1. Rethinking ethical-political education – beyond the Nordic model

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Young Europeans, including Nordic youths, now grow up in a globalized world marked by visible economic and social inequalities, new patterns of migration, digitized imaginaries, and an uncertain future. Youth revolts, emerging fascism and a "democratic recession" (Fukuyama 2015) may indicate that the societies' social contract is put to test. In this situation, national and transnational policy-makers tend to portray ethical-political education as a remedy. But is it necessarily so?

This volume offers a variety of outlooks and perspectives on this question. Educational researchers and philosophers of education from Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo and Stockholm are here mixing conceptual and critical philosophical works with empirical studies as they systematically address current dilemmas with diligence and insight. In doing so, they challenge ethical, ontological and epistemic assumptions beyond contemporary models: What may be the potential prospects and pitfalls of traditional and novel approaches to ethical-political education today?

Today's imperative

Ethical-political education is an area of continuous disputes and conflicting beliefs, values and world-views related to its embedded complexity embracing social, cultural and not least political community and identity (Koselleck, 2004; Straume, 2013). In short, "education" is a name for those phenomena through which a community or society preserves and renew itself. The term "ethical-political education" more explicitly relates to those aspects of education through which the communal and formative values and norms of a society seem to be at stake. The term may signify a sociopolitical mission; an instituted practice; or some discourses mirroring, embracing and reinforcing images of social and political rights, "the good society" or "the virtuous citizen". Such discourses are configured into educational policies and practices that are both products and productive of institutionalized values and world-views (Bottici, 2014; Castoriadis, 1987; Moutsios, 2018; Straume, 2013). Consequently, discourses on ethical-political education do not only mirror conflictual values and beliefs. They also carry the potential to shape, justify, uphold and direct shared images, values, norms and practices. So, taking the fact that communal beliefs, values and worldviews are at stake, a systematic re-thinking of the many faces of ethical political education seems today more urgent than ever.

Issues of ethical-political education have long since been an integrated part of political theory and philosophy. A classic example is Plato's *Republic*, which equates educational questions with political and moral questions. To the ancient Greeks, *paideia* (rearing well-conducted citizens of the polis) was not an abstract idea, but rather the sum of the tangible historical experiences that cultivate the ideal citizen (Jaeger, 1973). At the beginning of the nineteenth century political philosophers – i.e. Humboldt (1793) and Kant (1798) – conceived enlightenment and education as two sides of the same coin: *Bildung* (character formation) did not only designate inner cultivation, but also a reflective and critical self-refinement linked to "broader hopes for a better society" (Taylor, 2016). A century later, Dewey (1916) placed education at the heart of his political philosophy, as he paralleled his notion of democracy with progressive education. Today, however, political theorists and philosophers have a tendency to leave out the question of ethical-political education (Honneth, 2015). This void may signify, on the one hand, novel ways of thinking political theory and philosophy. On the other hand, it may be a sign of new divisions of academic labor, in which the thinking of ethical-political education is delegated to policy-makers, NGOs and practitioners (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2005). This book is

a response to this void, including the potential pitfalls of assigning the thinking of ethical-political education to non-academic stakeholders only.

A will to democracy

Assuming that the task of ethical political education is to promote active citizenship, the authors of this book hold that ideas on ethical-political education should not be separated from images of a vigorous democracy (Dewey, 1916; Holma & Kontinen, 2015; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Strand, 2015). Consequently, democracy is here taken as an axiom, which means that the worth of democracy is seen as self-evidently valuable and true. The notion of "democracy", however, can be given multiple interpretations (Held, 2006). The term is composed by the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratos* (government), and translates "governed by the people" or "rule of the people". Social and political studies may explore democracy as a form of government or political system. But educational researchers, including authors of this volume, do not narrow the notion of democracy down to designate a form of government only, neither as a model of a state, or as an abstract idea that every now and then materializes into everyday experience. Democracy is rather studied as tangible forms of everyday and inclusive practices that mirror and shape loyalties and identification with a *polis* (body of citizens). So, "instead of limiting the participatory activity of citizens to the function of periodically legitimating the state's exercise of power, their activity […] should be understood as the source of all political decision-making processes" (Honneth, 1998, p.763). Consequently, focus is not so much on citizenship-as-legal-status, but rather on citizenship-as-desirable-activity (Marshall, 1949; Kymlicka and Norman, 1994).

Subsequently, the identities and loyalties of citizens are here drawn to our attention: The health of a democracy does not only depend on the legitimacy of its political system or the citizens' capability to participate. A healthy democracy also depends on the citizens' sense of belonging; their "abilities to tolerate and work with others that are different from themselves"; and their "desire to participate in the political processes in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable" (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, p.353). Thus, in the intersection between "democracy" and "ethical-political education", democratic will formation seems crucial. Such democratic will formation is at the heart of discourses on ethical-political education in the Nordic countries (Hilson, 2015; Strand, 2006; Telhaug, Mediås and Aasen, 2006).

The Nordic model

As this book is a collection of chapters written by Nordic authors, it is not far-fetched to assume that the so-called "Nordic model" serves as a hidden assumption beyond their ways of exploring ethical-political issues. However, what are the main characteristics of the Nordic model, and how does it differ from the rest of the world?

Despite important differences between the Nordic countries, there still exist an idea of a common Nordic political model, characterized as "a specific egalitarian social democratic community of destiny" (Sørensen & Stråth, 1997) or a social democratic welfare state regime that "promotes equality of the highest standards" (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Basic principles are freedom, equality, and solidarity. Freedom encompasses freedom from poverty and oppression, as well as opportunities for personal development and creative self-expressions. Equality refers to equal rights and obligations for everyone, independent of social background, sex, religion or ethnicity. Solidarity refers to the ties that bind the citizens together, as well as solidarity with marginalized groups and the next generation. The incentive of the Nordic welfare state model is that "all benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to contribute" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 169).

It must be pointed out, however, that the notion of a "Nordic welfare state" is not unambiguous, uncontroversial, or static. The Nordic model and its symbolic representations are continuously in the making; contingent and unstable, fluctuating in time and space (Antikainen, 2006; Hilson, 2015;

Frimansson, 2006; Telhaug, Mediås and Aasen, 2006). Nevertheless, one of the key premises of a Nordic welfare state is that the state or the government has particular responsibility for the material or social welfare of its population, whether it is about protecting against poverty, or ensuring the health, education, and social participation of its citizens. Within this model, education is a vital pillar and the comprehensive school system an important tool for nation-building, constructing identity, and equalizing social differences. Consequently, public education is both the goal and the means for realizing the full potential of a Nordic social democratic utopia. As an implemented idea, public education aims at cultivating the next generation, while at the same time serving as a means for building, strengthening, justifying and developing the welfare state.

In contrast to other European countries - such as Germany, UK, France and the Netherlands - the Nordic comprehensive school system includes everybody, from early years up to the university level (Telhaug, Mediås & Aasen, 2006). The rationale is, first, that there is a clear connection between economic growth and the population's general level of education; second, that a comprehensive school system helps to equalize social differences; and third, that a comprehensive school system promotes communal identities and loyalties. In short, the Nordic model of education mirrors a social democratic ideology of inclusion, equality, progressivism and pragmatism (Antikainen, 2006). Nevertheless, the Nordic model should be conceived as an ideal type only. First, because current discourses on ethical-political education obviously mirror conflictual values and beliefs. Second, because there are manifest differences between the Nordic countries. Third, because the Nordic model - as "an attempt to construct a national education system on the foundation of specific local values and practices" - definitely is subject to transnational policies and influences (Antikainen, 2006, p. 230).

Despite the fact that the Nordic model of education is a shifting, more or less inconsistent ideology, the Nordic discourse on education mirrors a conviction that education is a vital tool for building a nation. Moreover, that education is a remedy against societal challenges. But to what degree do present-day philosophies, theories and programs on ethical-political education promote desirable values, worldviews and activities? What may be their potential prospects and pitfalls? Authors of this book explore these questions.

Youths in a World of Change

The chapters included in the first part of this book set the stage by deliberating empirical studies on Nordic youth's tangible experience and reflections on ethical-political issues. What does it mean to grow up in this world of change? How do Nordic youths describe and reflect upon their situation? What are to them the most pressing issues? What seems to be at stake? The authors here move close to Nordic youth's daily life, opening up for dialogues that may help to reveal and reflect upon vital issues and ambiguous loyalties negotiated among these youths and between them and the larger society. In her chapter on *Young Citizenship*, Kristinn Hegna explores Nordic youths' civic engagement and participation. To what extent do they participate in everyday civic activities? Are there signs of civic engagement? In other words, to what degree are young people passive or active citizens in school, leisure and family life? Hegna's analysis is based on the 2016 ICCS study for Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden and concludes that today, Nordic youths seem to endorse conventional citizenship ideals. The next chapter – *Philosophical and youth-studies perspectives on the participation imperative* – examines the idea of political participation. Here, Tomi Kiillakoski, Mervi Kaukko, Rauno Huttunen and Hannu Heikkinen reinterpret some Finnish youth studies that reveal how young people's interest in political participation now seems to be diminishing. However, to what degree can we trust these findings? After a diligent rereading, the authors conclude that the results are not unambiguous. First, it seems essential to distinguish between different arenas of participation. Next, to re-think the ways in which national or supranational political systems actually promote and justify youth participation. Third, to consider the close link between participation and recognition.

Consequently, it seems pertinent to ask to what degree current education may help youth to navigate local and global challenges. Chapter 4 – *Situating moral education* – explores this question. Here, Ole Andreas Kvamme reports a classroom study on how Norwegian 15 year's olds consider the values and norms embedded in education for sustainable development. Through an attentive analysis, Kvamme finds that teachers tend to adopt a rule-based approach that overlooks the students' diverse backgrounds and many-faceted experiences. In contrast to such a practice, Kvamme contends that we should bring the classroom diversity and the students' local/global experiences into play in a well-informed and up-to-date pedagogy that helps to mediate the moral and the political, the local and the global.

Following this line of thought, it is pertinent to consider the experiences of the numerous young asylum seekers arriving at the Nordic borders. In his chapter – *While we wait* – Kalisha Wills does so. He reports a phenomenological study that addresses the lived experience of waiting as described by unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors. First, Wills depicts these young people's tangible experiences of waiting as they deal with other aspects of life. Next, he explores their way of describing waiting as first, a lingering and worrying; second, as a delayed welcome to a new nation; and third, as a detached way of living.

In short, this first part of the book portray Nordic youths many faceted lived experiences and reflections. The authors here draw attention to their various identities and loyalties. But to what degree do current models of ethical-political education respond to and encourage a democratic will formation?

Educational philosophies, old and new

The second part of this book includes six chapters that explore some potential powers and pitfalls of educational philosophies, old and new. One dilemma may be the embeddedness of educational philosophies and theories, and thus their lack of ontological awareness. Honneth (2015), for example, emphasizes that philosophers, such as Plato, Herder, Rousseau, Kant and Dewey all developed their models of ethical-political education as responses to historical situations quite different from the complex situations of today's world of change. Moreover, Toulmin (1990) exposes the hidden, but yet persistent agenda of political philosophies of the West: A vision of society as rationally ordered as the Newtonian view of nature. Conventional Western images may thus not only fail to recognize the non-western representations carried by Nordic citizens, but they may also overlook the potential values of the creative hubbub of today's world of change. The authors of the chapters included in this part of the book aim to move beyond such conventional theories and orthodox beliefs.

In his chapter on *Encouragement and appeal*, Henrik Vase Frandsen throws a critical eye on Dietrich Benner's (2015) well-known theory of education. Focus is Benner's way of solving the famous Kantian paradox: How can we – through external influence – raise children that do not let themselves be determined by external influences? Benner aims to solve this paradox through an educational practice named "encouragement". However, Frandsen questions Benner's solipsism, which to him mirrors a distorted idea of freedom. The self, Frandsen holds, is not isolated, but rather a being concurrently oriented towards freedom and subjection. In the next chapter – *Towards educational justice* – Teemu Hanhela elegantly demonstrates the ways in which Axel Honneth's political theory of recognition captures the perspectives of the worst offs. In doing so, he places the experiences of the excluded at the forefront in his search for a theory of justice relevant to education. However, Hanhela identifies some weaknesses in Honneth, which illustrate the difficulties in theorizing the tacit experiences of the excluded. This goes well with Kalisha Wills' deliberations in chapter 5. However, Hanhela concludes his chapter by outlining how an emphasis on pedagogical aspects may further Honneth's theory.

In her chapter on *Citizenship education and the role of immigrant students in the Nordic countries,* Anniina Leiviskä holds that the previous Nordic vision of schools as arenas of social equality is now eroding. The Nordic model increasingly marginalizes students with immigrant backgrounds. One problem, among others, seems to be the "patriotic" idea of citizenship education. However, Leiviskä claims that no liberal democratic society can justifiably demand that immigrants endorse a given Danish, Swedish, Norwegian or Finnish identity. However, what we justifiably can demand - of both immigrants and the majority population - is reasonableness. Leiviskä maintains that a Rawlsian "political" model of citizenship education promotes such reasonableness.

The link between citizenship education and deliberative politics is also at the heart of Asger Sørensen's chapter on *Bildung as democratic opinion and will formation.* However, Sørensen holds a different outlook than Leiviskä, as he here performs a close reading of Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy. Sørensen claims that democratic citizenship education would benefit from a substantial notion of Bildung. However, he finds that Habermas cannot support such an argument. In contrast to Sørensen's somewhat dystopic outlook, Kjetil Horn Hogstad argues– in his chapter *Towards a plastic starting point* – that Catherine Malabou's concept of change may open up for a rethinking of ethical-political education. In doing so, Hogstad identifies and revisits three main moments in Malabou's philosophy: First, her re-elaboration of Hegelian dialectics as the process through which change happens. Next, the open potentiality of the event, as explored in Heidegger. Third, change as driven by, and dependent on, concepts and schematization, as implied by Derrida. These three moments, Hogstad holds, may open up for a rethinking of the onto-epistemic imaginaries beyond ethical-political education.

The last chapter of this part of the book also discusses the potential powers and pitfalls of educational theories and philosophies. Claudia Schumann – in her chapter *What is called thinking in education?* – here draws attention to a lack of ontological awareness. Taking Martin Heidegger's famously controversial lecture series *What is called thinking* (1951-52) as a starting point, she discusses which forms of thinking, which methods and bodies of knowledge are promoted, and which are marginalized and devalued within the academic discipline of education. Arguing that the main mission of philosophy of education is to keep alive the sense that it is possible and worthwhile to address moral aspects, Schumann questions the forms of thinking encouraged by contemporary educational sciences.

In short, the chapters included in the second part of this book move beyond conventional models of ethical-political education, while questioning their potentials to shape, justify, uphold and direct shared and desirable images, values, norms and practices. But how do these models respond to the most pressing issues within today's world of change?

Rethinking ethical-political education

Again, are there prospects of a fruitful rethinking of ethical-political education in response to today's most pressing issues? Chapters included in the third part of this book aims to respond by deliberating topics relevant to contemporary education, such as cosmopolitanism, post-humanism, social media and the post-truth society. In his chapter on cosmopolitanism – *Educational Cosmopolitanism: Education beyond Nationalist and Globalist Imaginations* – Niclas Rönnström discusses dilemmas of a national versus a global oriented pedagogy. To avoid the pitfalls of both, he proposes a rooted imaginary cosmopolitanism, which to him is a pertinent response to both an inward nationalist view and the ugly faces of globalization. In the next chapter - *Education and the Problem of Pluralism* – Henrik Rydenfelt explores the concept of pluralism, which is vital to contemporary ethical-political education. However, the concept of pluralism is somewhat vague. In addition, pluralist views seem hard to defend without submitting to relativism. Drawing on philosophical pragmatism, Rydenfelt here aims to meet these criticisms.

In Chapter 14 – *Re-conceptualizing the subject-citizen of Bildung in a post-human world* – Carol Taylor identifies post-humanism as a shift in terms of a re-conceptualizing of the subject-citizen of Bildung. She thereby portrays post-humanism as an ethical-political project aiming at more inclusive, socially just pedagogies in higher education. In her chapter on *Challenges and Possibilities of Public Dialogue in the Media* Minna-Kerttu Vienola claims radical dialogue as a key to democracy. In contemporary pluralist societies, however, stereotyping and misunderstandings are major and common obstructions of radical dialogues. Nevertheless, Vienola carefully portrays a self-reflective attitude as the key to overcoming these obstacles.

All since antiquity, philosophers have explored education as a process initiated by the experience of truth (*aletheia*) (Badiou 2012, Heidegger 1940, Plato 1994). Consequently, Jørgen Huggler – in his chapter on *The Educative Process and its Relation to Truth* – claims that education without a commitment to truth seems senseless. Theories of truth are thus vital to theories and philosophies of education, not least within today's "post-truth society". Exploring two present-day examples – first, the algorithms and data targeting of internet search technology and, second, propaganda and disinformation – Huggler demonstrates ways in which truth and critique are significant to ethical and political formation.

However, we should not overlook the fact that education implies a social relation, a child and a pedagogue. In the next chapter – *What causes education?* – Kirsten Hyldgaard explores this relation through a diligent reading of Lacan. Etymologically, education derives from Latin *educere* (to lead out) or *educare* (to nourish). Education means to lead. Hyldgaard carefully demonstrates how the image from ancient Greece, of the pedagogue as the slave accompanying the child to school, goes well with the Lacanian way of thinking the pedagogical relation as a social relation in which the pedagogue cannot be considered the master.

In the last chapter – *Here and Now* – Torill Strand sets out to explore to what degree Alain Badiou's anti-philosophy may represent a way of re-thinking philosophy of education in face of the current situation. In the first part of this chapter, she maps out the many faces of current philosophies of education. Next, she performs a close reading of Alain Badiou's anti-philosophical position. In the third part of the chapter, she compares and contrasts Badiou's position with some contemporary philosophies of education.

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