The School as a Playground for Educational Friction

Understanding Democracy in Dutch Secondary Education

Saro Lozano Parra
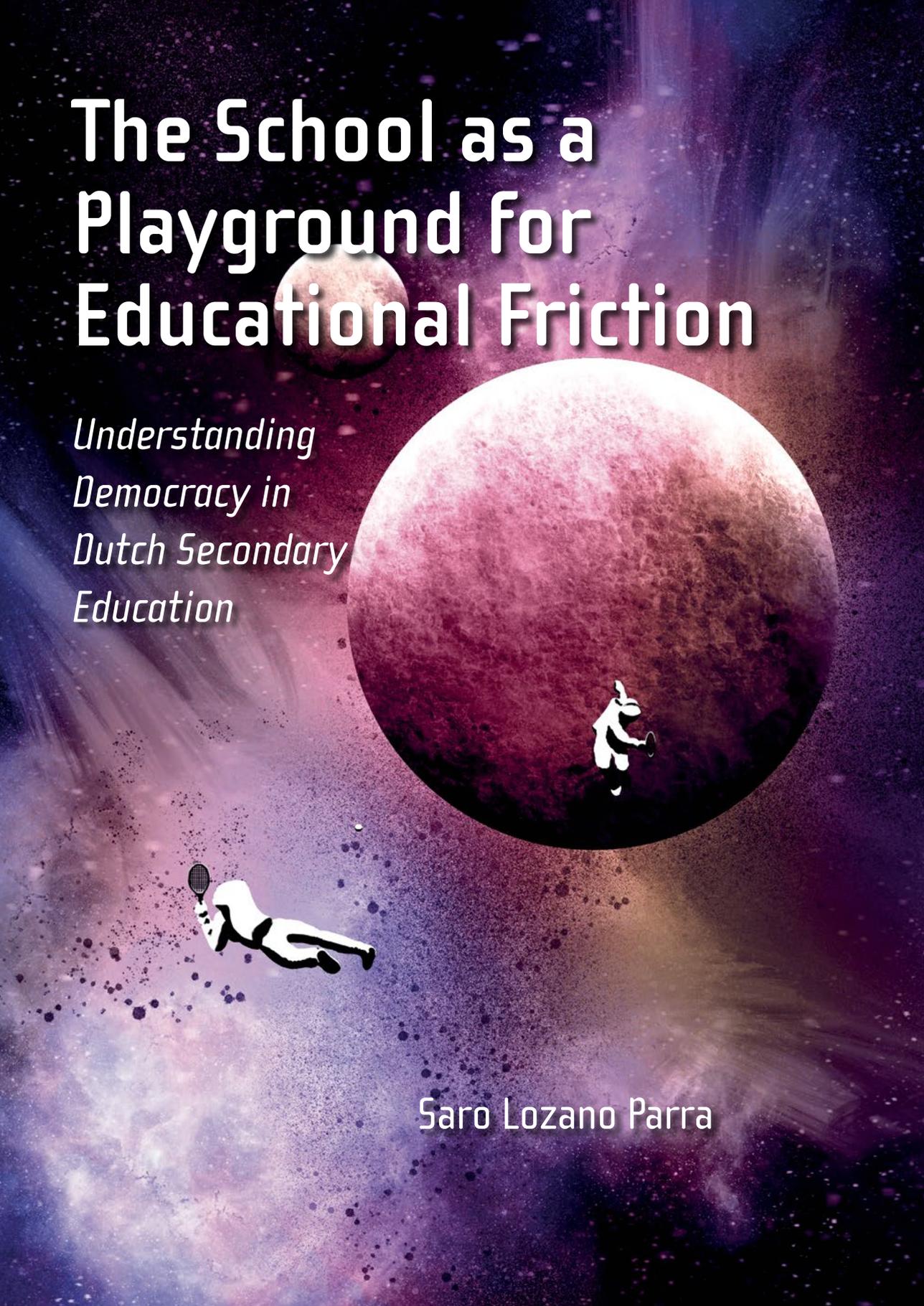
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De School als Speelplaats voor Educatieve Frictie
Over de Betekenis van Democratie in het Nederlands Voortgezet Onderwijs
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de
Universiteit Utrecht
op gezag van de
rector magnificus, prof.dr. H.R.B.M. Kummeling,
ingevolge het besluit van het college voor promoties
in het openbaar te verdedigen op

vrijdag 8 juli 2022 des ochtends te 10.15 uur

door

Saro Lozano Parra

geboren op 8 maart 1989
te Nijmegen

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To my parents

Preface

Caminante, no hay camino.

Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino y nada más;
Caminante no hay camino,
se hace el camino al andar.

Al andar se hace el camino,
y al volver la vista atrás
se ve la senda que nunca
se ha de volver a pisar.

Caminante no hay camino
sino estelas en la mar.

Antonio Machado

This dissertation is the result of an adventure in the land of in-between.
It took me some time to choose the classroom as the place I wanted to
be. When I was finally ready for this new step in my life, I was almost
immediately given a chance to combine my teaching with doctoral
research, which has led me up to this point.

The most difficult aspect of being a teacher and a researcher in the
land of in-between has been the experience of time. Both pursuits did
not stop when I left my desk or classroom. Surely, I will not be the first to
state that this can be stressful at times. However, the real difficulty lies
in the difference of pace: time goes fast at school and one has to think
on one's feet. However, research is the exact opposite: time *has* to go
slow, things have to simmer, and ideas have to grow. It takes time to see

patterns, to construct methods, to build up theory, to write paragraphs, sentences, and words to articulate thoughts.

It took me a while to get used to these two ways of being present in time. It almost felt like being in different time zones in any one week. In the teacher time-zone, I could not afford to wander off, triggered by something that occurred during class that made me think about my project. In the research time-zone, I had to force myself not to communicate with students or fellow teachers, quickly fix my administration, revise some essays, or temper my enthusiasm to prepare that new idea for my next lesson. I had to carefully guard the boundaries to be present in such a way that I was able to do the work.

My second experience in the land of in-between took place in the space between the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social and Behavorial Sciences. Because educational research is mostly part of the latter at Utrecht University, I struggled to find a place where I, as a researcher, belonged. I was the only one among my ten fellow PromoDoc-participants to be accommodated at the Humanities. I regularly felt a distance between myself and colleagues from Education as well as Humanities scholars that was sometimes difficult. To give an example: during meetings with other educational researchers, I had to explain my aims and methods, which they found hard to grasp. Stemming from a whole other paradigm of research, they often took a more quantitative route, studying the efficacy and efficiency of certain educational practices. In contrast, at the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, I found myself in the attic with PhDs who studied nine-century Islamic texts, or ethics in Artificial Intelligence. These scholars understood my hermeneutic aims and more fundamental questions, but belonged to a whole different world in both time and space.

The first years I felt obliged to choose a side, to make a home somewhere where I could belong, and where I would be accepted, but it was an impossible choice. I considered myself both a Humanities scholar and an educational researcher, and therefore, choosing one over the other was not an option. Moreover, I became convinced that I could handle this land of in-between. After all, it was not my first visit. As a child of a Dutch mother and a Colombian father, I became used to being flexible, convinced of the strength and value of being *in motion*, speaking in different voices, translating, and adapting where necessary. Nevertheless, as Zadie Smith writes in her essay *On Speaking Tongues*, multi-voicedness is not simply a gift, as it takes continual effort and

renewal. I think this is valid for both interdisciplinary researchers and teacher-researchers. Gradually I came to recognize that it is truly a gift to be in a position in which relations, perspectives, and contexts constantly tend to shift. However, it can also be tiring. My five-year stay in the land of in-between also made me doubt my choices, my abilities as a teacher, my relevance as a researcher, and the possibility of finishing this ambitious PromoDoc-trajectory.

You could say that my own path was full of friction. Still, when times were hard and I became weary, I always had a place to go: the classroom. My students, their curiosity, their resistance, but above all their trust to be present in learning with me gave me strength and direction. And when I got lost, which occurred more than once, my beloved family, dear friends, and many great colleagues gave me the support I needed to go on, in particular Cok, Lucien, and during the last part of this journey, Bjorn. Slowly but certainly, I discovered that this land of in-between was not only my gateway to learning lots of new things and meeting all kinds of new and interesting people. It could also be the very aim of this adventure of mine. I became more and more at ease as some kind of outlaw teacher-scholar. It did not only sound pretty cool; it was also a good place to be wandering around in. It has allowed me to change sceneries, to seek new places to stay, but also to leave after a while and continue my explorations. It gave me freedom to be *in motion* on my own multi-layered playground. 'Life is metamorphoses', as Hafid Bouazza writes in his essay *Bear in Fur Coat*. Looking over my shoulder at what lies behind me, I have to conclude that this adventure has been exactly what I needed it to be: a journey of learning, taking in both the discomfort and bliss of friction, struggling and ultimately succeeding in paving the way where I found it: *haciendo el camino al andar.*

Chapter 1

General introduction

General introduction

The last two decades have seen an increase in both research and debates about democracy with respect to education. This is partly a consequence of international concerns about social cohesion and the political participation of young people (McLaughlin, 1992; White, Bruce & Ritchie, 2000; Kahne & Westheimer, 2004; Ruitenberg, 2008; Lawy & Biesta, 2010; Biesta, 2013; Straume, 2015; Veugelers 2019). The insight that democratic citizenship does not develop naturally caused a greater emphasis on the role education must play in the development of democracy and citizenship education (Dewey, 1916; Arendt, 1961; De Winter, 2004; Gutmann, 2004; Parker, 2004; Veugelers, 2007; Ruitenberg, 2008; Nussbaum, 2010; Biesta, 2011; McAvoy & Hess, 2014).

Furthermore, because of societal unrest after several terrorist attacks in major European cities such as London, Paris, and Madrid, teachers had trouble responding to pupils who made extreme statements, expressed radical opinions, or even began to cheer when discussing the attacks (Sikkens, Sieckelink, San et al., 2016; Bertram-Troost & Miedema, 2017; Awan, Spiller and Whiting, 2019; James & Janmaat, 2019; Clycq, Timmerman, Vanheule et al., 2019). In the European Union, all Ministers of Education signed a declaration in which they stated that pluralism and non-discrimination should be part of all European education (European Commission, 2016).

In the Netherlands, the government asked for several advisory reports to further investigate how to organize civic learning in education (see, for example: De Winter, 2004; Onderwijsraad, 2012; Curriculum.nu, 2019b). This research started in the context of this renewed attention for democracy education and questions about its implementation in practice. In this thesis, we want to understand the meaning of democracy in Dutch secondary education in debates on 'good education', explore the school as a place to practice democracy while accepting conflict or antagonism as an inherent part of human relations, and study what teachers' practice looks like when they handle friction when teaching sensitive topics.

The Dutch context

To analyse the application of educational policy and innovations in Dutch education from the nineties onwards (such as 'the Second Phase', 'Basic Education', and the impact of 'lumpsum finance' [1]), the Dutch parliament asked the Dijsselbloem committee to evaluate govermental policy, and the practical implementations concerning these innovations. This committee concluded that the politicians responsible for these innovations suffered from tunnel vision, resulting in educational policies without broad support from educational practice (Commission Education Innovations, 2008). Subsequently, teachers felt sidelined when it came to policy matters, while politicians granted too much importance to international rankings (Commission Education Innovations, 2008).

Furthermore, since the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in 2001, the murder of the Dutch politician Fortuyn in 2002, the 2004 Madrid terrorist attack, and the murder of Dutch documentary maker Van Gogh in the same year, concerns about Islam, integration, and social tensions have increased in many parts of Europe. These terrorist attacks and others like them have caused 'shockwaves and triggered anxiety for immediate security risk' (James & Janmaat, 2019, p. 2). Recently, the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security has called for more attention to the far-right radicalization of youngsters between the age of twelve and twenty (NOS, 2021).

In a report commissioned by the Scientific Council for Governmental Policy, Dutch pedagogue De Winter argued for the socialization of pupils and their introduction and integration into the existing political and social order (De Winter, 2004). Since 2006, the Dutch government has obliged schools to promote 'active citizenship'. When educational practitioners such as teachers asked for more specific guidelines regarding this promotion of 'active citizenship', the Minister of Education promised to further outline this aim in 2018. After the murder of French teacher Paty in 2020, further debate ensued about the teaching of sensitive topics in general and the use of cartoons specifically. The Minister of Education consequently decided to speed up the legislative process. This resulted in an amendment of legislation in June 2021, in which the Government further specified the schools' task of citizenship

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1   In Dutch: De tweede fase, de basisvorming, en de impact van lumpsum financiering.

education. The school should promote 'active citizenship and social cohesion', which should be about 'teaching respect for and knowledge of the basic values of the democratic, constitutional state', the 'development of social and societal competences needed to be part of a plural, democratic society', and 'imparting knowledge about and respect for differences in religion, belief, political opinion, origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation, in which all should be treated equally' (Staatsblad, 2021).

In 2015, State Secretary of Education Dekker had constituted 'Our education 2032' platform (Ons Onderwijs, 2032) which was commissioned to set up a societal debate about a future-oriented curriculum. Democracy education and civic learning were main themes of this curriculum which also made them part of the broader debate about good education in the Netherlands. In 2018, the name 'Our education 2032' changed into 'Curriculum.nu', in which several development teams were given the task to work on the aims and ends of nine 'learning areas', including citizenship education.

Three stages of understanding democracy and conflict

This research started in 2016 in the context of the two developments described above. The aim of this thesis is to *understand* democracy and conflict in the educational context. To do so, this dissertation consists of three parts. According to German philosopher Gadamer, hermeneutics requires three *subtilitas*, meaning three forms of finesse or tact (Gadamer, 1960/2013 p. 264). The American religious scholar Caputo explains these three finesses as 'the subtle art of understanding *(subtilitas intelligendi),* of interpretation *(subtilitas explicandi),* and of application *(subtilitas applicandi)'.* As such, these parts are 'an integral part of the hermeneutical process' (Gadamer, 1960/2013 p. 256). Or in the words of Caputo, the subtilitas 'are not three different things but one and the same thing in three different stages' (Caputo, 2018 p. 112).

The first stage of this thesis is the *subtilitas intelligendi*. In **Chapter 2,** we study how democracy has come to be understood in the debate about 'good education' in the Netherlands. This stage concerns 'local hermeneutics', in which the 'inquirer would set out to analyse

existing interpretational practices at specific interpretational sites (communities, educational institutions, corporations, media sites, and so on)' (Gallagher, 1992 p. 333). In **Chapter 3**, we ask Dutch experts from three categories of expertise of educational policymaking, educational professionalization, and educational research, to further grasp the local understanding of democracy in relation to education.

The second stage is the *subtilitas explicandi*. In this stage, we built further on two insights from previous chapters. First, the experts we selected emphasized the importance of conceptualizing the school as a place to practice democracy in order to further understand democracy in relation to education. Second, we analysed how conflict as part of civic learning was absent from the revision of the Dutch curriculum mentioned above. When it was revisited, conflict was mainly described as something that should be 'resolved' and/or 'mediated peacefully' (Curriculum.nu, 2019a). Therefore, we set course to develop a theoretical conceptualization of the school as a place to practice democracy through which we accept conflict as an inherent part of human relations. In **Chapter 4**, we will present the analytical tool we developed, the Educational Friction Modelling Framework (EFMF). The aim of this tool is a dual one: it makes *re*contextualization possible, so different agents can use it to understand their own practice. And it is intended as a framework that could possibly speak again and again to ever new readers in ever new (educational) contexts.

The third and final stage of this thesis is the *subtilitatas applicandi.* It is by application that the effect of what we want to understand is shaped (Vedder, 2003 p. 131). In **Chapter 5**, nine expert teachers were observed and interviewed. We applied our analytical tool as a heuristic lens through which to understand how these expert teachers handled friction when teaching sensitive topics.

Overview

In **Chapter 2** we present our analysis of eleven key documents in which the meaning of democracy is constructed as part of 'good education' in the Netherlands. We purposefully collected eleven key documents and conducted a frame analysis. We used a diagnostic frame to show what is prior to the formulation of democracy, and a prognostic frame to analyse

which meaning(s) of democracy in relation to education have been verbalized within the selected documents. As a result, we found four different meanings of democracy which we used to construct discussion points and questions to further shape our research.

In **Chapter 3** we present our research to further grasp the meaning of democracy in relation to education in the Netherlands. To do so, we used a Delphi method to collect and use insights from experts, stemming from three fields of expertise: educational policymaking, educational professionalization, and educational research. We constructed two rounds: one round of discussion points on which the experts were asked to respond, and one round of open questions to further specify their views. The experts emphasized the conceptualization of 'the school as a place to practice democracy' as the most important theme. We adopted this challenge and made this conceptualization the focus of our next study.

Chapter 4 explores how conflict can be educational if we accept antagonism as an inherent part of human relations in democratic societies. Using democratic theory, narrative theory, and the cultural theory on play as described by famous Dutch historian Huizinga, we constructed the Educational Friction Modelling Framework that functions as an analytic tool to further understand conflict in the classroom, and turn political conflict into educational friction. To focus on educational practice, we will describe the three different components by presenting a case-study from the classroom, i.e. a moment in which a teacher and her pupils were confronted with conflict.

To do Gadamer's tact of application justice, we extended our application from one case study to an empirical analysis of nine expert teachers in **Chapter 5**. They were asked to develop a lesson in which multiple perspectives would appear. Data were gathered by means of lesson observations and semi-structured interviews. By using our theoretical framework as a heuristic lens, we analysed the ways in which expert teachers handled friction when teaching sensitive topics. The study provides insights into how our framework can be used as an analytical tool and presents five emerging themes that appeared in our analysis of the ways in which expert teachers handled friction in their classroom which educators can take into consideration when teaching sensitive topics.

Positionality

This research originates in the idea that friction in the classroom needs to be discussed and re-evaluated. In a democratic society, perceptions of friction, narratives of agents, and the limitations of the playground change over time. Methodologically, it is therefore important to acknowledge that democratic ways of living together, and the educational ways of turning political conflict into educational friction cannot be answered in the same way all the time: historical and socio-cultural embeddedness shapes friction, and therefore it is something that is not static but inherently dynamic, as are the human relations of which friction is an inherent part. To put it differently, reality is constantly debated and renegotiated, and therefore needs to be interpreted. Furthermore, it may be the case that point of views or opinions cannot be harmonised. This conflict of perspectives may have implications for living together in a diverse and democratic society and for the school as a playground to practice democracy.

This thesis has an abductive character, meaning that we emphasize the 'creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence' (Tavery, Timmermans, 2014 p. 5). Abductive reasoning allows 'for intuitive interpretations of empirical observations and creative ideas that might account for them' (Charmaz, 2008 p. 157). This conceptualization of abductive reasoning connects to our hermeneutic aim towards understanding. Caputo presents hermeneutics as 'not a matter of making a presuppositionless beginning but of rethinking the beginning with which we originally began. We argue that interpreting and understanding friction in education 'does not mean beginning with nothing but beginning with the beginning, beginning *again*' (Caputo, 2018 p. 38 emphasis as in original). That is why we do not present an interpretation of the current subjects that cause friction, nor do we explicate the boundaries of what should and should not be part of the school as a playground to practice democracy. Instead, we aimed to construct a 'timeless' tool that educators can use themselves to interpret and understand friction (Caputo, 2018). Furthermore, this dissertation shows the different levels and methods of interpretative research in education. We will come back to this in the conclusion of this dissertation.

We use an informed grounded theory approach with an abductive character (Thornberg, 2012). The separate methods used in the different chapters, respectively the frame analysis, the Delphi method, and our implication of EFMF, fit this idea. The Swedish educational scholar Thornberg formulates this alternative to Glaser and Straus' Grounded Theory method to overcome 'the very idea of a researcher who collects data and analyses theory-free data without any prior theoretical knowledge and preconceptions' in an unbiased way (Thornberg, 2012 p. 246). This more positivist idea of the researcher as a *tabula rasa* that fails to recognize the embeddedness of both the researcher and the data has been strongly criticized by both scientist philosophers (see, for example Chalmers, 1999; Hanson, 1965; Thayer Bacon 1996; 2003) and later by grounded theorists (Bryant, 2009; Charmaz, 2000; 2006; Clarke, 2005; Dey, 1999; Kelle, 2007). Thornberg (2012 p. 245) describes the informed grounded theory as 'a product of a research process as well as the research process itself, in which both the process and the product have been thoroughly grounded in data by GT [grounded theory] methods while being informed by existing research literature and theoretical frameworks.' Pre-existing theories and research findings can be used as *heuristic tools*, as 'lenses' that help the researcher to draw attention to certain aspects, nuances or phenomena in the data, as well as leaving space to 'see beyond the data' (Kelle, 1995; 2005). In our last chapter, we will use the EFMF as presented in Chapter three as a heuristic lens. As such, we contribute to the need for analytical tools to illuminate and understand how conflict can be educational, and how teachers can support the movements of their students in the classroom (Curnow & Jurrow, 2021), or the playground in Huizinga's sense of this term.

Framing democracy as response to neoliberalism in Dutch education[2]

Abstract

This paper aims to understand the meaning of democracy in the debate about what constitutes good education in the Netherlands. The meaning of the concept of democracy in these public debates is divergent and rather diffuse. If teachers, citizens, advisory councils, and the Dutch government agree that democracy ought to be anchored in future education, we first and foremost need to understand its meaning within these current debates. In this study, we conducted a frame analysis of eleven key documents from three relevant domains. The diagnostic frame shows that on the whole the authors of these documents view 'neoliberalism' and a 'culture of measurement' as undermining forces in education. The prognostic frame shows that all authors frame democracy as a prognosis, but with four different meanings: 1) democracy as organizational structure, 2) democracy as governmental policy, 2) democracy as knowledge and skill, and 4) democracy as a practice. We argue that these can be interpreted as four dimensions of a democratic solution, constructed as a response to neoliberal tendencies in Dutch education.

Introduction

Over the past decades, the Dutch Government has called for a thorough revisioning of the Dutch curriculum. This debate revolved around the formulation of 'good education', influenced by the international debate on how to formulate the aims and ends of education so as to justify the role of education in democratic societies (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Meijer, 2014; Bakker & Montesano Montessori, 2016; Ruijters, 2016). The notion of 'democracy' as a key goal of education (Dewey, 1916; Reid 2002; De Winter; 2004; Straume, 2015; Neoh, 2017) plays a significant role within this discussion about good education in The Netherlands. To date, however, little attention has been devoted to *understanding* what democracy in the debate about good education in The Netherlands actually means, and how its meaning is constructed.

The main research question of this project is: what different meanings of democracy as preferred education are constructed in response to the neoliberal educational paradigm in the Netherlands? In this question, there seems to be a contradiction between the meaning of democracy and neoliberalism, as if neoliberalism is opposed to democracy. We will not formulate an alternative for the neoliberal paradigm. Instead, we hope to clarify how this seeming contradiction follows from our analysis of the Dutch debate. In order to answer our question, we will focus on the different meanings that are constructed in key documents we selected from this debate. In order to clarify these meanings, we use concepts from frame analysis as part of social movement theory. Frame analysis is a multi-disciplinary social science research method that sheds light on how to understand certain situations, activities, or messages that agents choose to use to say or act upon, and show why and how they are chosen. The concepts we will use from frame analysis are the diagnostic frame and the prognostic frame (Snow & Benford 1988; 2000, Snow 2007).

We will use the Dutch debate on good education as an example of how the meaning of democracy is constructed by different agents in the debate. In our analysis, we found four key concepts: neoliberalism, the culture of measurement, good education, and democracy. The diagnostic

frame shapes how the neoliberal tendencies in the Dutch educational system, combined with a heavy focus on measuring and ranking data, sets the perimeters for the debate about good education. The prognostic frame presents how democracy is constructed as a solution to this diagnosis, leading to four different meanings of democracy as a desired prognosis that could be a solution to the neoliberal tendencies in Dutch education.

This analysis is both empirical and hermeneutical in its focus on collecting conceptualizations of democracy in the Dutch debate on good education and analyzing the construction of meaning through discourse that is used in these documents. It also contributes to an international debate about neoliberalism and its impact on education (see, for example: Giroux & Giroux, 2006; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Hill & Kumar, 2009; Baltodano, 2012; Sturges, 2015; Brathwaite, 2017; Fitzsimons, 2017; Rudd & Goodson, 2017; Ali, 2019; Grimaldi & Ball, 2019; Hastings, 2019).

In the theory section, we will first elaborate on the Dutch debate about good education. Then, we will clarify four key concepts: good education, the culture of measurement, neoliberalism, and democracy in the Dutch educational context. In the method section, we will present our frame analysis. Then, we will describe our selection criteria and present the documents selected for analysis in this study. In the findings section, we will present how the diagnostic frame sets the stage for the prognostic frame in which four different meanings of democracy emerged from our analysis. Finally, we will suggest further research, arguing that the frames constructed around democracy should be seen as four different dimensions of democracy in Dutch education. These dimensions deserve further research, in particular the meaning of democracy as a practice. This study contributes to the understanding of what democracy means with respect to education by unraveling its complexity as it becomes part of societal debates.

The Dutch context

Because of a multitude of educational policy innovations from the nineties onwards, the Dutch parliament asked for a committee to investigate govermental policy and its practical implementations. Its conclusions were clear: the responsible politicians suffered from a

tunnel vision resulting in educational policies without broad public support (Commission Education Innovations, 2008). As a result, teachers felt uninvolved in policy matters, while politicians granted too much importance to international rankings (Commission Education Innovations, 2008). Moreover, since 9/11, but more specifically since the 2004 terrorist attack in Madrid, concerns about Islam, integration, and social tensions have increased in many parts of Europe. Since then, terrorist attacks caused 'shockwaves and triggered anxiety for immediate security risk' (James & Janmaat, 2019, p. 2).

These historical and social developments kickstarted a great number of published documents and debates revolving around the content of good education. De Winter wrote a report for the Dutch Scientific Council which advocated that socialization of pupils should be anchored more firmly in Dutch education. In 2006, the Dutch government obliged schools to promote active citizenship. All in all, the emphasis on democracy education as part of good education increased due to a concept of education as an institute that is responsible for preparing individuals for effective participation in democracies and society (De Winter, 2004).

Theory: key concepts

In order to answer our research question, we will confine ourselves to the conceptualizations of good education that are constructed in the analyzed documents. The concept of 'the culture of measurement' refers to the rise of interest in educational 'outcomes' over the past two decades, resulting in national and international league tables. These have been used by government to raise educational standards and by scholars to develop 'evidence-based-learning' (Biesta, 2010). For our definition of neoliberalism, we follow scholar of Conflict Studies Demmers (2017), who understands neoliberalism as 'a logic of practice and form of normative reasoning through which the principles of the market are extended to every dimension of human life: political, cultural, social, vocational, educational, public and private.' Additionally, neoliberalism views the state in relation to the socio-economic political realm as a preserver of the free-market economy 'at all cost' (Harvey, 2005).

Democracy, our fourth and final key concept, has been revitalized over the past decades as an important part of education, engaging

educators, scholars, policymakers as well as politicians (Osler & Starkey, 2006; Arthur, Davis & Hahn, 2008; James & Cremin, 2012; Banks, 2017). This is partly because of international concerns about social cohesion and the political participation of young people (McLaughlin, 1992; White, Bruce & Ritchie, 2000; Kahne & Westheimer, 2004; Ruitenberg, 2008; Lawy & Biesta, 2010; Straume, 2015). While these researchers emphasize the importance of democratic education, they are also quite skeptical about governments formulating aims of curricula, to which we will come back in the result section, specifically in the prognosis of democracy as knowledge and skill.

Many researchers have argued that democratic citizenship does not develop naturally, and that education has a role to play in the development of democracy and citizenship education (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 2004; Parker, 2004; De Winter, 2004; Ruitenberg, 2008; Nussbaum, 2010; Straume, 2015). The classical conception of democracy originates in a moral ideal which sees social life as constructed by the core values of positive freedom and political equality (Reid, 2002). This is one of the reasons why the democratic theories of deliberation developed by philosophers such as Rawls and Habermas are often used by scholars and educators (Ruitenberg, 2008). However, democratic theorists such as Mouffe (2005) question this idea of equality of deliberation and have developed an agonistic model which emphasizes the importance of conflict. Other scholars point to the continuously developing nature of democracy (Giroux, 2004; Crick, 2008) and the difference meaning of democracy within each country (Cook & Westheimer, 2006; Zyngier, Traverso & Murriello, 2015). With respect to education, democracy is seen by some as a form of political liberation, and by others, at least partly, as a form of integrating newcomers into existing orders (Crick, 2008; Biesta, 2013). A conception which educational scholars often refer to is the idea of 'the school as an embryonic society', as formulated by the American pragmatist and educational philosopher Dewey (Dewey, 1916; Straume, 2015; Van Der Ploeg, 2016; 2019). In any case, democracy is viewed as something that needs to be part of the educational realm.

Our analysis presents a Dutch case study in which several meanings appear when agents from different fields join a societal discussion on the relation between democracy and education. For this paper, we will not elaborate on democratic theory such as the deliberative model or agonistic model, but will confine ourselves to the meaning of democracy

found in the analyzed documents about good education. In our frame analysis we will present how the concept of democracy, as part of good education and as an alternative to neoliberal tendencies, has four different meanings that all play a specific part in the prognostic frame of democracy as a solution to neoliberal tendencies in Dutch education: 1) democracy as organizational structure, 2) democracy as governmental policy, 2) democracy as knowledge and skill, and 4) democracy as a practice.

Method

The reason for choosing a frame analysis is twofold. First, a frame analysis acknowledges the important constructionist relation between language and reality. Framing is rooted in the symbolic interactionist and constructionist principle that meaning is not something that is naturally attached to certain objects, experiences or events, but rather appears through interactive and interpretative processes (Snow, 2004). Meaning is always embedded in, and bounded by, the broader cultural and political context in which it appears (Williams, 2004). A frame, therefore, is 'an interpretative schema that signifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action in one's present or past environment' (Benford & Snow, 2000 p. 614). By interpreting and assigning meaning to certain events and conditions, agents try to gather support and demobilize opposition (Snow & Benford, 1988; 2000). Snow and Benford (1988) identified three core framing tasks (1988), of which two are relevant for this research: (1) diagnostic framing for the identification of a certain event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need of modification; (2) prognostic framing to propose a solution to the problem and to specify what needs to be done.

Secondly, a frame analysis elaborates on the *discursive* process of meaning making, emphasizing the construction of meaning as a never-ending process, rearticulated, and renewed through temporal, geographical, political, and cultural contexts. It provides insight into this ongoing process of meaning making and enables us to focus on the d*iscursive* constructions of democracy in the debates about the future of education in the Netherlands. Benford and Snow term frames as

'relatively stable referential modes of representation' (Steinberg 1999, p. 739). According to sociologist Steinberg, however, this view neglects the dynamic character of language. Both Steinberg and the cultural theorist Hall emphasize the role of discourse in the shaping of meaning. Discourses are 'ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic or practice, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society' (Hall, 1995, p. 6). The term *discursive* has become a general term used to refer to approaches in which meaning, representation, and culture are seen as co-constitutive (Hall, 1995). These discursive processes take place in what McCombs (2004, p. 89) calls a discursive field. Because different meanings of democracy appear in a discursive, interactive process, this analysis gives us tools to understand how meaning is constructed. We view the debate on good education in The Netherlands as a discursive field in which different agents construct different meanings.

Selection of Documents

This analysis has an explorative character. For our frame analysis, we selected documents according to the following criteria: 1) the documents were published between 2004 and 2018, 2) the documents were written by Dutch agents, 3) the documents were written by teachers or school leaders (educational practice), educational scholars or policy-makers, 4) the document aim at contributing to 'good education', 5) the documents focus on primary and/or secondary education, 6) the documents focus on the aspect of democracy as an important part of good education. Therefore, the voice of the student activist asking for democratization in higher education, leading to the occupation of the administration building of the University of Amsterdam in 2015, is excluded. The voice of parents is excluded from our analysis. In our view, gaining insight into parents' and pupils' views on democracy education is a research subject on its own (see, for example: De Groot, 2013).

In total, eleven documents were analyzed in this study, authored by agents in three particular domains (see Table1). The first domain is Educational Practice, represented by the work of teachers Evers and Kneyber, and Boele (former teacher and educational director). We selected three reports from the second domain Government Work. Two

of these were published by the Dutch Education Council. The third one, titled 'OnsOnderwijs 2032' ('Our education 2032'), was published by the Education Platform and describes a discussion between citizens and educational practitioners about education for the future instigated by former State Secretary of Education Dekker. Our third domain consists of academic work by educational scholar Veugelers (a leading figure on the topic of democratic education and citizenship in the Netherlands), Dutch pedagogue De Winter (author of the report on democracy education already mentioned), and Dutch pedagogue Biesta. The latter's ideas about qualification, socialization, and subjectification as the purpose of education became accessible to a broader Dutch audience with the translation of his work between 2012 and 2016. He views his work as a trilogy that is highly interconnected (Biesta, 2013) and, therefore, we included all three works in our frame analysis.

We are aware of the differences in interests and language used within the specific discourses of these three domains. However, despite their differences, these three domains all interact within the Dutch discursive field of education, and agents within these domains all repeatedly use divergent meanings of the term 'democracy' to diagnose the current state of Dutch education and predict its future. Because meaning making is a discursive process and develops through the interaction of individuals exchanging thoughts and opinions, we do not separate the scholarly discourse from the public discourse. For example, the three dimensions developed Biesta are mentioned and used by policymakers, teachers, and school leaders alike. Reversely, the selected documents written by teachers are often called upon by policymakers and teachers as an example of (democratic) action. Since we want to investigate the meaning of democracy with respect to the future of good education in the Netherlands, we deem a frame analysis of these divergent meanings essential to our research (Table 1).

To structure the different meanings of democracy that appear in the various documents under analysis, we first conducted a close reading of every document (see Figure 1). During this process, we categorized words and sentences used to describe aspects of democracy with respect to education. As a subsequent step, we coded the language used within the core framing tasks, structuring the language used for motivation, diagnosis, or prognosis. The final step was to code the language within

Table 1. Selection of Documents

Educational practice	Governmental reports	Scholarly work
Het Alternatief I: weg met de afrekencultuur. [The Alternative I: Away with the culture of measurement] *Evers & Kneyber (red.)*	Onderwijs2032. [Education2032] *Platform Ons Onderwijs (PO)*	Beyond Learning. Good Education in an Age of Measurement. The Beautiful Risk of Education. *Biesta*
Het Alternatief II: [The Alternative II] *Evers & Kneyber (red.)*	De volle breedte van onderwijskwaliteit. [A broad definition of the quality of education] *De Onderwijsraad (OR)*	Opvoeding, Onderwijs en Jeugdbeleid in het algemeen belang [Education for the common good.] *De Winter*
Onderwijsheid. Terug naar waar het echt om gaat. [Educational wisdom.] *Boele*	Een ander perspectief op professionele ruimte in het onderwijs [A different perspective on professional space] *De Onderwijsraad (OR)*	Creating Critical Democratic Citizenship Education *Veugelers*

the core framing tasks to find generalizations that encompassed the three core framing tasks for documents from three domains. Finally, the findings resulted in the formulation of four different dimensions of democracy proposed as solution to the diagnosed problems. The analysis showed an overlap between the motivational and diagnostic frame. All authors used the diagnostic frame as a motivation for participation in the debate. Therefore, the focus in this article will be on the diagnostic and prognostic frames found in the selected documents, and the ways in which these frames both constitute the meaning of democracy in this debate.

Findings

Diagnosis

The first frame that is used for the core task of diagnosis is what the teachers Evers and Kneyber call the 'neoliberal perspective' (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 8). In their 'Alternatief I' ('First Alternative'), they argue

Figure 1. Frame analysis
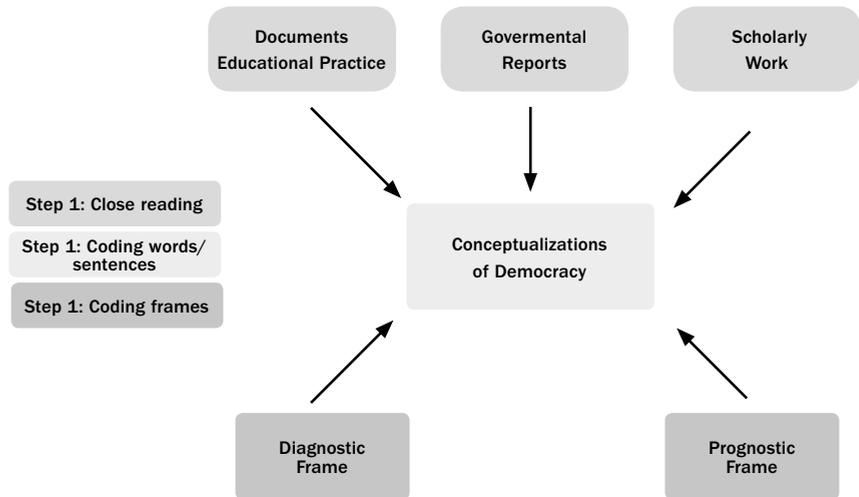
that neoliberalism sees education as a free market with a competitive character and top-down control, with teachers as instruments rather than professionals (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 8). In their sequel 'Alternatief II' ('Second Alternative'), they argue that neo-liberalism in Dutch education is a 'disaster' partly because it 'leads to a culture of performativity' (Evers & Kneyber, 2015a, p. 136). In addition, their diagnosis stresses that teachers lack agency and are incapable of using the liberty Dutch educational law gives them. They argue that this lack of agency is a direct result of a structural problem in the Dutch educational system, caused by neoliberal educational policy. According to Evers & Kneyber, a 'democratization' of Dutch education might be a solution to these structural problems (Evers & Kneyber, 2015a, p. 138).

Boele also argues that neoliberalism is a source of the problem and calls it 'the latest mutation of feasibility' (Boele, 2016, p. 15). In his opinion, economic growth as a criterion for relevance and a strong focus on training for the professional job market have foregrounded measurable results and have caused a lack of direction in education (Boele, 2016). A comparable line of thinking is present in Biesta's work. He claims that 'the neoliberal ideology' is responsible for a 'technical-managerial approach of accountability in education, wherein people only do what they are held accountable for by their superior' (Biesta, 2010).

This development has led to a redefining of educational relations into economic terms, assuming that with accountability comes responsibility and the belief that a consumer role will give parents and students more power (Biesta, 2006).

Rather than diagnosing neoliberalism as a problem in education, governmental reports verbalize their diagnoses in terms of vertical versus horizontal control. The Dutch Education Council sees vertical control as a useful tool to guarantee the quality of education but also writes that the Netherlands has an overly strong focus on this type of control. It dominates the organizational structure of Dutch education and is generally based on managerial logic. The Council states that this logic foregrounds the competency of individual teachers, even though structure (the organizational environment) and culture (the ambiance of the environment) are equally important in their view (OR, 2016b). According to the Council, all of this could lead to an alienation of teachers, to a reduction of their drive and motivations, and to an exaggeration of accountability (OR, 2016b, p. 21). The Council also points to the fragmented, narrow focus on professional space and its top-down character which does make this diagnosis partly similar to the criticism of neoliberalism mentioned above (OR, 2016b, p. 17).

Moreover, all domains make 'a culture of measurement' part of their diagnoses (Biesta, 2010, p. 10; Boele, 2016, pp. 105-107; Evers & Kneyber 2013, p. 8). This is interesting because this 'culture of measurements' contradicts the understanding of democratization as related to a certain freedom of the teacher. This becomes clear when they indicate three problems linked to this 'culture': growing bureaucratization, a growing importance of rankings, marks, and figures, and tightening frameworks of protocols and procedures (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 9). They state that it has caused 'the growth of bureaucratic accountability and a decrease of bottom-up responsibility in the educational practice' (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 9). They argue that teachers are expected to follow protocols to the letter, which is precisely why they lack the autonomy to change priorities. As a consequence, many teachers only feel responsible for the things they are supposed to do according to their superiors (Evers & Kneyber, 2013 p. 273). Boele takes the perspective of the director, stating that managing education is insufficient when it merely builds upon indicators, rankings, and protocols, and emphasizes measurable results (Boele, 2016).

Biesta also blames the culture of measurement for the disappearance of the subject of purpose in education. Discourses about effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability in education have replaced 'the question what education is *for*' (Biesta, 2010, p. 3, emphasis as in original)*.* As a consequence, the limited discourse about effectiveness and efficiency gave rise to an interest in the improvement and analysis of education by measuring educational data, such as exam results and other success rates. This in its turn has resulted in international tables and rankings used by national governments for policymaking (Biesta, 2010). The large quantity of data gave the impression that decisions about the direction of 'the policy and form of educational practice can be based *solely* on factual information' (Biesta, 2006, p. 12 emphasis as in original). This has led to a performative culture in which means become ends and targets and indicators of quality are mistaken for quality itself, Biesta claims.

Thus, the terms 'neoliberalism' and 'the culture of measurement' relate to an economized perspective on education that is problematic when it comes to good education according to the documents we have analyzed so far. These forces undermine current Dutch education and lead to problems that need modification. For example, teachers Kneyber and Evers call for action and change, stressing 'the need for an alternative for the culture of measurement' (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 269). They do not want to wait for government intervention, as they find it important that teachers reclaim their autonomy and take the first steps in the 'resistance against the culture of measurement' (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 9). In our view, the diagnostic frames of neoliberalism and the culture of measurement which all documents refer to, function as a counter-terminology, empowering the prognostic frame in which democracy is presented as a solution to the problems sketched above. At this point we will take the next step in our frame analysis, from the diagnostic framing task discussed above to the prognostic core framing tasks.

Prognosis I: Democracy as an Organizational Structure

The first meaning of 'democracy' in an educational context refers to the organizational structure of schools and the role of different actors, such as teachers, school leaders, and management. Evers and Kneyber aspire to radical change by 'flipping the system'*,* changing top-down

accountability into bottom-up responsibility, encouraging a system in which teachers are the leading pawns in the educational structure (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 270). This bottom-up system would lead to what they call 'collective autonomy', i.e. teachers taking control (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 270). Therefore, Evers and Kneyber's prognosis presents democracy as an organizational structure. According to them, this would enable good education, and is therefore an alternative to the culture of measurement and the neoliberalist organization of education (Evers & Kneyber, 2013, p. 270). Teachers would be fully responsible for education; other organizational layers would serve them and be accountable to them. The authors encourage teachers to step up and demand ownership to search for ways to utilize the space schools already offer. Evers and Kneyber conclude their first book by paraphrasing Biesta, stating that 'it is time to embrace the beautiful risk of education' (Biesta, 2013, p. 140; Evers & Kneyber, 2013, 275).

In their second book, they conclude that despite their best efforts, there is still a lack of action among teachers. This is the reason why they shift their prognosis from collective autonomy to professionalization. They even state that they no longer believe that improving Dutch education is dependent upon a further increase of an already available teacher autonomy (Evers & Kneyber, 2015, p. 14). Alternatively, the question whether teachers are capable of *using* this autonomy and freedom seems far more relevant to them.

In his prognosis, Boele also frames democracy as an organizational structure. To enable good education, 'a culture of quality' is necessary, meaning a 'systematic orientation on content, professional autonomy, responsibility and ambience' (Boele, 2016, p. 116). The content of education should be developed collectively, with contributions from all stakeholders, stimulated by school leaders. In addition, Boele is skeptical about a flat organization. He states that 'hierarchies have existed for thousands of years and have proven their value throughout this time' (Boele, 2016, p. 130).

The Education Council also stresses democracy as an organizational structure in its report about the quality of education. The report emphasizes working in teams, as this cooperation offers social support, social control, and responsibility (OR, 2016b, p. 18). This would lead to a reduction of vertical control and to the government taking up a stimulating and facilitating role – discussed in more detail below. To

enable educational work in teams, school leaders should create a culture and structure that is supportive, and teachers should have an active attitude to achieving agency. This restructuring of relations between teachers and school leaders asks for a 'democratic attitude' from teachers, meaning a professional position-taking to enable working together in teams, and making shared decisions (OR, 2016b). To create such agency, a certain amount of freedom without interference from government or school leaders is necessary, the Council claims (OR, 2016b).

Prognosis II: Democracy as Governmental Policy

Apart from emphasizing a 'democratic attitude' to restructuring relations, the Education Council also formulates another meaning of democracy that functions as part of a prognosis frame. Democracy as governmental policy entails the relationship between the educational field and the government, and the way in which this relationship is structured. It focuses on the power relations between different agents in the educational field, verbalized as the balance between vertical and horizontal control (OR, 2016b). When it comes to the quality of education, the Council deems vertical control executed by school leaders necessary. In fact, the Council advises the government to take more initiative, set out the principle guidelines, and ask for a larger professional input from schools (OR, 2016a).

At the same time, however, the Council argues that this vertical structure should be primarily aimed at strengthening horizontal control by using more instruments that emphasize informal rules and personal motivation to achieve a more equal form of communication regarding the quality of education (OR, 2016b, p. 33). According to the Council, this horizontal control will lead to an increase in agency and trust between teachers and school leaders, which will in turn lead to a decrease in the need for vertical control, because control takes place, not through formally stated power positions, but through an informal relation of stimulation and limitation (OR, 2016b, p. 33).

Prognosis III: Democracy as Knowledge and Skill

The third meaning of democracy encompasses the teaching of knowledge about democracy and democratic skills to children and students so

that they can become well-informed democratic citizens. In this type of prognosis frame, democracy functions as a curriculum-based solution that needs to be part of the content of future education. According to the Education Platform (PO), schools, teachers, and school leaders are responsible for constructing educational practice and giving meaning to it, rethinking curricula and goals on a national scale every year (PO, 2016, p. 16). One important facet of the Dutch educational curriculum should be a subject called 'burgerschapsvorming', best translated as citizenship education. According to the Education Platform, it is the task and responsibility of every school to teach children how to function in a democratic state. In a globalizing world and an increasingly multicultural society, the report argues, the teaching of democratic skills and knowledge is of utter importance. Keeping the core values of democracy alive is an educational task, together with the promotion of knowledge about the rule of law (PO, 2016, p. 36). Veugelers (2007, p. 107) analyzed postwar Dutch legislation on citizenship education and distinguished three types of citizenship:

- *adapting citizenship:* emphasizes discipline, social awareness, and gives relatively little attention to autonomy;
- *individualistic citizenship:* attaches great importance to discipline and autonomy, and relatively little to social awareness;
- *critical-democratic citizenship:* revolves around autonomy and social awareness more than around discipline.

By favoring the latter and building on work from for example Dewey, Giroux and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, Veugelers argues for 'critical-democratic citizenship' in a modern society that 'needs citizens that are both socially aware and autonomous (...) to stimulate humanitarian, social and democratic values' (Veugelers, 2007 p. 116).

    In contrast, Biesta states that the current understanding of democracy as knowledge and skill within the educational field is problematic. He claims that in established democratic states, education has the task to preserve democratic life but is currently called upon 'to counter political apathy, particularly among the young' (Biesta, 2006, p. 118). Asking education to prepare children for democracy is problematic for the following reasons: 1) it builds on an instrumentalist concept

of education, making schools fully responsible for the success and future of democracy, 2) it foregrounds individualism and citizenship as competencies by equipping students with the 'proper set of democratic knowledge', 3) and it is built on the premise that the success of a democracy depends on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of individuals and their willingness to act democratically (Biesta, 2006). These points would suggest that democracy is only possible when all citizens are properly educated and will act in a proper way. Biesta rejects what he sees as a relationship between democracy and education in which education is understood as a trajectory for children to become democratic citizens (Biesta, 2013, p. 102). Although the teaching of democratic knowledge and moral qualifications is an important aspect of education, Biesta challenges its existing developmental character, which we discuss in detail further below (Biesta, 2013).

Prognosis IV: Democracy as a Practice

When Veugelers speaks about democracy, he refers to the work of Dewey and the concept of 'democracy as a way of life' (Veugelers, 2007 p. 110). Veugelers emphasizes that democracy should not be seen as a fixed state, but as a process that needs to be won repeatedly and needs to be maintained. According to him, democracy as a process 'can stimulate, organize and link value development and norm development' (Veugelers, 2007 p. 110). De Winter also emphasizes that 'democracy is not only a political system, but also refers to a *way of life*' (De Winter, 2004, p. 7, emphasis as in original). He claims that the public interest as an educational aim got lost due to the increase of individual and (religious) groups interests (De Winter, 2004 p. 3). Furthermore, he calls for the need for socialization in terms of teaching '[the] democratic constitution and democratic manners in a time of increasing pluralism, decreasing social cohesion and advancing fundamentalism' (De Winter, 2004, p. 3). According to De Winter, democratic education is 'not about individual pedagogical choices, but an urgent pedagogical and societal responsibility for the sake of society as a whole' (De Winter, 2004 p. 3). Hence, De Winter characterizes the need for citizenship education mainly as an educational process towards socialization.

According to the Education Platform, 'good education' in the 21st century contains 1) a qualifying function, teaching children the proper

skills and knowledge, 2) a socializing function, equipping them for society, and 3) a contribution to self-understanding.[3] These categories are very similar to the domains of qualification, socialization, and subjectification Biesta introduced to discuss the purpose of education and to explain what constitutes good education.[4] Democracy as knowledge and skill would fall under the domain of socialization, i.e. the educational domain in which pupils become part of a particular social, cultural, and political order.

Even though Biesta acknowledges the need for socialization, he thinks that democracy should not be and is not equal to the kind of knowledge that can be taught (Biesta, 2010 p. 110, 2013, p. 103). Following the work of the German-American political thinker Arendt, he tries to overcome the 'instrumentalism and individualism in the theory and practice of democratic education' in order to articulate 'a political conception of democratic subjectivity' (Biesta, 2006, p, 121). According to Biesta, Arendt's philosophy revolves around the idea of humans as *active* beings, in which humanity is based on what someone *does* (Biesta, 2013, p. 104, emphasis as in original). Arendt distinguishes three modes of active life or vita activa in which, apart from labor and work, action is an end in itself with freedom its defining quality (Biesta, 2013). Biesta points out that to act means to take initiative and create something new, to make a new beginning. To be a subject is to act, but to *be* subject, we need others to respond to these new beginnings, because if no one responds, the new beginning would not come into the world and *being* a subject would be impossible (Biesta, 2006, p. 133, emphasis as in original). Action is never possible in isolation, and thus never possible without plurality (Biesta, 2006). We can find subjectivity in public life where we live and

3 In Dutch: kennisontwikkeling, maatschappelijke toerusting en persoonsvorming.

4 By qualification, Biesta (2010) means 'the part of education where knowledge, skills and understandings is provided and often also concerns the dispositions and forms that allow the students to 'do something'. Subjectification is the domain where 'the process of becoming a subject occurs. It is precisely not about the insertion of newcomers into existing orders, but about ways of being independent from such orders, ways of being in which the individual is not simply a specimen of a more encompassing order'. With socialization the three domains overlap, but we have to be aware that in discussing good education, separation will contribute to the conversation.

have to live with others who are not like us. Without plurality, there would be no freedom (Biesta, 2006, 2013).

So philosophically, democracy is understood as the situation in which everyone has the opportunity to *be* a subject, to act, and to bring their beginnings into the world of plurality and difference, into which others also bring their unique beginnings (Biesta, 2006). In the context of education, Biesta strongly emphasizes that education is not solely at the disposal of the existing order, inserting newcomers along pre-existing rules and borders. Hence, education is not mere socialization, but should also entail an orientation toward freedom in which students can question and oppose existing orders (Biesta, 2006, p. 129). For Biesta, democracy is not only an organizational structure, policy, or knowledge and skill, but also the commitment to a world of plurality and difference where freedom appears. More importantly, democracy as a frame is such a practice, a way of being and interacting with others. Therefore, we claim that this meaning of democracy constitutes an important fourth dimension in the debate about the future of good education in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

By using a frame analysis, we clarified that the documents under analysis make neoliberalism and the culture of measurement part of their diagnostic frame, i.e. they present them as forces that are undermining current education. This particular diagnosis then gives rise to the prognostic framing task, in which the meaning of democracy is discursively constructed as a counter-terminology to the concepts of neoliberalism and the culture of measurement.

In all documents, democracy is framed as a prognosis, but with four different meanings: 1) democracy as organizational structure, 2) democracy as governmental policy, 2) democracy as knowledge and skill and 4) democracy as a practice. We argue that these different frames can be seen as the four dimensions of democracy with respect to Dutch education. If democracy is to be part and parcel of the future of Dutch education, they should all be part of the conversation. However, an increased awareness about these four dimensions is not sufficient in itself. The next step would be to further specify specific themes at the

heart of these four dimensions, in order to understand what we can expect when it comes to democracy with respect to education. Firstly, we need empirical data about the ways in which policymakers formulate the aims of democratic education and define its meaning. Secondly, we need to explore how these aims fit into the current ideas about democratic theory. For example, if policymakers push for the aim to learn pupils how to disagree, how does this fit into the idea of conflict in democratic society? This is especially important for the current Dutch context; at this very moment, development teams are revisioning the Dutch curriculum. The first results tend to favor grounding democracy in education based on the deliberative model of democracy. This choice has strong implications for the meaning of democracy and its anchoring in the educational system. We want to stress the importance of exploring the meaning of the deliberative model when applied to educational aims, and the consideration of other democratic theories, such as the agonistic model. Lastly, we need to know how teachers and school leaders turn democracy into practice, and how they interpret potential connections between democracy and education. This study wants to function as a starting point for an understanding of these phenomena.

Understanding Democracy in Dutch Curriculum Change through a Delphi Method[5]

Abstract

Teaching citizenship education is an important subject of current debates about future education. Dutch pedagogue Gert Biesta calls for a shift 'from teaching citizenship to learning democracy'. This study wants to contribute to this shift. A Delphi-method was applied on a Dutch case study in order to collect and analyse data from experts that can be applied in different political, cultural, and geographical contexts. The Delphi panel consisted of experts from three categories of expertise of educational policymaking, educational professionalization, and educational research. A thematic analysis of the data collected through two succeeding rounds showed four emerging themes when turning the scope from citizenship to democracy: the distribution of *responsibility* of teachers and school leaders, questions revolving around the *freedom of education* secured by the Dutch constitution, the nature of *citizenship education*, and most importantly, *the school as a playground to practice democracy*. This final theme was singled out by the experts as a higher purpose of democracy in relation to education. This study argues that the concept of the school as a playground to practice democracy should be central to the shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy.

Introduction

The past decades have seen a revitalization of interest in questions about education and democratic citizenship, engaging educators, scholars, policymakers as well as politicians (Osler & Starkey, 2006; Arthur, Davis & Hahn, 2008; James & Cremin, 2012; Banks, 2017). This is partly because of international concerns about social cohesion and political participation of young people (McLaughlin, 1992; White, Bruce & Ritchie, 2000; Kahne & Westheimer, 2004; Ruitenberg, 2008; Lawy & Biesta, 2010; Biesta, 2013; Straume, 2015). That democratic citizenship does not develop naturally has emphasized the role education must play in the development of democracy and citizenship education (Dewey, 1916; De Winter, 2004; Gutmann, 2004; Parker, 2004; Nussbaum, 2010; De Groot, 2013). For example, scholars have analysed how citizenship education policy developed in different countries on all continents (see, for example: Kerr, 2000; Ross & Munn, 2008; Bron, 2011; Xu, 2016; Waghid & Davids, 2018). Furthermore, there are several examples of conceptualizations of citizenship in scholarly literature, from 'global' to 'critical-democratic' citizenship (see for example Veugelers, 2007; Ruitenberg, 2008; Cabrera, 2010; Straume, 2015; Blaauwendraad, 2017). Additionally, governments from different European countries as well as the European Commission initiated research and reports to further develop or implement legislation around democracy and citizenship education (European Commission, 1997; De Winter, 2004; Olser & Starkey, 2006; Dutch Educational Council, 2012).

However, Dutch pedagogue Biesta (2013 p. 6) states that, without downplaying the importance of citizenship education, it is 'at most a partial response to an alleged 'crisis' in democracy. He argues that "there is a need to shift the focus of research, policy and practice from the teaching of citizenship education towards the different ways in which young people 'learn democracy'' (Biesta, 2013 p. 6). Following his call for a shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy which we will explain further below, this Dutch case study changes the scope from citizenship towards democracy, exploring how experts with different expertise, but nevertheless taking part in the same debate, give meaning to democracy with respect to education. Therefore, this research is both

empirical (in that we have collected qualitative data from experts), and hermeneutically informed through the focus on meaning-making. The main research question is: what kinds of themes emerge when scholars, policy experts, and operational experts discuss set questions about democracy with respect to Dutch education? We asked experts from three categories of expertise in the field of democracy and/or Dutch secondary education to participate in a Delphi panel and we used a thematic analysis to analyse the data of this panel. Two rounds of online surveys were set up to seek and analyse emerging themes. By doing so, this article presents a methodology that could be applied as an instrument in different political, cultural, and geographical contexts.

The theory section briefly outlines the Dutch context and elaborates on the shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy. We will subsequently clarify our choice of the Delphi method and present its application for this study, followed by the selection criteria for the panel experts and a description of our research process. In the findings section, we present the four emerging themes found in the data from the Delphi panel. Finally, we will argue that the shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy necessitates a further conceptualisation of 'the school as a playground to practice democracy', a theme which has clearly emerged from this study. If educators, scholars, and policymakers want to anchor democracy more strongly within (future) education and move beyond teaching citizenship, the conceptualization of this theme should be the starting point.

Theory

As presented in previous research, the debate around democracy with respect to education in the Netherlands has received more attention from the beginning of the twenty-first century onwards. Moet zijn: The Dutch parliament asked for a committee to investigate governmental policy concerning educational innovations from the 1990s. Its conclusions were clear: tunnel vision of politicians lead to educational policies without broad public support (Commission Educational Innovations, 2008). Parallel to this debate, societal unrest grew due to the political murders of politician Fortuyn in 2002 and tv-director Van Gogh in 2004. The potential radicalization of Dutch youngsters and the actual departure of

radicalized Dutch citizens to fight in Iraq and Syria increased the focus on the field of education with the aim to stop nascent radicalization. In 2004, Dutch pedagogue De Winter wrote 'Education for the Common Good: The Need for a Democratic-Pedagogical Offensive', a voluminous essay commissioned by the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy. De Winter argued that the socialization of pupils should be more important in Dutch education. In 2006, the Dutch government obliged schools to promote active citizenship and to develop 'the willingness to be part of society and to be actively part of it.' This change in educational legislation was meant as both an encouragement and a commitment that could now be controlled by the government, giving Dutch schools the opportunity to outline and organize their own aims and practices of citizenship education. All of this – a revision of the goals of good education; national and international political and societal unrest; new legislation around citizenship; an increased emphasis on the concept of democracy, and the obligation and encouragement of the Dutch government – caused a still ongoing debate between policymakers, scholars, school leaders, teachers, students, and pupils.

The main concept of this research is democracy. To answer the research question presented in the introduction, we will confine ourselves to the conceptualizations presented by the experts taking part in this Delphi study. As already mentioned, we want to contribute to the shift 'from teaching citizenship to learning democracy' as explained Biesta. He emphasizes the importance of seeing beyond the socialization character of democratic education, not only to realize more realistic expectations of the contribution of education to citizenship or society as a whole, but also to develop ways of seeing citizenship not as 'a matter of *individuals* and their knowledge, skills, and dispositions (...) but the need to focus on individuals-in-interaction and individuals-in-context (...), moving beyond the trend to see the domain of citizenship in *social terms,* that is, in terms of "good, socially adaptive and integrative behaviour"' (Biesta, 2013 p. 2 emphasis as in original). For Biesta, this means going against current trends of seeing citizenship as communities of sameness. Alternatively, he suggests that we focus on democracy and the plurality it entails, emphasizing the importance of processes and practices that challenge the status quo instead of understanding how to include newcomers into an existing socio-political order (Biesta, 2013). Therefore, the focus of this study is not on citizenship, but on

experts from different levels of expertise who are concerned with Dutch education, and their sensemaking of democracy with respect to education. We used two rounds of discussion points and questions based on previous research. These questions were based on four dimensions of the meaning of democracy in the debate about future education: the term democracy was used to describe 1) preferred organizational changes within the school itself, 2) the relation between the government and the educational field concerning vertical versus horizontal control, 3) democracy as knowledge and skills for pupils and 4) a conceptualization of democracy as a gateway to a more all-encompassing goal of education. We will now set out the methodology that we used to collect and analyse the empirical data.

Method

The Delphi method is an iterative process to collect and analyse judgements of experts in multiple rounds of questionnaires (Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Skulmoski, Hartman & Krahn, 2007). Originally, the method was used in the American business community; it has since been used within different fields, including health care (Kangasniemi, Arala, Becker et al., 2017), policymaking (Adler & Ziglio, 1996), and education (Alexander, 2004). The Delphi-method has a flexible character, making it applicable for quantitative and qualitative research (Adler & Ziglio, 1996; Mason, 1996; Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Brady, 2015). It can also be applied to accomplish different aims such as facilitating group problem solving, program planning, and structuring administration (Linstone & Turoff, 1975; Delbeq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975; Rowe & Wright, 1999; Aicholzer, 2009). In this study, the Delphi method is used to gain a more detailed understanding the relation between democracy and Dutch education of using it 'to make sense or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning the participants place on them' (Adler & Ziglio, 1996; Skulmoski, Hartman & Krahn, 2007, 9).

The decisive reason for our use of the Delphi method is its pragmatist tackling of four methodological problems (Kirk & Reid, 2002, 30; Hsu & Sandford, 2007, 2; Brady, 2015, 2; Bryman, 2016, 418). Firstly, pragmatism is evident in the Delphi method because of its applicability for purposive sampling. This enabled us to select experts with expertise in democracy

and education. Also, the use of digital questionnaires makes the Delphi method affordable and eases the logistics and planning of the research. In addition, the anonymity of the individuals on the Delphi panel rules out influences of dominant individuals and/or peer pressure. More importantly, digital questionnaires offer experts flexibility thereby increasing their willingness to participate. Furthermore, experts will not be distracted or influenced by other experts or feel pressured to conform to other arguments.

A Delphi consists of two succeeding rounds makes it easier to understand nuances and fill in knowledge gaps (Skulmoski et al., 2007, p. 11). By using the work of Australian qualitative researcher Bazeley (2009) and her threefold strategy to describe, compare, and relate emerging themes, this study attempts to implement rigour into the analysis used in the Delphi method.

Selection of experts

The choice of the experts for a representative Delphi panel was based on our definition of certain categories of expertise and on certain selection criteria. Above all, we had to formulate what makes someone an expert. In this study, a person is recognized as an expert if 'he or she possesses an institutional authority to construct reality' (Meuser & Magel, 2009, 19). Expert knowledge is characterized by the possibility for the expert "to become hegemonial in a certain organizational and functional context within a field of practice'. The expert could, therefore, be potentially 'influential in structuring the conditions of action for other actors (…) in a relevant way' (Meuser & Magel, 2009, 19).

According to Aicholzer (2009, p. 255), experts on a Delphi panel should cover one of the following three categories: factual knowledge, operationalization, and empirical investigation. We adjusted the latter to 'educational research' to fit the expertise relevant for this specific study. Furthermore, these three categories of expertise were attached to three inclusion criteria for individual experts, namely scholarly research, business, and governmental administration (Aicholzer 2009, p. 261). We formulated the following selection criteria by connecting the criteria of expertise of the experts to previous research:

- *Factual Knowledge* – Governmental Administration
Respondents are involved in policymaking and/or lobby for innovations with respect to one of the four dimensions of democracy in Dutch education, based on previous research.

- *Operationalization* – Business
Respondents are working in educational practice outside of schools, implementing programs and/or offer training courses to educational staff in one of the four dimensions of democracy in Dutch education.

- *Educational Research* – Scholarly Research
Respondents published educational research about one of the four dimensions of democracy in Dutch education.

An invitation to participate in the Delphi panel was mailed to thirty-five individuals who met the expertise criteria: eight to experts from the factual knowledge domain, ten to experts from the operationalization domain, and seventeen from the scholarly research domain, in the hope that at least five experts from each domain would participate. The invitation contained information about the aim of the study and the two-round design of the Delphi process. Participants were encouraged to participate in both rounds. Eventually, sixteen experts agreed to participate (Table 1).

Table 1. Selected experts and their expertise

Expertise: Factual knowledge – governmental administration	Expertise: Operationalization – business	Expertise: Educational research – scholarly research
Expert C	Expert D	Expert A
Expert I	Expert J	Expert B
Expert K	Expert L	Expert E
Expert N	Expert M	Expert G
Expert Q	Expert P	Expert H
		Expert O

Research Design

After the formation of the Delphi panel, we formulated the discussion points and sent them to the experts. They all responded within the set deadline of one month. These data were then analysed and coded. Based on this analysis, questions for round two were formulated and sent to the experts. The last step was the analysis of these data. Together with the data collected in the first round, the emerging themes were formulated. Before presenting the emerging themes that we found, we outline the design of the questionnaires and the process of the research.

Table 2. Round 1: discussion points presented to the Delphi panel

1. Teachers should have more influence on the school policy and organization of the school as institution.
2. School leaders should be more supporting and facilitating instead of having a more navigating and decision-making role.
3. Education in the Netherlands has a top-down character but should be organized from the bottom up.
4. The Dutch government should give schools more possibilities to shape their own vision of a good education.
5. Democracy in school means teaching pupils knowledge and skills about the Dutch rule of law and parliamentary democracy.
6. Good citizenship is less related to knowledge about the rule of law and skills necessary in a parliamentary democracy than to citizens' freedom to be critical about these concepts.
7. Dutch education is mainly focused on the qualification and socialization of pupils and does not pay enough attention to the subjectification of pupils.
8. Additions

For the first round (see Table 2), the online software SurveyMonkey was used (Baarda & Julsing, 2011; Baarda, Bakker, Julsing et al, 2012). For the thematic analysis of the data collected through the Delphi panel, NVIVO software for Mac was used. Because SurveyMonkey and NVIVO are incompatible, we also used Google online software.[6] The data ranged from short sentences to a few words, to longer statements and extensively outlined arguments. During the first phase, a close reading was applied in order to understand the content of the data. Six questions were subsequently formulated to further specify and clarify the points

6   The surveys were constructed and sent using this online software in April 2018, six months before the new guidelines revolving around EU legislation.

made by the Delphi-panel in a second round of clarifying questions (Table 3). A brief introduction with a short recapitulation and experts' quotes from the first round preceded every question. These quotes were included to make them part of the overall knowledge of the experts and motivate them to participate. Then, we analysed and coded both the data from the first and second rounds to reveal the emerging themes. The aim of the second round was to further build and clarify the themes that had already been pinpointed by the experts in the first round.

Table 3. Round 2: questions presented to the Delphi panel

1. In response to the above, where begins and ends the responsibility of the teacher in his/ her activities at school?
2. 'In response to the above, where begins and ends the responsibility of the school leader in his/her activities at school?
3. Is it possible to state that Article 23 of the Dutch constitution about the freedom of education is experienced as a prison without bars?
   [The introduction to this theme described two aspects of citizenship education that had emerged from the first round: 1) citizenship as knowledge and disposition all pupils need, and 2) democracy as doing, where pupils learn democracy by doing.]
4. Do you agree with this dichotomy when it comes to citizenship education? If so, what does doing democracy actually mean?
5. What does democracy in an educational context actually mean?

Findings

Responsibility

The first theme to emerge was *responsibility*, used and emphasized by experts in the first round. Expert K stated that 'there is freedom within boundaries [in the Netherlands], [however] people [in the educational system] should point out better who is responsible for what.' Expert O observed that the debate about more teacher influence and the role of school leaders should be 'about the distribution of responsibilities in a right way.' Expert O pointed to a study conducted by the Dutch journal *Elsevier* in which 3000 teachers were interviewed about their jobs. Expert O argued that many of these teachers mentioned 'a lack of freedom' in relation to their work. In contrast, Expert O emphasized the absence of the concept of responsibility, stating that the conversation

about responsibility is absent within schools. Expert H observed that 'the influence of teachers should be compliant to their different roles and responsibilities, because everyone who wants influence should be prepared to be responsible.' For Expert A, it seemed clear that 'when it comes to school policy, I think it is important that it is made clear where someone's responsibility begins and ends.'

The second indication of responsibility as a theme to emerge from the first round, was the experts' frequent emphasis on two things: teachers' unawareness of the liberty the Dutch Constitution gives them to increase their participation and influence at school and, consequently, their inability to use that liberty. Except for 2 experts, 14 were convinced that teachers could increase their influence through this liberty. In the words of Expert N: 'the question should not be about the enhancement of participation; it should be concentrated on how to increase the ability to act.' According to Expert Q, teachers 'should gain more influence, because they have the space to do so. What is lacking is time; teachers also feel that school leaders offer insufficient support.' Expert L explained that 'the structures [of teachers' participation] are there through the construction of school teams and participation in decision-making. But it is unclear which purpose education has and what the goal of increasing participation would be.'

In the light of these remarks, the experts were asked to further specify the responsibilities of teachers and school leaders. The data pointed out that the Delphi-panel had no problem presenting the responsibilities of teachers, often listing them in a hierarchical degree of importance. For Expert K, 'the teacher is an educational professional and is, therefore, responsible for his or her education and should be given the liberty to act accordingly. Apart from this responsibility, the [educational] professional is also partly responsible for the atmosphere in the team and the organization of the school befitting his or her tasks.' Strikingly, the experts of the operationalization group gave very specific answers to questions about teachers' responsibilities. Expert D implied a clear hierarchy by numerating the responsibility of the teachers: '1) [responsibility for] his or her own classes, 2) [responsibility for] the team to work together and learn from one another, 3) this should all exist within the school's mission and educational vision that is drafted by school leaders and the team of teachers together.' Incidentally, Expert L used the same kind of hierarchy while emphasizing a different kind of

vision: 'teachers' responsibility begins with the quality of the relation with their pupils. They are also responsible for establishing good relations in their team. Additionally, there is the responsibility for the development of a vision about the content of learning and didactics.'

However, the experts disagreed on the responsibilities of the school leader. A variety of responsibilities were suggested. For Expert C, a school leader has the responsibility to 'navigate, inspire, facilitate, to challenge and to ask questions.' Expert G emphasized the responsibility 'for the well-being and functioning of teachers and other personnel, and also indirectly for the pupils', not to mention the 'external responsibility in relation to the school association, parents, the municipality, etc.' For Expert H, 'the school leader serves others and should enable teachers to do their job.' This task has organizational as well as moral aspects, 'for example to control and stimulate the conversation about professionality [of individual teachers] and a professional culture in school.' Expert O argued that 'the school leader is a good employer and pater/materfamilias.' Expert K was more explicit about the difficulty in grasping the responsibility of the school leader, stating that 'it is not possible to present an unambiguous description of what an ideal school leader should be like.' Hence, the responsibilities of the Dutch school leader for this Delphi-panel remain unclear.

Freedom of Education

The second theme to emerge from the Delphi panel of experts is *freedom of education*. In the first round, experts were unanimous with respect to the liberty schools have to shape the education they offer. As Expert C stated briefly: 'there is plenty of space.' In addition, expert M stated clearly: 'the space for that is big in the Netherlands.' Some of the experts emphasized this by referring to the Dutch constitution. Expert L stated that 'Dutch education is one of the most decentralized educational systems in the world. Article 23 of the Constitution provides maximum space. The Government limits itself to determining the soundness of education.' According to Expert K, 'the establishment of our educational system is unique in the world. There are educational goals fixed by law, but the school board has the responsibility to further shape the content, [which] is a great achievement.' According to Expert C, 'we should cherish the existing balance between shared ambitions and the freedom [provided] to (groups of) citizens.'

However, during both the first and second rounds, experts said that this freedom and the liberty provided by Dutch law is insufficiently used. Expert J claimed that 'there are no schools anywhere that have the freedom schools in the Netherlands have', but wonders whether 'the available space is, indeed, used.' Expert E expressed the same point, claiming that 'there seems to be space for schools to have their own vision. The question is, how do you stimulate and support schools to formulate their vision? How do you get schools to utilize this space?' Expert B already observed some movement in this respect: 'with regard to the space to act, I think that there is already a lot of available space and it is getting used more often.' Expert L did not agree, emphasizing that 'the structures and the system are there, but what is missing is the support and content to fill in these structures.' Especially experts from the operationalization group made bold statements about this inability.' Expert J thought that 'educational professionals find it hard to handle the freedom that is available. People are hesitant to act.' Expert P implied that 'more importantly, there is plenty of space that people do not use because of certain habits.' Expert D went even further: 'the problem is not oppressing rules, but weak teams at school. If people experience a lack of freedom, it is because teams are too weak to make choices on their own. A strong team of teachers, together with a good school leader, has an enormous amount of freedom.' Expert H seemed to agree and concluded that 'in my opinion, schools have to maximize the use of their possibilities within the boundaries of the law. If people don't, they surrender to self-pity and do not act professionally. For me, this indicates that we are far from a self-conscious and strong professional community who stands tall within its own domain.'

According to most experts from the Delphi-panel, the Dutch constitution enables schools to shape the education they offer. Expert Q even stated that 'according to the OECD, the Dutch educational system is the most decentralized system in the world.' Expert E agreed and mentioned that 'the freedom of education in the Netherlands does not end with religions [using the freedom to start a school], but also grants freedom to different pedagogical beliefs [to start schools].' Strikingly, three of the six scholarly experts emphasized the historical roots of the Dutch law in relation to the freedom of education, problematizing the characterization of the law to enable decentralization, while it was built to resolve profound religious differences in nineteenth-century

Dutch society. Expert A outlined the relation between religion and the Dutch constitution, suggesting that 'it is important to be aware of the fact that the freedom of education was forced upon and appeared in the [Dutch] constitution, because of big underlying religious divisions that had to be acknowledged. This [constitutional] article was never meant to function as the basis of a decentralized system. In my opinion, it is therefore somewhat curious to judge the article on this meaning and/or function.' Experts B added that 'the position of the freedom of education within the Dutch constitution is complex, because of *pacification* within the constitution', referring to the alignment of funding for public schools and schools with a religious identity in 1917. In summary, the main problem for the scholarly experts seemed to be that freedom of education has gained a contemporary meaning that is different from its original historical one: it is viewed as the basis of a decentralizing structure whereas, at the time of its construction, it functioned as a political solution for religious divisiveness within nineteenth-century Dutch society.

Narrow view on citizenship education

The third theme to emerge from the data was *the risk of a narrow view on citizenship education.* All three groups of expertise agreed on this risk, especially the scholarly experts, emphasizing different points of criticism. Expert B thought 'it is important to teach children [democratic] knowledge and skills, but I would not call it "democracy at school." This suggests something else. Democratic citizenship, I would say, is greatly dependent on a desire to live and live together democratically, with a focus on freedom, equality, and solidarity.'

For Expert A, 'a conversation about social issues would be more efficient than forcing the "right" democratic values upon [pupils]. Democracy is not something you will learn from a textbook. It is a practice.' According to Expert E, there is 'not much of a vision about citizenship of young pupils and the role of the school in the development of citizenship. That is why the already abstract "effort commitment" [dictated by Dutch constitutional law], very quickly dissolves into a project that could easily be discarded.' Expert E also argued that a citizens' initiative within school 'should not only be appreciated when it matches the outcome already decided by people higher up, even if this were to be

true in our current society. To practice public participation should be more than just fun. There should also be room for conflict under careful surveillance.' Expert H agreed, stating that 'it is good to ask what kind of image of citizenship the government actually has? And of education? Of the "goody-good" citizen as a governmental policy instrument. Or could citizenship equal deviation from the norm, rebellion, resistance, civic disobedience?' The expert from the operationalization group emphasized that pupils should engage in the act of *doing* democracy. According to Expert D, 'knowledge of the rule of law is of limited value if pupils themselves cannot participate in the situation at hand during class.' Expert P emphasized the point of pupils' participation, arguing that democracy 'is taught by "doing" democracy. The skills needed for good citizenship cannot be taught theoretically within an autocratic environment. People become good citizens when they can practice democracy in their own surroundings.' For Expert Q, this means 'enabling pupils to organize decision-making by letting them campaign, formulate proposals, convince school boards, and join student councils.'

Just like the scholarly experts, the governmental administrative experts on the panel also found the presented view of democracy as knowledge and skills too narrow. Expert I suggested that 'practicing how to function in democratic partnerships and the application of basic [democratic] values are more important.' Incidentally, governmental administrative Expert Q turned the question around, agreeing that it is important to teach pupils democratic knowledge and skills, but 'it should also be about what the pupils could contribute to democracy.' Strikingly, Expert C stated 'that [citizenship education] is an important educational goal, but it also means the development of the school [as an organization].'

During the second round, experts were asked to challenge this narrow view they were critical of. To provoke a broader definition of citizenship education, the panel was asked to respond to a twofold definition found in the first round. On the one hand, it contained the experts' consensus about democratic knowledge, on the other the 'doing' part of democracy presented by experts from the operationalization group. Experts were asked if they could agree to this definition and if so, to further specify what 'doing' democracy would entail. The data showed that most experts found this twofold definition of citizenship education not convincing. According to Expert G, 'binary thinking usually does not

help, which is also the case here. Both meanings are important and more exist.' Expert M also cast doubt on it, arguing 'that it is not a dichotomy. By "doing" democracy you develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions.' Expert B stated that 'doing democracy sounds misleading and too vague when it is presented from a competency perspective. Especially when people argue that democracy should be instrumentally "done" and organized for example as pupils' participation or a student parliament.'

More importantly, in their efforts to answer the question about citizenship education, the experts from all three groups of expertise also mentioned other aspects that should be taken into account when talking about democracy and education. Expert K argued that 'the school is a small community on its own. Like society, it is a place where values and norms must be respected and things such as democracy and diversity work. Citizenship education also addresses pupils' behaviour where necessary and contributes to pupils' upbringing.' Expert L was even more elaborate on what democracy actually means: 'to be an example, is to be conscious that *every* act, all communication with other students, is part of being a citizen. This does not only mean practicing how to engage in a debate during Dutch classes, but also revolves around group work during physical education. It is about giving pupils responsibility to shape their own learning strategies and to ask them to give feedback on your own lessons. It is about noticing when a pupil is being bullied, which jokes to make. It is about the amount of collaboration within the section and the example you are when it comes to working together. Knowledge constitutes a mere ten percent of what it is all about in citizenship education.' In short, these two examples show how two experts out of many try to articulate the higher purpose of democracy in education, paving the way for the fourth theme found in this Delphi.

The School as a Playground to Practice Democracy

The data about citizenship education show that experts used words and expressions with a high level of abstraction, very often from the same vocabulary. 'Democracy is not something you will learn from a textbook; it is a practice', Expert A mentioned. For Expert E, 'school is the designated place to feel the complexity and vulnerability of democracy.' Expert K suggested that 'every classroom, every school is a small democracy', or in the words of Expert C 'school is a small

community on its own.' According to Expert G, 'a school has to mirror a democratic and organic society in which everyone can participate and is taken seriously.' For Expert J, it is important that 'school is a place where democracy is studied while practicing and engaging in the process to discover how to live together.' According to Expert G, 'democracy is a state of being.' Expert O suggested that 'democracy expresses itself within the quality of intersubjective relations among members of the community. In any case, democracy means shared responsibilities instead of foregrounding your own opinions and interests.' 'It is about accepting uncertainty and being an example in a world that is far from perfect and is not fully controllable', expert L claimed. He continued by arguing that 'people are diverse, they are part of a society in which things can remain unresolved. Every day we must deal with complexity without the prospect of a definite solution. That is [the fact] we have to face.' For Expert I, '[democracy] as a way of being is not there for the taking but must be developed at school by experiencing how to interact with each other, how to deal with different views and ideas, how to adopt a shared responsibility for the social and physical environment. So, it is about practicing and reflecting consciously on underlying principles and values such as freedom, equality, and solidarity.'

The concept of 'school as a playground to practice democracy' was frequently mentioned when experts articulated their views on the higher purpose of democracy in Dutch education. Expert I expanded on this by adding a small detail, referring to 'the school as a playground to practice democracy in a broad sense.' Expert B found 'it interesting and in my opinion important to characterize the school as a place to practice.' According to Expert O, 'knowledge and skills come together in a school as a place to practice for society.' Expert H argued that 'democracy is a peaceful way of living together with others who are not like you. School can be a place where practice can occur in a safe environment without outside pressure. This practice should be about what Dewey calls participating in activities of communication with each other, and what Arendt is referring to when she talks about plurality and [people that need] to act.' Consequently, this shows the attempt of experts from all groups of expertise to articulate a higher purpose of democracy with respect to Dutch education. In doing so, they emphasize the same concept: the school as a playground to practice democracy.

Conclusion

By using a Delphi method and a thematic analysis, this study showed that four themes emerged in the shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy. By doing so, this article presents a method that can be applied in different political, cultural, and geographical contexts to gain insight into the construction of meaning of the topic of democracy with respect to education. In our view, the conceptualization of the school as a playground to practice democracy, pointed out with great consensus by experts from all three different fields of expertise, should be the starting point of further research into the shift from teaching citizenship towards learning democracy. The vocabulary used by the experts suggest that this concept has a more all-encompassing character. Therefore, the other three themes that emerged from our analysis of the data should be considered, but in line with this main concept. What are the responsibilities of educators on such a place of practice? We argue that the concept of 'the school as a place to practice democracy' as used in this study goes beyond a narrow view of citizenship education, because of the combined aspects of a 'playground' to 'practice'. We argue that this conceptualization and the importance of difference and plurality democracy entails can be used to advance Biesta's idea of learning democracy and to move beyond the socialization character of citizenship, by emphasizing the playful character of practice. The security of the playground can be used as a safe space to try, to fall and get back up, to be confronted with political others and their arguments. To do so, there is a need for a theoretical framework to conceptualize such a formulation of the school as a playground to practice democracy. Such a framework can be informed by the collection of empirical data on the wants and needs of educators to shape their practice in such a way that they are enabled to move beyond teaching citizenship on a playground to practice democracy, and learn what it entails to be part of a plural and diverse society.

Practicing Democracy in the Playground: *Turning Political Conflict into Educational Friction*[7]

Abstract

Research shows that teachers and educators struggle to act when conflict appears in the classroom. This article argues that (political) conflict should not be avoided or eradicated. Teachers should enable conflict and attend to their pupils in the process, in order to enable further understanding of each other and their differences, as part of living together in a plural and diverse society. Scholars and educators often take a deliberative approach to citizen education by focusing on problem solving and consensus seeking. This article explores how conflict can be educational if we accept that antagonisms are inherent parts of human relations. The aim of this paper is not to propose moral boundaries to conflicts. Instead, it wants to contribute to a shift from teaching citizenship as conflict-free space towards learning democracy, in which educational conflict, or *friction*, is seen as an important part of the political education of pupils. This paper uses democratic theory, narrative theory, and the cultural-historical theory of play as described by Dutch cultural historian Huizinga, to construct analytical tools to further understand conflict in the classroom.

Introduction

In 2016, the Ministers of Education of all EU countries signed a declaration in which they stated that pluralism and non-discrimination should be part of all European education (European Commission, 2016). This declaration responded to worries after the November 2015 Paris attacks on the *Charlie Hebdo* editorial office when teachers and parents had difficulty reacting to pupils who showed intolerance, express radical opinions, or even began to cheer (Sikkens, Sieckelink, San et al., 2016; Bertram-Troost & Miedema, 2017; Awan, Spiller and Whiting, 2019; James & Janmaat, 2019; Clycq, Timmerman, Vanheule et al., 2019). In answer to such serious concerns about social cohesion, integration, and the political participation of young people, a body of research arose around the explication of and need for citizenship education.

These educational researchers emphasize the socialization of pupils and integrating them as future citizens into existing systems, values and norms (see, for example, McLaughlin, 1992; Callan, 1997; Kahne & Westheimer, 2004; De Winter, 2004; Osler & Starkey, 2006; Hess, 2009; Ruitenberg, 2009; Kahane, Weinstock, Leidet et al., 2010; Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch et al., 2017). The recent revisioning of the Dutch curriculum to strengthen future education has also been informed by these aims (Curriculum.nu, 2019; Lozano Parra, Bakker, Van Liere, 2020). However, little attention has been devoted to the place of conflict in citizenship education. If conflict is mentioned, it is often presented as something that has to be solved or even avoided.

The Belgian political theorist Mouffe theorizes conflict as antagonism that is inherent to human relations (Mouffe, 2005a). If we accept that a school should be a place to practice democracy, aimed at educating pupils to be part of a society that is increasingly diverse and plural, it is of great importance that they experience and understand conflict and difference *before* trying find consensus – if the conflict is even solvable. The focus of citizenship education on problem-solving and the avoidance of conflict is problematic since it does not enable pupils how to cope with plurality, diversity, and non-discrimination (the EU aims mentioned earlier). We argue that political communication

without conflict is impossible. Engaging in conflict teaches pupils how to disagree, and challenges them to truly see the other and experience differences that are necessary, in order to learn how to live side by side within a diverse and plural society. In order for conflict to emerge in the classroom and become educational, teachers need to understand it in an educational way and learn how to supervise it.

Following Mouffe, we see conflict as an inseparable part of democracy, in which conflict takes place within the dimension of what Mouffe calls *the political*. By framing conflict as political, we align with a growing tendency in the field of political and educational philosophy to anchor the political more firmly into education (Ruitenberg, 2008; Biesta, 2011, 2019; Szkudlarek, 2013; Straume, 2015). Therefore, the ability to learn to cope with conflict should be an important aim of pupils' education. When we present our key concepts, we will further clarify our use of the terms democracy, conflict, and friction.

The question we seek to answer in this article is: how can conflict be educational? This paper has an explorative character. Our aim is twofold: theoretically, we want to contribute to what Dutch pedagogue Biesta calls a shift 'from teaching citizenship towards learning democracy' (Biesta, 2011). We will further explain this shift and Biesta's distinction between civic learning as *socialization* and civic learning from a *subjectification* perspective. As for educational practices, our purpose is not to present a blueprint of how a school as an institution should be structured. Instead, we aim to build an analytic tool that will enable teachers to reflect upon and gain insight into conflict and the educational limitations of their classroom when friction emerges. The role of the teacher in educational conflict is of pivotal importance. The analytical tool we will present is our effort to help teachers to turn political conflict into educational friction. We will not present the right solution to solve conflict in the classroom. Alternatively, we will unravel the complexity and the different (educational) layers of possible events that cause conflict in the classroom, and argue to make conflict part of *learning democracy*.

To articulate our framework, we use insights from democratic theory, narrative theory, and cultural theory. We use the work of Conflict Studies scholar Mitchell to explore what constitutes conflict. Mitchell articulates conflict as a concept that consists of three aspects, which we visualize as a *triangle*. To show how conflict is embedded in the verbalized stories of people, we use Religion and Conflict scholar Van Liere's work on

conflict and religion and the embeddedness of conflict in narratives. We will choose a *circle* to visualize the embeddedness of conflict *within* narrativity. To further explore the limitations of conflict we use the theory of play as described by Dutch cultural historian Huizinga. This component visualizes the boundaries of educational conflict in the classroom as the playground in which conflict appears, and is therefore visualized as a *square*. We will present these three components separately. They jointly constitute a tool to understand conflict as educational and are therefore integrated in one model.

We will first describe the context of this research and current developments in citizenship education in The Netherlands, and explain how conflict is presented as something to overcome. Then, we will justify our focus on conflict by explaining the difference between socialization and subjectification in civic learning, theorized by Biesta, followed by a clarification of our key concepts – democracy, conflict, and friction - along the lines of Mouffe. We will also explain why we choose to conceptualize the school not as a place, but as *a playground* to practice democracy and justify our selection of Huizinga's theory of play. Then, we will present the three components: conflict, narrative, and play. After each paragraph, we will show how this theoretical framework can be applied by using a significant case of conflict in the classroom, in order not to lose sight of the educational practice.

Civic learning in The Netherlands

Since 9/11, but more specifically since the 2004 Madrid terrorist attack, concerns about Islam, integration, and social tensions have increased in many parts of Europe. Since then, terrorist attacks caused 'shockwaves and triggered anxiety for immediate security risk' (James & Janmaat, 2019, p. 2). In a report written for the Scientific Council for Governmental Policy, Dutch pedagogue De Winter argued for the socialization of pupils and their introduction and integration into the existing political and social order (De Winter, 2004). Since 2006, the Dutch government has obliged schools to promote 'active citizenship'. Schools were given the freedom to formulate their own definition of this concept and further shape their education to achieve it. After 2011, Dutch, but also British, Belgian, and French youth joined the fight of different militant groups

in Iraq and Syria, such as Al-Qaida and Islamic State, causing further shockwaves in society. In 2016, The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science established a task force consisting of scholars, policymakers, school leaders, and teachers. Its aim was to give citizenship education a central role in a revision of the national curriculum. In its first report in the spring of 2019, the task force stated that 'in a democratic, pluralist society, freedom, equality and solidarity are central", and described schools as 'a place to practice democracy and handle diversity' (Curriculum.nu, 2019a p. 5). The task force also stated that its vision on citizenship education had been inspired by a deliberative approach to democracy, 'emphasizing democracy as a process to seek consensus' (Curriculum.nu, 2019a).

Different scholars and experts were asked to give feedback on the proposal. One expert argued that 'conflict did not appear, while it is one of the fundamental parts of the democratic rule of law' (Curriculum. nu, 2019b p. 12). The same expert stated that the deliberative model of democracy chosen by the task force 'is at different levels very problematic (…) because it underestimates the inequality of opportunity and does not acknowledge the impact of power relations and emotions' (Curriculum, 2019b p. 11). Our analysis of the final proposal of the task force shows that the word 'conflict' does appear twenty-one times. For more than two-third of these, conflict is seen as something that should be 'resolved' and needs to be 'mediate[d] in order to resolve peacefully' (Curriculum.nu, 2019a). Generally, the report urges that solutions be found to conflicts. Thus, conflict is mentioned in the context of problem solving, solution seeking, and consensus.

However, in our view conflict should be part of every classroom to increase the understanding of cultural, social, and religious differences. Too much emphasis on problem solving simply overlooks the fundamental social, cultural, and religious differences that are part of modern, plural societies. If we want to achieve active citizenship, the exploration of conflict should be our starting point, because democracy is about togetherness without losing diversity and plurality. Instead of exploring conflict from a solution finding perspective, we wish to emphasise sensibility towards differences that are difficult to harmonize, but are nevertheless considered part and parcel of a Western democratic society. Furthermore, schools provide a space for civic learning in the context of play, since it is a place for pupils to *learn,* which implicates

room for searching, fumbling, and making mistakes. We will further explain the relevance of our focus on conflict and play by connecting it to Biesta's distinction between civic learning from a socializational perspective, and civic learning as subjectification.

The school as a playground to practice democracy

Why focus on conflict?

To reconceptualize conflict, we will first present civic learning as explained by Biesta, and then elaborate on conflict theorized by Mouffe, followed by explicating our key concepts and showing how her concept of conflict can be used in an educational context.

 As democratic citizenship is seen as something that does not come naturally, scholars emphasize the role education should play in its development (Dewey, 1916; Gutmann, 2004; Parker, 2004; Nussbaum, 2010; De Winter, 2011). In *Learning democracy in school and society*, Biesta uses the theoretical concepts of socialization and subjectification to clarify two different ways of civic learning. A socialization conception of civic learning 'would see the aims of civic learning first and foremost in terms of the reproduction of an existing socio-political order and thus of the adaption of individuals to this order' (Biesta, 2011 p. 86). From this perspective, different scholars have argued for a 'right' conception of citizenship that needs to be taught (see for example Veugelers, 2007; Ruitenberg, 2008; Cabrera, 2010; Blaauwendraad, 2017). Less attention has been given to the subjectification conception of civic learning that focusses on 'the emergence of political agency, and thus sees the aims of civic learning first and foremost in terms of the promotion of political subjectivity and agency' (Biesta, 2011 p. 87).

 In contrast to De Winter's report, Biesta wants to look beyond the socialization character of civic learning. According to Biesta, it is not only important to have more realistic expectations of the contribution of education to citizenship or society as a whole, but also to see citizenship not as 'a matter of *individuals* and their knowledge, skills, and dispositions (...) but as the need to focus on individuals-in-interaction and individuals-in-context' (Biesta, 2013 p. 2 emphasis as in original). Thus, he aims to move beyond 'the trend to see the domain of citizenship in *social terms',* that is, in terms of 'good, socially adaptive,

and integrative behaviour' (Biesta, 2013 p. 2 emphasis as in original). To understand civic learning in terms of socialization conceptualizes democracy as a 'particular, well-defined singular order (…) and thus civic learning can be fully understood in terms of the acquisition of this identity by individuals' (Biesta, 2011 p. 87). He goes even further by stating that understanding civic learning as socialization would mean that this conception would be the *only* way to understand it (Biesta, 2011, emphasis as in original). Alternatively, he argues that 'questions about how to engage with conflict are likely to permeate democratic processes and practices' (Biesta, 2011 p. 93). It is exactly conflict that makes democracy possible. Democracy *is* the ongoing (re)negotiation of conflict. Understanding civic learning solely in socializational terms would be undemocratic exactly because of its aim to integrate newcomers into an already existing system.

The concept of conflict at the core of democracy is what Biesta tries to capture in his concept of subjectification in relation to civic learning. By analysing the nature of democratic communities, their borders, the processes that occur within these communities, and the status of those who engage in such processes, Biesta builds a theoretical argument for schools as places in society that need civic learning from a perspective of subjectification. The emphasis on civic learning as subjectification moves beyond any essentialist concept of a pupil learning *to be a specific kind of citizen* that fits within an existing order. Instead, it embraces political subjects to enter in conflict and collide, because it is exactly within this conflict between political agents that democracy appears. It does not focus on fixing the difference between these agents, but advocates the exploration and experience of the conflict that appears when political subjectivity arises. By focusing on conflict, we want to contribute to this shift towards *learning democracy*. Before we use Biesta's device of socialization and subjectification to explain the difference between practice and play and justify our use of the concept of a playground, we will first clarify our key concepts.

Democracy, conflict, and friction

Mouffe writes about democracy from a political-philosophical perspective. Nevertheless, her ideas about conflict are useful to our formulation and understanding of how political conflict can be

understood as educational. In response to the deliberative model of democracy, Mouffe formulates an alternative 'agonistic model'. The term agonism stems from the Greek *agon,* meaning contest or strife. In *The Democratic Paradox* (2005a), she describes the paradoxical relation between 'liberal' and 'democracy' within liberal democracy. For Mouffe, the paradox between these two concepts is shaped by the 'liberal grammar' of equality and universalism of liberalism, that contrasts with the struggle for hegemony that is democracy (Mouffe, 2005a). According to Mouffe, democracy is about the fundamental identification of the rulers and those who are ruled. This leads automatically to the existence of power relations between the people that are part of the demos. Mouffe states that these power relations play a significant role in structuring human relations. Democracy is linked to the fundamental principle of the unity and identification of the demos. If people are to rule, it is necessary to determine who belongs to the people, and who does not. Or to put it differently: who is to rule, and who is not? Who is represented, and who is not? Democracy for Mouffe is always about the constitution of 'us and 'them'. However, as opposed to deliberative models which see conflict as something that should be solved or avoided, Mouffe sees this difference between liberal and democratic grammar as 'a *tension* that installs a very important dynamic' that enables the ongoing and necessary (re)negotiation of power relations (Mouffe, 2005a). Additionally, Mouffe's aim is not to dismiss liberal democracy as a whole, but rather to re-evaluate the relation between liberalism and democracy, emphasizing the importance of democracy and the constant conflicting (re)negotiation it entails. The very existence of liberal democracy depends on the constant process of (re)negotiating this constitutive paradox. If we take Mouffe's idea of democracy and apply it to education, *learning democracy* entails the appearance of conflict as the process of (re)negotiation in which the status quo can be questioned in the classroom. In order for pupils to *learn* how to engage in such a conflict, to take part in liberal democracy, the classroom should be the place in which they are challenged to engage in this process.

Mouffe theorizes conflict as the antagonism that is an inherent part of human relations (Mouffe, 2005a). To explain this further, she makes a distinction between *politics* and *the political* (Mouffe, 1999; 2005a; 2005b). The latter refers to 'the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in all human society, which can take many different forms and can emerge in diverse social relations' (Mouffe, 1999, p. 754). The former refers to 'the

ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions that seek to establish
a certain order and to organize human coexistence in conditions that
are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the
dimension of "the political"' (Mouffe, 1999, p. 754). Subsequently, she
wants to redraw the political frontier by changing 'political enemies',
who do not share commonalities, into 'friendly adversaries', who share
common ground and mutually acknowledge each other's legitimacy
even though they remain conflicting parties (Mouffe, 205b). For Mouffe,
conflict is not a weakness that should be eliminated, but rather the
foundation democracy is built upon. Therefore, the challenge is to change
antagonism into agonism, and enemies into adversaries (Mouffe, 2005a).

Following Mouffe's theory of the political, we also understand
conflict as political conflict. This does not mean that conflict exclusively
revolves around political disagreement. In fact, Mouffe states that
conflict within the dimension of the political can take many forms and
emerge in different ways. Political conflict should be seen as the act of
politicizing in which differences are made clear. In this sense, political
conflict comes in different gradations, ranging from disagreement,
discomfort, resistance, and confusion to surprise. Educational conflict
should be understood as a way to teach pupils how to experience
and engage with these different gradations of conflict as part of
the antagonism in human relations. The democratic part of liberal
democracy enables people to engage in conflict, in a non-escalating and
non-violent way. That is why the political should take place at school
and in the classroom, where it can be practiced under the supervision
of teachers and be experienced as an inherent part of living together,
which means that the role of the teacher in educational conflict of great
importance. The classroom is a literal space where conflict can be
practiced and played out, with room for movement, rethinking, mistakes,
and the exploration of new possibilities. This extends the idea of simply
'agreeing to disagree', which would be acceptable within the deliberative
conception of democracy through its focus on resolution. Or to
formulate it along the lines of Biesta: agreeing to disagree individualizes
democratic learning and allows us to be uninvolved with others.
Alternatively, conflict as a felt experience or as collision with others
exists between individuals-in-interaction and through individuals-in-
context, and thus is important as part of learning democracy within a
plural and diverse society in which people live together in difference.

Just as Mouffe changes antagonism into agonism from a political point of view, we argue from an educational perspective to change conflict into friction. We have two reasons for this perspective. First, we argue that friction covers the several gradations mentioned above such as disagreement and resistance, in order to point out that conflict is not something that is dissatisfying or something pupils can fail at when it remains unsolved. Moreover, educational conflict is about accepting that friction is part of human relations, that it might be there and need not be avoided per se and that friction can even remain unsolved in the classroom. This friction embodies what it means to be part of a society that is plural and diverse in several ways. Second, in our view, the concept of friction denotes the limits to practicing democracy, but nevertheless still keeps open possibilities to challenge or question these limitations. With Mouffe, we argue that the political community cannot function without a certain stability.

In sum, we understand school not as a place, but rather as a playground to practice democracy. In our view, *to practice* means to learn what is already there. Or to put it differently, to practice means to relate to existing orders; it is, therefore, a socializational act. Alternatively, *play* has a different connotation. Play always entails certain rules but it also always contains agon. Because of this aspect of agon, we use play and the playground as suitable concepts for our theoretical framework. It is important to mention that we do not mean to take conflict less seriously by emphasizing play in this way. Play can be very serious indeed, as we will elaborate on when presenting the component of the square. Additionally, play should not replace practice: both should be part of learning democracy. Before presenting the components of our framework of friction, we will end this section by justifying our use of Huizinga's (1938) theory of play.

Game theory, and the theory of play

Our research is focused on conflict that is part of the political, as explained above. In our search for a theory of play that could help shape the framework of the playground, we wondered whether game theory could help us understand conflict as an educational concept. Game theory has become a powerful analytic tool mainly in mathematics, economics, and behavioural sciences, and has steadily made its entrance

into the political arena (McCarty, 2012; Owen, 2013). Scholars have also used game theory to analyse decision-making in educational policy (see, for example: Kwok, 2017). In game theory, a game is played by two or more players in which every player knows and follows the rules of the game. At the end of each game there is a certain payoff, which could be money, prestige, and/or satisfaction (Owen, 2013). Game theory analyses possible behaviour of people engaged in certain games to rationally determine strategies (McCarty, 2012). In order to gain the payoff at the end of a game, a player will rationally consider, choose, and use strategies, leading to the 'best' outcome of the game for the player.

In the end, we had three reasons to turn our scope from game theory to a theory of play from a cultural-historical perspective. First, game theory assumes that agents play, act and choose rationally. With Mouffe, we argue that political conflict is often not rational and is very much characterised by emotions. If we want to understand political conflict as educational friction, we have to include the possibility of irrational behaviour in the playground. The assumption of rational behaviour is at least partly caused by the idea that games include payoffs and that players use different strategies to achieve them. This brings us to the second reason: learning democracy in a playground is not aimed at an end point or payoff as understood by game theorists. As Biesta states, 'learning democracy is an ongoing experience' (Biesta, 2011, p. 6), that extends education. Therefore, learning democracy should be explicitly open ended. You could say that its payoff is learning how to live together in a diverse and plural society. However, we feel that this type of 'pay-off' does not fit the grammar of 'gaining' or applying 'the right strategy' to get to the 'payoff'. This brings us to the third and final reason for choosing Huizinga's cultural-historical concept of play: to further explore the playground in which political conflict can be understood as educational friction, we searched for a conception of play that educational psychologist Vanderven (2004) calls 'play as meaning'. In this sense, play is understood not as a rational game with a theoretical aim to grasp possible strategies, but as enabling humans 'to make sense of their world' (Vanderven, 2004). Play as meaning 'enables both the expression of feelings and emotions as well as acquiring better understanding of own's feelings and those of others' (Vanderven, 2004 p. 179). In his foreword to *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, Huizinga clarifies that he studied play as 'a cultural phenomenon' with

significant social functions for humans living together (Huizinga, 1998, p. 4). Because of Huizinga's focus on play as a cultural phenomenon, and the impact of play for the sensemaking of agents that continues after and outside play, we use his theory to build our framework.

We will now present the three individual components of our framework, starting with the triangle of conflict which explains what conflict actually entails. To clarify the significance of our theoretical framework, we will use the following event that occurred in a Dutch secondary classroom. At age fourteen, Mehmet and Peter[8] became friends as they went through primary school together. They played football together and lived in the same town. They applied for the same secondary school and ended up in the same class together under the supervision of teacher Ms. Baker. In the first week, Ms. Baker asked every pupil to prepare a personal pitch for their classmates. Mehmet used it to tell the class about his two older brothers, his parents, and his love of football. He then told his classmates about his religion, and stated: 'me and my family are Muslims, and everyone who is not a Muslim is empty'. Peter was surprised and confused by his friend's statement. Peter is not religious and thought: 'does this mean that I am an empty person?' Ms. Baker felt the tension in the classroom caused by this statement and saw the somewhat confused expression on Peter's face. She decided to interrupt. Before revealing what subsequently happened, we will use this event to explain the approach through our framework of friction, starting with the first component, the triangle (Figure 1).

The triangle of friction

In 1981, Mitchell presented a triangle model for conflict which has become a standard in the field of conflict studies (Demmers, 2017). For Mitchell, conflict is 'any situation in which two or more "parties" (however defined or structured) perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals' (1981, p. 17). The first part of a conflict consists of a perception of *incompatibility*, i.e. actors or groups perceive or *feel* that their objective or objectives are blocked by another group that attempts to reach its own goal. Demmers explains that goals are 'defined as

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8   The names of the individuals involved are feigned for privacy considerations.

Turning Political Conflict into Educational Friction

Conflict Theory
- Incompatibility of goals
- Frictional behaviour
- Frictional atitudes

Narrative Theory
- Narrativity as a sensemaking mechanism
- Narratves as a way to include passions

Cultural Theory
- Play as freedom
- Limitations of space and time
- The cheat vs. the spoilsport

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in what constitutes friction

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in how friction is verbalized through narrativity

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in the limitations in the classroom
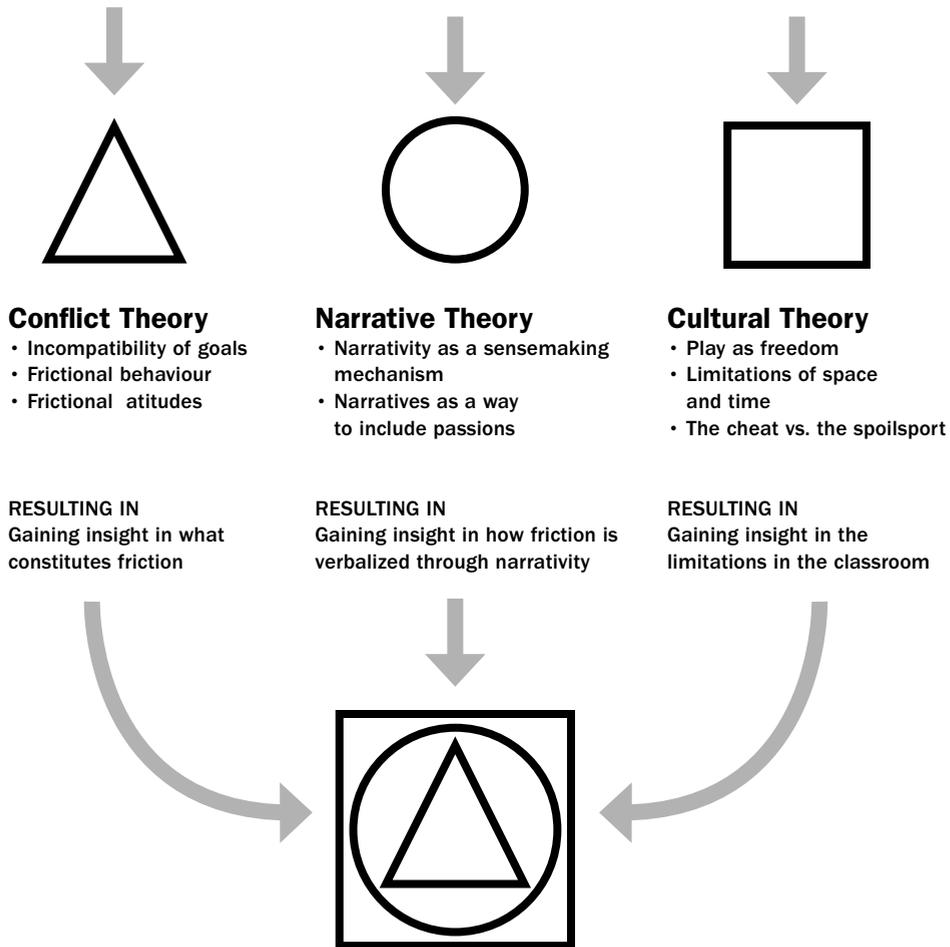
consciously desired future outcomes, conditions or end states, which often have intrinsic but different values for member of particular parties' (2017 p. 6). The second part of a conflict is *conflict behaviour*: the actions that are undertaken by an individual or group in any situation aimed at the opponent with the intention to let the opponent abandon

or modify its goals (Mitchell, 1981, p. 29). The third part of a conflict encompasses *conflict attitudes*: psychological states, emotions and attitudes as well as patterns of conception and misconception that arise from entanglement in a situation of conflict (Mitchell, 1981 p. 27). Additionally, Mitchell acknowledges a difference between attitudes with emotional orientations, such as anger, envy or fear, and attitudes caused by cognitive processes, such as stereotyping or tunnel vision.

The starting point of this triangle of friction is Mitchell's notion of the perceived incompatibility of certain goals. This incompatibility is neither something that should be solved, nor a collision that needs to be avoided. Incompatibility for educational friction enables us to understand the behaviour and attitudes pupils express and question why their goals are perceived as incompatible. It is the task of the teacher to pinpoint and address the frictional behaviours and attitudes that are on display and teach pupils to recognize them. So, if a pupil shows anger or uses stereotyping, this frictional behaviour should be made part of the frictional conversation, or at least not dismissed as emotions that are 'not constructive' in search for a solution. The focus on understanding through the incorporation of frictional attitudes and behaviour is consistent with what Mouffe calls 'passions', which she conceptualizes as collectively felt emotions concerning political wants and needs. Acknowledging these passions in the classroom entails an acceptance of the fact that possible irrational attitudes or behaviour are not easy, but nevertheless constitute a legitimate part of classroom friction. In contrast to the rational character of the deliberative model, Mouffe emphasizes the importance of passions. She argues that these passions have been pushed back with 'the advance of individualism and the progress of rationality' (Mouffe, 2005b). Instead, passions as collective and shared emotions that at least partly shape the antagonism that is inherent in human relations should be incorporated 'towards the democratic design' (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 103).

If we return to what happened in Ms. Baker's classroom, there is a perceived incompatibility between Mehmet's point about the emptiness of non-Muslims and the question that is triggered in Peter's head: could his friend's statement mean that he in fact is an empty person? Ms. Baker and her pupils could engage in this event by starting a frictional conversation to unravel the behaviour and attitudes that are shown. For example, Ms. Baker could ask Mehmet to explain what he means.

She could also ask Peter how he feels about Mehmet's statement, and ask Mehmet what he thinks when confronted with his friend confusion and emotions. Ms. Baker could also choose to ask if the other Muslim pupils in the classroom feel the same as Mehmet does. In sum, the component of the triangle in the playground urges individuals to engage in the friction caused, using the three parts of the triangle to shape further educational actions, possibly leading to clarifying questions or giving pupils a certain task. For Mitchell, conflict revolves around the perception of the incompatibility of certain goals. This is a very rational explanation of the reason for a conflict. The perception of incompatibility is caused by colliding interpretations and constructed narratives that people have of reality, that are verbalized and constitute the actual conflict between them (Van Liere, 2014). Mitchell does not incorporate this narrative aspect. However, from an educational perspective it could be argued that, as constructions of reality, narratives determine human interaction that results from, could lead to, or is part of conflict. As such, narratives should be an intrinsic part of the theoretical framework proposed in this article.

The circle of narrativity

Research on narrativity has become well established among psychologists, anthropologists, and feminist scholars (De Groot, 2013). Both in conflict studies and in education, narrativity is widely acknowledged as important (for conflict studies, see for example Little, 2007; Rahal, 2012; for education, see for example: De Groot, 2013; Goodson, Biesta & Tedder et al., 2013). Fisher (1984, p. 79) coined the term *homo narrans* in 1984 to describe the need of people to understand their complex surroundings by constructing, telling, and listening to stories. Vanderven states that 'meaning is communicated through narratives that serve to organize experience' (Vanderven, 2004, p. 179). Or as American sociologists Denzin and Lincoln put it, the world is known 'through the stories that are told about it' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 p. 641). According to Van Liere, who studies religion in contexts of violent conflict, the attention to narrativity as a useful tool in learning processes is based on the idea that narratives are understood as a source of information about the subject studied and as a possible instrument

to integrate the object into a cognitive learning process. As such, Van Liere (2014) understands narrativity as a sense-making mechanism that has the ability to broaden one's position, but also helps teachers and students to understand how this narrative position is part of historical, cultural, and religious presumptions which can be refocused, redirected, and reinterpreted (see also: Clark, 2010 p. 5; Goodson & Gill, 2011 p. 120). This ability of increasing understanding through the frictional exchange of micro-narratives is the reason why narrative learning is the second component of the playground.

Narrativity connects to Mouffe's idea about democracy and conflict in at least two ways. First, as Van Liere argues, narratives do not take place on the cognitive level alone. Mitchell rationalizes conflict by stating that it is caused by perceiving incompatibility of certain goals. This might be the case, but this incompatibility is something that is felt and verbalized by the agents. Narratives are rooted in different dimensions of emotion, sometimes touching upon intense feelings (Van Liere, 2014). Or to speak with Mouffe, passions are part of narratives that make them come alive through the different levels of friction in which these passions are articulated. This is also mentioned when Van Liere explains how narratives are not isolated activities: people live in a 'story-shaped world' in which narratives are all around:

> 'in gossip and riddles, soaps and news reports, on YouTube and blogs, small talks and pep-talks. (...) Grief, anger, disappointment, happiness, commitment and compassion are all specific elements that need to be told (...). By telling stories (...) we relate to what is important for us to be. It is by "feeling" for example grief within a narrative and linking with one's own that makes a story becomes alive' (Van Liere, 2014 p. 159).

Mouffe states that the challenge for democracy lies not in excluding passions, but rather in finding ways to channel them into the democratic realm. The circle of narrativity enables pupils to channel passions. Furthermore, this part of the playground enables practice with the articulation of pupils' passions in a classroom in which different narratives could possibly cause friction. Hence, by articulating their own stories and listening to those of others, pupils learn that they are part of a society with different stories and different forms of frictions.

Narrativity not only connects to passions but also to power relations. For Van Liere (2014 p. 159, 160), sharing narratives is not a purely autonomous activity as it is embedded in social, cultural, and often moral modes of storytelling. This is related to the narrating subject as an agent. As such, a narrative always contains an 'agenda' which 'affirms, confirms, reaffirms and denies certain aspects as belonging to my "identity" or my "core-narrative"' (Van Liere, 2014 p. 160). So, by constructing a narrative, individuals are making sense of themselves and the world around them (Clark, 2010). At the same time, narratives will always be configured to social, cultural, or religious normativities that are historically situated. Or as Van Liere (2014, p. 162) puts it: '*What* stories are told and *how* stories are told is determined by structures of power that demand stories to be told in such a way that they become understandable and bearable as part of a (…) historical continuum.'

If we accept that relations of power are constitutive of the social, the main question is not how to eliminate power. Instead, the focus should be on how to constitute forms of power that make negotiation and recreation possible. For Mouffe, consensus in a liberal-democratic society 'is – and always will be – the expression of a hegemony and a crystallization of power relations' (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 49). By making narrativity part of the playground, pupils are encouraged to explore how their stories and those of others are embedded in different contexts, and how power relations cause one story to be favoured or outstripped by another, effecting the friction they experience in hearing the stories of others. Moreover, to really listen *where* stories come from and understand which assumptions, experiences, or values the stories are embedded in. Hence, we would emphasize the importance of the circle as the component in which friction is enclosed.

This may sound as a complex and challenging task to execute in practice. Of course, to contribute to the process of learning democracy of pupils and manage friction in an educational way is not easy. Nevertheless, a small interruption, question, or task can be sufficient to facilitate the sharing of narratives to understand the friction in the playground. For Ms. Baker, the challenge lies in using Mehmet's pitch and statement in such a way that her pupils exchange their stories. She could ask Mehmet to tell his classmates how his religion is part of his daily life. She could also ask Mehmet to sit down and ask all students to write about the place of religion in their lives and what they like or

dislike about it. Non-religious pupils such as Peter she could ask to write about what religion is in their view, and how they handle these topics as non-believers. Another strategy would be for Ms. Baker to show how Mehmet's religion is a significant part of different news items, and how it is presented within these stories by showing some examples from news channels, YouTube, or social media, and compare these different ways of presenting stories. A more complex strategy could be to stoke up the friction further by stating that some non-believers think religious people are 'empty', and therefore choose to believe in something that cannot be proven. If this approach makes Ms. Baker uncomfortable, she can for example show a clip of a provocative atheist to fire up the conversation. In this way she would bring the outside world into the classroom, which could lead to a more intense level of friction. However, this begs a question about the game rules of such friction. For example, you could question to what extent Ms. Baker should enlarge the friction, or whether a pupil such as Mehmet should be allowed to make such a statement. And if so, how should the teacher respond? Should Mehmet be cast out of the classroom and be reprimanded in private, or should he be made an example of in front of the classroom? Should his statement be ignored by quickly changing the subject, or should Ms. Baker end the revolving discussion by stating that some things cannot be said in the classroom? To explore the limitations of this playground, we will now use Huizinga's reflections and turn to the square of play.

The square of play

According to Huizinga, the first and foremost important aspect of play is that it is a free act. It contains a 'quality of freedom', '[play] is in fact freedom' (Huizinga, 1998 p. 8). Huizinga sets play apart from 'real life'. To play means to step out of real life 'into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own' (Huizinga, 1998 p. 8). Play interpolates itself as an activity in itself. Therefore, it should be seen as an intermezzo or interlude within daily life. However, it is also a regularly recurring activity and as such an integral part of our daily lives. Play has a cultural and social function for both the individual as well as society (Huizinga, 1998).

The third element of play is closely connected with the idea of play as an interlude, namely its limitedness and thus its ability to create a certain order. Play appears within a certain time and space: 'it contains its own course and meaning (…) begins, and then at a certain moment its "over"' (Huizinga, 1998, p. 9). Play is always 'performed within a playground that is literally "staked-out" (…) a temporarily real world of its own' (Huizinga, 1998, p. 14). Additionally, Huizinga mentions the ability of play to be repeated at any time. With the end of the play its effect is not lost, rather it continues to 'shed its radiance on the ordinary world outside, a wholesome influence working security, order and prosperity for the whole community' (Huizinga, 1998 p. 77). Moreover, Huizinga (1998, p. 10) finds the limitation of space even more striking and mentions the idea of the *playground*: '[all play] moves and has its being within a playground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course.'

The last important elements are tensions and uncertainty. In play, there is always something at stake, or at-play. 'Play is tense, as we say' (Huizinga, 1998, p. 11). As is the case in Mouffe's democratic theory, Huizinga mentions the concept of *agon*, which he classifies as an essential part of the play concept. In his view, *agon* as tension, strife, or contest, is an inherent part of play, precisely because something is at play. There is something to be won. This does not extend to what game theorists call the payoff. To put it more strongly, in his reflections on the first decades of the twentieth century, Huizinga observed a growing emphasis on winning, causing play to become more and more serious. He states that rules have become strict and elaborate, while records and rankings gained more and more importance, causing a shift towards 'seriousness and over-seriousness', in which 'something of the pure play-quality is inevitably lost' (Huizinga, 1998 p. 197). For Huizinga, play revolves less around the finalization of a victory, and more about the play being played: 'like all other forms of play, the contest is largely devoid of purpose. That is to say, the action begins and ends in itself. The popular Dutch saying to the effect that "it is not the marbles that matter, but the game", expresses this clearly enough' (Huizinga, 1998 p. 49).

As already mentioned, all play has its rules according to Huizinga. However, some people try to change or undermine the rules. Huizinga makes a distinction between the 'spoilsport' and 'the cheat'. The latter still "pretends to play the game, and on the face of it, still acknowledges

the play (Huizinga, 1998, p. 11). Additionally, Huizinga mentions how in different myths and fables through history, moral judgement is often in favour of the cheat who wins by using his wit and tricks. The spoilsport shatters the play-world:

> *'By withdrawing from the game, he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its illusion, a pregnant word which means literally "in-play" (...). Therefore, he must be cast out, for he threatens the existence of the play-community' (Huizinga, 1998, p. 11).*

Huizinga mentions that consequently the spoilsports often make their own communities with rules of their own, thereby becoming 'outlaws' or 'revolutionaries' (Huizinga, 1998 p. 12).

When applied to the school as a playground to practice democracy, learning democracy can be understood as a voluntary act, or as freedom. Furthermore, learning democracy in a playground can be seen as an interlude because it is an ongoing experiment that extends education. Huizinga's characterization of play as interlude connects to the aspect of civic learning as subjectification, exactly because a school is a place which focuses on a process of learning, which implicates room for orientation, adjustment, and error. The concept of play as interlude also applies to interventions in the lesson aimed at making pupils focus on a certain topic that came up during class, as is the case in our example. Huizinga refers to this element of play as 'a world on its own' and as a phenomenon that is literally 'staked-out', because it can begin and end at any time. More importantly, Huizinga mentions that the end of play does not mean its effect gets lost. On the contrary, it continues to 'shed its radiance on the world outside', in this case not only extending from the classroom to the school as a playground, but also beyond the playground and in *the world outside*. So, in light of Huizinga's idea of play, how the event in the classroom of Ms. Baker was played-out will affect the pupils in their lives 'after school'.

This is also the case because tension and uncertainty are part of the playground, because there is something at stake, or at-play. Just like Mouffe classifies agon as an inherent part of democracy, Huizinga states that agon is an inherent part of play. So, we would

first like to acknowledge the fact that tension and uncertainty are an inherent part of the playground, and thus of education. Teachers who are confronted with friction, when pupils make highly sensitive and possible hurtful or discriminating statements for instance, may find themselves in such a highly tense and uncertain moment. Second, by reflecting upon those who undermine the rules of play, Huizinga provides us with a theory to explore the limitations of the playground to answer Ms. Baker's questions after she heard Mehmet's statement. Huizinga makes a distinction between cheats that still acknowledge the playground, and spoilsports who breaks the rules and threatens the play-community, sometimes leaving the playground to make their own community. From the perspective of Huizinga, the cheat remains part of the playground, even when his practice appears on its borders and challenges its limitations by balancing or even overstepping the borders. Nevertheless, as a player in the playground the cheat can be called upon or reprimanded as part of the play. In other words, the teacher still puts down the boundaries, and acts as an agent that is actively part of the play that is unfolding within those boundaries. In our view, the cheat can also be a critical voice that challenges the status-quo by bending the rules or showing flaws in the limitations by using wits and tricks. According to Huizinga, the spoilsport, by breaking out of the square of play, should be sent away and excluded from the playground. However, from an educational perspective that aims to turn political conflict into educational friction, this should not happen to the spoilsport. In our view, exactly because of Huizinga's claim that spoilsports that leave the playground often make their own communities, it is educationally important to keep them in. By dismissing a pupil because of his harsh statement while practicing democracy is to say that this is not the playground in which he or she belongs, and thus that his or her opinion has no place in a democracy in which opinions are respected and played-out, at the risk of making the pupil an outcast. From an educational perspective, *learning democracy* encompasses friction that comes with plurality and diversity. Hence, with regard to the spoilsport breaking or overstepping the limitations of the playground, we still need to be to *understanding* and involve the pupil. If the aim is to understand the school as a playground to practice democracy, as advocated by the new curriculum, researchers, and experts, the one rule would be for teachers to allow what Huizinga calls the 'elasticity of human relationships' within the classroom (Huizinga, 1998 p. 207).

From the perspective of friction, Ms. Baker should not ignore, blur, or gloss over Mehmet's statement. Moreover, she should not dismiss him out of class because of his statement. The question would be if Mehmet is a spoilsport or a cheat within her limitations. She could answer this question by turning back to the triangle and circle of the playground, creating an interlude in which she enables the pupils to practice with the friction that is felt. This way, she can clarify the perceived incompatibility, attitudes and behaviour, and telling each other their stories to understand in what narratives this friction is rooted. Either way, if the aim for pupils is to learn democracy, she should not ignore or overstep this friction. Ignoring such a frictional statement, or settling the matter by 'agreeing to disagree' is a missed opportunity to learn democracy. Not dismissing the spoilsport in a moment of educational friction and turning this moment into a democratic interlude in which all pupils can be engaged, is an example of what learning democracy through friction can be.

Conclusion

This is what actually did happen in Ms. Baker's classroom. After Mehmet's statement, she asked him: 'Now Mehmet, you do not mean that non-Muslims are empty people, but that they have no religion, right?' Mehmet, still in front of the class, looked at his teacher and said: 'No, I mean that they are empty.' Ms. Baker, now also confused and caught by surprise, asked his classmates to applaud him and Mehmet to return to his seat. Enthusiastically, she announced the next pupil and asked her to come forward. Mehmet and Peter never spoke again about this event. Neither in class, nor in the days after. Mehmet did not know that his friend was affected by his statement. Peter told his parents he was angry and felt misunderstood and he did not know how or when to talk to his friend about this. After months, slowly but surely, the two friends grew apart. This seems a slightly dramatic end to a rather small event, a friendship ending as a consequence of a short sentence. Maybe the reason Mehmet and Peter grew apart had to do with developments everybody goes through during puberty: shifting interests, meeting new people, changing values, different hobbies after school. Nevertheless, the example does clarify a missed opportunity for mutual understanding

between two friends, but also between citizens within a plural and diverse society, and the pivotal importance of teachers' role in turning political conflict into educational friction.

Education should incorporate consensus and integration into existing orders and civic learning as socialization. Nonetheless, we argue that the current emphasis on citizenship as consensus, and conflict as something that needs to be resolved does not do justice to democratic learning, and fails to formulate civic learning as subjectification. This paper explored how political conflict, as an important part of democracy, can contribute to subjectification as civic learning, and to understand it as educational friction. By referring to friction, we pinpointed the different levels of conflict that can appear within an educational context. By using theories about conflict, narrativity, and culture, we explored how conflict can be educational and constructed a theoretical framework that might help teachers identify and supervise friction in their educational practice. The visualization of friction as a triangle helps to understand the three aspects of friction to identify when friction appears in the classroom: which goals are perceived as incompatible, what kind of attitudes are shown, and which behaviour needs to be addressed. Then, the component of the circle, in which the triangle is embedded, should trigger the teachers to shed light on the pupils' narratives, in which the friction is verbalized. The square is the visualization of the limits of the classroom and the friction that takes place. Handling friction in the classroom is a challenge that requires great knowledge and teacher professionalism. The aim of this paper was not to determine the boundaries, but to help teachers understand their own limitations, and construct a framework that contributes to further professionalization of teachers regarding conflict in the classroom, and turn it into educational friction.

Furthermore, this paper aimed to theoretically contribute to the shift from teaching citizenship to learning democracy. By using Huizinga's work, we explored the value of the concept of play for civic learning as subjectification. In our view, play as a cultural phenomenon that always contains a certain *agon* further clarifies what subjectification as civic learning encompasses. As Huizinga states, it is a voluntary act, or freedom, which happens as an interlude and can be frustrated by individuals who do not play by the rules. From an educational point of view, learning democracy as subjectification means allowing pupils

to talk freely when friction appears, by taking the time and creating an interlude. Biesta justly states that the school is only one place to *learn democracy*. Nevertheless, it is in the classroom and the playground where democracy is learned under the supervision of teachers. These pupils will grow up one day and become adults. If we do not take political conflict into consideration and treat it as educational friction, we silence pupils, forcing them through the focus on the dissolvement of difference to ultimately having the same ideas and opinions, instead of inviting them to open up and formulate their own views and beliefs. This would result in the impossibility of the school as a playground to practice democracy. Surely, this will cause tense conversations and tasks of which the outcomes are uncertain. It would lead to pupils which will challenge their teachers' limitations and act as cheats or spoilsports. If the school is a place in which democracy should be practiced, we as educators should embrace this *agon* in such a way that pupils begin to learn how to deal with difference by understanding it, in the hope that these frictions at school are the first of many plays and practices which they will find themselves confronted with when they ultimately leave this playground for another one.

Teachers Stepping up Their Game in the Face of Extreme Statements: *a Qualitative Analysis of Educational Friction when Teaching Sensitive Topics*[9]

Abstract

Friction in the classroom should not be understood as something that must be solved.

Experiencing friction during the education of sensitive topics may enable students to learn democracy. Due to the openness and indeterminacy of these topics, students can experience what it is like to be (political) subjects in a diverse society, and become aware of the other's subjectness. To better understand how to handle educational friction in the classroom, we observed and interviewed nine expert teachers and analysed the empirical data by using our Educational Friction Modelling Framework (EFMF) of educational friction as a heuristic lens.

We found five different ways in which teachers show willingness to engage in a subject-subject relation with their students, and balance between challenging and limiting students when discussing sensitive topics: 1) allowing extreme statements, 2) making room for students, 3) sharing narratives, 4) challenging and provoking students, and 5) making a distinction between rationality and emotions in the classroom. This study shows how expert teachers make friction educational and, in doing so, show their students that friction is inherent to the process of civic learning and of living together in a plural democracy.

Introduction

Friction in the classroom should not be understood as something that must be solved. On the contrary, it is inherent to the process of civic learning and living together in a liberal and plural democracy (Biesta, 2011; Lozano Parra & Wansink,in press; Merry, 2020; Mouffe, 2005; Ruitenberg, 2008). However, research shows that teachers tend to evade sensitive topics and political driven subjects that cause friction, often out of fear for consequences in the classroom (Wansink et al., 2018; Awan et al., 2019; James & Janmaat, 2019; Clycq et al., 2019; Sikkens et al., 2016; Bertram-Troost & Miedema, 2017).

For teachers to allow friction, we need to better understand how it appears in the classroom, and how it is used for civic learning. In previous research, we developed our Educational Friction Modelling Framework (EFMF) to understand political conflict as educational friction (see Chapter 4). The research question of this article is: how do expert teachers handle educational friction in the classroom? Nine secondary education expert teachers were asked to design a lesson about a social, political and/or culturally sensitive topic in which different perspectives would appear. We observed and transcribed the lessons and conducted stimulated recall interviews to collect empirical data for our analysis. We apply an 'informed grounded theory' approach that emphasizes the creative process that emerges when analysing empirical data while being informed by theory (Thornberg, 2012). To do so, we used the theoretical framework developed in our previous research as a heuristic lens through which to further analyse the meaning of the findings from our qualitative, empirical analysis.

The aim of this study, which has an explorative character, is to further understand educational friction by showing how it takes shape in the educational practice of teaching sensitive topics. Hopefully, our study will provide new insights which will help educators to handle and apply educational friction further in practice. In doing so, we intend to contribute to what Dutch pedagogue Gert Biesta (2011) has called a shift 'from teaching citizenship towards learning democracy', and present insights as a result of using our EFMF as an analytic tool to illuminate and understand educational friction (Jurnow & Curow, 2021).

Before we further outline the qualitative, interpretative research process of this study in the method section, we will first explicate our theoretical framework. First, we will conceptualize 'sensitive topics', and describe Biesta's shift towards learning democracy. Then, we will explicate educational friction in the context of teaching sensitive topics. In the result section, we will describe five ways of handling friction in the classroom that emerged from our analysis. Then, we will discuss how these five ways of handling friction which educators can use to apply in their teaching of sensitive topics, connect to two more overarching conclusions. We will argue that our results ultimately come down to teachers' ability to simultaneously challenge and limit themselves and their students, and their willingness to enter into a subject-subject relation with their students.

Theory

Sensitive topics

Sensitive topics or controversial topics, which we will use as synonyms in this article, arise from contrasting views between individuals and/or groups within a society, because of perceived conflict about a subject that is multi-interpretable (Dearden, 1981; Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Oulton et al., 2004; Savenije & Goldberg, 2018). There is a large consensus about the importance and educational value of teaching controversial topics when it comes to civic learning: teaching these topics can promote democratic values and contribute to the interest of students in politics (see, for example: Bickmore, 1999; Hess & Avery, 2008; McAvoy & Hess, 2014). However, several reports and studies also show that teachers are hesitant to teach sensitive topics, for different reasons. More general reasons for avoiding these topics are a lack of time, an overfull curriculum, and a felt lack of knowledge about the topic (Erlich & Gindi, 2019). Furthermore, teachers fear potentially uncontrollable situations and students' emotional reactions, and may be uncertain about their ability to respond in case of extreme or undemocratic reactions (Hess, 2009; Misco & Patterson, 2007; Wansink et al, 2018; 2021). Or, to put it differently, teachers are hesitant to discuss controversial topics because of their fear of conflict or friction (Lozano Parra & Wansink, in press). This seems to be caused – at least partly – by the exposed indeterminacy and openness

about the topic that causes friction. When talking about a controversial issue, interactions between students and teacher do not revolve around 'the right answer' or the 'skill to achieve a certain goal'. Moreover, subjects involved in a discussion about sensitive topics find themselves entangled in a process of sense-making about a certain controversial topic (Lozano Parra & Wansink; in press; Wansink et al, submitted). During this act of sense-making, teachers as well as students are confronted with multiple perspectives on a certain subject on different levels, and in different gradations of tension in the classroom.

Learning democracy

Biesta argues that 'questions about how to engage with conflict are likely to permeate democratic processes and practices' (Biesta, 2011 p. 93). By focusing on friction and its different gradations of tension in the classroom, we argue that making friction educational connects to the shift 'from teaching citizenship towards learning democracy' explored by Biesta (2011). We will explain this by briefly explicating the distinction he makes between civic learning as socialization, and civic learning as subjectification.

A socialization conception of civic learning 'would see the aims of civic learning first and foremost in terms of the reproduction of an existing socio-political order and thus of the adaption of individuals to this order' (Biesta, 2011 p. 86). This is what he pinpoints as 'teaching citizenship'. In emphasizing a subjectification perspective, Biesta aims to move beyond 'the trend to see the domain of citizenship in social terms.' Moreover, he argues for a focus on 'the emergence of political agency, and thus [to see] the aims of civic learning first and foremost in terms of the promotion of political subjectivity and agency' (Biesta, 2011 p. 87). Civic learning is something done by individuals-in-context and individuals-in-relationship (Biesta, 2011). Civic learning as subjectification entails finding oneself as a (political) subject among others and advocates the exploration and experience of the friction that appears when political subjectivity arises. Civic learning as subjectification moves beyond any essentialist concept of a pupil learning *to be a specific kind of citizen* that fits within an existing order (Chapter 4).

We argue that it is through friction that students experience plurality, and thus experience not only their own subjectness, but also

the subjectness of others. By focusing on friction, we therefore contribute to the practice of learning democracy by studying how teachers handle friction in the classroom. Furthermore, Biesta states that his idea of learning democracy actually refers to viewing democracy as 'an ongoing collective experiment' (Biesta, 2011 p. 2; Ranson, 1998 p. 9). The friction that is caused by the indeterminacy and openness of sensitive topics connects to this idea: handling friction is an ongoing collective experiment in which both teacher and students are challenged to shape their subjectness on the playground to make friction educational. To make this process insightful, we developed a framework which we will now explicate further in order to connect it to the idea of learning democracy.

Education Friction Modelling Framework

Friction is a tension that is inherently part of human relations in a plural and diverse democratic society (Banks et al., 2007; Biesta, 2011; Curnow & Jurow, 2021; Meirieu, 2007; Mouffe, 2005; Merry, 2020; Ruitenberg, 2008; Tivaringe & Kirshner, 2021). *Educational friction* is the tension in the classroom that sparks different levels of friction which is verbalized by individuals in a certain context and in relation to each other, in which narratives are shared, and the limitations of the playground, which we will explicate further below, are tested. Educational friction can be experienced in different gradations, such as collision, perplexity, difference, or resistance, but also as surprise or discomfort. It is exactly these gradations of experience that open possibilities for learning (Dewey, 1933; 1938; Wansink et al, submitted). The classroom seems a suitable place to allow friction to become educational, while it is the place in which students can be 'nudged' to participate in this sense-making process (Lozano Parra & Wansink, in press). Moreover, in the classroom students can practice and play out this tension on a playground in which there is room for learning, and thus for movement, rethinking, making mistakes, confusion, and the exploration of new possibilities. This is very different from simply 'agreeing to disagree'. The latter individualizes the matter at stake and, therefore, breaks the tension by dismissing the context and relations between subjects. Consequently, friction is envisaged as a threat to human relations instead of an inherent part of human relations. To put it differently, agreeing to disagree disables

the conversation by simply ending the dialogue, and thus forecloses any possibility of allowing educational friction in the classroom to enable students to experience the diversity and plurality that is part of democratic societies.

In previous research we developed the 'Educational Friction Modelling Framework' to further clarify educational friction. Educational friction consists of three parts; the first part is the *triangle of friction* (see Figure 1) which represents the perceived friction by two or more agents or groups of incompatible goals. Based on insights from the field of Conflict Studies, we conceptualised the second part as *frictional behaviour*, meaning 'the actions that are undertaken aimed at letting the opponent abandon or modify its goals' (Mitchell, 1981). The third part of the triangle of friction consists of *frictional attitudes*: 'psychological states, emotions and attitudes as well as patterns of conceptions and misconceptions that arise from entanglement in conflict' (Mitchel, 1981 p. 29). These attitudes can be either cognitive, such as the appearance of tunnel vision or stereotyping, or emotional, showing for example anger or fear.

Friction is always verbalized, and thus narrated (Van Liere, 2014). This shows the embeddedness of friction in narrativity, presented in our framework as the triangle that is embedded in the *circle of narrativity*. In 1984, communication scholar Fisher (1984, p. 78) coined the term *Homo Narrans*, pinpointing the need of people to understand their complex surroundings by constructing, telling, and listening to stories. In other words, the world is known 'through narratives that are told about it' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005 p. 641). Narrativity is a sense-making mechanism that helps teachers and students to broaden their own position, but also to redefine and restructure how this narrative position relates to historical, cultural, and religious presumptions which can be refocused, redirected, and reinterpreted (Clark et al., 2011; Vanderven, 2004; Van Liere, 2014). Narrativity allows students-in-relation and students-in-context to make sense of their own experiences, the experiences of others, and the context they live in. This means that friction is always part of making sense of something, experiencing the different gradations of learning, shaped by previous learning, and meaning making (Biesta, 2011; Dewey, 1938).

The third part of educational friction is the *square of play,* which we will refer to as the playground. We used the concept of play, formulated by Dutch cultural historian Huizinga to explore the limitations of the

playground that is the classroom. For this study, it is important to mention that, according to Huizinga, play is an 'interlude' which can recur regularly. Play is a free act first and foremost: it contains 'a quality of freedom' that enables 'the elasticity within human relations', which is important because it 'allows tension' (Huizinga, 1938/1998 p. 8, 300). There are those who undermine play, respectively 'the cheat' and the 'spoilsport'. Where spoilsports shatter the play-world, often leaving it to 'make their own communities', revealing the fragility of the play-community, cheats, despite bending the rules, still acknowledge the existence of the play and remain part of the playground (Huizinga, 1938/1998 p. 11).

Huizinga's characterization of play as an interlude connects to Biesta's idea of civic learning as subjectification, because it is an act of freedom, and thus appears as an interlude in which people as subjects can choose to act or not to act, as opposed to civic learning as something that is *taught*. At the same time, the playground is a place in which individuals are in-relation and in-context with others, all accepting certain rules to move freely within, and possibly slightly overstepping, the limitations of the playground. To shift the focus from teaching citizenship to learning democracy, means that a citizen is not 'made'. Moreover, shifting the focus in this way foregrounds citizenship not as something that can be taught but instead as a form of *becoming*, and therefore as something that should aim at the *promotion* of freedom (Biesta, 2020 p. 93 emphasis as in original).

Just like society is restricted by law and democracy cannot function without a certain stability (Mouffe, 2005), the playground of the school as a place for learning democracy also has rules and limitations which support its steadiness. However, Huizinga's spoilsport and cheat also leave room for questioning the limitations of the playground and thereby the status quo and, thus, enable a process of learning and making mistakes. By leaving room for different gradations already mentioned, we argue that making friction educational is first about understanding the topic and what makes it frictional. By using EFMF as a heuristic lens, we will analyse how teachers handle friction when teaching sensitive topics, and thereby encourage their students to learn democracy. To do so, we will first present our methodology.

Figure 1. Educational Friction Modelling Framework (EFMF).

Educational Friction Modelling Framework

Conflict Theory
· Incompatibility of goals
· Frictional behaviour
· Frictional atitudes

Narrative Theory
· Narrativity as a sensemaking mechanism
· Narratives as a way to include passions

Cultural Theory
· Play as freedom
· Limitations of space and time
· The cheat vs. the spoilsport

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in what constitutes friction

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in how friction is verbalized through narrativity

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in the limitations in the classroom

Method

Participants

For our research, we purposefully selected nine teachers that were nominated by university-based teacher educators as expert teachers (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Furthermore, teachers needed to meet three criteria to be selected for this study: firstly, they had to be active within Dutch secondary education. We chose to select only in-service teachers, because pre-service teachers are often reserved in discussing controversial topics (Nganga et al., 2019). Secondly, teachers needed to be willing to develop a lesson along the lines of our instruction. And finally, teachers had to have a well-established relationship with their pupils. That is why we asked the pupils to fill in the standardized and evaluated

Table 1. Respondents

Teacher	Teacher Experience	Subject	Level	Topic
1. James	10	Social Sciences	Vocational	Dealing with different perspectives
2. Michael	2	Social Sciences	Vocational	Israel & Palestine conflict
3. Mary	11	Dutch Language	Pre-university	State of human beings
4. Omar	6	Global Politics	Pre-university	Terrorism
5. Steven	14	Religious Education	Pre-university	Organ Donation
6. Emma	13	Dutch Language	Pre-university	Bullying
7. Brian	2	Social Sciences	General	Tolerance
8. Julia	12	Social Sciences	Pre-university	Multiculturalism in society
9. Oscar	27	History	Pre-university	Dutch Culture

Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction, or QTI (Wubbels et al., 2006). This questionnaire explicates the relationship between teacher and students along two axes: communion (i.e., warmth and closeness of the teacher) and agency (i.e., dominance and influence of the teacher). Research shows that pupils feel safe and comfortable to participate during class when their teachers score high on communion and agency. Therefore, we only included those teachers who scored high in those two areas (Wubbels et al., 2006; Campbell, 2008). Nine teachers, six of them male and three female, met the criteria and were included (see Table 1).

Data Sources

Eighteen data sources are used for this analysis: nine transcriptions of the lesson observations and nine stimulated recall interviews. The purpose of the lesson observations is to gain insight into the

Table 2. Example of coding

Coding	Description	Example
Friction	The perception of incompatibility of goals	Asylum seekers should be sent back, vs. we should take care of more refugees
Frictional behaviour	Action/statements to undermine opponent	'If you say something like that, do not be surprised when someone throws a brick at your head'
Frictional attitudes	Anger, fear, tunnel vision or stereotypes	'All people who seek asylum are fortune-seekers'
Narrativity	using one's story to understand, make a point and/or relate to yourself and/or somebody else	'My father is Italian; I I know what it is like to have a migration background'
Limitations of the playground	The acknowledgement and/or crossing of limitations and/or rules	'We do not use the word foreigner in this classroom'
	Provoking the limitations in the classroom and/or society about that which causes friction	'Do you consider euthanasia as progress?'

manifestation of friction in the classroom and the response to or shaping of this friction by teachers. The stimulated recall interviews were used to pinpoint friction by asking the teachers at which moment they experienced it. Furthermore, the interviews provide us with the opportunity to further analyse the meaning of the teachers' actions.

The second author and two research-assistants took the interviews and collected the data. For this study, we focused on the interaction *between* the teachers and their students to unravel the educational process of meaning making caused by the friction that appears in the playground that is the classroom.

Positionality

We use an informed grounded theory approach with an abductive character (Thornberg, 2012). By taking an abductive approach, we want to emphasize the 'creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence' (Tavery & Timmermans, 2014 p. 5). This connects to our constructivist idea that friction in the classroom needs to be discussed and re-evaluated. Friction, narratives, and the limitations of the playground change overtime. Turning political conflict into educational friction needs to be reflected upon every now and then: historical and socio-cultural embeddedness shapes friction. Friction as inherent tension in human relations is therefore also inherently dynamic, while it can change over time. In this study, our theoretical framework functions as a heuristic lens through which to focus on friction in the classroom, enabling both the grounding of theory in empirical data and the creative process of further enhancing the practicality of educational friction Kelle (1995, 2005).

Table 3. Analytical steps, process and strategy

Analytical Steps	Analytical Process	Analytical Strategy[10]
1. Identifying moments of educational friction within the raw data	1.1 Selection of discourse and utterances from the lesson observations based on the stimulated recall interviews that showed a situation or experience that would possibly be characterized as educational friction.	Initial coding
	1.2 Selection of discourse and utterances from the lesson observations that could also be characterized as educational friction, apart from the stimulated recall.	
	1.3 Selection of discourse and utterances from the interviews that shed light on thoughts, feelings and justifications of respondents' actions that were undertaken in relation to educational friction.	
2. Identifying perceived friction, narrativity and the limitations of playground within the selected data of each respondent	2.1 Coding discourse and utterances from the selected lesson observation data considered as perceived friction, narrativity and the limitations of the playground.	Selective coding
	2.2 Coding discourse and utterances from the selected interview data that connected to the perceived friction, narrativity, and the limitations of the playground in the data of the observed lessons.	
3. Reading, re-evaluating and rewriting of personal memos and observations	3.1 Memo writing, based on the coding and analysis of Step 2.	Memo writing
	3.2 Writing analysis reports for each respondent, describing the various ways in which friction, narrativity, and the limitations of the playground appeared, and connected it to the described experiences, justifications, and reflections given during the interviews.	
4. Identifying emerging themes that appear within the selected data coded during step 2	Coding emerging themes how teachers allow educational friction. Themes: live-world, the other perspective, didactics, diversity, own opinion, emotion, extreme statements, in the moment, lesson aim, letting go of lesson aim, power, provoke, relation, rhetoric, making room, steering, time-management.	Selective coding

10   All strategies, Charmaz (2008).

Table 3. **Analytical steps, process and strategy** *(continued)*

Analytical Steps	Analytical Process	Analytical Strategy
5. Interpretation of emerging themes to further construct educational friction	5.1 Analysing the meaning of the emerging themes, and relating them to the practice of educational friction.	Memo writing
	5.2 Analysing the different codes critically, resulting in five results to further outline as ways in which teachers handle friction. Some codes were insufficiently broadly supported. This was the case for: didactics, rhetoric and power.	
	5.3 Formulating five ways that teachers use to handle educational friction: allowing extreme statements, making room, the use of personal stories, challenging and/or provoking pupils, and rationality vs. emotions.	
	5.4 Accommodate themes to the focused new insights: live-world, the other perspective, diversity, and relation connected to the use of personal stories. Own opinion, in the moment, lesson aim, letting go of lesson aim, and steering connected to challenging and/or provoking pupils. Time-management connected to making room.	

Data Analysis

We use a cross-case analysis (Kahn & Van Wynsberghe, 2008) and the analysis of emerging themes in the empirical data (Charmaz, 2008). For the outline of our analytical process, see Table 3. The first analytical step was a close reading of both the lesson observations and the interviews to identify the moments in which friction appeared in the classroom. We selected the data in the lesson observations that were pinpointed by the teachers themselves through stimulated recall during the interviews as the moment in which 'different perspectives' appeared. Furthermore, we also selected data in the lesson observations that appeared to be part of one of the three components of educational friction during the close reading but were not recalled by the teacher during the interview. Then, we identified the segments in the interviews that shed light on the question how and why the teachers chose to act, say something, or otherwise acted in the way they did during their lesson when friction appeared.

The second step of the analytic process was coding those segments in the selected data which we identified as one of the three components of educational friction, using our framework as heuristic lens, along the following descriptions. For a text fragment to be coded as friction, the text should point towards 'the perception of incompatibility of goals' (see Chapter 4, p. 58). The 'perception' part means that words and utterances not only include 'what the friction was about', but also refer to those segments pinpointing where 'the friction was "actually" about' according to the individuals that were involved in the conversation. Consequently, descriptions, clearances, and attempts to recapitulate, sharpen, change, or challenge related to the friction in the classroom were included.

We consider both behaviour and attitudes as inherent parts of friction. Therefore, we did not code them as separate aspects, but chose to use them as indicators of friction. 'Frictional behaviour' refers to 'actions or statements with the intention to let the opponent abandon or modify its goals'; 'frictional attitudes' refers to emotional statements that show fear or anger, but also cognitive attitudes such as the use of stereotypes or tunnel visions (see Chapter 4, p. 58).

For a text fragment to be coded as narrativity, the coded text had to be an effort 'to understand reality by telling or relating one's own personal story' to explicate, make a point, and/or understand that what is spoken about in the classroom' (see Chapter 4, p. 59). We coded a text fragment as play when it addressed 'the acknowledgment and crossing of limitations and/or rules that are part of the classroom' (see Chapter 4, p. 61). Based on the interviews, we also coded fragments in the lesson observations as play which teachers referred to as a specific moment that called for explicating or setting the limitations of the playground. In addition, we coded fragments as play that showed teachers and/or students activating each other to 'test the boundaries'. This referred to the limitations of the classroom, the conversation itself, referring to what can and cannot be said, but also questions or statements pinpointing limitations within society about the subject that was debated. In some cases, a segment had more than one code. For example, a sentence that referred to a personal narrative could at the same time test the limitation of the playground. For a clear view of all the analytical steps and their implication, see Table 3.

To make this research process both more transparent and rigorous, we applied an audit trail procedure with an independent researcher to review the analytical steps and outcomes (Akkerman et al., 2008).

The results of the audit trail were used in the final data analysis. For example, the coding segments of both friction and limitations were sharpened, and the use of the heuristic tool was further explicated. A cross-case analysis was made in NVIVO to explore the differences and similarities between the coded components within the data of the nine respondents. We wrote an analysis for every respondent to further clarify 1) the interrelation between the three components of educational friction, and 2) the relation between the actions undertaken during the lessons and the justifications, thoughts and feelings of the teacher expressed during the interviews. As a final step, we analysed all data once again through an emerging themes analysis in NVIVO to reveal those aspects within the selected data during Step two. We refrained from starting this analysis directly after the first coding of the selected data (step 2) to separate observations from interpretation as clearly as possible. By doing so, we separated the empirical analytical steps (steps 1, 2, and 4) from the interpretative analytical steps (steps 3 and 5), to structure an iterative process that does justice to both the empirical analysis and the interpretative, abductive process.

Results

In this section, we present the five emerging themes we found during our analysis using our framework as a heuristic lens. These themes represent different ways in which teachers handle educational friction. Where necessary, we will link the lesson observations to the interviews in which teachers explain *why* they choose to act, do, or say specific things, justifying their choice of words and actions in teaching a sensitive topic, clarifying the *how* of handling friction in the classroom. In the separate paragraphs, we will link the themes to one or more of the components of friction, narrativity, and the playground, and explain how the emerged themes show how teachers handle friction in the classroom.

Allowance of extreme statements
We observed how students in different classrooms made a harsh or extreme statement, i.e., a statement that excludes certain (minority) groups, and/or might be classified as possibly discriminating and/

or racist. In all cases, we coded these statements as friction, covering different gradations such as surprise, collision, and resistance. In Michael's class, a student showed a frictional attitude while preparing for a debate about the Israel-Palestine conflict, stating that the unrest 'is all because of the Jews', resisting his task to explore both sides of the conflict. For an overview of the extreme statements we coded, see Table 5.

In all cases, the teachers allowed the extreme statement, i.e., we observed how teachers neither expelled nor dismissed a student for making it. Instead, teachers initiated a conversation. James turned to the small group and talked about disagreement and the use of violence. Michael also spoke to a small group about their statement blaming Jewish people. Brian started a conversation about media framing when a student stated: 'I have never seen a North-African guy with blue eyes and blonde hair'. Oscar chose to thematize the statement of one of his students about 'the Moroccan-heating', pinpointing the place where most students with a migration background can be found during lunch breaks, and turned it into a whole-class discussion[11] about segregation at their own school. By using the extreme statements that were made during class, the selected teachers allowed for different gradations of friction that were caused, and made them part of their education at that specific moment.

Although they did not dismiss their students for making harsh statements, the teachers were well aware of the extremist character of what had been said. Michael even suggested that 'journalists should not hear such a statement'. In addition, extreme, frictional statements were not restricted to students alone. Steven states in his interview that his aim as a teacher is to 'guide them through their questions about life.' He tries to always refer to 'us' instead of 'I' to emphasize commonality. 'His secret goal' is to improve relations between pupils. Nevertheless, he is 'fundamentally convinced' that 'everyone may have their own opinion: one may think being gay is fantastic or reject homosexuality in general'. To prove his point, he mentions 'another hot potato.' According to him, 'one can totally be against Jews or Israel', if this happens with 'respect for one another' without 'leading to violence'. Steven thinks that he is more professional than his colleagues who 'teach the Big Bang as the truth', while he refrains from teaching creationism, even though he believes that God created earth.

11   in Dutch: onderwijsleergesprek

Table 4. Extreme statements made during the lesson

Teacher	Extreme statement made by a student during the lesson	Gradations of tension as a consequence of the extreme statement made during the lesson	The response of the teacher concerning the extreme statement during the interview
1. Michael	'The Jews, the Jews. It is all because of the Jews.'	*Resistance* towards to exploring of both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict	'There is still a lot to gain when it comes to these students.'
2. James	'If you say something like that, do not be surprised if someone throws a brick in your face.'	*Surprise* because of the harsh character of the statement	'See, then I will question him about the use of violence and about which reactions are acceptable and legitimate.'
3. Omar	'Is there something like justifiable terrorism?'	*Discomfort* about the possibility that a controversial issue could be understood in a different way	'I want them to learn that words contain power. To articulate something means making sense of social reality.'
4. Steven	'That is the same as saying you are not gay, when you actually are.'	*Collision,* frictional behaviour to convince the other of the difference between them	'I think one is allowed to reject homosexuality, as someone may think being gay is fantastic.'
5. (LA) Brian	"I have never seen a North-African guy with blue eyes and blonde hair."	*Collision,* frictional behaviour to convince the other of the point being made	'All conversations eventually come back to this point of framing people.'
6. Julia	"a school that is characterized by having a lot of foreigners is often a lower class kind of school."	*Surprise* about a student using a specific concept when pinpointing fellow citizens with a migration background	'They know they will lose points if they use "foreigner" in their exams.'
7. Oscar	Teacher: 'when I walk through the hallway, I see all the Moroccan students by the entrance.' Student: 'yeah, that is the "Moroccan-heating."'	*Disagreement* between the native students, and the students with a migration background about what it means to be discriminated	'Those remarks about the 'Moroccan-heating' are very politically incorrect (…), do not let journalists hear it.'

Making room

Our analysis shows four ways in which the selected teachers *make room* when teaching a sensitive topic, which we will take to mean: 1) making room, 2) making time, 3) making way, and 4) making space. The first example of making room is when friction from outside the classroom is invited inside, best exemplified by James. During the interview, James talks about how his previous lesson 'went out of the window' because a student shared how he was 'being discriminated by police and people on the street.' On the spot, James classified this as more important than what he had planned for the lesson, and 'made room' for it. He thematized the narrative of this student and decided to talk about 'how to deal with people with whom you disagree', knowing that it 'is something that is on top of their minds', and would possibly cause friction. In doing so, he hoped friction would appear through a sensitive topic that they all could relate to as he explained during the interview.

Making Time

Making time relates to the decision to throw the lesson plan 'out of the window' to make time and room for friction to appear. We observed that both James and Omar extended the friction that was discussed. Where James changed his lesson altogether, Omar postponed another task to the next class to make more time for the friction to play out. Mary made her students physically choose sides, aiming to literally cause movement to make disagreement visible. She asked a number of students why they chose this or that side, which led to two students defending their position, attacking the others' arguments for standing on the other side. In contrast, Mary stopped the discussion, saying she liked the fact that there were different perspectives, but ended it nevertheless because 'we are not having an extensive discussion right now'. During the interview, she made clear that this was a choice based on time-management. She wanted to elaborate on the disagreement that appeared, but it was impossible during a lesson 'that lasts only fifty minutes.' Thus, we observed how teachers tried to extend and limit the space that was available to them when friction appears.

Making Way

Making way is exemplified by teachers' awareness of their physical presence in the classroom. During his recall, James explained how he consciously 'makes room' while watching how the lesson proceeds: 'I want to get up, but immediately I am aware that I will be standing, and [pupil A] is sitting down. So, I adjust my posture: I take a step back, [I put my] hands on my back because I thought I had to make space.' Brian emphasizes the importance of 'his body language to show his sincere interest' when students are talking. Steven always uses 'we' during class and shows how he does not walk towards one of his pupils when he cannot hear him properly. This is a 'pitfall teachers often fall into because it minimizes the distance', causing other students not to be involved anymore, and consequently, the 'we' gets lost. That is why he always 'makes sure that he speaks loudly, so everybody can hear me', to stay in touch with all his students as a group. These teachers are aware of their bodily presence and its possible influence on their students within the physical space on the playground that is the classroom.

Making Space

The fourth and final way of making room, which we refer to as making space, refers to teachers letting go of the aims and ends of the lesson that they had planned to make way for what comes up when friction appears. This is distinct from making time: where Omar and May exemplified how they make room by controlling time, this fourth way of making room does not concern time, but the figurative space to speak about whatever comes to mind. Steven states that when he initiates a conversation such as the one about organ donation, he does not plan what will happen or how it will go, but instead lets himself 'be guided by that what is said', which happens 'conscious and unconsciously, all in split-seconds'. He 'does not know what happens in the minds' of his students, i.e., he cannot control what they will learn from it if anything: if they 'said good and useful things, then I am satisfied.' Emma also mentions the importance of space for change: 'you can plan all kinds of nice aims and activities, but [students] always bring other things [into the classroom] than you had planned.' Julia states that in preparing a lesson about a sensitive topic, she is mostly concerned with the kind of questions she could ask. Then all she can do is 'hope that it will bring something good:

usually it works, but not always. Sometimes it does not work.' Oscar
states that 'you do not know what people will come up with, and you do
not know where you want to go either.' Thus, by making room through
letting go of the aims and ends when friction appears, teachers make
room for the unexpected in which the conversation can go different ways.

Sharing personal stories

When a sensitive topic is discussed in the classroom, students' personal
stories are used to relate to it. We observed this in three ways. First,
the embeddedness of friction in narrativity is shared by students on
their own initiative. In Steven's class, different students shared their
religious beliefs to explain why they oppose organ donation. One of
Julia's students used his mixed background to strengthen his point of
view in the debate about multiculturalism. One student in Brian's class
explained how during one of his soccer matches, a boy with a migration
background who played very well was called 'that Moroccan player', while
a Dutch boy remained 'that boy'. During Oscar's lesson, one student
explained when she experiences discrimination outside school.

Second, in some cases, the teacher asked a specific student to
respond, knowing that this student would have a different point of
view about the topic. As such, teachers use student narratives to
invite the perspective of an 'other'. After letting several Muslim pupils
speak up, Steven asked a student to explain the religious beliefs of
the Bahai followed by an explanation of his own fasting experience.
Brian, Julia, and Oscar also questioned a specific student directly.
In his more homogeneous classroom, Oscar explicitly named the
absence of two students due to Ramadan and the missed opportunity
'to ask them what they think.' Then, he invited the only student with a
migration background to ask a personal question, asking her whether
she 'recognizes what is said' in class about discrimination. The
student responds: 'I don't know really (...), I am looked at, but that is
only when I wear a cap and my tracksuit when I'm biking through my
neighbourhood.' Consequently, other students react to this comment and
begin talking about skin-color, questioning if this is the same as 'having
many tattoos' or 'pink hair' and, consequently 'be stared at.'

Third, when the teachers were not satisfied with the friction in their
classroom, they tried to instigate it by emphasizing the importance of

narrativity, or even change the subject altogether to move to a subject that students can relate to in a more personal way. Emma explained during the interview that she experienced a shortage of friction because students 'did not made the subject personal', leading her to change the subject. She hoped that the clip she showed as an introduction about a victim of bullying would trigger 'students' emotions', but instead, she concluded that they were more occupied with 'distilling arguments to win the debate.' Brian made his lesson explicitly personal by asking his students 'to share something about your lives.' When not satisfied with the general remarks made about (in)tolerance, Brian urged his students 'to stay personal', and let them reflect on examples of (in)tolerance at their own school.

Furthermore, we want to add that all teachers emphasized the importance of a trust-bond. This relationship is established through 'being interested' in students' lives 'outside of the classroom' to build a 'safe space.' James calls it 'small-talk'. Brian talks to his pupils 'in the hallway'; Mary mentions how she asks the student who plays football if he won during the weekend. Michael talks about the music they listen to, and Omar mentions how he uses the space of his classroom outside of school hours as a place where students can visit him for a conversation or spend their lunch break. This trust-bond seems to be a condition to make the sharing of personal stories possible.

In sum, students use their narratives to make sense about the topic that is discussed. In some cases, teachers try to balance out different perspectives by asking specific students to share their narrative. When they do not sense any gradation of friction, teachers do not hesitate in asking their students to be personal, or they even change the subject entirely.

Challenging and provoking students

All teachers emphasized the importance of their task to challenge and provoke friction. Emma argues that she tries to get her students out of their comfort zone. Julia states that 'provoking or challenging pupils is probably one of the most important teacher goals.' She agrees with Oscar that students tend to say 'socially acceptable' things, which she tries to undo 'by provoking and teasing from time to time.' In her class, Julia provoked friction by condemning a student for using the

word 'foreigners' when referring to Dutch citizens with a migration background. Shortly after, she called another student 'the foreigner over there in the back' when asking his opinion. Brian states that he tries to really challenge his students to engage in conversations, asking the interviewer if he saw how many of the students stayed after class to further talk about the sensitive topic. Steven says it is his task as a teacher 'to get things out into the open without it spinning out of control.' In the conversation about organ donation, he challenged his religious students to argue why their religion, as they say, condemn it, asking them 'if this means they will decline an organ if they need one in a life-or-death situation'. Omar constantly fired questions at his students to contain the tension of discomfort in their discussion about terrorism and its meaning, such as: is it terrorism when you blow up an empty building?', and 'can a state do terrorism?', and 'is there something like justified terrorism?' At the same time, he also invited other students to challenge his questions and the statements of others, praising them along the way 'for making things difficult'. Omar stated during the interview that he was not aiming at 'a solution' but tried to unfold a quest of meaning-making that 'showed [the] complexity of a sensitive topic.'

In their interviews all teachers make clear that it is not their aim to impose their own opinions on their students, describing their facilitating role. Steven's aim is to 'guide' his students and Omar is not interested in 'shaping his students' ideas.' He aims to shape their awareness about the power of language. James aims to let his students 'think critically', 'to give them knowledge, content and skills to engage in a discussion'. Oscar emphasizes his facilitating role, stating that it 'is a possible pitfall for teachers to express their own opinion, when you are actually, technically speaking, the chairman'.

However, despite these aims provocation sometimes does seem to steer the conversation directly. This is visible in two ways. First, the challenging remarks of teachers caused them to become involved as participants. For instance, we observed several remarkable moments when Oscar steered a conversation about 'Dutch identity'. When he refers to the Dutch-Argentinian queen Máxima in this conversation, he says to his students that 'she began her speech with the sentence that "Dutch identity" does not exist, but of course that is not right: Dutch identity does exist.' He asks his students what is typical of Dutch culture, to which one student yells, 'we love free things', and another student says:

'we are stingy', followed by Oscar, who responds: 'you can be who you are [here]'. Thus, he answers his own question to the pupils. His answer evokes another student to say: 'yes, that is a good one'. At one moment, a student tries to explain why she thinks some people find it 'hard to handle things they do not know', and Oscar responds: 'I get your point, but you cannot say that we, here in The Netherlands, are not used to different cultures', to which the students do not respond. This shows how Oscar takes part in the friction on the playground and his students then stop to share their insights.

Our second example of steering a conversation about sensitive topics is exemplified by Michael. He is the only teacher in this selection who purposefully changes the task of students because of friction. During the interview, Michael explains how he tries to 'quiet them down', asking his students to 'adjust their tone' during the lesson about the Israel-Palestine conflict. When this does not have the intended effect, he 'stops for a moment to calm the conversation and proceeds with the arguments made.' Alarmed by the harsh statements, he changes the debate teams. Initially the students that made the extreme statement were given the task to defend the Palestinian perspective. He then asked them to defend the Israeli perspective instead, while 'these students still have a lot to learn'. Michael, thus, not only steers *how* his students talk about a sensitive topic, but he also gives them a task which he hopes will let them think about a controversial issue *in a certain way*.

Emotions versus rationality

Some teachers make a clear distinction between rationality and emotions in teaching sensitive topics. Some prefer communication based on rational argumentation, while the others express how emotions help to clarify what students *really* think, moving beyond rationality. Oscar is triggered by 'socially desirable answers', pinpointing this in the interview as 'rationalizing', of students 'not saying what they actually think'. He describes it as a strategy to formulate 'politically correct' and 'socially desirable [answers]', which makes him think 'that he still must go down another layer, bring it closer to them, [and] make it more personal' to 'let them realize that they are thinking rationally. If it becomes personal, they will realize: "wait a second, I say things, but my feelings are different."'

James prefers rationality over emotions. During the interview, he states that 'students sometimes connect their opinion to their identity', which 'fires up the conversation' and 'makes it emotional, which I do not always value so much. (...) There must be room for emotion, but I hope that a conversation is based on ratio. Then, emotion[s] have to disappear.' That is something that he 'exemplifies', showing 'that you must accept emotions, but not make them part of everyday life.' If a student is emotional, he intervenes by saying that 'it is okay that you feel emotions, but [decide that] now is not the moment [to show them].' He also states that he thinks it is very impressive if a student makes clear to him that '"maybe you are right, maybe I am not capable to have this conversation right now."' Other teachers also emphasize the importance of rationality. Mary asks herself what to make of emotions in debates, saying that emotional arguments can be a very fruitful strategy in a debate. Nevertheless, she states that 'in my area of expertise', she teaches her students 'not to use emotions', but to use 'good arguments', meaning 'arguments based on stats and numbers, and research from experts, and not to act from gut feelings.' Julia also likes it 'if it is not only "I think this or that" or "that is how I experience it". She 'like[s] the combination of experience with rationality, because otherwise, you will come back to the level of "tak[ing] me as I am", and then everything stops. The debate stops, and then your personal growth stops.'

It seems that in order to decide upon their next step, teachers distinguish between rationality and emotions. For example, for teachers like Oscar, rational arguments are a sign to challenge students on another level. He may for instance ask a a specific student if he 'can ask her a personal question' and invite her to share her narrative which he knows has the perspective of the other and will therefore cause friction. For teachers such as James and Mary, emotional arguments or remarks are a sign that a specific student or the interaction between them needs readjusting. They do not dismiss emotion but suggest that this is not the time and place for it. We will further discuss this theme and the four other ways of handling friction in the following section.

Discussion

Our analysis shows how expert teachers do not evade or resolve friction. In contrast, they do handle it in their classroom and, therefore, include it on their playground. We argue that these five emerged ways of handling

friction ultimately are part of two overarching aspects of teaching sensitive topics: the capacity of the teacher to challenge and limit their students, and their willingness and ability to engage into a subject-subject relation with their students. We will now present the five emerged ways of handling friction as separate aspects which teachers can use to reflect upon for their future practice of teaching sensitive topics, and discuss how they relate to these two overarching conclusions.

Extreme statements

All teachers emphasize the importance of the establishment of a trust-bond, which we classify as a precondition to handle friction, share narratives, and make them part of the playground. As such, this trust-bond enables what Huizinga calls the 'elasticity of human relations.' The bond empowers teachers and students as players to be more flexible with each other, hence the extreme statements.

When students made extreme statements, teachers used them to create an interlude and turn them into educational friction. The duration of the interlude and the number of participants differed: some teachers chose to discuss the frictional matter in a small group for a few minutes, others organized an entire classroom discussion for the remainder of the lesson. Furthermore, by not dismissing students for making extreme statements, teachers refused to see them as spoilsports. Instead, teachers allowed them as cheats on the playground, despite the extremity of their statements. In doing so, they trust these students to be willing to take part in the play even though they are cheating. This makes civic learning possible, not only for the cheats, but also for the other players involved on the playground.

Handling an extreme statement and the ability to make it educational comes down to the teachers' decision to limit, or challenge their student(s): is this statement a clear overstepping of the boundaries of the playground? Or does this statement, or student(s) need to be challenged? The answers to these questions – when and how to challenge or limit students - is at least partly dependent on the teachers' own subjectness which entails an acceptance of the different gradations of friction, such as surprise or collision, which then leads to the decision about the next step they want to take.

Making room

We have shown how teachers make room on the playground in four different ways. We argue that all four ways of making room are ways of challenging and limiting friction on the playground. Teachers challenge the boundaries of the classroom by inviting narratives that were constituted outside the playground and cause friction inside. In their decision to extend or limit the time of students on the playground, teachers also handle the extent to which the friction is played out. By thinking about their physical presence, some of the selected teachers show awareness of the ways in which their body limits and/or challenges their student's presence, worrying that if their bodies are too present, as subjects on the same playground, their students' appearance as subjects could be affected. These four ways of making room all connect to play as an act of freedom. By allowing not one direction but several, teachers enact their own subjectness and invite their students to be subjects and move freely on the playground, deciding where to go in the moment. As such, teachers need to ask themselves: where is my body on the playground? How does my non-verbal communication affect the space for this student? Do I need to make room or focus my presence to invite students? We will come back to this when discussing the difference between taking part in play, and being part of the playground.

Narratives

Students use their own narratives to make sense of the topic under discussion. Teachers show no hesitance in directly asking students to share their narrative, or changing the subject when they are not satisfied with the gradation of friction. This shows the embeddedness of friction of in narrativity, presented in the EFMF as the triangle that is embedded in the circle. This was exemplified by James' decision to use one student's narrative about the discrimination she felt outside the classroom. Furthermore, this shows how friction is verbalized through the different pieces of narrative that students share, which can also be seen as a challenge teachers present to their students on the playground.

When teachers are not satisfied with the amount of friction, they try to instigate it by focusing on narrativity, asking for specific narratives of students, or altogether changing the matter under discussion, hoping that students can relate to a new subject better which then will lead to

some level of friction. As such, teachers show how they are occupied with finding balance, and are not hesitant to limit or challenge their students or to change the play altogether when friction is not part of the play.

In coding narratives, we found the already mentioned emphasis on the establishment of the trust-bond. We argue that this trust-bond can be seen as grounds which, enables a subject-subject relation before teaching sensitive topics. Not only could teachers set the stage by showing their interest in students' lives outside of school. If they want to establish a subject-subject relation, they could ask themselves: which narratives am I willing to share with my students as a subject on the playground? When teaching sensitive topics, teachers can have an general overview of the possible narratives which could be affected, and which narratives they think they can make valuable parts of their playground.

Challenges and provocations

All teachers emphasize the importance of their task to challenge their pupils. We observed how teachers fire questions at students, ask them to share personal stories and even use provocations to challenge students to hold on to a certain gradation of tension and step 'out of their comfort zone.' This last quote does not mean that they step outside the playground. Moreover, to challenge or provoke students about something *outside* themselves, i.e. a controversial topic or a specific perspective on this topic that is mentioned on the playground, often leads teachers to challenge students to focus *inward*. Thus, in these particular cases, challenging students happens on an individual level: what do *you* think about what is said? Or: what do you *really* think? In this study, to be challenged about sensitive topics that cause friction in society, means the Kantian challenge to think for yourself in the classroom.

In some cases, challenges and provocations then start to influence in-class conversations especially when teachers take the role of participants. Occasionally, teachers thus seemed to make it hard for students to participate as subjects as a consequence of teachers taking part in play, which seems to make students hesitant to engage further. In this sense, we argue that when a teacher and pupils are in a subject-subject relation, the balance between challenging and limiting does not only concern these pupils. Teachers may run the risk of making it more

difficult for their pupils to experience subjectness on the playground if they do not know how to challenge or limit themselves as teachers on the playground. Thus, when teaching sensitive topics, teachers can also reflect on their own participation: how do my students take what I, as their teacher, say? Does what I state increase or decrease the opportunity students have to share their narratives? Does my statement allow space for students to share thoughts, feelings and/or ideas that contrast or resist what I said with regard to the unequal relation between teacher and student?

Emotions vs. rationality

Some of the teachers make a distinction between emotions and rationality, and use it as signals to choose how to further handle the friction at hand. For some, emotions in the classroom are a sign to limit the students on the playground and emphasize that communicating rationally is preferable. Alternatively, others see 'rationalization' as a sign to challenge students to dig deeper, moving beyond 'socially desirable answers.' As such, this distinction seems to help teachers decide or see when they need to act or refrain from acting on their playground when friction appears. In the context of learning democracy, this specific theme deserves further study to grasp its meaning in teaching sensitive topics especially in the light of the power relations that are at stake in the classroom (Curnow & Jurow, 2021; Tivaringe & Kishner, 2021).

Taking part in or being part of the playground

We argue that the selected teachers who are allowing friction when teaching sensitive topics are subjects on the playground as well. Like their students, they are, therefore, involved in a process of subjectification in which they are occupied with existential questions such as 'Who am I as a teacher?', 'How am I, do I act or not?' We will explain this further by referring again to two examples already briefly mentioned.

During the interview, Steven makes frictional statements about his allowance of students' statements. He shows awareness of *what* he thinks about a sensitive topic, and explains *how* this relates to him as a

subject *within* the classroom at that moment. Because of this reflection, he classifies himself as 'more professional' than his colleagues. The relevance for the point we want to make does not lie in *what* he believes and teaches, but lies in his awareness *of* those beliefs and his choice to act or not to act on his own beliefs in his educational practice. This, we argue, is part of subjectification: Steven is existentially aware of *how* he is. By choosing not to act, Steven makes space for his students to make up their own mind, without his being interfering in the subjectness of his students. That none of the selected teachers expelled a student for making an extreme statement, does not mean that they agreed with what was being said. In fact, during the interviews all teachers acknowledge the extremity of the extreme statements. In our view, their allowance of these statements, followed by the interlude in which the statement is made educational is their attempt to produce and affirm their students' subjectness. They do not want to teach them that everything can be said *individually*, but want to show them that *what* is said should be discussed within the *commonality* of the playground.

This is also reflected in Oscar's statement that 'you don't know what people will come up with, and you do not know where you want to go either.' We do not classify this as a lack of awareness of the teacher's own position as a subject. Alternatively, we argue that this letting go of the outcome reflects Oscar's willingness to be engaged as a subject-teacher among his subject-students, all in that specific place, at that specific time. This shows the importance of teachers' willingness to be a subject among other subjects.

However, this raises the question what the difference is between the teacher as participant, which tends to influence rather than provoke students, and the teacher-subject among student-subjects. This difference can be explained by separating taking part in play from being part of the playground. In taking part, the teacher participates as a player, possibly influencing other players. By being part of the playground, teachers are involved in the play without losing a certain distance from it in order to retain their position to handle the friction that is played out. That is the reason why, when speaking about subjects on the playground, we prefer to refer to teacher-subject among students-subjects to preserve the different roles they play on the playground. Nevertheless, teachers need to be aware of their own being. If they want to handle the different gradations of friction and make it educational, teachers must allow themselves to be surprised, to feel resistance, or

sense collision. When teachers commit to being a subject themselves, they can subsequently think, feel, and choose to act or not to act as subjects, and as such allow others to be subjects that learn democracy.

Conclusion

In this article, we studied how expert teachers handled friction in their classroom while teaching sensitive topics. By using our framework as a heuristic lens, we analysed empirical data from lesson observations and interviews. As Philip and Sengupta argue (2020, p. 2), 'theories of learning are implicit theories of society'. Therefore, we agree with Curnow and Jurow (2021, p. 21) that 'we need to be vigilant as to how what we value as learning advances particular forms of hierarchy and domination.' Moreover, learning in dynamic spaces understood as possibility requires 'analytical tools' that 'support, illuminate, and understand the movement of people' in this case, on the playground (Curnow and Jurow, 2021). We argue that educational friction is about being in motion in two ways: 1) both student and teacher are involved in a subject-subject relation, and thus are occupied with question about *how* to be, and 2) teacher are balancing when to challenge or limit their students in order to put them as subjects in motion on the playground.

Our Educational Friction Modelling Framework is such a tool. We also showed how teachers at several moments show vigilance of friction and the power relations at hand, trying while engaging in a subject-subject relation to make room for students, to refrain from being dominant on the playground without losing their (power) position as teachers, use friction to allow their students to experience and learn as (political) subjects, and make friction educational.

The aim was to both better understand educational friction and find new insights that would contribute to educators' practice of teaching sensitive topics and learning democracy. To do so, we took an abductive perspective with an informed grounded approach. This resulted in five emerging ways in which to handle friction, which other teachers can take into consideration to shape their educational practice. Ultimately, the five emerged results of handling friction can be interpreted as educational ways of challenging and limiting both students and teacher that engage in a subject-subject relation. Our insights help to understand

what educational friction means in practice. Furthermore, our analysis resulted in five ways in which expert teachers handle friction which educators can use and reflect upon for teaching sensitive topics in future practice.

When is an extreme statement allowed, and when do the boundaries of the playground need strict regulation? Does this conversation call for a frictional statement to provoke a student, or do I have to make room to let them play out the friction themselves? Does this need more time, would that pupil share her narrative to invite another perspective? We argue that these five emerged results are educational activities embedded in everyday life, and thus are attempts of teachers to produce and affirm the educational rights of their students as democratic subjects living in plural societies (Espinoza & Vossoughi, 2014).

 In line with the QTI and our selection criteria, establishing a trust-bond seems to be an important condition for the sharing of narratives. This establishment, in our view, also connects to what Uttamchandani (2021) calls 'education intimacy'. The trust-bond is co-constructed by both the teacher and their students, outside as well as inside the classroom. Because of the embeddedness of friction into narrativity, this bond also helps to establish a certain elasticity in the relation between teacher and pupil, which consequently opens a safe space in which students verbalize friction with more comfort. Teachers can then make room for students by striking a balance between limiting and challenging them. They can decide to play out the friction within a limited amount of time, or challenge a larger group of students to engage, and balance their physical presence on the playground. Teachers can directly ask students to share personal stories. When provoking students, teachers need to be aware that provocations sometimes limit students' choices to act or not to act, which is important when learning democracy.

The relevance of our framework lies in both understanding and making visible the three components that constitute educational friction as a whole. Specifically, it would be interesting for future research to further examine the distinction between emotions and rationality, and how this affects the teachers' handling of friction. Furthermore, the four ways in which to make room, especially how teachers use their physical presence as opening space, could lead to interesting insights. In general, both our model and the study of teaching sensitive topics would benefit from expanding the data set, both in the variety of sensitive topics and

of teachers teaching different subjects, such as economy, geography, and biology. After all, friction between people who are living together is an inherent part of human relations, and thus transcends different school subjects. Every subject has its sensitive topics. It is often during these moments of agon and tension that it becomes clear not only how challenging this co-existence in a plural and diverse society actually is, but also how important it is to really see each other as subjects within the commonality of the playground, recognizing it as a space in which it is allowed to learn with, and from each other.

Chapter 6

General Discussion

General Discussion

In this chapter I will first present the main results of our four studies. I will subsequently discuss the contributions of these studies to the main aims of this dissertation: to understand the meaning of democracy and its conceptualisation in Dutch secondary education, to explore what a school as a playground to practice democracy looks like if we accept conflict as an inherent part of human relations, and to understand how expert teachers handle friction when teaching sensitive topics. I will draw some overarching conclusions about our aim to understand democracy in Dutch education. To do so, I will use the work of American pragmatist philosopher Dewey on democracy and education, and the concepts of visiting and natality as described by the German-American political thinker Arendt. I will argue that the research conducted during these four studies point towards an understanding of educational friction as a move *beyond democracy*. At the end of this chapter, I will offer some practical recommendations and discuss the potential directions of future research.

Conclusions of Chapter 2

The first study was aimed at grasping the different meanings of democracy constructed within the debate about 'good education' in the Netherlands. We used the diagnostic and prognostic frame as part of a frame analysis, a multi-disciplinary social science research method, to understand certain situations, activities, or messages that agents choose to use, to say, or act upon and show why and how they are chosen. The prognostic frame showed how the concept of democracy is constructed as a response to what is referred to as a 'neoliberal perspective' on education, and the influence of 'the culture of measurement', two dimensions that, according to the selected documents, undermine education. This frame functions as a counter-terminology and sets the stage for the prognostic frame in which the meaning of democracy is constructed as a response in the selected documents. We found four

different understandings of what democracy means in secondary Dutch education. First, democracy is verbalized as an organizational structure which would positively influence the quality of 'good education' in changing the hierarchical structures within schools, giving teachers a certain amount of autonomy. The second prognosis concerns democracy as governmental policy, in which democracy could facilitate a better balance between horizontal and vertical control of schools and stimulate the Dutch government to take a more facilitating role in constituting 'good education'. The third meaning refers to democracy as knowledge and skill, which emphasises that democratic learning, or citizenship education, is an important part of 'good education'. In the past two decades, we have seen an increase of both governmental reports as well as scholarly research that focuses on democracy as knowledge and skill. The fourth meaning refers to democracy as a practice, in which democracy is often referred to as 'a way of life'. This study has thus unravelled and clarified the existence of four dimensions of democracy in the debates about 'good education' in the Netherlands.

Conclusions of Chapter 3

As a next step, we organized a Delphi panel consisting of different experts from different fields of expertise and asked them to further help us understand democracy with respect to Dutch education. We asked the selected experts to participate in two rounds of digitally designed surveys. In the first round, experts were asked to respond to discussion topics based on the four dimensions found in the research mentioned above. In the second round, we presented the experts with a number of clarifying questions. This resulted in four emerging themes that, according to our experts, were the most urgent in the context of democracy with respect to education. In sum, these themes were: the distribution of responsibility of teachers and school leaders, questions concerning Article 23 about the freedom of education grounded in the Dutch constitution, the content and aims of citizenship education, and, the conceptualisation of 'the school as a place to practice democracy', which the Delphi panel described as the most urgent theme. We made this conceptualisation the focus of further research, and questioned how the school could be understood as such.

Conclusions of Chapter 4

Subsequently, we focused on developing a theoretical framework to conceptualize the school as a place to practice democracy. In our aim to contribute to the shift from teaching citizenship towards learning democracy, and our search for an English translation of the Dutch concept 'oefenplaats' which literally translates as 'a place to practice', we chose to conceptualize the school as 'a playground to practice democracy'. Primarily, this was a consequence of the formulation of aims and ends of citizenship education in the Netherlands. Focus groups that were part of curriculum.nu (the scientific curriculum commission that was installed by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science) were revisiting and renewing the Dutch curriculum. Our analysis shows that their revisions take conflict to be something that needs to be 'resolved', rather than as an inherent part of human relations. Following Mouffe (2005), we emphasised conflict as an inseparable part of democracy, and therefore as an important aspect of civic learning. Therefore, we set out to explore how conflict can be educational, and how it could be included as such in our conceptualization of the kind of school foregrounded by the experts of our Delphi panel. We used the concept of play as described by Huizinga to explore the opportunities and limitations conflict could bring to the educational playground.

To articulate our framework in which conflict can be seen as educational, we used insights from democratic theory, narrative theory, and cultural theory. Mouffe (2005) emphasizes the importance of turning antagonism into agonism. To translate conflict for educational purposes, we proposed to turn political conflict into educational friction. Friction covers several gradations of the tension that it causes, for example: disagreement, collision, surprise, resistance, and discomfort. These different levels of tension open opportunities for (civic) learning (Dewey, 1933: 1938). Furthermore, we wanted to point out that conflict has the connotation of something that is dissatisfying, and something at which pupils can fail. Moreover, our theory of educational friction as tension enables us to accept it as an inherent part of human relations in a plural and diverse society, which can remain unresolved and need not be avoided.

We developed a theoretical framework that could function as analytical tool to understand educational friction. The framework consists of three parts; the first component is the *triangle of friction* and

represents the incompatibility of goals, the frictional behaviour that is shown, and the frictional attitudes that appear which can be either cognitive and/or emotional. Friction is always verbalized, and thus narrated. Therefore, the triangle of friction is embedded in the second component, the *circle of narrativity*. Narrativity works as a sensemaking mechanism which allows students-in-relation and students-in-context to understand their own experiences, the experiences of others, and the context they live in. Subsequently, friction always is part of making sense of something, experiencing one or several of the gradations described above. The third part of educational friction is the *square of play*. Democracy cannot function without a certain stability (Mouffe, 2005). Just as society is restricted by law, the school as a place for learning democracy has its boundaries. We used Huizinga's conception of play to elaborate on the limitations that are at stake when conflict is made part of the classroom and becomes educational friction. Huizinga's distinction between 'the spoil-sport' and 'the cheat' allows space for questioning the boundaries of the classroom, and even allows theoretical space for students to overstep the playground. The cheat, while dodging the rules, still acknowledges the existence of the play, while the spoilsport withdraws from the play, which in the words of Huizinga 'shatters the play-world' (Huizinga, 1938/1998 p. 11). This theoretical distinction can be used to reflect on their own decision-making when pupils tend to challenge or cross the limitations of the playground. Altogether, our theoretical framework of the school as a playground to practice democracy enables the possibility to turn political conflict into educational friction, in which the different gradations of tension of friction allow students to experience what it means to live in a plural and diverse society wherein friction is an inherent part of human relations.

Conclusions of Chapter 5

In our final study, our aim was to study how expert teachers handle friction in the classroom. To do so, we focused on how teachers deal with sensitive topics, while these issues are characterized by a certain openness and indeterminacy in which both students and teacher find themselves entangled in a process of sensemaking. We purposefully selected nine teachers and asked them to develop a lesson in which

multiple perspectives would appear. We observed and filmed their lessons and conducted a stimulated recall interview afterwards. This resulted in nine transcribed lesson observations, and nine transcribed interviews. As a theoretical framework, we used the Educational Friction Modelling Framework (that we had already developed in previous research) as a heuristic lens to analyse the empirical data with regard to the ways in which our chosen expert teachers handle friction in their classroom.

This analysis resulted in five different ways in which they handle friction. First, we observed how none of the teachers expelled students for making an extreme statement. Instead, they allowed and used the extreme statements to further shape the conversation in the classroom. Applying Huizinga's theory of play, we proposed that we see this act as the making of 'an interlude' in which teachers allow *agon,* or a certain amount of contest or strife on their playground, and thus different gradations of friction. What followed were moments in which the teacher thematized the extreme statements to structure an educational conversation which could differ in both the amount of time spent on the matter and the number of participants involved.

Second, teachers showed four ways of making room on the playground. They made room by inviting into the classroom narratives that were constituted outside that same classroom; they showed self-awareness about their physical presence in the classroom, and they retreated physically if this affected the space for their students to be on the playground. Furthermore, in some cases, teachers dismissed the aims for that specific lesson to enable the friction to play out. We described this letting go of planned outcomes as a willingness and ability of teachers to be subjects on the playground themselves.

Third, students using their narratives during the observed lesson made sense of the topics that were discussed, and thus showed the embeddedness of friction in narrativity. When teachers were not satisfied with the gradation of friction, they used personal narratives to encourage it, and often asked specific pupils for sharing personal stories in a directive manner. Furthermore, all teachers emphasised the establishment of a trust-bond which seemed to be an important condition for students to share narratives on the playground. We connect this trust-bond to the allowance of what Huizinga calls 'the elasticity of human relations', empowering both teacher and students to be flexible

with each other in the context of a space in which they learn, hence the extreme statements which the selection of teachers allowed to make an interlude to make friction educational.

Fourth, we showed how teachers made a distinction between rationality and emotions. For some, emotions were a sign to limit students, emphasizing that rationality was preferable on the playground. For others, rationalizations signalled to them that they needed to 'dig deeper', moving beyond rational argumentation that they consider as socially desirable.

Fifth, teachers emphasized their task to challenge students. In some cases, by provoking their students, teachers came to influence the conversation, *taking part* in play, instead of *being part* of the playground in a distanced manner that enabled them to handle friction on the playground.

Thus, this study has resulted in five ways of handling friction which (future) teachers can reflect on for future teaching sensitive topics. Moreover, it also points towards two important aspects when it comes to the practice of teachers' aim to enable learning through educational friction. Ultimately, educational friction comes down to 1) the teachers' ability to challenge and limit their students and themselves on the playground, and 2) their willingness to engage in a subject-subject relation with their students.

Back to the beginning, or beginning again

For this dissertation, our aim has been to understand the meaning of democracy in secondary Dutch education, explore the school as a place to practice democracy while accepting conflict as an inherent part of human relations, and study what teachers' practice looks like when they handle friction when teaching sensitive topics. As part of the *subtilitas intelligendi*, the first part of this dissertation, we conclude that democracy has been presented as a solution within a prognostic frame to tackle the diagnosed problematic developments pinpointed as neoliberal tendencies, and the culture of measurement. To further understand democracy with respect to education, the Delphi panel emphasized the importance of conceptualizing the school as a place to practice democracy. In the second part, using the finesse of the

subtilitas explicandi, we developed a framework in which conflict is seen as an inherent part of human relations, showing how conflict can be educational as part of the school as a playground to practice democracy. The final stage of *subtilitas applicandi* showed how expert teachers handled friction in the classroom when teaching sensitive topics. In observing their practice and interviewing them, we were able to describe application as the third part of hermeneutic understanding.

This brings us back to the beginning: what can we conclude about the meaning of democracy in Dutch secondary education if we accept antagonism as an inherent part of human relations? Or to put it differently, overlooking the separate parts of this dissertation, what can we say about the research as a whole? I will now first turn to Dewey's classical work on democracy and education and then look at the concepts of natality and visiting as described by Arendt. Then, I will explain how this study, which began as an endeavour to understand democracy in Dutch secondary education, has led to an understanding of educational friction as a move beyond democracy.

Democracy and education

Dewey's classic work on democracy and education has been interpreted in different ways, at least partly because not all scholars take the totality of his work into consideration (Ploeg 2016; 2019). Furthermore, by using some of the aspects of his work in an a-historical way, his ideas turn into 'catch phrases' that sound good, which consequently do not do justice to his ideas and the context in which they were conceptualized (Straume, 2016). Keeping this in mind, we will now briefly turn to Dewey's conceptualization of democracy and education. Dewey argues that any school is a 'miniature community, an embryonic society' in the context of 'social progress' (Dewey, 1899/1976 p. 6). The core of this idea is that democracy should not be seen as a fixed set of institutions, but rather as something all people alike experience. Democracy and education, as two parts of the same coin, are ultimately aimed at 'continued capacity for growth' (Dewey, 1916/2018 p. 107). Democracy as such 'is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint associated experience' (Dewey, 1916/2018, p. 93).

We argue that, in their attempts to make the friction that appeared in the classroom educational, our selected expert teachers tried to enable

their pupils to experience friction. In doing so, they chose different methods at their disposal. A teacher could choose to continue his or her lesson in a small group for a few minutes or instigate a whole class discussion for the remainder of the lesson. Furthermore, teachers showed awareness of their bodies in the classroom. Some teachers moved to the back of the classroom so they could overlook the whole class instead of only one individual, in order for their pupils to feel included. Another teacher was conscious about his height and arms so he moved his body backwards while folding his arms and hands behind his back, refraining from intervening in the experience and/or participation of his students, or to put it differently, not to seem threatening and/or limiting which could block the pupils' motivation to engage on the playground.

Dewey's idea of democracy as a 'mode of associated living' connects to our conclusion that teachers need to be willing to engage into a subject-subject relation with their students. Teachers emphasized the establishment of a trust-bond with their students and aimed to let their pupils share their narratives that are formed outside in the 'real-world', inside the classroom. Teachers directly and purposefully invited certain pupils to share their narratives, because they wanted to bring the perspective of another onto the playground. As such, democracy as educational friction means that teachers attempt to get *in sync*, or as Arendt puts it, when she describes what it means to exist politically, to act 'in concert' (Arendt, 1958 p. 57). To be in concert, there must be a conductor that is involved with musicians, because without them, there would not be any music to conduct in the first place. However, the conductor, or teacher, is part of the music that is made. In other words, the teacher is part of the playground by 'making music without making music' and thus participates in its creation, finding a mode of associated living in which the musicians, or students, are enabled to create sound, albeit harmonious or dissonant, as players always in-relation and in-context while playing together. Therefore, apart from the willingness to be in a subject-subject relation with their students, the capacity to grow and play in a mode of associated living, in which students engage in an experience in-relation and in-context with each other, asks of teachers to use all their abilities to challenge and limit their students *and* themselves to be part of the playground. Furthermore, when it comes to connecting our two main conclusions to Dewey's ideas on democracy and education, handling educational friction on the playground fits Dewey's

descriptions of democracy and education as two sides of the same coin that people experience alike, and is ultimately aimed at growth.

However, there is also a possible contrast between Dewey's conception of democracy and education, in comparison to this study of educational friction. In his time, Dewey was arguing against critics who claimed that democracy had become so complicated that it was unreasonable to expect everyone to be an active part of it (Carr & Hartnett, 1996). The Norwegian educational scholar Straume (2016) has convincingly argued that this historical context shaped the meaning Dewey gave to democracy and education, in which industrialization and urbanization caused a rapid increase of social inequality and fragmentation that led to the idea that democracy is not something everybody has to be involved in (Carr & Hartnett, 1996; Straume, 2016). Dewey did not agree with this and formulated his ideas of the school as an 'embryonic society' in the context of social progress, in which schools participate as part of 'the whole social evolution' (Dewey, 1899/1976 p. 6). In sum, Dewey did not formulate democracy and education in a 'political' manner, but as two sides of the same coin with a 'social' value. How does this relate to our understanding of democracy as a playground for educational friction?

Visiting

Democratic experience, according to Dewey, is fostered by a high degree of communication. This interaction between both individuals and/or groups, secures a variety of shared viewpoints and common interest for society (Dewey, 1916/2018 p. 89). As presented in Chapter 4, this idea of democracy shows similarities with a more consensus-driven perspective in which communication does not take 1) power relations into account, and 2) neglects what Mouffe's pinpoints as the tension between democratic and liberal grammar that installs a very important dynamic enabling the ongoing and necessary (re)negotiation of power relations (2005). Subsequently, what is problematic, is that in Dewey's conception of democracy, this political understanding of democracy seems absent (Straume, 2016). In conceptualizing the school as a playground to practice democracy, we aimed to fit this aspect of democracy as an ongoing renegotiation of power relations – and the conflict this entails – into our conceptualisation of the educational playground. In my view, this idea

of educational friction connects well to Arendt's idea of visiting. Before explaining why this connection constitutes a move beyond democracy, I will briefly present the concept of 'visiting' and discuss how it relates to educational friction.

For Arendt, the challenge for teachers is to take responsibility for the world. The essence and danger of education is 'natality, the fact that human beings are *born* into the world' (Arendt, 1954/2006 p. 171). With this concept, Arendt pinpoints the dynamic that is part of education: it introduces pupils into the old world, i.e. the one they are born into, while simultaneously offering them the possibility to *be* born, i.e. start their own beginnings in that world. In my view, this idea is quite similar to Dewey's idea of democracy and education as the 'continued capacity of growth.' However, the difference lies in the fact that Arendt as a political thinker, takes political existence into consideration. Biesta (2012, p. 111) already showed how Arendt's developmental perspective of childhood in which growth is understood as *preparation*, which leads to a hard cut between the world of children and the world of adults, is somewhat problematic. Arendt (1954/2006 p. 192) wants to 'decisively divorce the realm of education from the others, most of all from the realm of public, political life (…).' According to her, 'one can neither educate adults nor treat children as though they were grown-ups' (Arendt, 1954/2006 p. 195). The reason why she separates these two worlds in such a harsh manner, is because she wants to emphasise the meaning of authority that is appropriate for a space in which the appearance of natality is made possible, and therefore indemnify or set apart children from the political system. As part of the old world, teachers need to make room for new beginnings, for actions of pupils that interrupt the old world. Her idea of visiting as political understanding allows us to overcome this developmental perspective in which the political should be kept away from pupils (Biesta, 2012). In my view, this idea of political understanding which she refers to as 'visiting' connects to our ideas of handling educational friction. Arendt understands political existence, not as a capacity, but as living 'with other people, strangers, forever, in the same world (Arendt, 1944 p. 322). She conceptualizes visiting as 'being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not' (Arendt, 1977 p. 241). One's position remains one's own, but the context in which it is taken up differs, and as such can cause the disorientation needed for pupils to become aware of the plurality and diversity in which they find themselves (Disch, 1994).

Handling friction as visiting does not aim for a particular change of perspective, nor does it attempt to put students 'in someone else's shoes'. An understanding of educational friction as visiting means that teachers enable experience, and thus learning, by challenging and limiting students to be and think from their own positionality at that moment, in-relation and in-context with others, stimulating the possibility of the interruption of feelings, thoughts, and ideas of students on the playground. It is the confrontation with others that are *not* you, experiencing difference through meeting fellow pupils with *different* stories that are different from your own. It is this confrontation and sharing of differing stories in dialogue that cause the disorientation in which students experience plurality. Moreover, it means that teachers, by letting students communicate through friction, enable the kind of learning through experiencing that shows what it means to be political subjects living together as part of a plural, diverse democracy in which some forms of conflict cannot by harmonized (Lozano Parra & Wansink, accepted/in press).

Beyond Democracy

A child being born, as a new beginning into the status quo, always puts the old world at risk (Arendt, 1958/2018 p. 190). When applied in the classroom as a playground in which experience is learning, a new beginning puts the space 'at-stake' because of the possibility of different gradations of friction that can emerge between the different players. Or to put it in an Arendtian way: learning through educational friction puts the old world at risk. Therefore, exactly because handling educational friction means that something is put at-stake, I argue that educational friction can be understood as a move *beyond democracy*. To conclude this part of the general discussion, I will briefly explain what I mean by this.

In Chapter 2, we discussed how democracy is often constructed as a prognostic response to 'undemocratic developments' in education. At least partly, this clarifies the urgency experts showed in Chapter 3 in their statements to conceptualize the school as a place to practice democracy. In Chapter 4, we described the curriculum development groups that were commissioned by the Dutch Ministry to help develop fitting aims and ends for civic education for future curriculum. In the same chapter, we concluded that civic learning solely as the introduction

of newcomers into the status quo has a potential *undemocratic* tendency: a state prescribing the intended outcomes of civic education solely as socialization, would ultimately mean that this would be the *only* way to understand it (Biesta, 2011 p. 93), which in my view does not do justice to Dewey's idea of democracy and education as two parts of the same coin.

Still, democracy needs a certain amount of stability. Education is a space in which experience as learning should be made possible. Therefore, to do justice to the plurality and diversity aspect of democracy for which we explored the concept of play that Huizinga calls 'an act of freedom', handling educational friction means that teachers move *beyon*d democracy, *for* democracy. By conceptualizing the school as 'a playground to practice democracy', I understand it as a space in which the hegemony of democracy so to say needs to be penetrated to 1) allow friction as an inherent part of human relations, and 2) allow natality in the classroom. Democracy as experience of associated living is shaped in this space in which pupils learn. And because of this learning, for the sake of democracy, we as educators need to limit and challenges ourselves for interruptions to appear, even if this means allowing extreme statements from time to time, as shown in Chapter 5. In some cases, the statements that were made would not be 'accepted' in any other public sphere apart from the classroom. Asking 'should teachers then allow students to say everything they want?' is simply asking the wrong question. It is not what can and cannot be said that is at stake here; the question is 'what can be experienced, and thus learned, if I as an educator choose to let this statement exist in my classroom?' That is what I mean by moving beyond democracy. It could well be that a teacher decides to allow an extreme statement that is not acceptable to enable learning. As such, we argued that teachers in these moments are part of the playground in which they enable learning as experience, conducting a highly dissonant piece of music, an interlude in which boundaries of the classroom are challenged, or maybe even overstepped. Following Huizinga, we understand this as an act of freedom, and thus see this handling of friction as a way to experience, and thus learn what happens when gradations of friction such as resistance, collision, surprise, or unease appear in the plurality of the playground. This connects to Mouffe's distinction as described in Chapter 4 between politics and the political. For the sake of democracy, the political, meaning 'the dimension of antagonism that is an inherent part of human relations', should be practiced and played out, moving

beyond democracy as politics, 'the ensemble of practices, discourses, and institutions that seek to establish a certain order and to organize human coexistence that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of "the political"' (Mouffe, 1999 p. 754). Educational friction is not about the inclusion of otherness into the status quo. Educational friction is the dedication to a form of learning to experience that what is different, and shaping a playground which offers a place for the possibility of disruption and disorientation when visiting those who are others. Not to *let them in*, but to *let yourself visit their otherness*. Educational friction is about learning through experience that it is okay to be shaken from time to time, to *not* understand, to *be* surprised, or *feel* resistance. That is what it takes to live in a plural and diverse society. Democracy, if understood as experienced associated living with a capacity for growth, means allowing a form of learning in the classroom in which teachers in a subject-subject relation with their pupils, limit and challenge students and themselves on the playground in which the political can be learned. Consequently, there will be moments of interruption and disorientation as part of the friction. Educational friction is a move *beyond* democracy, *for* democracy. As educators, we can handle these several gradations of friction to make them part of the playground, and thus make this playground a space for play as an act of freedom to experience political subjectness. As such, subjects are offered the *possibility* for growth to bring their beginnings to the playground.

Interpretative research

In light of our aim to understand democracy through interpretative educational research, this dissertation shows how this understanding occurs on different levels. We started by studying texts. Subsequently, we interpreted collected data from experts from different fields of expertise. Then we constructed a framework by using insights from conflict theory, narrative theory, and cultural theory, followed by an analysis of empirical data collected from expert teachers teaching sensitive topics, which led us to interpret lesson observations and interviews. Text, opinions from different fields of expertise, theoretical expositions with different foci, and empirical data from teachers in the classroom, and in conversation

during interviews, were all objects of our interpretative educational research. Furthermore, we collected and analysed these data through a variety of methods: frame analysis, the Delphi-method, thematic analysis, using different theories to build a theoretical framework, cross-case analysis, lesson observations, interviews - all have contributed to our interpretative educational research.

This study is an example of the levels that can be interpreted, but also of the complexity of different levels of interpretation that characterizes interpretative educational research. A hermeneutic, interpretative approach as applied in this study could be an important contribution in two ways. First, because it focuses on sense-making, this approach could shed a more normative instead of instrumental light on the interpretative road educators take that lead to their choices and actions in the classroom (Bakker & Montessori, 2016). Second, a hermeneutic approach could contribute models and tools to better understand and interpret how to act in the classroom. There is a growing interest in and need for tools to help support, illuminate, and understand the movements of students (Curnow & Jurow, 2021). In our view, our Educational Friction Modelling Framework is such a tool. As such, this dissertation has been an attempt to do justice to both these aspects. Its relevance resides in the ontology of education, referring to 'learning in terms of people's meaningful movements in an always changing world' (Akkerman et al, 2021, p. 416).

Practical recommendations

Teachers

Teachers could use our Educational Friction Modelling Framework presented in Chapter 4 and 5 as a professionalization tool to help understand the friction that appeared in their classroom. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of two aspects when handling educational friction: 1) handling educational friction is about challenging and limiting both the students and oneself, and 2) being willing to engage in a subject-subject relation with students as part of the playground. They can use the five ways expert teachers showed in handling friction presented in Chapter 5 and the reflective question shown in Table 1, to expand their own way of handling teaching sensitive topics.

Table 1. Reflective question to handle educational friction.

In the classroom	Reflective question for educational practice
I. Extreme statement	1. Is this statement an example of overstepping the boundary of the playground? 2. Is this a statement made by a cheat that still accepts being in play? Or is this a spoilsport that does not acknowledge the playground? 3. Does this extreme statement call for an interlude, or do I need to hold the line of the classroom?
II. Making room	1. Is it possible to invite a narrative from outside inside the classroom? 2. How much time does an interlude need for the friction to play out? 3. How does my non-verbal communication affect space for this student or group? 4. Does this moment ask me to let go of the aim of the planned lesson?
III. Sharing of narratives	1. Which narratives are present on this playground? 2. Who is telling which story? 3. How is this story told?
IV. Challenges and provocations	1. Does what I say increase or decrease the opportunity for students to be part of the playground? 2. Am I as a teacher taking part in play, or am I being part of the playground?
V. Emotions vs. rationality	1. Which emotions are a sign for me as a teacher to limit students on the playground? 2. Do certain rationalizations point to a social-desirable answer and do I need to 'dig deeper'?

Curriculum development

We responded to the call from different experts from different fields of expertise to focus on the conceptualisation of the school as a playground to practice democracy. We decided to change 'a place to practice' into 'a playground to practice' to include both agon as part of play. Moreover, we intended to make room for civic learning as subjectification apart from practice, which in our view refers to learning that what is already there. Consequently, curriculum development related to the teaching of sensitive topics should, instead of solving conflict, emphasize friction as a tension in which the aim is not to find consensus, but to be engaged in a sensemaking process in which experiencing educational friction can be an aim in itself. Alternatively, aims in curricula related to educational friction should not be formulated as problem-solving, but instead as experiencing difference without anchoring where this experience should end.

Furthermore, we saw how some teachers (Chapter 5) emphasized that a shortage of time made it impossible for them to let friction play out. Therefore, it is important not to overload the curriculum in such a way that teachers become hesitant to make interludes when different gradations of friction appear. Heavily packed curricula tend to constrain teachers to focus on those aims which need to be achieved, possibly at the expense of those moments of friction which come up during teaching (Barton and Levstik, 2003). Still, when the time, place or moment are not right, a teacher may decide not to elaborate on friction. However, this decision should not depend on a shortage of time caused by the number of aims that still need attention. Curricula should leave room for friction that does not lead to defined curriculum outcomes.

Governmental action

The Dutch Institute for Social and Cultural Research (SCP) has recently written about segregation in Dutch education. In this report, the SCP argues that the sum of individual choices made by school boards and parents led to segregated educational possibilities for pupils to choose from (SCP, 2021). Schools are increasingly separated based on educational levels that exist within the Dutch educational landscape, e.g., vmbo, havo, and vwo. Consequently, pupils from different social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds go to their 'own school', in which they 'do not learn how to deal with "the other" at school, which leads to a growing distance between different groups in society' (SCP, 2021).

Furthermore, the Dutch Council of Education advised the Dutch Government to establish so-called 'bridge classes' for the first three years of secondary education (OR, 2021). Pupils from different levels should be put together in the same classroom for at least three years to give them more time to learn with others, because early differentiation of pupils into different levels increases the already existing inequality of opportunity (OR, 2021). After three years, pupils can be separated into different classes. At the moment, 'bridge classes' generally vary between one or two years. Furthermore, the Dutch Inspection of Education (DIE) emphasized an increase of so-called 'categorical schools' such as gymnasia, which only teach pupils from the same level and do not have 'bridge classes' at all (DIE, 2016).

I would argue that these different institutions point towards what American educational scholar Merry (2020 p. 133) calls 'making our schools more just institutions'. At minimum, these schools 'require that children not have their educational experiences determined by their postcode, their ethnic status, first language or family wealth' (Merry, 2020 p. 133). In our last study, we saw how teachers in some cases chose to play devil's advocate by bringing perspectives of others about a certain controversial topic into the classroom to make these perspectives part of the playground. Paradoxically, this seems to be a consequence of the composition of classes: they are increasingly filled with students with a comparable background, which disables friction even before it starts. When we accept conflict as an inherent part of human relations, and are willing to handle – and further learn how to handle – educational friction in our classrooms, we agree with the SCP (2021) that governmental action is not only desirable, but also urgent. School boards should organize their education in a broader manner, in which pupils from different backgrounds, from different levels meet and interact with each other in an environment in which their learning is not determined by where they live, in which social class they reside, their ethnic roots, cultural background, or family status (Merry, 2020).

Suggestions for further research

The Dutch government formulated citizenship education or civic learning as an aim of the school as a whole. This often leaves civic learning to *the usual suspects*, namely history and social sciences. However, we would argue that every subject has its sensitive topics. Furthermore, in some way every subject is connected to our daily lives and the world that surrounds us. So, we could broaden our investigative research scope by collecting data from teachers who teach sensitive topics in for instance biology, economy, geography, arts, religious education, and science. We could also analyse how teachers who teach different subjects handle friction when teaching the same sensitive topics, such as vaccination policies or climate change. Another interesting research question could be how the epistemological assumptions of different school subjects influence how teachers teach sensitive topics. These three suggestions would also shed new light on

the handling of educational friction, which could for example lead to a more general conceptualisation, or a more detailed outline for teaching sensitive topics within specific subjects, and explore the possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, it would shed light on the possibilities and challenges for other subjects besides history and social sciences to handle educational friction when teaching sensitive topics.

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Appendix

Appendix

Audit report: Teachers Stepping up Their Game in the Face of Extreme Statements: a Qualitative Analysis of Educational Friction When Teaching Sensitive Topics
Auditee: S. Lozano Parra, Utrecht University
Auditor: D.C.D. van Alten, Utrecht University

Complex research processes, such as our explorative study with an abductive character, do not have standardized procedures to control scholarly rigor and quality. Akkerman (et al, 2008) developed a procedure that examines this kind of research on visibility, comprehensibility, and acceptability. Mesker (2018) describes the three components of the audit procedure as follows:

- Visibility: have the auditee made clear which data sources were used, and the interrelation between the different sources and the selected data?
- Comprehensibility: have the auditee made clear how findings are grounded in data, and which decisions, analytical steps and interpretations have been made?
- Acceptability: have the auditee made clear the processing of the data and the linkage to the components of analysis in a valid and reliable way?

For this research, an independent auditor has been contacted and asked to take the role as auditor, and examine the research process along the three criteria mentioned above. David van Alten, part of the same research group and fellow PromoDoc, but not connected to our research in any way, was willing to be the auditor of the study. To construct the audit procedure, we followed the work of Akkerman (et al, 2008), and used Mesker's report (2018) as guideline to further structure the audit procedure. The procedure has seven stages, as is presented in Table 1. Together these stages form the audit report, which will be summarized down below.

Table 1. Stages of audit procedure

Stage of audit procedure	Description
1. Orientation to audit procedure	Audit objectives, roles, and rules are established by auditor and auditee.
2. Orientation to study	Auditee arranges the logistics for the auditor and explains the audit trail to familiarize the auditors with the study procedure.
3. Determination of the auditability of the study	Auditor determines the completeness, comprehensibility, and utility of the audit trail. Auditee and auditor discuss the study's auditability.
4. Negotiation of contract	Auditee and auditor establish timeline, determine goals, specify roles, arrange study logistics, determine outcomes and format.
5. Assessment	Based on the audit trail, auditors assess the research process according to the specified quality criteria.
6. Renegotiation	Auditor presents findings and discuss discrepancies; auditee assesses the accuracy of the auditor claims and adherence of to the audit trail agreement.
7. Final report auditor	Auditor writes a substantiated assessment on the trustworthiness of the study.

Stage 1: Orientation to audit procedure

Auditee formally asks the researcher to take the role of auditor. During the first orienting call, the auditee explicates the procedures, the roles, the rules, and the aim to assess the research on the criteria visibility, comprehensibility, and acceptability. The justification for asking Dr. van Alten is his background and the interdisciplinary character of the research project. This study makes use of humanities and social sciences research methodology. Dr. Van Alten knows both worlds because of his work both as a historian and educational researcher using different social sciences methods. In this first orienting call, the auditee and auditor establish the time frame, and explicated the role of the procedure to structure the research process of the study.

Stage 2: Orientation to study

Before the audit, the auditor was broadly acquainted with the research of the auditee. Orientation to the study took place during the first meeting (Session 1, 23-04-21). The auditee prepared the necessary documents and materials and extensively discussed the study's background and context, theoretical framework, previous research of the auditor, methodological approach, and research questions.

First, the auditee explained the embeddedness of the research and presented the theoretical framework as a result of previous research that would function as 'heuristic tool', followed by the aim of the study and the chosen methodology to answer the research question. The auditee asked several clarifying questions that were used to further structure the introduction and theory section of the study. The four most important subjects that caused debate were: 1) the relation between the perceived friction and the use of narrativity, 2) the auditees' intention to code frictional behavior and attitudes as part of friction, 3) the limitations of the school in relation to the limitations of society, and 4) the operationalization of civic learning as socialization, and civic learning as subjectification.

Stage 3: Determination of the auditability of the study

Before the first meeting, the auditor and auditee agreed that the audit was to be performed as an ongoing iterative process. The auditee prepared each stage, and the auditor continuously asked questions during each stage. Both auditor and auditee took responsibility for constantly keeping track of the study's auditability and goals as clarified during Stage 1. The auditor and auditee reached agreement to combine the assessment (Stage 5) and renegotiation (Stage 6) as the meetings took place organically and were scheduled according to the progress of the audit. In addition, we discussed the framework of the final audit report. The auditor and auditee agreed that an extensive report of all the audit stages combined makes the final audit report (Stage 7).

Stage 4: Negotiation of contract

The auditors and auditee established the goals and roles of the audit on the phone before the first meeting, agreeing that the audit should be focused on the research process and the assessment of visibility, comprehensibility, and acceptability of the research. We also decided to evaluate the audit process and progress after each meeting and plan them organically. All sessions in which the various stages were completed were recorded and archived via video calling software for transparency and accountability.

Stage 5 and 6: Assessment and Renegotiation

Session 1 (23-04-21)

During the orientation to the study (Stage 2) during Session 1, the auditor established that all the necessary documents to perform the audit were discussed in a transparent and clear manner. Next, the auditor and auditee discussed the visibility, comprehensibility, and acceptability of the methodological approach. The following issues were discussed:

a. The auditee was one of the ten participants in the data set, without knowing at that time that the auditee would study this data set. The pros and cons of including the auditee as participant were discussed. The auditor suggested that it could be possible as others transcribed the lesson observation and interview, if done transparently and acknowledged in the study. However, the auditor concluded that bias could emerge as the goal of the study is to comprehend the teachers' actions in the classroom. Looking at the complete data set, the auditor and auditee concluded that including or excluding this particular participants' data would probably not lead to significantly different analyses and results. As a consequence, in deliberation with the auditor, the auditee chose to exclude this data from the research.

b. The data sources, procedures, and analysis were discussed, and the scientific approach and paradigms were clarified. This was needed to further explicate the function of the heuristic tool and to further structure the analytical process of coding.

c.   The auditor asked several questions about the coding steps, process, and strategies. These led to the following improvements:

i.   Table 2 contains important examples of coding for visibility. It helps the reader to assess both the actual research data as the criteria for coding. Make this important in the manuscript.

ii.   For transparency and repeatability, make clearer in the method section that the interplay between coding the lesson observations and interviews reinforce the findings. Examples were discussed in relation to coding limitations of play: when do you know if a student oversteps certain limitations, or when is a limitation simply not defined?

iii. Examples in the data discussed where teachers are pushing the limits. Auditor added to the method and particular tables that this is also an example of 'limitations of play', namely testing the limitations. The auditor suggested that this could be explicated in the method section to enhance visibility, and comprehensibility.

iv.   The auditor asked what happened when multiple coding categories could be applied on a certain selection of data. The auditee explained that the framework contains three different components, and emphasized their interrelation. Auditee explained the difficulty of separating the components for clarity, in respect to the possibility for new themes to emerge without harming the interrelation between those components that interact and together form educational friction.

v.   Given the qualitative and explorative approach, the auditor suggested that multiple coders would assess coding accuracy. Especially because the audit took place before and during the analysis process, and it thus positively affects the next coding stage, this audit procedure is used to further strengthen accuracy and enhance visibility, comprehensibility, and acceptability. In addition, it is more cost effective.

Session 2 (03-05-21)

First, the auditor and auditee reflected on the previous session and summarized the most important issues that were discussed. *The core of the research is the following: it aims to understand teachers' actions in*

the classroom when confronted with educational friction, not to explain
their behavior. To understand it, the researcher has to separate educational
friction (i.e. coding) to better understand the relationship between those
three components that together form educational friction.

Second, the auditee showed and explained the raw data and the first three analytical (coding) steps of the research that had been performed. Lesson observation transcripts and interview transcripts were separately coded. Both were collected and transcribed by other researchers than the authors of the current research. The auditee elaborated on the first coding steps, which the auditor found understandable. The auditor asked about the context in which the data was gathered. The participating teachers were retrospectively asked about moments in which they experienced different perspectives and to elaborate on these moments. The auditee explained that, by analyzing both the interview data and the lesson observation data, all moments of educational friction were coded (also the moments that were not mentioned by the teacher). The auditor advised to elaborate this point in the method section of the study.

Third, the auditor and auditee critically assessed if the analytical steps that were performed by the auditee were written down in the method section in a comprehensible way that is aligned with what the researcher did. A few suggestions to rewrite Table 4 and the method section were made to improve this aspect. For example, the auditee proposed to rewrite the steps in Table 4 according to the type of analysis that was done: Memo writing (interpreting) is now noted as a separated Step 3 instead of a part of Step 2 (coding).

Fourth, the three coding categories with separate colors were discussed. It was clear to the auditor how the researcher established the categories, and it was made transparent how the coding was conducted. The next analytical step was personal memo writing as first overall analysis of the codes. The auditor valued this step as an important scientific step towards the final interpretative analysis, as the auditee had made transparent and comprehensible when the auditee had encountered which insight during the qualitative analysis. However, the auditor suggested an improvement of the explanation of this step in the method section to show the reader the same underlying principles that the auditee explained to the auditor during the audit. A point of attention was also how specific moments that took place in the classroom are linked in the separate interview and observation transcriptions. Now,

cross-links are found and noted down manually. We decided to discuss this in a next session.

Fifth, the auditee explained the planned next steps in the research and asked the auditor for critical improvements in this approach. No significant changes were suggested. That the improvements from the audit report are taken into consideration for the further steps was recognized as a strength by the auditor. In addition, the auditor asked why analytical step 4 was not already conducted after step 2. The auditee explained that this was done to reduce possible bias and take a broader view to the data in Step 3, to return to the empirical data in Step 4 again. This iterative process is considered a good practice by the auditor. The auditee is aware of possible biases and takes careful steps to both reduce them and make them transparent according to the grounded theory analysis. Again, the suggestion was made to further elaborate on this in the method section.

Session 3 (05-05-21)

During the third and final session, the auditee and auditor further discussed the analytical steps while the auditee explained these steps by means of a random sample that was shown. The auditor randomly picked a few codes and asked the auditee to explain the interpretations behind the codes. The coding was done in a comprehensive and transparent manner. In a few cases, we found some complex cases. As the goal of the researcher is to relate the different codes to each other to grasp the underlying concepts of teachers' actions, the auditor assessed that it is not insurmountable that there are some difficult cases, especially regarding the explorative and qualitative nature of the analysis. Until now, all analytical steps were well substantiated and can be recognized in the data.

One of the main issues was the question whether the auditee should perform the next analytical step using coding software such as NVIVO, and, if the previously manually performed steps then should also be repeated in NVIVO. We discussed the pros and cons. On the one hand, the auditor explained that it is a common practice with this relatively small amount of data to do it manually, and then in the next step print all the color codes and segments to compare, analyze and structure it for new themes to emerge. On the other hand, it has great added value

to perform the previous and future analytical steps in coding software. Then, the software can aid interpreting the different data sources that are complexly layered as they are dealing with the same events. Furthermore, it will make the coding steps more comprehensible and transparent. Lastly, the auditee will repeat the previous coding steps in this coding software, which ensures that the discussions and improvements from the audit trail are also retrospectively improving these analytical steps.

Stage 7: Final audit report

Finally, the auditor wrote a report, sent it to the auditee, which summarized the report above for all six stages.

Reflection on the audit procedure

Both the auditor and auditee agreed that the different steps should be handled as guidelines to further shaping the study (Akkerman et al, 2008). The value of the audit depends on the effort and collaboration between auditor and auditee. In this case, the audit procedure was valuable in several ways. First, the audit helped to apply more rigor to the explorative, interpretative analysis, and thus helped structure this interdisciplinary research process, making it more transparent. Second, the procedure was instructive for both the auditee and for the auditor. The procedure functioned not only as a process to help structure the qualitative analysis, but also functioned as a valuable vehicle to further strengthening scientific communication, which is very important for interdisciplinary research. As for this specific study and audit procedure, the audit helped to further position between the humanities and social sciences in educational research. As such, the audit procedure should not be seen as a tool to control or examine the working process of a researcher, but should rather be seen as a way to share and communicate scientifically about research, that along the way improves and contributes to (educational) research in general.

Nederlandse samenvatting (Dutch summary)

De laatste twintig jaar is de relatie tussen democratie en onderwijs en de rol van de school omtrent burgerschap in toenemende mate onderdeel van het maatschappelijke debat. Vanuit een internationaal perspectief is dit tenminste gedeeltelijk een gevolg van groeiende zorgen over de sociale cohesie en politieke participatie van jongeren (Kahne & Westheimer, 2004; Biesta, 2011; Veugelers, 2019). Het inzicht dat democratisch burgerschap niet wordt aangeboren maar aangeleerd, benadrukt de actieve rol die het onderwijs zou moeten spelen in de ontwikkeling van de democratie en de vorming van haar burgers (Dewey, 1916; De Winter, 2004; Gutmann, 2004; Munniksma et al, 2017).

Een andere reden voor de toename van de aandacht rondom democratie en burgerschap in het onderwijs vanaf het begin van de millenniumwisseling is de maatschappelijke onrust die ontstond na aanslagen in verschillende Europese steden zoals London, Paris en Madrid. Sindsdien worden docenten steeds vaker geconfronteerd met extremistische opmerkingen, velerlei radicale meningen en ongemakkelijke situaties zoals juichende leerlingen tijdens het bespreken van terroristische aanslagen. Docenten worden steeds huiveriger en voelen zich handelsverlegen wanneer zij dergelijke onderwerpen aansnijden in de klas. De moord op de Franse docent Samuel Paty gaf een extra impuls aan het debat. De Franse Minister van Onderwijs deed een appel op zijn collega's en vroeg docenten uit alle Europese landen in hun klassen stil te staan bij de moord. Eerder, in 2016, ondertekenden alle ministers van onderwijs binnen de Europese Unie een verklaring waarin zij afspraken zich te committeren aan onderwijs waar pluralisme en non-discriminatie een vaste waarde zou moeten zijn (Europese Commissie, 2016). Naar aanleiding van de moord op Paty ontstond er in Nederland een debat over het gebruik van spotprenten in de klas.

In de Nederlandse context lopen er in deze periode twee ontwikkelingen parallel. In het begin van de jaren nul liep er, onder leiding van de Commissie Dijsselbloem, een parlementair onderzoek naar onderwijsvernieuwingen sinds de jaren negentig, zoals de

basisvorming, de tweede fase en de lumpsum financiering. De commissie
concludeerde in 2008 dat de verantwoordelijke politici last hadden
van een tunnelvisie die resulteerde in beleid zonder brede steunen
vanuit de onderwijspraktijk. Als gevolg lieten deze politici zich volgens
de commissie te veel leiden door internationale lijsten en 'rankings'.
Parallel aan deze ontwikkeling liep ook de maatschappelijke onrust
naar aanleiding van terroristische aanslagen, in Nederland gevoeld door
andere de moord op Pim Fortuyn in 2002 en de moord op Theo van Gogh
in 2004. Deze incidenten, maar ook het vertrek van jongeren richting
Irak en Syrië rond 2013 zorgden voor angst en alertheid (James en
Janmaat, 2019). In november 2021 waarschuwde de National Coördinator
Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid (NCTV) dat er meer aandacht zou
moeten gaan naar de radicalisering van rechtsextremistische jongeren
tussen de twaalf en twintig. Door deze gebeurtenissen groeide de
urgentie rondom de vraag welke rol het onderwijs zou moeten spelen in
een maatschappij waarin de angst voor de radicalisering van jongeren
toenam. Dit leidde tot meerdere opdrachten vanuit de overheid om te
analyseren op welke manier burgerschapsvorming verder verankerd
zou kunnen en moeten worden in het onderwijs (zie bijvoorbeeld: De
Winter, 2004; Onderwijsraad 2012; Platform OnsOnderwijs 2032, 2016;
Curriculum.nu; 2019b). Dit promotieonderzoek startte in 2016 in de
context van deze twee ontwikkelingen.

In dit proefschrift worden vier deelonderzoeken beschreven met
als doel 1) de betekenis van democratie in het Nederlandse voortgezet
onderwijs in de debatten over 'goed onderwijs' te begrijpen, 2) te
exploreren wat het betekent om de school te conceptualiseren als een
speelplaats om democratie te oefenen als we conflict accepteren als een
inherent onderdeel van menselijke relaties, en 3) te analyseren hoe de
praktijk van docenten eruit zien die frictie hanteren tijdens het lesgeven
over gevoelige onderwerpen. Omdat ons doel betrekking heeft op het
begrijpen van democratie in een educatieve context gebruiken we een
hermeneutisch perspectief. Dit proefschrift bestaat uit drie onderdelen,
uitgaande van Hans Georg Gadamer's idee dat hermeneutiek of begrijpen
bestaat uit drie *subtilitas*, zogenaamde finesses of tact: de *subtilitas
intelligendi*, de *subtilitas explicandi*, en de *subtilitas applicandi*. Gadamer
ziet de drie *subtilitas* niet als drie verschillende vormen van begrijpen,
maar als drie stadia in de zoektocht naar betekenis. In het geval de
betekenis van democratie in het Nederlandse voortgezet onderwijs.

Subtilitas Intelligendi

In het eerste stadium lag de focus bij 'lokale hermeneutiek', waarin we analyseerden op welke manier bestaande interpretaties in specifieke contexten tot stand zijn komen (Gallagher, 1992). Vandaar dat **hoofdstuk 2** gestoeld is op de vraag: welke betekenis(sen) van democratie is/zijn er gevormd in het debat over 'goed onderwijs' in Nederland? Om deze vraag te beantwoorden hebben we een doelbewuste selectie gemaakt bestaande uit elf documenten met een belangrijk aandeel binnen het debat over goed onderwijs. Vervolgens hebben we gebruikt gemaakt van de 'frame analysis', een multidisciplinaire sociaalwetenschappelijke methode. Specifiek hebben we het 'diagnostische frame' en het 'prognose-frame' gebruikt om beschreven situaties, activiteiten en boodschappen te analyseren binnen deze documenten, en te onderzoeken welke betekenissen van het begrip democratie zijn gevormd.

Het diagnostische frame laat zien dat democratie als een reactie wordt geformuleerd op twee ontwikkelingen waarnaar wordt verwezen als 'het neoliberale perspectief' en 'de meetcultuur'. Dit frame en de hierboven genoemde ontwikkelingen functioneren als een counterterminologie waar 'democratie' als een oplossing tegenover kan worden geplaatst. Binnen het prognose-frame vonden we vier verschillende oplossingsgerichte betekenissen van democratie, geformuleerd als een normatief geformuleerd alternatief tegenover de tendensen veroorzaakt door neoliberale tendensen binnen het onderwijs en de cultuur van het meten. De eerste betekenis die we vonden was 1) *democratie als organisatorische structuur*: het veranderen van de hiërarchische structuren ten faveure van een meer democratische organisatie, waarin meer ruimte zou zijn voor de autonomie van docenten die een positieve invloed zou hebben op 'goed onderwijs'. De tweede formulering is 2) *democratie als overheidsbeleid*. Democratie in dit geval betekent een betere (lees: democratische) balans tussen verticale en horizontale controle, verwijzend naar een overheid die een meer faciliterende rol zou moeten aannemen in het organiseren van 'goed onderwijs'. In de derde conceptualisatie, 3) *democratie als kennis en vaardigheden*, werd democratie als iets wat geleerd moet worden. Als zodanig is democratie leren, of burgerschapsvorming, een belangrijk onderdeel van 'goed onderwijs'. Als laatste vonden we een meer filosofisch geformuleerde opvatting van democratie als een

overkoepelend educatief doel die we 4) *democratie als praktijk* doopten. Als het over deze betekenis van democratie in een onderwijscontext ging, werd er in de documenten gesproken over democratie als 'een manier van leven', een aspect dat doorwerkt in de school als een plaats waar leerlingen leren omgaan met zichzelf en met elkaar, een praktijk die moeilijk te vatten is maar wel degelijk voorbij zou gaan aan democratie als kennis en vaardigheid. Dit deelonderzoek heeft aangetoond dat er verschillende betekenissen van democratie worden gehanteerd in de debatten over wat goed onderwijs behelst. Dit is vooral belangrijk omdat het risico op de loer ligt dat een complex begrip als democratie verwordt tot een alles overkoepelend stempel of label waarvan de betekenis onduidelijk blijft.

Om verder grip te krijgen op de betekenissen van democratie organiseerden we als volgende stap binnen dit stadium een Delphi panel, beschreven in **hoofdstuk 3**. Dit panel bestond uit experts uit verschillende vakgebieden, maar met een focus op onderwijs. We selecteerden beleidsmatige experts op het gebied van onderwijs, onderwijswetenschappelijke experts en bedrijfsmatige experts gericht op onderwijsprofessionalisering. In deze Delphi-methode maakte we gebruik van twee digitaal uitgezette rondes. De onderzoeksvraag voor dit onderzoek was: welke thema's komen op wanneer beleidsmatige-, bedrijfsmatige-, en wetenschappelijke experts in een Delphi panel discussiëren over de betekenis van democratie in relatie tot het Nederlandse onderwijs? In de eerste ronde vroegen we experts te reageren op acht verschillende discussiepunten. Deze punten formuleerden we op basis van de vier betekenissen die we vonden in het eerste deelonderzoek. Bij de tweede ronde gaven we de experts een aantal vragen met als doel de antwoorden uit de eerste ronde verder te verduidelijken. Om de experts te betrekken bij de kennis en antwoorden van de andere panelleden werd elke vraag ingeleid door een of twee prikkelende meningen, geformuleerd door een van de experts tijdens eerste ronde.

De data die deze twee rondes opleverden hebben we vervolgens kwalitatief gecodeerd en geanalyseerd, resulterend in vier thema's die door de experts zijn geformuleerd en die bijdragen aan een verdere uitwerking van de betekenis van democratie. Het eerste thema benoemd door het Delphi-panel is de 1) *distributie van de verantwoordelijkheid van docenten en schoolleiders*. Waar de experts weinig moeite hadden met

het opsommen van de verantwoordelijkheden van de docent en deze ook in een aantal gevallen op hiërarchische wijze opsomden, bleef de verantwoordelijkheid van de schoolleider vaak ongewis. Het tweede thema betroffen 2) *vragen rondom Artikel 23*. De vrijheid van onderwijs is stevig verankerd in de Nederlandse grondwet. Binnen het panel bestond er nogal wat onenigheid over de vraag wat deze vrijheid uiteindelijk behelsde in de praktijk, leidend tot de conclusie dat scholen gestimuleerd moeten worden in het formuleren van een eigen onderwijsvisie. Experts benoemden ook de spanning tussen de meer historische betekenis van de vrijheid van onderwijs als oplossing voor religieuze twisten in het Nederland van de 19e eeuw, versus de meer 21e-eeuwse uitleg van de wetgeving als een manier om onderwijs decentraal te organiseren. Het derde thema door het panel besproken betrof de 3) *smalle kijk op burgerschapsvorming*. Alle experts benadrukten het belang van het aanleren van democratische kennis en vaardigheden. Desalniettemin was een groot deel van de experts kritisch op het tekort van een visie op wat burgerschap zou moeten behelzen. Ook werd benadrukt dat democratie niet enkel kennis en vaardigheden betekent, maar ook gezien zou moeten worden als 'een praktijk' die geoefend moet worden. Een groot aantal experts sprak van 'democratie doen'. Toen de experts in de tweede ronde naar deze beschrijving werd gevraagd, spraken zij bijvoorbeeld over 'de school als een miniatuur gemeenschap op zichzelf.' Deze verwijzingen leidden ook het vierde thema in wat volgens de experts het meest urgent zou zijn, namelijk de conceptualisatie van 4) *de school als oefenplaats voor de samenleving*. Een expert vatte het als volgt samen: 'democratie is een vreedzame manier van samenleving met mensen die anders zijn dan jij. School kan een plek zijn waar oefening kan plaatsvinden in een veilige omgeving, zonder druk van buitenaf.' Vandaar dat we voor vervolgonderzoek besloten om de conceptualisatie van de *school als oefenplaats voor de samenleving* centraal te zetten in het volgende stadium van dit onderzoek.

Subtilitas explicandi

In onze zoektocht naar een juiste Engelse vertaling van het begrip 'oefenplaats', stuitte we op het eerste probleem dat we moesten oplossen: is de school in de letterlijke vertaling 'a place to practice', of is het een 'playground', en dus een speelplaats? De reden waarom we ervoor kozen

om niet alleen oefenplaats te vertalen naar 'playground', maar ook in het Nederlands een verandering van oefenplaats naar speelplaats te voorstaan, is tweeledig. Ten eerste was dit een consequentie van de formuleringen van *de school als oefenplaats* en de plaats van conflict hierbinnen, zoals beschreven door ontwikkelteams van Curriculum. nu. Het Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap gaf deze teams de taak doelstellingen te reviseren en formuleren voor toekomstbestendig onderwijs in Nederland, onder andere met betrekking tot burgerschapsvorming. In deze plannen vonden we voornamelijk beschrijvingen van conflict als iets dat 'vreedzaam opgelost' moest worden. Hierdoor stelden we onszelf de vraag wat precies de plaats is van conflict als het gaat om democratie in het Nederlandse onderwijs. In navolging van politiek denker Chantal Mouffe (2005) zien wij conflict als een onlosmakelijk onderdeel van democratie die inherent is aan menselijke relaties. Vandaar dat we onszelf de taak stelden om een de school als speelplaats de conceptualiseren waarin conflict serieus genomen wordt. Ten tweede was de keus voor 'speelplaats' het gevolg van het werk van cultuurhistoricus Johan Huizinga die we hieronder verder uiteen zullen zetten.

De onderzoeksvraag voor dit deelonderzoek was: hoe kan conflict educatief zijn? Om een model te ontwerpen waarin conflict kan worden begrepen als iets educatiefs, gebruikten we inzichten uit democratische theorie, narratieve theorie en cultuurtheorie. Mouffe (2005) is bovenal een politiek denker en benadrukt het belang om antagonisme te veranderen in agonisme, afstammend van *agon,* dat strijd of wedijver betekent. Anders geformuleerd pleit zij ervoor om politieke vijandigheid te om te zetten in politieke tegenstand. In navolging hiervan pleiten wij vanuit educatief perspectief om politiek conflict te veranderen in educatieve frictie. Waar conflict een meer eenduidige connotatie heeft verwijzend naar een mogelijk onoplosbare tegenstelling, duidt frictie op verschillende gradaties van agonisme dat als spanning onderdeel is van menselijke relaties. Frictie kan als zodanig verwijzen naar onenigheid, perplexiteit, weerstand, verassing, ongemak en botsing. Deze verschillende niveaus van spanning zien we als kansen of mogelijkheden om tot leren te komen (Dewey, 1933; 1938). Educatieve frictie kan dus niet alleen verschillende gradaties inhouden. Naar ons idee verwijst educatieve frictie ook naar een spanning die inherent is aan leven in een diverse en pluriforme samenleving. Frictie als spanning vergemakkelijkt

ook het gegeven dat conflict mogelijk onopgelost blijft, en zo als een onderdeel van samen-leven kan worden geïnterpreteerd, een spanning die men niet uit de weg zou moeten en hoeven gaan.

Figuur 1. De drie componenten die samen educatieve frictie vormen

Educational Friction Modelling Framework

Conflict Theory
· Incompatibility of goals
· Frictional behaviour
· Frictional atitudes

Narrative Theory
· Narrativity as a sensemaking mechanism
· Narratives as a way to include passions

Cultural Theory
· Play as freedom
· Limitations of space and time
· The cheat vs. the spoilsport

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in what constitutes friction

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in how friction is verbalized through narrativity

RESULTING IN
Gaining insight in the limitations in the classroom

Het model dat we ontwikkelden bestaat uit drie delen, weergegeven als drie figuren. Als eerste is dat de driehoek. Gestoeld op basis van het werk van Chris Mitchell (1981) waarin hij conflict duidt, representeert de driehoek de frictie, en de drie onderdelen van frictie die zich in de klas kunnen voordoen. Het eerste onderdeel is de *incompatibiliteit van doelen* waar de frictie over gaat. Het tweede onderdeel is het *frictieve gedrag* dat wordt getoond, volgens Mitchell alle gedragingen die worden ingezet om de ander te overtuigen. Als laatste zijn dat de *frictieve houdingen.* Deze houdingen kunnen zowel cognitief als emotioneel zijn. Een leerling kan bijvoorbeeld blijk geven van tunnelvisie of gebruikmaken van stereotypering in de klas (cognitief), maar ook emoties als boosheid, angst of jaloezie tonen. Frictie manifesteert zich via taal en wordt verteld, en is dus onderdeel van iemands narratief. Vandaar dat de driehoek van frictie ingebed is in wat we de *cirkel van narrativiteit* noemen. Narrativiteit werkt als een betekenisgevingsmechanisme dat leerlingen in relatie met elkaar en in een bepaalde context de mogelijkheid geeft om eigen ervaringen, de ervaringen van anderen en de context waarin deze zich afspelen te begrijpen.

De derde en laatste component waarbinnen de driehoek en cirkel zich bevinden is het *vierkantvormig speelveld.* Een democratie functioneert enkel bij een bepaalde vorm van stabiliteit (Mouffe, 2005). Net als de democratische samenleving kent ook de school als speelplaats, waar ruimte is voor educatieve frictie haar grenzen. Dit vierkant representeert de grenzen van dat speelveld. Om deze grenzen verder te analyseren gebruikten we het cultuurtheoretische werk *Homo Ludens* van Johan Huizinga. Het eerste hoofdkenmerk van het spel is volgens Huizinga dat het 'vrij is, het is vrijheid' (Huizinga, 1938/2010 p. 20). Bovendien waarborgt het spel ook een 'elasticiteit der verhoudingen' (Huizinga, 1938/2010 p. 301). Het spel ook altijd een vorm van wedijver met zich mee. Net als Mouffe spreekt Huizinga van agon. Dat het spel vrij is, betekent volgens Huizinga niet dat het grenzeloos is. Sterker nog, het spel bestaat bij de gratie van regels; de speelruimte is 'een opzettelijk afgegrensde kring waarbinnen de handeling verloopt en regels gelden' (Huizinga, 1938/2010 p. 293). Tegelijkertijd kan een spel, zoals verstoppertje of een potje voetbal, eindeloos herhaald worden, als een intermezzo, een begrensde wereld waarin 'spanning' een grote rol speelt (Huizinga, 1938/2010 p. 27). Dat een spel eindig is en opnieuw begint wil niet zeggen dat haar 'werking' afloopt: het spel straalt na afloop af op de gewone wereld daarbuiten (Huizinga, 1938/2010 p. 31).

Dit onderzoek had niet als doel de grenzen van het klaslokaal, en dus van het speelveld te bepalen. Ons doel was om te exploreren op welke manier conflict educatief zou kunnen zijn, en zo geïncorporeerd zou kunnen worden als een belangrijk onderdeel van democratie en democratisch leren. Ons model kan worden gebruikt om steeds weer te bepalen waar de frictie over gaat, en hoe dit narratief wordt gevormd. Ook zou ons model kunnen helpen bepalen wat de grenzen zijn op dat specifieke moment in de klas, in die specifieke context om democratisch leren vorm te geven. Ons model maakt het mogelijk om de school als speelplaats voor de samenleving te begrijpen waarin verschillende gradaties van frictie toegestaan kunnen worden. Op deze speelplaats kunnen leerlingen ervaren wat het betekent om onderdeel te zijn van een diverse en pluriforme samenleving waar frictie een inherent onderdeel is van menselijke relaties. Zoals Huizinga stelt: het cultureel en sociaal vormende aspect van spel, gekenmerkt door frictie, stopt niet als het spel eindigt, maar blijft na afloop afstralen op de spelende mensen aanwezig op de speelplaats.

Subtilitas applicandi

In dit laatste stadium en in de laatste hermeneutische finesse van toepassing hebben we ons als doel gesteld een antwoord te vinden op de vraag: op welke manier behandelen expertdocenten educatieve frictie in het klaslokaal? Om antwoord te vinden op deze vraag hebben we ons in dit deelonderzoek gefocust op het lesgeven over gevoelige onderwerpen. Gevoelige onderwerpen, e.g. slavernij, het Israël-Palestina conflict en/ of seksualiteit dragen een bepaalde openheid of onbepaaldheid in zich. Hierdoor worden zowel docenten als leerlingen geworpen in een proces van betekenisgeving waarin de kans op frictie in het klaslokaal groot is. Negen expertdocenten werden geselecteerd en gevraagd om een les te ontwerpen en te geven waarvan zij zeker wisten dat het zou leiden tot het ontstaan van meerdere perspectieven in de klas. We observeerden en filmden de lessen en interviewden de docenten na de les. Een van de onderdelen van de interviews was een zogenaamde *stimulated recall*, waarin we samen met de docent een fragment terugkeken waar volgens de docent sprake was van meerdere perspectieven, om zo verder het gedrag, de keuzes en het handelen van de docent in kaart te brengen. Dit leidde uiteindelijk tot negen getranscribeerde lessen en interviews die

we middels een cross-case analyse verder exploreerden. Dit deden we door het model ontworpen tijdens de *subtilitas explicandi* en inmiddels gedoopt tot het Educatieve Frictie Model, te gebruiken als heuristische lens om te destilleren op welke manier de geselecteerde expertdocenten educatieve frictie behandelen in hun klaslokaal (Kelle, 1995; 2005).

Onze analyse leverde vijf verschillende inzichten op met betrekking tot de wijze waarop docenten frictie behandelen in de klas. Ten eerste observeerden we hoe geen van de geselecteerde docenten een leerling uit de klas zette voor het maken van *extreme opmerkingen* die we classificeerden als racistisch en/of discriminerend. In plaats daarvan gebruikten zij de opmerkingen om het gesprek in de klas verder vorm te geven. Of om in Huizinga's termen te spreken: zij maakten een moment waarin zij frictie in verschillende gradaties toestonden. Wat volgde waren momenten waarin docenten de frictie toelieten. Deze momenten verschilden in: 1) tijd: sommige docenten stonden tien minuten stil naar aanleiding van de extreme opmerking, andere thematiseerden de opmerking in een onderwijsleergesprek dat de gehele les duurde, en 2) het aantal betrokkenen leerlingen: sommige docenten bespraken de opmerkingen in groepje, andere met de hele klas.

Ten tweede zagen we verschillende manieren van docenten die *ruimte maakten*. Docenten spraken over 'het overboord gooien van hun les' om ruimte te maken voor narratieven van buiten de klas, en lieten deze verhalen toe in het lokaal. Ook gaven zij aan tijdens de les tijdsoverwegingen te maken over hoe lang de frictie op het speelveld te behandelen. Daarbij lieten zij in de verschillende interviews zien zich bewust te zijn van hun fysieke aanwezigheid in de ruimte en bewust de handen achter de rug te vouwen of een stap terug of juist vooruit te doen als het moment hierom vroeg. In een aantal gevallen lieten de geselecteerde docenten de doelstellingen van de voorbereide les los, om zo de frictie te laten uitspelen en de richting van de les te laten bepalen.

Ten derde zagen we hoe leerlingen hun narratieven gebruikten om te begrijpen wat er op dat moment werd besproken in de klas, wat ons idee van de inbedding van de driehoek van frictie binnen de cirkel van narrativiteit bevestigde. Bijvoorbeeld, in een van de lessen werd segregatie op school besproken, waarbij één leerling (met een migratieachtergrond), deelde wat zij opmerkte op het moment dat ze in een trainingspak door haar wijk fietste. Wanneer docenten niet tevreden waren met de frictie in de klas, observeerden we hoe een aantal docenten

bewust leerlingen vroeg om hun narratief te delen. Vaak, zo gaven zij aan in de interviews, was dit om 'het perspectief van een ander' ruimte te geven op het speelveld. In het verlengde van deze observaties is ook van belang te noemen dat elke docent het belang van een vertrouwensband benadrukte, een belang dat we classificeren als een voorwaarde voor het toelaten van frictie die, zo denken wij, Huizinga's idee van 'de elasticiteit van menselijke relaties' mogelijk maakt.

Ten vierde benadrukten alle docenten de taak om leerlingen uit te dagen, en zelfs af en toe te provoceren. In sommige gevallen observeerden we hoe provocaties van de docent de leerling niet leek uit te dagen, maar juist beïnvloedden. Om deze conclusie te verduidelijken maken we een onderscheid tussen de docent die meedoet met het spel, en mogelijk hiermee het spel dus beïnvloedt, en de docent die onderdeel is van het speelveld, waarin er een zekere afstand gewaarborgd is die het mogelijk maakt voor de docent om 'mee te doen zonder echt mee te doen.' We zullen dit aspect verder toelichten wanneer we Hannah Arendts idee van 'bezoeken' uiteenzetten.

Als laatste analyseerden we hoe docenten een onderscheid lijken te maken tussen ratio en emoties in hun besluitvorming tot handelen in de klas wanneer er sprake is van frictie. Voor een aantal docenten zijn emoties in de klas een teken om hun leerlingen eraan te herinneren dat emoties er mogen zijn, maar dat een gesprek op basis van ratio wenselijker is. Voor andere docenten zijn rationalisaties een teken om 'dieper te graven' om voorbij 'sociaal wenselijke' antwoorden te komen. We hebben deze observaties niet verder kunnen uitwerken, maar denken dat hier voor vervolgonderzoeken interessante inzichten uit zijn te halen om beter te verklaren hoe verschillende, wellicht typen, docenten tot handelen komen in het lesgeven over gevoelige onderwerpen.

Dit deelonderzoek resulteerde in vijf vormen van het behandelen van educatieve frictie door expertdocenten waar (toekomstige) docenten op zouden kunnen reflecteren met hun eigen praktijk in oogschouw nemend. Daarnaast laat dit onderzoek ook zien dat het toelaten van educatieve frictie uiteindelijk neerkomt op twee belangrijke aspecten van het docentschap, namelijk: 1) het vermogen van de docent om de leerling en zichzelf uit te dagen en te begrenzen, en 2) de bereidheid van de docent om een subject-subject relatie aan te gaan met leerlingen. Met dit laatste bedoelen we dat frictie kan worden toegestaan als de docent bereid is in een bepaalde mate ook zichzelf open te stellen, en zo ook de frictie toe te

laten en zichzelf af te vragen; wat roept dit onderwerp eigenlijk bij mij op, en waarom? En op welke manier beïnvloedt dit mijn aandeel in het speelveld? We zullen hieronder een aantal reflectieve vragen presenteren die docenten hopelijk helpen om meer inzicht te krijgen in deze twee aspecten, en de mogelijkheid bieden te exploreren op welke manier de vijf vormen van het behandelen van educatieve frictie passend zou kunnen zijn in de eigen lespraktijk.

Terug naar het begin, of opnieuw beginnen

Het doel voor dit onderzoek was om de betekenis van democratie in het Nederlands voortgezet onderwijs in de debatten over 'goed onderwijs' te begrijpen, te exploreren wat het betekent om de school te conceptualiseren als een speelplaats om democratie te oefenen als we conflict accepteren als een inherent onderdeel van menselijke relaties, en te analyseren hoe de praktijk van docenten eruitziet wanneer zij frictie hanteren tijdens het lesgeven over gevoelige onderwerpen. Het onderzoek had drie stadia, geformuleerd naar de *subtilitas*, of finesses, zoals geformuleerd door Gadamer. Dit brengt ons terug naar het begin: wat kan er gezegd worden over de betekenis van democratie binnen het Nederlands voortgezet onderwijs? Of anders gezegd: als we de verschillende onderdelen van dit onderzoek in beschouwing nemen, wat kunnen we dan zeggen over het geheel? Aan de hand van Dewey's klassieke werk over democratie en onderwijs en Arendt's concept van 'nataliteit' en 'bezoeken', zal ik hieronder aantonen hoe onze zoektocht naar het begrijpen van democratie in het voortgezet onderwijs uiteindelijk leidt tot het begrijpen van educatieve frictie als een beweging *voorbij* democratie, *omwille van* de democratie.

Dewey's klassieke werk over democratie en onderwijs is op vele manieren geïnterpreteerd (Van Der Ploeg 2016; 2019). Een veelgenoemd citaat is 'de school als embryonale samenleving', de school als een democratie in het klein. Voor Dewey is het belangrijk democratie niet te zien als een vaststaande reeks van instellingen, maar veeleer als iets dat alle mensen gelijkelijk ervaren. Democratie en onderwijs stelt hij voor als twee zijden van dezelfde munt, uiteindelijk gericht op een voortdurende capaciteit van groei. Democratie als zodanig is dus meer dan een regeringsvorm, het is in de eerste plaats een wijze van geassocieerd leven, een gezamenlijke, geassocieerde ervaring (Dewey,

1916/1980). Dit laatste aspect sluit aan bij de conclusie dat de docent bereidheid moet tonen om een subject-subject relatie aan te gaan met leerlingen. Docenten benadrukken het belang van het sluiten van een vertrouwensband en doen verschillende pogingen om leerlingen narratieven die zij hebben opgedaan buiten de klas te laten delen in het lokaal. Democratie verstaan als educatieve frictie betekent de poging van de docent om 'in sync' te komen met de leerlingen op het speelveld, of zoals het Arendt het noemt wanneer zij spreekt over politieke existentie, te handelen 'in concert' (Arendt, 1958 p. 57). Om samen tot het spelen van muziek te komen is er naast een dirigent natuurlijk altijd sprake van muzikanten, want zonder hen valt er weinig te spelen. Desalniettemin, de dirigent heeft een bijzondere rol, omdat dit individu 'muziek maakt zonder muziek te maken'. De dirigent speelt niet mee, maar is wel degelijk onderdeel van het speelveld en het spel van de muzikanten die in relatie met elkaar en in de context met elkaar muziek maken, ongeacht of de harmonieën nou consonant of dissonant klinken. Vandaar dat ook de tweede conclusie uit het laatste onderzoek, namelijk dat frictie behandelen uiteindelijk neerkomt op het vermogen van de docent om zichzelf en de leerlingen te begrenzen en uit te dagen, te verbinden is aan Dewey's idee van democratie en onderwijs. De docent als een dirigent op het speelveld, als degene die wel onderdeel is van het spel maar niet meespeelt, is naar mijn idee gericht op het scheppen van de mogelijkheid om leerlingen democratie te laten ervaren.

Deze ervaring wordt volgens Dewey bevorderd door een hoge mate van communicatie. Deze interactie tussen individuen en groepen zou een verzameling aan gezamenlijke visies op en gemeenschappelijke belangen met betrekking tot de samenleving mogelijk maken (Dewey, 1916/2018 p. 89). Dit idee is overeenkomstig met de ideeën van democratische vorming vanuit een consensus gedreven perspectief. Binnen dit perspectief wordt weinig rekening gehouden met 1) machtsrelaties, en 2) de spanning tussen liberale, meer universele concepten zoals vrijheid, en de democratische realiteit van verschil. Deze spanning zorgt volgens Mouffe voor een belangrijke dynamiek waarbinnen machtsverhoudingen steeds weer opnieuw zouden moeten worden geëvalueerd (Mouffe, 2005). In het werk van Dewey blijft deze politieke dimensie ten minste wat onderbelicht (Straume, 2016). Het doel van dit onderzoek is juist dit aspect van machtsrelaties en de mogelijkheid om die te (her)evalueren te incorporeren in de conceptualisatie van de school als speelplaats voor de

samenleving. Om tot de laatste stap te komen en uiteen te zetten waarom dit onderzoek uiteindelijk begrepen kan worden als een beweging voorbij democratie, omwille van de democratie, zal ik nu bondig de verbinding leggen tussen educatieve frictie en Arendts idee van nataliteit en bezoeken.

De uitdaging voor docenten volgens Arendt is om verantwoordelijkheid te nemen voor de wereld. Volgens haar is de essentie van onderwijs 'nataliteit, het feit dat de mens geboren wordt in de wereld' (Arendt, 1961/2006 p. 171). Met dit concept wil Arendt de dynamiek beschrijven die onderdeel is van het onderwijs met betrekking tot het introduceren van jongeren in een oude wereld waarin zij geboren worden, en tegelijkertijd hen het mogelijk maken geboren te worden, waarmee zij doelt op hun mogelijkheid om hun eigen begin te maken in die wereld. In mijn optiek ligt dit idee van nataliteit niet ver af van Dewey's nadruk op de capaciteit tot groei als het gaat over democratie en onderwijs. Er is ook wel een verschil: Arendt houdt als politiek denker rekening met politieke existentie. De reden waarom zij een harde knip voorstelt tussen de wereld van kinderen en de wereld van volwassen is niet alleen om ruimte te maken voor nataliteit in het educatieve domein, het is ook een poging kinderen zogezegd vrij te waren van het politieke systeem. Docenten als onderdeel van de oude wereld moeten ruimte maken voor het nieuwe begin van hun leerlingen die mogelijk de oude wereld doorbreken. De oplossing voor die al te harde knip tussen volwassen en jongeren binnen het educatieve domein is om niet voorbij te gaan aan de nataliteit, maar ook de docent nog te zien als een onlosmakelijk en belangrijk onderdeel van de speelplaats waar politieke existentie een plek heeft, en politiek begrip te verstaan als 'bezoeken'. Voor Arendt is politieke existentie niet een capaciteit, maar het samen existeren met andere mensen, vreemden, voor altijd in dezelfde wereld (Arendt, 1977). Politiek begrijpen als 'bezoeken' betekent dan ook voor haar om 'te zijn en te denken binnen mijn eigen identiteit op een plek waar ik op dat moment niet ben' (Arendt, 1977 p. 241). Naar mijn idee doelt ze hiermee op het feit dat iemands positie hetzelfde blijft, maar dat de context verandert, en daardoor desoriëntatie ontstaat die nodig is om pluraliteit en diversiteit te ervaren (Disch, 1994). Educatieve frictie als bezoeken betekent daarom niet mikken op het veranderen van perspectief, noch betekent het leerlingen in de schoenen van iemand anders plaatsen. Het begrijpen van educatieve frictie gaat over de docent

die het mogelijk maakt om te ervaren, en dus te leren, door zichzelf en de leerlingen uit te dagen en te begrenzen om te zijn en te denken vanuit hun eigen positionaliteit, in relatie en in de context met anderen, waarin docenten de mogelijkheid tot interruptie en desoriëntatie van gevoelens, gedachten en ervaringen stimuleren op de speelplaats. Educatieve frictie is de confrontatie met anderen die *niet* jou zijn. Het is de ervaring van verschil door de ontmoeting met leerlingen met *andere* verhalen dan die van jezelf. Geboren worden en een nieuw begin inbrengen brengt de oude wereld in gevaar (Arendt, 1958/2018 p. 190). En omdat educatieve frictie behandelen of inzetten in de klas een gevaar met zich meebrengt, concludeer ik dat educatieve frictie uiteindelijk een beweging voorbij democratie betekent.

Voorbij democratie

In hoofdstuk 2 van dit proefschrift lieten we zien hoe democratie is geconstrueerd als een oplossing voor de diagnose van 'ondemocratische ontwikkelingen' in het onderwijs. De urgentie die de experts benoemen in hoofdstuk 3, wat betreft de conceptualisatie van de school als oefenplaats voor de samenleving, is in ieder geval gedeeltelijk hierdoor te verklaren. In hoofdstuk 4 beschreven we hoe de werkgroepen van curriculum.nu de doelstellingen voor burgerschapsvorming voornamelijk beschreven in termen van het zoeken naar consensus en het zoeken naar vreedzame oplossingen. Ook beschreven we dat, als je democratische vorming enkel in socialiserende termen begrijpt en doorvoert, dit uiteindelijk ondemocratisch zou zijn: een overheid die bepaalt welke uitkomsten wenselijk zijn betekent uiteindelijk dat dit de *enige* manier is om democratische vorming te begrijpen (Biesta, 2011), wat in mijn idee geen recht doet aan Dewey's opvatting van democratie en onderwijs als twee kanten van dezelfde munt.

En toch, hoewel democratie in het onderwijs ook het behandelen van educatieve frictie zou moet behelzen, en dus zou kunnen zorgen voor bepaalde spanningen en risico, wil ik hiermee niet zeggen dat ook democratie, en dus ook democratische vorming in het klaslokaal een bepaalde vorm van stabiliteit vereist (Mouffe, 2005). Onderwijs is een plek waar ervaren als leren mogelijk zou moeten worden gemaakt, en als zodanig betekent het gebruiken van educatieve frictie in de klas een beweging van docenten voorbij democratie, omwille van de democratie.

Zij kiezen ervoor om aspecten die buiten het educatieve domein als niet-democratisch, racistisch en/of discriminerend worden ervaren te laten bestaan (hoofdstuk 5), omdat het een opening creëert om te leren. In de conceptualisatie van de school als een speelplaats voor de samenleving versta ik de school als een plek en de klas als een ruimte waarin zogezegd de hegemonie van de democratie van tijd tot tijd doorbroken moet worden. De educatieve ruimte waarin democratie als ervaring wordt vormgegeven is een context waarin ruimte is voor leren. En juist omdat er geleerd wordt, moeten wij als docenten, in het belang van democratie, onszelf en onze leerlingen begrenzen en uitdagen op zo'n manier dat er interrupties kunnen ontstaan, zelfs als dit betekent dat dit extreme opmerkingen tot gevolg heeft zoals weergegeven in hoofdstuk 5. In sommige gevallen zouden deze opmerkingen in andere publieke ruimten dan het klaslokaal niet geaccepteerd of getolereerd worden. Onszelf de vraag stellen: 'zouden docenten dan alles moeten toestaan wat leerlingen willen zeggen?', is simpelweg de verkeerde vraag stellen. Het gaat over de vraag: 'wat kan er geleerd worden?'

Het gaat erom wat er op het spel staat en wat er kan worden ervaren, en dus kan worden geleerd naar aanleiding van de frictie. Dat is waar ik op doel als ik educatieve frictie definieer als een beweging voorbij democratie.

Aanbevelingen voor de praktijk

Het kan zo zijn dat een docent, omwille van democratische vorming, een extreme opmerking die onacceptabel is toestaat met als doel om te leren via educatieve frictie die ontstaat. Dit haakt aan Mouffes distinctie tussen 'politiek' en 'het politieke' zoals beschreven in hoofdstuk 4. In het belang van democratie zou het politieke, of wel het conflict dat inherent is aan menselijke relaties in het klaslokaal uitgespeeld kunnen worden. Educatieve frictie gaat niet over de inclusie van diegene die anders zijn binnen de status quo. Educatieve frictie is het ervaren van verschil, als inherent aan wat het betekent om in een democratie te leven. Als onderdeel van de school als speelplaats betekent educatieve frictie een vorm van leren als ervaring van verschil met anderen. Niet om deze ander binnen te laten, maar om jezelf de ander te laten ontmoeten. Educatieve frictie is leren dat het oké is om van tijd tot tijd opgeschud te worden, om het even *niet* te weten, om verrast te worden of weerstand te voelen. Dat hoort er nu eenmaal bij in een pluriforme en diverse samenleving. Wat wij als docenten kunnen doen is de verschillende

gradaties van educatieve frictie zo behandelen dat er ruimte is om te ervaren wat het betekent om politiek subject te zijn op de speelplaats, waarin leerlingen de frictie uit kunnen spelen op een plek waar ruimte is voor groei en om een nieuw begin te maken.

Het Educatieve Frictiemodel is een hulpmiddel dat kan worden ingezet voor verdere docentenprofesionalisering als het gaat om frictie in de klas. In Tabel 1 zijn aan de hand van de resultaten uit hoofdstuk 5 reflectieve vragen geformuleerd die docenten kunnen gebruiken om op te reflecteren voor toekomstige lessen.

Tabel 1. Reflectieve vragen ter bevordering van het behandelen van frictie in de klas

In de klas	Reflectie vraag voor de onderwijspraktijk
1. Extreme opmerking	1. Gaat deze opmerkingen over de grenzen van de speelplaats? 2. Is dit een opmerking gemaakt door een valsspeler die toch nog meespeelt? Of is dit een spelbreker die de speelplaats niet erkent? 3. Vraagt deze opmerking om een intermezzo, of moet ik de grens van het speelveld bewaken?
2. Ruimte maken	1. Is het mogelijk om een narratief van buiten de klas in het lokaal toe te laten? 2. Hoeveel tijd is er nodig om deze frictie te laten uitspelen? 3. Op welke manier beïnvloedt mijn fysieke en non-verbale aanwezigheid de ruimte van mijn leerlingen op het speelveld? 4. Vraagt dit moment mij om het lesdoel even te laten voor wat het is?
3. Het delen van narratieven	1. Welke narratieven zijn aanwezig op het speelveld? 2. Wie is welk verhaal aan het vertellen? 3. Op welke wijze wordt dit verhaal verteld?
4. Uitdagen en provoceren	1. Verkleint of vergroot de kans dat de leerling meedoet op het speelveld door wat ik zeg? 2. Ben ik als docent onderdeel van het speelveld, of ben ik mee aan het doen met het spel?
5. Ratio en emoties	1. Zijn emoties een signaal voor mij als docent om leerlingen hierin te begrenzen? 2. Zijn rationalisaties een vorm van sociaalgeaccepteerde antwoorden, en dus een trigger om 'dieper te graven'?

Suggesties voor verder onderzoek

In het laatste hoofdstuk formuleer ik een aantal adviezen voor verder onderzoek op verschillende niveaus en suggesties. Dit onderzoek is een voorbeeld van wat interpretatief onderwijsonderzoek met een meer hermeneutisch perspectief kan bijdragen aan onderwijsonderzoek.

Niet alleen maakt dit perspectief van onderzoek inzichtelijk op welke manier docenten tot handelen komen, ook dragen we middels ons Educatieve Frictiemodel bij aan de behoefte die er bestaat aan modellen die bijdragen aan het begrijpen, ondersteunen en illustreren van betekenisvolle bewegingen van jongeren in het klaslokaal (Akkerman et al, 2021; Curnow & Jurow, 2021). Op het niveau van curriculumontwikkeling pleiten we ervoor om ruimte te laten voor docenten en leerlingen om frictie te laten uitspelen in de klas. Dit betekent dat doelstellingen niet zouden moeten worden vastgelegd, en dat het curriculum niet zodanig overladen moet worden dat docenten als gevolg van tijdsdruk of prestatiedruk voorbijgaan aan frictie die opkomt in de klas. Op het niveau van overheidsbeleid laten verschillende onderzoek van de Onderwijsraad en het Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau zien dat er een structureel probleem bestaat die ongelijkheid, en naar ons idee daarom ook democratische vorming van leerlingen zeer bemoeilijkt. De vraag is niet óf de overheid moet ingrijpen, maar wanneer (SCP, 2021). Als grondbeginsel zou de overheid ervoor moeten zorgen dat kwaliteit en kansen op leren niet afhangen van aspecten als de culturele, etnische of sociale afkomst, de postcode of de familiestatus, en op die manier zorgen dat de school een meer rechtvaardige plek wordt (Merry, 2020). Wat betreft onderzoek pleit ik ervoor om de dataset te vergroten en onderzoek naar educatieve frictie uit te breiden naar andere vakgebieden. Democratische vorming en burgerschapsonderwijs is geformuleerd als een school-brede taak, en gevoelige onderwerpen zijn binnen elk vak te vinden. Ook zou het interessant zijn te onderzoeken op welke manier kennistheoretische assumpties van bepaalde vakken de ruimte voor frictie en meerdere perspectieven beïnvloeden.

Dankwoord (acknowledgements)

> 'If you believe something,
> if you think this is right,
> it is going to make you smaller
> until you learn how to read the resistance,
> and travel with the friction that is created
> when you put a line in your life.
> Friction is movement.'

> *Jacob Collier, in een interview met Eric Whitacre*

De jaren waarin ik dit onderzoek deed zijn niet zonder frictie geweest. Nu ik dit schrijf, lijken die momenten waarop de lijn het meest gespannen was ver weg. En toch, als ik even de tijd neem om terug te kijken voel ik opnieuw een vlaag van de frictie die ergens is opgeslagen, een nerveus gevoel ergens in mijn buik dat wordt vertaald in allerlei gedachten en herinneringen. Een aandenken aan hoe het ooit was, en waar ik nu ben: frictie is beweging.

Dit onderzoek is me tot dicht op de huid genaderd. Het is onderdeel geworden van wie ik ben, of wie ik aan het worden ben. Dit heeft verschillende redenen. Als eerste komt dit omdat het is vervlochten met het werk waar ik zoveel plezier en voldoening uit haal: het leren met mijn leerlingen in een klaslokaal. Daarnaast is dit onderzoek het product van de ambitie om na te denken en te analyseren waarom iets is zoals het is. En als laatste is het als een jas geworden die past, omdat dit proefschrift een belangrijk thema in mijn persoonlijk leven belichaamt: omgaan met en leren van verschil. Leren door en van frictie gebeurt altijd in relatie tot anderen. Hoewel ik urenlang alleen aan mijn bureau heb gezeten om te creëren wat er nu op al deze pagina's te lezen is, zijn er veel mensen die, allen op hun eigen manier, naast me hebben gestaan.

In de eerste plaats hebben mijn eigen docenten en begeleiders een grote rol gespeeld in dit project, te beginnen bij mijn twee promotoren, Cok en Lucien. De gesprekken die we gedrieën aan het Janskerkhof voerden heb ik zeer gewaardeerd. Ik heb me altijd gezien gevoeld door jullie. Ook op momenten van frictie in mijn werk als docent en in mijn persoonlijke leven zijn jullie begripvol geweest, en voerden onze gesprekken verder dan dit onderzoeksproject.

Dan zijn er nog twee docenten die ik sinds kort directe collega's mag noemen. Bjorn, dank voor je scherpe blik. Je hebt het nooit gelaten me te bevragen. En misschien nog wel belangrijker: mijn felheid heb je nooit afgekeurd, maar altijd gezien als teken van mijn toewijding en als mogelijkheid om verder te komen. Hanneke, je bent altijd betrokken geweest en dichtbij gebleven. Als ik twijfelde over vervolgstappen of inhoudelijke keuzes wat betreft mijn onderwijs of onderzoek, kon ik bij je terecht. Nu sta ik naast je college te geven en vullen we elkaar aan: daar ben ik heel blij mee en trots op.

Ook wil ik hier de belangrijkste docent uit een vorig leven noemen: Mike Martin. Van alle docenten in mijn jeugd ben jij degene die een blijvende indruk heeft achtergelaten. Als kleine tennisser kwam ik samen met mijn broertje bij jou terecht. Al spelende leerde ik binnen en buiten de lijnen van het veld onder jouw vleugels meer over solidariteit, gelijkheid, discipline en samenwerken dan dat ik toen op school leerde. Ik ben helaas geen proftennisser geworden, maar ik weet zeker dat jouw lessen hebben bijgedragen aan mij als persoon en aan het voltooien van dit proefschrift.

Als promovendus maakte ik deel uit van de onderzoeksgroep Normatieve Professionalisering, waar ik vaak over die aspecten van het onderwijs kon praten die mij intrigeerden, maar waar ik in het begin van dit project nog niet echt een plek voor had gevonden. Ik wil alle leden van deze groep bedanken, en in het bijzonder Koen en Anouk voor jullie scherpe opmerkingen, vragen en steun! Ik wil ook twee mensen noemen die er zijn sinds we samen studeerden om docent te worden. Emma, zo fijn dat we elkaar sinds vakdidactiek zijn gaan zien en kunnen praten over alles binnen en buiten de klas. David, mijn mede PromoDoc. Hoewel je overliep naar de Dark Side en je hart verkocht aan SPSS, zorgde de afstand tussen de Drift en het Langeveld niet voor minder contact. We hebben in onze pauzes veel gewandeld, koffiegedronken en elkaar gesteund in het overleven van alles wat komt kijken bij beginnend

docentschap in combinatie met een PhD-traject. We begrepen elkaars situatie, en kijk ons nu! Hopelijk staan we in de nabije toekomst samen voor een groep aanstaande docenten.

De afgelopen jaren heb ik naast het uitvoeren van dit onderzoek met veel plezier op het Joke Smit College lesgegeven, mede door alle fijne collega's die er rondlopen, waarvan ik er een aantal wil uitlichten. Mijn docentschap begon bij de eerste keer dat ik binnenliep in dat prachtige gebouw aan de Reijnier Vinkeleskade in Amsterdam: Wilma, ik wil je bedanken voor de kansen en de ruimte die je me hebt geboden. Mike, dankzij jou voel ik me er thuis! Het is een feest om 's ochtends door jou verwelkomd te worden: dat geldt niet alleen voor mij, maar ook voor de leerlingen, zeker als er bachata, samba of je favoriete album van Mariah Carey door de speakers schalt.

Sandor en Fleur, met veel plezier heb ik me samen met jullie gestort op allerlei wilde plannen en ideeën voor de ontwikkeling van ons team op school. Dank voor jullie betrokkenheid en creativiteit. Matthijs, je werd chagrijnig van mijn CV, maar we vonden elkaar meteen. Je was mijn eerste maatje op school en bent dat gebleven. We hebben veel gepraat over onderwijs, lessen ontwikkeld, gelachen en kattenkwaad uitgehaald. Terry, Astrid en Annemarie! We vonden elkaar tijdens onze tussenstop in Krakau, op weg naar de rest van onze collega's in Slowakije. We dronken mierzoete hazelnootlikeur tot diep in de nacht, hadden lange gesprekken over ons leven naast school en dansten in de woonkamer. Mijn geschiedenissectie: Vincent, Christiaan, Sam en Dennis. We zijn een goed team en ik vond onze samenwerking altijd heel fijn. Jullie zijn altijd begripvol geweest als ik weer eens examenvragen te laat of niet inleverde, en namen lessen over als ik zo nodig ergens anders moest zijn voor dit project. Ik gun elke leerling een van jullie als geschiedenisdocent.

Tijdens mijn onderzoekstraject heb ik in juni 2018 een week aan het KNIR in Rome mogen verblijven voor een masterclass 'Werken in de (geestes)wetenschap', onder de begenadigde leiding van Frits van Oostrom. Een enerverende week die ik niet zal vergeten, mede door twee andere leden van 'De Feestclub'. Jorrit, ik waardeer onze gesprekken over schrijven, boeken en al het leven daartussen. Alie, ik vind het bijzonder dat we elkaar gevonden hebben en elkaar deelgenoot hebben gemaakt van onze werkzaamheden als promovendi. Dank voor het luisteren naar mijn professionele en de nodige onprofessionele sores. Jullie beiden

hebben me geholpen en gesteund bij het schrijven toen ik zoekende was. Daar ben ik jullie erg dankbaar voor.

En dan mijn band, Archie's Grand Adventure. Muziek maken en samen zingen is een wonderlijk iets. Op die momenten van frictie was het spelen met jullie, Jelle, Stijn en Jan-Hendrik, hetgeen waar ik zowel troost als energie uithaalde. Op naar nog veel optredens en repetitieweekenden samen in een huisje aan de bosrand.

Noud, ik hoop dat we onze wandelingen op de Veluwe en gesprekken over onderwijs en linkse hobby's blijven voortzetten. Sjaak, ik kan me niet bedenken met wie ik harder moet lachen dan met jou. Je chagrijnige hoofd tijdens een potje Risk en je slaaphoofd in de trein richting Nijmegen (begrijpen we dat, mensen?) staan in mijn geheugen gegrift. Jan, al een langere tijd hebben we een bijzondere vriendschap, en sindsdien is jouw huis aan de Overtoom ook een beetje mijn thuis, ook toen ik even zonder zat. Dank dat je me altijd hebt gezien, me met open armen hebt verwelkomd, en me op het juiste moment hebt gewezen op het gedicht waar ik dit proefschrift mee open. José, ik koester nog steeds de rust en de steun die je gaf tijdens de beginperiode van dit project.

Mengvoeders: David de Boer, Sander, David Bos, Rik, Koen en Lynn, met jullie heb ik een groot deel van mijn studententijd gespendeerd. Ik ben heel blij dat jullie er nog steeds zijn. Koen, als de middelbare schooldocenten van het stel zijn we steeds meer gaan delen. Ik koester onze tijd samen, ook met Sep en Eva, en de gesprekken die we hebben.

Brothers from another mother: Chris, Ruud, Ernst, Bouke en Luuk. Al sinds onze middelbareschooltijd zien we elkaar graag. Ik kan me geen betere vrienden wensen dan jullie. Erik, ook al was je tijdens een groot gedeelte van mijn onderzoek in Sierra Leone, ver weg bezig met je eigen avontuur, je was altijd dichtbij. Luuk en Erik, we hebben lang in één huis gewoond en samen lief en leed gedeeld. Een groot deel van wie ik nu ben is gevormd in die tijd, en ik ben daarom heel erg gelukkig dat jullie naast me staan als mijn twee paranimfen.

En er staat nog iemand naast me, degene waarmee ik met veel liefde op het speelveld tussen de ruimtes beweeg, en met wie ik de mogelijke frictie onderweg met alle vertrouwen tegemoet zie: Jessey, je bent de liefste.

Als laatste wil ik mijn dierbare familie noemen. Mijn lieve oma die me altijd gesteund heeft in mijn ambitie steeds maar door te leren. Chayèn, lieve zus, we zijn de afgelopen jaren nog dichter tot elkaar

gekomen. Yannick, *hermano,* met wie ik samen uren op de tennisbaan heb gestaan: ik ben groot geworden met jou. Ik ben ontzettend trots op jullie allebei. Papa en mama, door jullie weet ik wat onvoorwaardelijke liefde betekent. Ik ben ontzettend dankbaar hoe jullie me hebben gedragen, steeds weer. Mijn liefde voor onderwijs heb ik niet van vreemden. Mam, jouw constante zorg en gevecht voor jongeren die een plek in de samenleving verdienen heb ik altijd bewonderd. Pap, van jou leerde ik wat discipline en doorzettingsvermogen betekent. De liefde voor taal, schrijven en lezen heb ik van jou. *Los quiero mucho.*

Curriculum Vitae

Saro Lozano Parra was born in Nijmegen (NL) on March 8, 1989. He received a bachelor's degree in History at Utrecht University in 2010. He simultaneously completed an internship at the editorial office of the Dutch magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer*. In 2012, he was granted a MA degree in Cultural History, for which he wrote a thesis on the representation of masculinity in seventeenth-century genre paintings. In the same year, he received a Thomas More scholarship for an additional year of philosophy study at Radboud University Nijmegen. He subsequently obtained a second MA degree to become a history teacher in Dutch secondary education.

In 2016, he received a grant in the PromoDoc trajectory funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The Promodoc trajectory offers recently graduated master students and early-career teachers the opportunity to do a PhD while teaching in a secondary school. Saro combined his work as a history teacher at the Joke Smit college in Amsterdam with his PhD research into the meaning of democracy and conflict in Dutch education. He presented his research at several national and international conferences and educational institutions. He contributed to research projects on teaching sensitive topics and multiperspectivity, and participated in research conferences in Rome and Groningen. Results of his research have been published in journals such as *Journal of Social Science Education, Journal of Curriculum Studies,* and *Curriculum and Teaching*, as well as in edited volumes published by Bloomsbury. During his PhD project, Saro also published essays and blogs for the philosophy website *Bij Nader Inzien* and the teacher magazine *Didactief,* and op-ed articles in national newspapers such as *De Volkskrant,* and *Trouw.* He continued working as a history teacher at the Joke Smit College in Amsterdam. As of February 2022, he works as a Teacher Educator at the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University.