools (C, n=11). In the Wochenschau handbook, social learning (*soziales Lernen*) is not systematically presented as an "intersection," although the frequent use of the metaphor of the "social bond" (W, 135) might suggest such a cross-sectional reflection. In the German discourse, social learning seems largely delegitimized as a deficient counterpart of true political learning in a more narrow sense of "civics". However, for democracy education in the post-68 period, the focus was on the theory and practice of social learning

as a natural starting point for any social science education. Key terms like "group" or "role" formed corresponding didactical basic concepts that have conspicuously faded into the background today. Sociology once was the primary discipline of reference for democratic education, if we only look at the West German founding generation around Wolfgang Edelstein, Monika Keller, Lothar Krappmann and others at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin (Edelstein, 2005; Edelstein, 2011). Nowadays, however, sociology seems to have largely been replaced by political science as the primary reference discipline in the field of democracy and education.

4) Knowledge turn - subject matter didactics (didactic of democracy, teaching and learning democracy): Subject matter didactics (*Fachdidaktik*) could be the missing link, which could offer a realistic turnaround of democracy education that does not level out their ambiguities. Concepts that relate more to subject didactics, such as "teaching", "didactics" and (social) "knowledge", are, of course, often discussed indirectly in both handbooks. Nevertheless, they could be included more in the basic conceptual reflection. In Germany, following a recommendation of the 16 federal ministers of education on "Democracy as the goal, object and practice of historical-political education and upbringing in schools" (KMK, 2018, first published in 2009) and subsequent curricular clarifications at the level of the 16 federal states, a wide field of subject matter didactic reflecting democracy as a topic and means of teaching has been initiated. To date, this task has mostly been discussed under the heading of "political education as an overarching principle of all school subjects" (*politische Bildung als Unterrichtsprinzip*). However, the composite term "democracy didactics" (*Demokratiedidaktik*, W, n=21) leads to unspecific references in the Wochenschau handbook, and is omitted in the Cambridge handbook, even "subject matter" mentioned only a few (C, n=8). Just to name a few teaching subjects: (1) History or classical language lessons (Greek, Roman) as a conflictual, "post-heroic" narrative of democracy; (2) native language curriculum, the broad field of rhetoric and debating (W, 661-669) as basic conditions for democratic voice, including the "voice of poetry in cultivating cosmopolitan and democratic imagination" (C, 395-415); (3) foreign language didactics, regarding topics of multilingualism, language diversity and dominant school language, as well as modern "regional studies" (area studies); (4) geography didactics, concepts of climate justice and "earth democracy"; (5) mathematics and computer science, critical statistical literacy or digital literacy. (6) pedagogy as an emerging school subject enables lessons about lessons (meta-learning) and the self-evaluation of democratization at the students' workplace; (7) civics might function as a central and coordinative player in the democratic curriculum.

5) General didactics and curriculum studies - powerful knowledge in a global world: Following this idea, democracy didactics might even move into the vacant position of general didactics (*Allgemeine Didaktik*). In recent decades, general didactics, an internationally widely received "German tradition", and the work of Wolfgang Klafki (W, n=7;

C, n=0) have become more and more marginalized.[5] The concept of powerful knowledge, even not mentioned in the Cambridge handbook so far, might have stepped into this gap (Muller & Young, 2019; White, 2018); the quest for a worldwide core curriculum (C, n=0) or canon, providing a shared basis for communication and understanding in a global world and future of democracy. Didactics, defined as the question of selecting what is worth knowing, has always concerned cultural studies and sociology of knowledge. Democratic societies and those that grow together need a least common multiple, a minimum of shared experiences, narratives and factual knowledge in order to be able to live individuality and pluralism (Han, 2023). In this way, democracy education might bring the question to common knowledge (*Kanon, Allgemeinbildung*), content standards and curriculum studies back onto the agenda.

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[5] Compare the recent project of a digital and open access journal Research in Subject-matter Teaching and Learning (RISTAL), edited by the *Gesellschaft für Fachdidaktik* (GFD) and a group around Martin Rothgangl at Vienna university. The journal aims on the one hand to network subject didactics with each other, to stimulate and enable interdisciplinary discourses, and on the other hand to make the results of subject didactic research in German-speaking countries internationally visible (website: www.ristal.org).

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