

General education. Homogenised education for the globalized world?

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Abstract Societies need to make sure that the next generation is ready and capable to take over in due time, be it in working life, culture, civil society, politics or families. Therefore, society at large and specifically state governments need to assist the efforts of families and local communities. Such provisions have been the basic premise for general educational theories for centuries, when education was often named Democratic and Comprehensive Bildung. At present, this premise needs re-conceptualization, because societies are moving dramatically towards opening up for interactions and relations with the widest possible area: the globe. Many societal challenges have effects across nations, calling for trans-national coordination, management and solutions,—for homogenized and standard based policy making. At the same time, inspiration from multiple sources produce conflicting visions and rival discourses about what the purposes of and the means for education should be.

In this paper we analyze and discuss two contemporary, fundamentally dissimilar discourses on education and their theoretical and societal roots. Our main method is discourse analysis. We argue for inclusion of a global world-view in national education. We shall be critical, however, to the technocratic turn and the homogenization of education *per se* and argue for a *Democratic Bildung* perspective in education for world citizenship.

Keywords Democratic Bildung · Discourses · Globalization · Global Citizenship · Homogenization · Outcomes

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Allgemeinbildung. Homogenisierte *Erziehung für die globalisierte Welt?*

Zusammenfassung Gesellschaften haben dafür Sorge zu tragen, dass die nächste Generation darauf vorbereitet ist und sich auch dazu bereitfindet, zu angemessener Zeit Verantwortung zu übernehmen – sei es nun im Berufsleben oder in der Kultur, in Zivilgesellschaft, Politik oder Familie. Deshalb müssen die Gesellschaften insgesamt und die Regierungen im Besonderen das Bestreben von Familien und lokalen Gemeinschaften unterstützen, ihren Kindern die besten Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten zu verschaffen. Solche Fürsorgekonzepte sind für Jahrhunderte die elementare Voraussetzung für die erziehungswissenschaftliche Theoriebildung gewesen, immer dann, wenn Erziehung als demokratische oder allgemeine Bildung verstanden wurde. In der Gegenwart muss diese Voraussetzung aber neu konzeptualisiert werden, weil sich Gesellschaften dramatisch verändern, indem sie sich für gemeinschaftliche Handlungen und Beziehungen öffnen, die sich auf das denkbar größte Gebiet beziehen, auf den Globus. Viele gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen haben Effekte, die über (einzelne) Nationen hinweg wirken und deshalb transnationale Koordination, Management und Problemlösung verlangen – für eine homogenisierte und auf gemeinsamen Standards beruhende Politik. Gleichzeitig erzeugt die Inspiration aus unterschiedlichen Quellen konflikthafte Visionen und rivalisierende Diskurse über die Zielsetzung von Erziehung sowie die Wahl der dafür geeigneten Mittel.

In diesem Beitrag analysieren und diskutieren wir zwei fundamental verschiedene Diskurse über Erziehung und deren theoretische und gesellschaftliche Wurzeln. Unsere Hauptmethode ist die Diskursanalyse. Wir argumentieren dafür, eine globale Welt-Perspektive in die nationale oder regionale/lokale Erziehung einzubringen. Wir nehmen aber eine kritische Position bezüglich der technokratischen Umorientierung und der Homogenisierung per se ein und argumentieren für eine demokratische Bildungsperspektive im Rahmen einer Erziehung zum Weltbürger.

Schlüsselwörter Diskurse · Demokratische Bildung · Output · Globalisierung · Homogenisierung · Weltbürgerschaft

1 Two discourses on education

In this paper we analyze and discuss two contemporary, fundamentally dissimilar discourses on education and their theoretical and societal roots. In this paper, a discourse is understood as a way of argumentation and structuring of the world often by a specific societal or scholarly community. Such argumentation is based on a set of moral and ethical values or norms that often are not made explicit by the members of such a community and we will in our analyses try and uncover such values.

At present we see two prevailing discourses,—ways in which we can legitimately verbalize or talk about social phenomenon like education. One of the two emerged from the welfare state model (a political post World War II vision) and may be called the “Democratic Bildung Discourse.” Based on works of Wolfgang Klafki (2001) we name this understanding of general and comprehensive education for Democratic Bildung, because the intention is to position children in the world, in democratic

communities and societies in ways that make them competent in understanding and deliberating with other people. Klafki sums the discussion up in these three points: General education must be an education for everybody to self-determination abilities (Selbstbestimmung), participation capabilities (Mitbestimmung) and solidarity capabilities (Solidaritätsfähigkeit); a critical rethinking of the General; and Education as developing all human capabilities (Klafki 2007 [1986], p. 40).

The other is attached to the competitive state (a vision that started to be produced in the 1980s), and we call it the “Outcomes Discourse” (Moos 2017) because the fundamental outcomes of education in this discourse are the measurable students’ learning outcomes. In discussions on education, there is a tendency for homogenization of educational practices e.g. in a plea for general education for the globalizing world.

Over the past two or three decades, we have seen how international competition in the global marketplace has brought a focus on measuring student outcomes. Thus, education seemed primarily to be intended to provide a good position of the country and the individuals in it in the global race as constructed by international comparisons such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). In order for an educational system to be competitive, education needs to “produce” students with high levels of attainment outcomes. Therefore, in the outcomes discourse, education is being constructed along ‘management-by-objective’ lines: The government draws up the aims and measures the outcomes, while schools, teachers and students need to learn to correctly answer test questions. Very often, the curriculum that is developed in this situation has a scientific structure: experts know how to attain their (often political) ends, and they describe every step for schools, teachers and students to be followed in detail. In this orientation, there is a focus on ‘back to the basics’ and ‘back to the skills’, because these are what may easily be measured.

The vision of education for the competitive state is built on a set of core theories: management by objectives and outcomes-based accountability. Proponents of this discourse often refer to parallel theories like scientific management and the scientific curriculum as core theoretical bases (Blossing et al. 2013; Moos et al. 2015). Proponents of these theories are fundamentally concerned with centralizing the power. Also, the scientific curriculum hides the power to decide on the purpose, content, relations and methods of education behind the pretexts of expertise and value-free decisions.

Thus, we present one interpretation of the shift in education itself and in discourse in educational governance towards outcomes based visions. Both the Democratic Bildung discourse and the Outcomes discourse build on a set of core logic and core purposes that are inseparable and at least partly incommensurable: The traditional governance discourse, i.e. the welfare model, advocates democratic equity and deliberation in society and its institutions, while the competitive discourse builds on central management, i.e. managing by objectives and hierarchies. The welfare educational discourse builds on individual authority and democratic participation and deliberation for Democratic Bildung, while the competitive discourse builds on acquiring basic skills for employability.

We hold that the competitive- and outcomes-orientated discourse and associated practices are subject to more social technologies than we have ever seen before in the

history of education and educational theory (Moos et al. 2015). Social technologies can be seen as silent carriers of power. They are made for a purpose—often hidden from the practitioners—and they specify ways of acting. Therefore, they point into a non-deliberative practice steered and managed top-down (Dean 1999, p. 31).

The PISA comparison has been imported into the European space as an important means of governing education (Moos et al. 2015). The programme is a package of standards or indicators for learning, measurements for outcomes and tools for comparing students, schools and countries. This is not unexpected, as a working paper of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows (Wilkoszewski and Sundby 2014).

Both the OECD and the European Union (EU) are working with the global trends to develop a new model of and discourse for governance of education. The central theme is that policymakers and practitioners should build on the quantitative sciences, rather than the traditional, qualitative science of educational philosophy. These processes are called, “The Political Work of Calculating Education” (Lawn and Grek 2012). Statistics become the science of the “numerical study of social facts” and the foundation for the emergence of “governing by numbers” (Nóvoa 2013). That means de-ideologizing and objectifying governance, leadership and education, making it possible to treat social facts as if they were things (Desrosières 2000). Over the past century, this development has been the background for the emergence of a new group of experts in the educational field: experts in statistics and psychometrics. Politicians and policymakers are particularly interested in their work, as numbers are seen to be the best and cheapest foundation for political and governance decisions. This trend is often called an “evidence-based policy” (Tillmann and Baumert 2016).

Such evidence based policy is limited and even risky, because the major tool, PISA, is actually measuring what has at most only partially been taught (Labaree 2014). The OECD thereby reduced learning to the acquisition of economically useful skills—for employability. In order to be able to compare outcomes, a set of aims and skills was produced that is—at the present—nowhere taught as a complete set (Labaree 2014). National tests normally attempt to measure the outcomes of teaching in relation to national aims and standards. PISA, however, was constructed as a tool that could facilitate a comparison of national outcomes across 20–30 different national educational systems. These national educational systems had their particular and often rather different sets of national aims and standards, which only partially overlap: therefore, it was impossible to define a unified set of curricular aims, and that is why PISA constructed its own transnational set of aims: “skills to meet real-life challenges”. These aims are skills that productive workers anywhere in the advanced world would need. Thus, PISA only measures how well schools perform as far as there is overlap between the national curriculum aims and the PISA defined skills. The PISA results might rather indicate how well the national curriculum and the PISA skills are aligned than what the quality of schools and teachers are.

PISA is more governance focused than is usually acknowledged (Lawn and Grek 2012, p. 121). This should however be no surprise, as the OECD is the originator of the neo-liberal new public management system of thinking and governance (OECD

1995). Measuring outcomes, and in particular outcomes along one global set of criteria, is a very powerful technology of soft governance—governance that is not prescriptive, only advisory (Lange and Alexiadou 2007; Normand 2016). As time goes by, politicians, policymakers and professionals become accustomed to thinking that such measurements are the “new normal”. As has already happened in so many ministries and local administrations, we will see a homogenization of views on education, on the dominant discourses of education. This tendency carries the potential for a new, global view and practice of education, that however may also be neglecting national and local politics, culture, world views and education.

Democratic *Bildung* for deliberation has been an important discourse in Nordic and Continental European educational systems since World War II. Although both tendencies, the Outcomes Based education and the Democratic *Bildung* emerged before World War II, they were revitalized and reconfigured in the post war era. Both the Outcomes Based and the Democratic *Bildung* vision on education have long lasting historical roots, but policies and practices have been located in the periods mentioned. The description of the Outcomes discourse is closely linked to the construction of the neo-liberal competitive state of the marketplace. The logic and theories governing this discourse are a good fit with the basic economy and management logic of the general governance. The description of the alternative, the Democratic *Bildung*, is based on another kind of understanding of the needs of societies and agents: we need to develop democratic systems, thinking and practices, in order to develop sustainable societies that are able to survive despite the current dominance of economics and technocracy (Moos 2011b). It is a normative choice, based on educational values and not on economic needs, and it acknowledges that education is normative at its very core, because it is concerned with visions of a human future for children. Therefore it goes beyond economic and technocratic criteria and refers to the very core of education.

2 The core of education and schooling

When we discuss education in a pedagogical way, we often use terms that are related to the purpose of education, rather than to the functions of schools (Moos 2003; Biesta 2009; Moos 2013a). Educational functions are rarely made explicit and the terms we use to describe aims are affected by the educational system being one of the public or state institutions. Peter Kemp therefore writes (Kemp 2011, p. 6) that, as education is part of civilization, the educational system is responsible for socializing (or forming) children to become well-functioning citizens in the society in which they are being brought up. Educational systems have this dual function: on the one hand, they further the optimal development of children’s competence, and on the other hand, they teach them to be effective, well-functioning citizens. In this way, educational systems have always played a part in societal governance, which is about both building structures and institutions to maintain the dominant culture, and socializing citizens to willingly cooperate in this effort.

Educational purposes are reflected in a society’s culture (Kemp 2011), in the formal objectives of educational institutions, and they are examined by educational

theories. As an example, in Denmark the intentions of the educational system are set out in Article 1 of the Act on the Folkeskole¹ (Ministry of Education 2000 [1993], p. 1), which states:

The school shall prepare the students for active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy. (Authors translation)

Given the trend towards a globalizing world in which communities function within a larger environment, European teachers and principals must be aware of the socio-cultural environment and the learning conditions in their own and in other European countries. For students to become competent to function in such a globalized world, they should not only be taught how a democratic society functions at a structural level, i. e. acquiring knowledge about one's own parliament, about the government, the juridical system, police, and so on, but they themselves should experience and live a democratic life: "*A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience*" (Dewey 1916, p. 87). This is particularly important in relations at school. This means that not all methods of instruction and types of teacher behavior can be considered appropriate and acceptable.

This position is backed by educational theory as it has been devised and discussed on the Continent in the historical epoch called the Age of Enlightenment and subsequent epochs which together identify the age named "Modernity", starting in the late 18th Century with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Johann Friedrich Herbart and others. Education basically implies the responsibility of every generation to educate the next generation in such a way that they, the students, become competent to live in their society (cp. von Oettingen 2001).

Children thus depend on their parents to educate them, as they are born into a "not-yet-condition"; they are not able to grow and survive without assistance from the older generations. Humanity depends on one generation of human beings educating the next generation of human beings (Uljens and Ylimaki 2015).

Education includes the acquisition of skills and the development of proficiency, the assimilation and construction of knowledge, and the development of motives and values. It involves what is traditionally called (school) subjects and liberal education, and, in German, *Bildung*. Children must learn to become human beings, and therefore they must be educated so that they are able to function on their own in their culture and society. As these theories were devised in the Age of Enlightenment, they build on a concept of society—or rather, a vision of society—as enlightened and democratic. Therefore, the ideal human being, the goal of education, was the participating, democracy-minded citizen who was willing and able to be a qualified participant in the community and in society as a whole.

¹ The Danish 'Folkeskole' covers primary and lower-secondary education, for students aged 6–16. A brief description of the Danish educational system is found below.

An inspirational summing up of that long time discussion gives Gert Biesta (2009) when he argues that schools should concern themselves with three interlocking functions of education when striving for a Democratic Bildung, as we would call it: students' qualification, socialization and subjectification. When focusing on *qualification*, school emphasizes the students' need for acquiring knowledge, skills and judgement thus enabling them to act in different worlds, be it the working, private, cultural or political one. When *socializing* pupils, they are enabled to become members of communities of many kinds with specific values, norms and behavior. Qualification and socialization are pivotal in education as they enable students to enter into societies as we know them, but on top of that it is important to acknowledge each and every, unique student as they *subjectify*, thereby becoming unique subjects, who acknowledge themselves and who are competent in questioning the society's order of knowledge and community, and who can and should be both critical and creative in respect to the "givens" of civilization (Biesta 2009).

Most educational theories mentioned above were developed within local/national boundaries, national civilizations and cultures in times when nations seemed to be sufficiently independent units for thinking about education and educational systems. However, international cooperation as well as market-place globalization have, over time, produced challenges to societies and cultures that can only be managed in international communities which therefore are in need of educational theories that transcend national boundaries. The next sections will provide examples of such educational thinking.

3 A new global order: The homogenization move

Until somewhere around the World War II period—to put this extremely briefly—nation states were the only institutions responsible for taking care of shielding and protecting their citizens, their property (Pedersen 2011), production and trade by means of the army, the juridical system, policy, and export and import duty. Then the war taught many politicians and business leaders that trade across borders in international or transnational companies boosted economy and profits. They learned that collaboration could sustain peace, security, production and the economy as a whole, and this was one of the reasons that states gradually agreed to form alliances, such as defense alliances, one of which was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and economical alliances such as the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Globalization grew into an intricate pattern of changes in economics and the global division of labor; e. g. the emergence of numerous, huge transnational companies loyal to their international shareholders and able to force governments to shape their financial policies according to market logic. Globalization brought changes in communication, especially because of the internet, including many forms of split-second communication, global mass media etc.; and it brought changes in culture and politics, with only one global political system remaining (Martin and Schumann

1997). More recent areas of global interdependence are the financial market, the climate change and environmental challenges. Governments have tried to meet the new challenges caused by transnational developments by forming transnational agencies or alliances.

One global effect is the trend towards neo-liberal marketplace politics in public governance (with a focus on decentralization, output, competition, and strong leadership), as well as accountability politics (with a focus on recentralization, centrally imposed standards and quality criteria, and on governing by numbers). This trend is known as neo-liberal New Public Management (NPM) (Hood 1991). The influence of transnational agencies, particularly of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), has been very visible in governance and education over the last 20 years (Hopman 2008; Moos 2009; Moos 2011).

CERI, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, the OECD bureau of education is a powerful player in the global restructuring of the nation-states education (Henry et al. 2001). CERI influences by including education services in the areas of free trade, thus transforming education into business (Moos 2006; Pitman 2008). The agency constructs together with other agencies global learning standards and measurements like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). It contains sets of competences and numerous packages of so called evidence-based programmes and best practices. These are 'soft governance' and thus preconditions for treating education and learning as commodities. Stephen Ball argues that we see a shift of perception of social relations as belonging to the sphere of things and production life and thus to the market logics instead of belonging to the social life:

The concept discusses social relations conducted as and in the form of relations between commodities or things. ... In fetishizing commodities, we are denying the primacy of human relationships in the production of value, in effect erasing the social. (Ball 2004, p. 4)

The trans-national influences on policy and practices are not linear and straightforward. Lawn and Lingard (2002) describes them as 'mutually constitutive relations' between distinctive fields, or spaces. They also claim that transnational organizations such as the OECD act as shapers of emerging discourses of educational policy as '*expressed in reports, key committees, funding streams and programmes*' (Lawn and Lingard 2002). The main influence comes from the OECD setting the agenda (Schuller 2006), both within the whole organization—e. g. international comparisons such as the PISA (Hopman 2008) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). This strategy is explicated in the OECD publication Education Catalogue (OECD 1998) as the strategy of 'peer pressure', that 'encourages countries to be transparent, to accept explanations and justification, and to become self-critical' (Hopman 2008, p. 2).

The PISA comparison is a peer pressure technology that builds on a set of common standards and measurements over the whole of the association, all the 90 participating educational systems or countries (OECD 2017b).

Hence the discourses and the attached social technologies are important factors in the homogenization of education all over the globe. This tendency has reached a stage where big multinationals are interested in the education market. The Mer-

rill Lynch-Bank of America estimated that the global educational market is worth 4.3 Trillion \$. Consultancies, like Pearson, Price Waterhouse Cooper and McKinsey, and philanthropically oriented foundations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Hewlett Foundation have become very active to work on developing and spreading educational and governance packages to the whole world, through philanthropy or sales. These institutions are pivotal actors and agents of a global homogenization, making education a similar commodity all over the world and hence supporting downgrading the importance of national and local cultures (Ball 2012; Ball and Junemann 2015; Verger et al. 2016; Gunter and Mills 2017).

Globalization, the move towards a global, neo-liberal market-place, is built on 'The Four Freedoms' (the free movement of goods, capital, services, and labor, (European Parliament 2017)). Education is seen as a service and thus subject to no market restrictions (WTO 2017). That means it is one of the major constructors of new challenges with the intention to open up for the free flow, underscoring the need for rethinking the curriculum.

4 Trans-national challenges

Many societies are however facing many challenges. We shall point to four challenges:

Social inequality is growing in many countries (OECD 2011), leaving increasing numbers of people without jobs, subsistence and hope: a divide of the population in a small, but very rich elite that can use the easier means of mobility on the one side, and a growing group of poor people who are stuck in poverty and no hopes on the other. The Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman coined the description as tourists and tramps (Bauman 2000).

Migration is growing (OECD 2017a), partly because of more local and regional unrest and wars, partly because of growing poverty in third world regions. In many places, this has produced a massive resistance towards taking people in: xenophobia. As a consequence, governments move to seal off the country against the outer world with the further consequence that new, populist and radical political parties are formed, that want to narrow down the culture to a nation-state culture.

International conventions and trade agreements—like the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom (Posner 2014); the WTO; the Inner Market of the European Union;—are being contested (Jones 2015). For example, the universal applicability of the human rights convention is questioned, because it is seen as the outer world's intervention into the 'us' in the nation states. Similarly, trade agreements are under critique both in respect to the European Union (EU) (Kavanagh 2011) as an inner market, as to new ideas about EU-Canada and EU-USA agreements. Recently, the newly elected US president Donald Trump unilaterally cast aside such agreements. It seems that growing portions of populations find the free flow to be too free and dangerous for economics and national societies.

Increasing pollution and climate change are examples of global phenomena that cannot be managed on a national level, but need cross-national collaboration. That is why the concern for sustainable development is wide spread. The report to the

club of Rome (Meadows et al. 1972) and the Brundtland Report: “Our Common Future” (WCED 1987) are still often referred to as milestones in this field.

Together these challenges may explain the changes of political interests in England, shown in Brexit, and in the USA, shown in the election of Donald Trump for presidency, and other forms of resistance movements towards the economic and political establishment in many European countries.

5 To know and to understand

Although these broad tendencies are political, economic, and governmental by nature, we need to remember that behind all of these forces we find people and civilizations as well as cultures, and thus we need to reconsider education to include global thinking and cooperation. We may begin with Wolfgang Klafki (2001) and Peter Kemp (2011). In connection to his theory of the exemplary principle in didactics, Klafki writes about the need to include ‘key-problems typical of the period like peace, environment, social inequalities, need for new qualifications on the labor market, and individual people’s relations to other people. These key-problems can be seen as civilizational and pivotal trans-national challenges that students in our schools must acquire knowledge about.

A further global challenge that points to the relations between national and global understanding is the clash between cultural and national consciousness and global responsibility. We need to find out how students can get to understand the cultural foundations for all of the challenges they will be confronted with: how people in other cultures conceive, understand and describe their world views. We need to intensify the “Conversation between Cultures” (Kemp 2011), and we need to produce multicultural understanding and respect for the deliberations, communication and “better argument.” Jürgen Habermas (1996) writes that education should aim at striking a balance between social equity on one hand and social awareness and respect on the others, so that

[...] gradual elimination of the social division and stratification of world society without jeopardizing cultural distinctiveness. (Habermas 1996a, p. 88)

Building on this line of argument, education and specifically *Bildung* as one of its elements should strive at fostering students’ capacity for deliberation and the better argument as one major aspect of a world citizenship education.

6 General education and global citizenship

At the cutting point between subjects and civilization is the state’s and global need for socializing subjects to become knowledgeable and motivated citizens. In 1976, the Norwegian philosopher Jon Helleenes formulated an often-quoted differentiation between conditioning or affirmative and liberal or non-affirmative education (Uljens and Ylimaki 2015) as two forms of socialization:

Affirmative education reduces humans to objects for political processes which they do not recognize as political; a conditioned human being is thus more an object for direction and control than a thinking and acting subject.

Non-affirmative education means that people are socialized in such a way that they understand the problem complexes pertaining to the preconditions of what occurs around them and with them. Educational socialization thus emancipates humans to be political actors. (Hellesnes 1976; Fedotova 2014).

The ideal of “Bildung” is to educate human beings to be authoritative,—to be confident and in control,—competent and autonomous. This ideal, however, creates a fundamental paradox, which has occupied theorists and practitioners ever since:

How is it possible—through external influence—to bring human beings to a state where they are not controlled by external influences? (Nelson 1970, p. 349)

This has been a fundamental question for all the educational theorists mentioned above, and for many more. We know from experience that children are not able to take care of themselves; they must be educated. Therefore liberal education is an external influence that should somehow be able to bring about an individual’s autonomy. In principle, there are two agents in school education: the child and the teacher, and our question is the following: what are the pre-existing conditions of the child, and what can the teacher do to foster the students’ self-regulated Bildung, their authoritativeness and autonomy?

According to Oettingen (2001; Uljens and Ylimaki 2015), Rousseau, Kant, Schleiermacher, Herbart and Benner point to two fundamental principles in overcoming the paradox: the *Bildsamkeit* of the child and the request for “self-reflection”. *Bildsamkeit* is difficult to translate into English; it means the fundamental, innate ability (and willingness, we would add) to be open-minded and to participate in a shared praxis. The concept acknowledges the child’s “not-yet-condition”—it has not yet become what it is going to be—but it must participate in the educational interaction in order to become human. ‘Self-reflection’ means that the self is able to focus its attention on something in the outer world and at the same time, on her or himself and relate these to each other. This ability (and, again, willingness) enables human beings to act and to reflect on their actions, and thereafter initiate other actions. Therefore, educators should encourage children to engage in self-reflection.

When it comes to teacher activities, Uljens and Ylimaki (2015) write along this line of argument, that two main actions are pivotal: firstly recognition of the child and secondly summoning it to self-activity, that is independent and especially self-determined activity. Recognition means respect, esteem, love and friendship (Honneth 1992), and these qualities are the basis for developing self-confidence and self-respect, and these developments are seen as the basis for learning. Recognition is the quest for summoning to self-activity, inviting the student to become aware of her or his freedom as a cultural and political being with the option of realizing her or his aims. Thus, teachers may need to invite children to act and reflect in ways for which they are not yet ready, much like parents who invite children to walk, even when observation and experience indicate that they may not be able to walk

yet. Focusing on these principles should facilitate the aim of all and any educational praxis, a praxis which is to ultimately render itself superfluous.

This outline of an educational introduction/discussion illustrates the ways in which educational questions have a fundamental bearing on democracy: there is always the question of what kind of citizen a society or a culture wants to educate in the family, in the community and in institutional settings. Therefore, we cannot limit our discussions of education in schools to matters of subject content and curriculum. We must engage in debate on the entirety of school life, the relations between students and teachers, the relations between teachers and principals and their relations to the local and national communities. Such debates can and should be nourished by results from educational research from classrooms and schools.

In bringing educational theories closer to practice, Dewey's writing has been a great inspiration. He writes (Dewey 1937):

What the argument for democracy implies is that the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. Power, as well as interest, come by use and practice [...] The delicate and difficult task of developing character and good judgement in the young needs every stimulus and inspiration possible [...] I think that, unless democratic habits and thought and action are part of the fibre of a people, political democracy is insecure. It cannot stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by presence of democratic methods in all social relationships. (p. 345 f.)

7 Participation and deliberation

Democratic education (Moos 2014) is described by Biesta (2003) as "creating opportunities for action, for being a subject, both in schools and other educational institutions, and in society as a whole". Besides the opportunity for action or participation, the most important concepts related to democracy are critique and diversity, because they give a more precise direction to the concept of participatory and deliberative democracy. In line with our understanding, Beane et al. (p. 7) (Furman and Starrat 2002; Woods 2005) describe the central concerns of democratic schools as:

1. the open flow of ideas that enables people to be as fully informed as possible,
2. the use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems and policies,
3. the welfare of others and the common good and
4. concern for dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.

Pursuing goals of this kind has been a major concern for many educationalists over time. Besides the opportunity for action, participation and deliberation, however, the most important concept related to democracy development is critique; it gives a more precise direction to the concept of deliberative democracy.

If we change the perspective from micro- to a macro-sociology perspective and to policies concerning societies and states, we may be able to shed some light on the micro-sociological analyses. The intention behind doing so is to try to develop links between the trends and intentions in democracies at a societal level, and the

discussion of how leaders and teachers, the professionals in schools, can build the practices in schools in ways that are supportive for the students' Democratic Bildung.

The theories mentioned in the previous section (Dewey 1916; Beane and Apple 1999; Bernstein 2000; Biesta 2003) demand that it is pivotal to give students voice and that this is seen as the opportunity for deliberations in schools. This builds on a notion of a deliberative democracy that attempts to build a connection between liberal and communitarian democracy (Louis 2003). The basis for liberal democracy is described as a special form of governance, where the free individual is capable of choosing his or her self and where this individual pursues his or her own interests and so takes care of his or her own life. Another dimension of this kind of democracy is the protection of the free individual, in that it is given rights and that it can make social contracts. In other words, individuals are seen as autonomous, even if they are part of a community and they have formed their opinions before entering the community. They are not bound by shared values, but the majority votes is the preferred way of mediating opinions and reaching decisions:

A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (Dewey 1916, p. 99)

In social communities, however, individuals are seen as partners bound by a set of shared moral and social values in the communitarian democracy. Values are generated within the community, and may change over time. Dewey's view on education is often seen as originating from a harmonious perspective on the world including a community that wants to reach consensus. Such an interpretation, however, is at least incomplete if not incorrect, because Dewey's focus on social contexts for learning and living show that he is aware of the potential conflicts in social relations. When he writes: "... secures flexible readjustment of its institutions", this probably implies tensions, that is disharmony, that are at the origin of a need for readjustments. Members of a community are orientated towards a set of shared goals, and are conscious of their social bonds that often include disagreements. This perspective is found in Englund and Seashore-Louis:

Deliberative democracies can be considered associations whose affairs are governed by its members' public deliberation (Englund 2006). At least two conditions must be met in this kind of democracy:

1. The individual's rights can be met in that the democracy is representative.
2. Individuals are competent in a high degree of reflexivity and responsiveness towards other members of the community in order to participate meaningfully and constructively in deliberations.

A basic concept in this is the concept of social identity. The position Karen Seashore Louis takes is enlightening in this respect:

Many contemporary democratic theorists argue that the most essential element of democratic communities today is their ability to engage in civilized but semi-permanent disagreement. Articulating a humanist voice that calls for respecting and listening to all positions—but then being able to move forward in the absence of consensus—will be the critical skill that school leaders need to develop when the environment makes consensus impossible. (Louis 2003, p. 105)

A further description of deliberations can be found in sensemaking theory by Weick et al. (2005):

When we say that meanings materialize, we mean that sensemaking is, importantly, an issue of language, talk, and communication. Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence. (p. 409)

The starting points for sensemaking processes are often situations of surprise or astonishment where reality does not match expectations so that there is a need of explanation. The astonishments can,—when first noticed, bracketed and labelled,—act as irritations, provocations to the common sense understanding and thus activate sensemaking processes. This understanding is very much in line with Dewey's pragmatic theory of communication and learning. He understands learning and experiences as communication and as sensemaking processes, where meanings are produced in common, through interaction and participation (Dewey 1916, p. 30).

8 Global education

World citizenship education needs to build on Democratic Bildung in order to capture the cultural understanding of “the other,” and it should include a global world view and the idea of a global community into education, and not to build an education of a global civilization based only on measurement following from PISA. In that perspective, all students in the whole world are supposed to acquire the same set of knowledge and skills, the same competences, and they have to be measured by the same standards and means. This will, if successful, produce homogeneity with no or little respect for local and regional differences of culture, society and economics.

The theoretical or philosophical background for this article (Moos 2013) is a basic understanding of democracy and communication, the communicative rationale developed by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. In his theory of universal pragmatism, communication is seen as being legitimized if it strives for ‘the strange unconstrained force of better argument’ (Habermas 1996, p. 306). This means that communicators aim for mutual understanding and empathy with a minimum of domination in what will, in bureaucratic organizations, always be asymmetric relations. The potential for rationality in communication is inherent in communication itself. Thus, communicative rationality refers primarily to the use of knowledge in language and action, rather than to a property of knowledge.

In order for an argument to work as a better argument, it must build on a thorough knowledge of the content at hand, and about the culture of all partners in communi-

cation, both one's own and that of the other. Building on this line of argumentation, education (*Bildung*) should strive to further students' capacity for deliberation and the better argument as one major aspect of a world citizenship education.

We take the argument further by referring to the American feminist Karen Barad's theory on intra-action (Barad 2003). To Barad, communication and interplays form the agents: they are not fixed individuals prior to the communication. They are formed through communication and intra-actions which they themselves co-produce. Barad hence writes that individuals produce their identity in the sensemaking processes: by being able to recognize themselves as subjects in the communications, in the actual social processes and through materiality. Barad is in line with Alfred Lorenzer (1975) who argues that aspects of socializing environments are bodies, materiality, space and time.

This argument ties communication to education and to identity-formation, which is a pivotal aspect of world citizenship education: It should not restrict itself to cognitive learning, but should include the ways and circumstances, relations and space, in which learning takes place, because citizenship is a cultural and at the same time cross cultural phenomenon.

9 Conclusion

To conclude, we return to the question in the title of this contribution: General Education: Homogenised Education for the Globalized World? Our answer, as will be clear from our discussion above, is both affirmative and non-conforming. In order for future citizens to understand the globalized world they are living in and to be able to function in and contribute to it, Democratic *Bildung* is a necessity everywhere. Thus education worldwide will be in need of common elements, like the typical of the period key-problem as formulated by Klafki (2001, p. 5), in every part of the world. However, given that the challenges which families, institutions, societies and nations have to cope with have all their idiosyncratic, locally and culturally bound features, education will have to adapt to these challenges in preparing the next generation for its future. Thus education has in every school and even every classroom its own fundamentally local ingredients. Teachers, students, principals, parents, policymakers and politicians alike have the difficult task to combine the two different perspectives in the daily life of the classroom, the family and the political arena.

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