Mats Volberg

The Democratic Conception of Education and the Problem of Civic Education

Bachelor’s thesis
Supervisor: dr. Paul McLaughlin

Tartu 2008
University of Tartu Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics
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Introduction

The two main sources of inspiration for this thesis come from John Dewey and Amy Gutmann, who both write about democratic education in their work, but use the concept with slightly different meanings. It ought to be clarified here what I mean by this concept. Dewey makes a clear distinction between democracy as a form of government and democracy as a way of social life; usually he uses democracy in the latter meaning and his conception of education is aimed at achieving social goals, having a society that shares common values and aims, one in which there is extensive communication and cooperation between its members, rather than in a political sense. Gutmann on the other hand does not make any clear distinction between different usages of democracy, but Dewey would classify her usage as political not social, and her aim very roughly stated is to have free individuals who would also be competent citizens.

The first part of this thesis is dedicated to the democratic conception of education, in which I aim to combine Dewey’s and Gutmann’s work on the democratic conception of education, so it would cover both the society (the people living together roughly taken) and the state (the formal institutions of the modern state roughly taken). So I do make a difference in meaning between “society” and “state”, but since the democratic conception developed in this thesis includes both those aspects, I will use them in parallel when making general claims.

Nel Noddings has pointed to the fact that too often the history of the philosophy of education is forgotten and many theorists are overlooked when certain questions are up for discussion (Noddings 1998: 19), but due to restrictions of time and space I can not go into very detailed history and will have to limit my discussion to only the major authors. The historical part of chapter one is not only necessary to see where the democratic conception originates, but also to see, that given the situation that we are in, why we even need a new conception of education. In the first chapter I will also present both Dewey’s and Gutmann’s view of the democratic conception of education and formulate a conception which I will defend.

There are two reasons for doing this: the first is that since there is a strong relation between education and society (state) — a view which is explicitly or implicitly held by many philosophers of education and political philosophers, as I will demonstrate shortly — a clear and fully developed conception of education which would be compatible with a given society (state), is needed to provide an adequate account of how education should look. The second is that such a conception should also provide us with the groundwork to rely on when solving different practical issues concerning education. This
is why after I have presented my conception of democratic education I will apply it to one of the most fundamental issues of education from the political and moral aspect — the issue of civic education — and provide my solution to it based on the conception defended earlier to demonstrate its potential in solving other issues like multiculturalism in education, religion in education, sex education, and so on.

The philosophy of education and political philosophy, like education itself and governance, have gone hand in hand for a long time. When Plato discusses in his Republic what kind of state would be a just one he emphasizes repeatedly the importance of education in bringing about this just society (Plato 1998: 373e–374a; 376c; 377a–377b, 425a–425c). The link between education and the type of society it directly or indirectly brings about is also present in the writings of Dewey and Gutmann. Dewey argues that all living things maintain themselves by renewal and education in its broadest sense is a means for this renewal (Dewey 2001: 5–6). The more complicated the society is, the wider the gap is between newborns and adults, and according to Dewey, education, and education alone, can span this gap by providing the information, skills and practices of the society (Dewey 2001: 7). He also makes an explicit statement that education effects directly the development and direction of life in the society and vice versa (Dewey 2001: 85).

A democratic state runs on the principle that its citizens are willing and able for political participation and critical deliberation, or at least that they have made a conscious decision not to act upon their right for political participation. According to Gutmann and others, democratic education should not only provide awareness of and the willingness to act by that principle, but also the factual knowledge and practical competence to do so effectively (Gutmann 2007: 159; Postman, Weingartner: 1). In other words: education is directly responsible for the choices and decisions we make, which in turn influence and shape the society (the state) in which we live. Thus the importance of the democratic conception of education is not only providing principles for solving procedural questions but also the preservation and renewal of the democratic state.

This thesis concerns philosophy of education; but before we can advance in more detail to the specific thesis, some overview and justification of the philosophy of education should be given. This is not because I feel that philosophy of education is worth less then other sub-discipline of philosophy; actually when relying on the work of John Dewey, which this thesis does a lot, one could even claim that philosophy is first and fore-most philosophy of education or educational theory, and its roots are in the educational issues of Ancient Greece (Dewey 2001: 336–337); but it is more because, as Nel Noddings notes in the introduction to her book Philosophy of Education, that unlike other branches of philosophy, it is rarely taught in philosophy departments (Noddings
1998: 1). Though this is not the case in our department, it still would be useful to provide some very basic introduction and principles.

In order to do philosophy of education thoroughly and properly, work in a number of other sub-disciplines of philosophy would have to be done: from epistemology, to know what knowledge is and how it is formed is essential to start thinking about education; to philosophy of science, to clear the issues on teaching methodology, and philosophy of mind (and even psychology), to solve questions in pedagogy. But ethics and political philosophy would also have to be done, to solve such questions as who should be educated, by whom should they be educated and how should it be done. All of these issues have been important and have gotten much attention from various philosophers from Socrates to contemporary authors.

Due to restrictions both in time and in space, I will concentrate on only one of the aspects of philosophy of education, namely that which concerns political and moral issues, of which a short overview has been given already. It is also worth mentioning that there are several philosophical traditions which deal with educational questions from existentialism and phenomenology to critical theory and analytic philosophy. Due to my own education so far and my personal preference based on past experience, this thesis makes an effort to stay within the Anglo-American tradition, sometimes also quite loosely referred to as analytic philosophy, which I find is a rather ambiguous term.

This fact also narrows the number of prominent authors on whose work I can rely. As mentioned before, one of those authors is John Dewey, who is usually considered the most influential author in the field of modern philosophy of education (Noddings 1998: 23). His importance is not only in his numerous writings on education, both on a theoretical and a more practical level (most famously Democracy and Education (1916), which is one of the main sources of inspiration for this thesis), but also his contribution in other fields; his work on epistemology along with Charles Sanders Pierce and William James laid the groundwork of pragmatism, and his instrumental conception of knowledge played a significant role in his philosophy of education which can be described as experimental. Additionally, Dewey’s attempt to actually realize his theoretical considerations during 1896–1903 in his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago and his latter efforts to reform the current school system, the results of which are reflected in his book Experience and Education (1938), provided much insight for contemporary authors.

The second major source of inspiration for this thesis is Amy Gutmann, who is often characterized as a political theorist, but has greatly contributed and influenced the field of philosophy of education, most famously through her book Democratic Education (1987, revised in 1999). While Dewey’s work is by now in some sense out of date, though it still provides insights on a theoretical level, Gutmann’s work is not only more
contemporary, but very practically minded. She begins the revised version of *Democratic Education* by stating that the issues of education in political theory have become even more prominent after the book was first published, and the practical issues of education are on the minds of policy makers and they need to be dealt with (Gutmann 1999: xi). She has also done quite a lot of work on the question of civil education, since for her education in a democratic society is basically education for democratic citizens (Gutmann 1999: xii–xiii), which has been tied to real-life cases, thus providing both theoretical and empirical writings from which the second chapter draws its inspiration.

While Dewey provides us with more theoretical and more general thoughts on what education, democracy and their relationship is, Gutmann’s approach is more political and more practical; by combining these two, a satisfactory conception of education can be developed, which would have a thorough theoretical basis, but also practical guidelines for real-life situations.

Before I start with the more substantial portion of the thesis, a few more remarks should be made about the framework in which this thesis is written. As mentioned before, I will concentrate only on the political and moral aspects of philosophy of education, excluding all epistemological, methodological, most pedagogical and other aspects, and I will do this by taking into account only what philosophers from the Anglo-American tradition have written. Moreover, I will not engage with the question of whether the state as such is itself justified and will take its existence for granted since the reality is that it exists. In addition, throughout the history of philosophy of education the state has been either an important educational agent or had great influence on the other educational agents. Another remark that needs to be made is that I have used the terms “society” and “state” in the same sense when making general claims about their relation to education, since Dewey and Gutmann both use the democratic conception of education in different senses, but they both see one or the other as a central concept when it comes to education, so I will make little or no difference between them within this thesis. Furthermore, since the conception that is under consideration is a democratic one, I will then restrict my area of interest to Western developed democracies (with a few exceptions from Asia), excluding all clearly non-democratic and/or socio-economically less developed countries.
1 The Democratic Conception of Education

Education in its most basic terms is not something intrinsic only to humans; all mammals and even some non-mammal animals train their young for the life that is waiting for them, so that they would acquire the necessary skills for sustenance and survival. But the purpose of that training is not limited by the immediate effects and its receivers but also by the future young; in order to be able to train, one must first be trained oneself.

On a social level, then, education (on more primitive levels, training) serves two objectives within a society: (i) securing the survival of the individual creature, be it a human or a wolf, and (ii) securing the survival of future generations, the society itself. Thus, education is a naturally vital feature of any intelligent life-form, whether it has organized itself in an institutionalized state or not.

But when we look at the state, leaving aside the fact that every state assumes a society, and view it only on its institutional level, we see that the difference is that the state provides an artificial environment in which, to operate efficiently, one needs to acquire skills for artificial sustenance and survival. This means that education is also a naturally vital part of any state.

But the role of education is not just a passive feature of recreating any state and also any society, a certain kind of education also shapes and brings about a certain kind of society or state. Thus if we have a certain type of society and state in mind which we would like to bring about, it would be reasonable to wish for (i) the education to correspond in its form and content to both the society and the state, and also (ii) the education to try to shape both in the same direction. To use a very simplistic example, it would not make much sense to have a totalitarian education with the purpose of creating an otherwise democratic state and society, and it would also not make much sense to have “right-wing” education concerning the matters of state and a “left-wing” education concerning matters of society.

A similar argument is made by Montesquieu who writes that the laws of education are the first laws that we become acquainted with, thus they are the most important laws since they lay the groundwork for the individual to later understand and comply with the laws of the state one happens to live in. Furthermore his argument is that since in a despotic and monarchical state the driving social value (fear and honor respectively)
arises naturally from the institutions of the state, then the civic virtue which is the central value in republics can only come from education. (Montesquieu 2000: 31, 36–37)

Since the de facto situation is that we live in a state and a society which we have come to call democratic, even if we don’t have a universally agreed definition nor a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for a democracy and when speaking about democratic countries we can rely on Wittgensteinian family resemblance at best, we seem to wish for a democratic society and state to come about and also persist. Hence our search for a clear concept of democratic education, which would pave the way for establishing such a society and state.

I will start with a brief historical review on some of the classical educational models as interpreted by Dewey and Gutmann. I will also provide their criticism of those conceptions along with my own comments. It is necessary to show that none of the historical conceptions is adequate for the situation at hand and there really is a need to develop a different kind of conception, a democratic one; both Dewey and Gutmann work from a historical perspective to show how their conception — the democratic conception — compares with other conceptions and why it is better and why it fits better with (current) society. This will also reveal the background upon which the democratic model is built and from where it draws its inspiration, especially when it comes to the side of education. I will analyze the conception presented by Dewey and Gutmann and also comment on Harry Brighouse’s writings.

1.1 Historical overview and critique

1.1.1 Plato’s conception of education

Although their choice of historical educational models is different, both Dewey and Gutmann start with the one presented by Plato in his The Republic, which Gutmann calls for reasons soon to become apparent the Family State. His understanding of what education should do and what it is for is quite simple: to establish harmony in the society by cultivating in its members the line of thought that realization of their personal good should be concurrent with the realization of social good (Gutmann 2006: 398). Or as Dewey puts it: to achieve harmony in society where everyone does what they do best (Dewey 2001: 92).

In order to achieve this, Plato places exclusive educational authority in the hands of the state to guarantee the best results, creating a family like structure, where the state acts as parents (or in Plato’s words guardians) and the people are the children who are obligated to obey, hence the choice of name. The justification for this is that since the rulers of the state know what is best they have the right to do this. Here lies probably the biggest weakness in Plato’s theory, which both Dewey and Gutmann aptly
point out: if education is to be founded on divine or close to divine knowledge about what is best for all the members of society, then how does one come to possess this knowledge, who is capable in gaining this knowledge in order to pass it on (Gutmann 1998: 29; Dewey 2001: 93)? Plato’s response could be “philosophers, of course” but since he describes that knowledge as so close to perfection, it might be questioned whether he sets too high standards, more specifically too high standards for practical purposes.

Although their critique is aimed at the same point in Plato’s theory, their approaches are different: while Dewey points to the fact that if a just society is produced by education and the right kind of education can only be produced by a just society, then Plato finds himself in a circle — how does the first knowledge come about? (Dewey 2001: 93–94). Gutmann points to the fact that there is no objective way to determine what the best conception of life is, and even if one came to possess it and was able to pass it on, there would be no need for further governance since the people would already be wise enough to govern themselves (Gutmann 2006: 399).

But the main criticism of Plato by Dewey and Gutmann is aimed at quite different aspects of his theory, and that is mostly due to the fact that they value different things. For Dewey, the main aim of education is growth; this means the end of education is not static but in constant progress (Dewey 2001: 105), but the society brought about with the Platonic educational model is one without change, since it is founded on perfect knowledge and therefore the society itself must be perfect, so it conflicts with the way Dewey saw education (Dewey 2001: 95–96). The other problem Dewey has is that this kind of education leads to class division (Dewey 2001: 94–95), and such division was something that Dewey was trying to overcome.

Gutmann, on the other hand, takes freedom as one of the main values that ought to be fostered, and, since the Platonic conception of the best life is externally imposed on a person, it is not free for Gutmann, since it is not freely chosen. The second problem she sees with it is that such an educational model would exclude people from the state and would not equip them with the proper tools and skills to work together as a society (Gutmann 2006: 399).

Although it is hard to argue with their critique of Plato in the light of a democratic conception of education, it should be pointed out that there are numerous real-life cases where people are not either capable or motivated enough to take proper control of their education and lives on their own. One can easily witness this by comparing the drop-out percentage in high school (a non-compulsory (Basic... §17) educational environment with external coercive force) and in university (also a non-compulsory educational environment usually without external coercive force, or considerably less compared to high school). This implies that there are numerous people who without an external
coercive force would not be able to achieve anything, or at least not as much as they are expected, and would end up as burdens on the society, so in some sense Plato’s approach serves as a social warranty, such that only when everybody are subjected to a rigid educational program one can be sure that a just society is brought about. The problem was that he took his ideas to the extreme and cut off all freedom of individuals concerning education, not letting anyone, not even those who would be capable of choosing, chose their own educational path (this is similar to something Gutmann also says: that the state has to play some role in education to preserve some communal solidarity (Gutmann 2006: 401)).

1.1.2 Thomas Aquinas’ and John Locke’s conception of education

Next in line for Gutmann is the educational model that was dominant and most famously advocated by Thomas Aquinas and John Locke, an educational model radically opposed to the Platonic one. Gutmann calls this the State of Families and, in a sense, it is not very different from the Family State. On different grounds, natural rights in the case of Aquinas and best results in the case of Locke, exclusive educational authority is placed in the hands of parents, creating an environment which at least educationally consists of many smaller units — families. (Gutmann 2006: 400)

Although it is in the other end of the spectrum, in its nature it mirrors the Platonic educational model, then, the critique is also similar — for Gutmann, it does not matter who has the exclusive educational authority; as long as someone has it, the education provided will not be free and the choices made because of it will also not be free, therefore, it will not be democratic. For Gutmann, one of the underlying principles of democratic society is willingness and adeptness of critical deliberation, thus democratic education should foster it; but which single exclusive educational authority does not do so, since it will only present one possible take on things. In addition, Gutmann points to the fact that parents might not be able to educate their children properly, an objection that is becoming stronger as the sciences and arts progress. She also mentions the possibility that the parents might not be willing to educate their children, pointing to a famous court case of an Amish community versus the state of Wisconsin (Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 US 205, 1972) — a point that Brighouse also makes (Brighouse 2006: 13), adding that universal public schooling is the only guarantee that we have of securing equal opportunities for all children independent of their parents’ beliefs (Brighouse 2006: 7).

Due to my own positions in political philosophy, I would like to emphasize one point here. Although Gutmann also touches on this topic in connection with the State of Families (Gutmann 1998: 29), she makes it more explicit when talking about the State of Individuals (Gutmann 2007: 160). The topic here is the distinction between liberal and
communitarian thought. Her rejection of the educational models discussed so far makes a clear case that she definitely does not lean towards communitarianism (in the case of the Platonic educational model, the state was issuing the values that should be fostered by the community, and in the State of Families, although on a smaller scale, the parents or the head of the family was doing the same within the family).

From further discussion of the liberal educational model proposed by John Stuart Mill and her own democratic conception of education, it will become quite clear that although she tries to reject the choice between giving priority to the individual and giving priority to the community, she leans somewhat towards the liberal tradition; in fact most modern authors present their work within the liberal framework and do not even intend it to apply outside of that tradition. For me this is somewhat troublesome since I feel that the debate between liberalism and communitarianism is not yet satisfactorily resolved. I cannot, in the interest of space, fully engage that discussion here, but it is worth mentioning that the fact that liberal democracy is the prevalent political situation in modern Western states does not necessarily mean that it should always be preferred. But in Gutmann’s defense, I must admit that she is not radically opposed to the community and actually advocates something that might be labeled as liberal communitarianism for lack of better term (Gutmann 2007: 164).

### 1.1.3 18th century’s enlightenment conception of education

Dewey on the other hand concentrates on the 18th century individualistic ideal of education, which places Nature in the centre as its main value. The aim of this model is to emancipate the individual from internal chains and immaturity and to foster individual development. Emphasis is on all kinds of natural values and knowledge, since the natural law could lead us to a perfect society, a kind that would not be corrupting to morals, if we would only give up all the pervasive man made constraints. The main advocate of this educational model was, according to Dewey, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (Dewey 2001: 64; 96–97; 104)

Although there was a certain element of progress within this conception of education, there was also a definite end: the perfect society governed by natural law and consisting of fully developed individuals, and this is something that Dewey would like to reject (Dewey 2001: 115–116). But the biggest problem he has with this individualistic educational model is that if man-made institutions that traditionally exercise educational authority are bad and should be dismantled and the real education was supposed to come from “nature”, then, it would not be an education at all, since it would be based on mere accidents of circumstance and would have no positive organ to carry through the process. (Dewey 2001: 97–98)
Here a strong argument for agreeing with Dewey is the point that I tried to make earlier: if one has a purpose for education in mind, in this case bringing about a certain kind of society, then it seems to me that this nature-based educational model without any positive organ rests on a naive belief in the equal ability and the will of all people to come to realize the necessary truths required for this particular society on their own without any external manipulation, and this, if we look at the empirical data, is not the way the world is. A study done by Dembo and Eaton offers extensive data on how students are unable to motivate themselves properly and also refer to an earlier study which estimates, that nearly 95% of all students procrastinate (Dembo, Eaton 2000: 480). And even if all people were equally rational and capable of coming to know and value such principles that would give rise to and sustain the society we desire, then I would even doubt the will and the motivation of at least some people to exercise that rationality. If someone were to object by giving ample examples of people having some sort of universal rationality and the motivation to use that in one particular way, I would reply that this is only because they have been subjected to some sort of education by an external force. Therefore, some organ or institution is needed in order to secure at least some level of satisfactory educational results.

1.1.4 German idealistic conception of education

The next educational models that Dewey and Gutmann introduce and then criticize are probably most similar to our current and their own democratic conception. Gutmann presents what she calls the State of Individuals, the liberal educational model advocated by John Stuart Mill, while Dewey takes a look at the national education that grew out of German Idealist philosophy. Both conceptions are presented so that they seem to avoid all the criticism made of the previous ones, mainly for reasons that they are so similar to what the authors propose on their own, which is not that surprising since Gutmann could be considered as a liberal and Dewey as (at least partly) a Hegelian who is influenced by German thought in general. Gutmann values liberal education because it seems to be a golden mean between the Family State and the State of Families, and to provide enough equal liberties to all members of society. Dewey favors nationalistic education since it provides an agent which supplies the education and it also socializes the children to create a community. So, from one model, we have universal public schooling with the aim of socializing and, from the other, extensive liberties for different choices and neutrality of values. Obviously both authors have problems with the conception that they present.

As stated, under the influence of German thought, education became civic and its function was to achieve the ideal national state, to form citizens not men. Thus, the nation state became the agent that oversaw the educational process since it was
interested in the end result — a patriotic soldier, the perfect citizen who would provide
the highest social efficiency. Since each nation state was in competition with every other,
then, according to Dewey, no cosmopolitan values could flourish and to achieve
maximum social efficiency and obedience, subordination was the thing valued most.
(Dewey 2001: 98–99)

This educational model that aimed at national education and socialization also
recognized the existence of individual education and the development of a person. But it
could not allow any deviation from the ultimate goal, so the development of a person was
tied to the development of a citizen. Although some sort of social progress was
recognized within this concept of education, the only agent seen fit to be responsible for
it was the state. But this would lead us once again very close to the first educational
model discussed, namely the Platonic one which was rejected for being unfree. (Dewey
2001: 99–101)

Although Dewey criticizes this kind of educational model, there is one certain key
element in it which is also reflected in his own conception and, as we will see later, this
notion also comes up in Gutmann’s and Brighouse’s argumentation. The element in
question is universal public education. Dewey notes that Germany was the first country
to implement universal public education (Dewey 2001: 101) and now it has become one
of the essential components of the democratic conception of education. Both Brighouse
and Gutmann emphasize on this notion that no one should be left out of education under
any circumstances (Brighouse 2006: 1; Gutmann 1998: 33). This also brings up key
issues in the democratic conception of education, but I will come to these later on.

1.1.5 John Stuart Mill’s conception of education

Gutmann concentrates on another educational model, which introduced some
values that she later uses in her own democratic conception; this is, as stated above, the
liberal conception advocated by John Stuart Mill. The central claim of this conception is
that “All attempts by the State to bias the conclusions of its citizens on disputed subjects
are evil” ((Mill 2007: 158), but, at the same time, the state should make sure that every
person would possess the knowledge and skills required to make informed conclusions.
Mill argued his case in a society where, on the one hand, it seemed obvious that the
state should require universal education up to a certain point but, on the other, no one
was actually willing to defend that claim and everybody continued to look to parents to
educate their children (Mill 2007: 156).

It is important to note here that Mill made a clear distinction between education
by the state in a Platonic or German idealistic sense, where the state was both the agent
which carried out education and also defined its content, and by the state in the sense of
the state just being the most suitable vehicle for carrying out the educational process,
since it has more resources than any private agent; but while doing that, the state will not be the exclusive authority on the content of the education (Mill 2007: 157). So, according to Gutmann, this liberal conception of education had two main goals: to guarantee the opportunity of choice to everyone and the neutrality between different values and conceptions of the good life (Gutmann 2006: 402). But Mill was not advocating total neutrality, for that is impossible to achieve for two reasons. First, in the case of moral education, because children up to a certain age are incapable of critical thought, so some predispositions must be cultivated in them. And, second, because any education will always be given in a certain language and in a certain culture and that already implies some sort of non-neutrality. In addition, the cultural aspect should be non-neutral for the purposes of cultural cohesion (Gutmann 2006: 402–403).

Gutmann’s main critique of this kind of educational model is that it facilitates a kind of personhood that can only exist in one kind of society, but it does not promote that kind of society, at least, not explicitly, and therefore Gutmann proposes that we should move on to her democratic conception which takes into account the required society (Gutmann 2006: 403–404). Elizabeth Anderson, on the other hand, argues that Mill’s unorthodox utilitarianism was already quite democratic and promoted a democratic society. According to Anderson, to achieve the utilitarian end of maximum happiness of the members of society, we need legislators who are motivated to pass laws that promote happiness by regular democratic elections and who have the knowledge of what those laws look like — which is provided by scientific education (Anderson 1998: 333–334).

Furthermore, Anderson argues that Mill rejected the orthodox utilitarian notion of democracy of tastes (that no pleasure is intrinsically better then any other), which orthodox utilitarians used to argue for democracy since orthodox utilitarianism failed to promote equality by allowing paternalism (one party feels they know what is best for everyone), an aristocracy of hedonists (some people are more capable of experiencing pleasures and pains, so they should be preferred), and indifference to distributive considerations (the utilitarian principle tells us to maximize total happiness not equal happiness) to come about. (Anderson 1998: 338–339)

Instead, Mill invokes two other notions as the basic values which may not be sacrificed for the sake of any other — the notions of *autonomy*, which Anderson defines as the pleasure of self-government, the exercise of our own judgment and initiative in our own lives; and *sympathy*, which Anderson defines as the moral sentiment of caring for others and doing right to them. The way Anderson discusses these notions gives the impression that Rawls’ two principles of justice might have drawn inspiration from them: autonomy as basic individual freedom, power over one’s own life; and sympathy as the
difference principle, since it will lead us to promote the happiness of the worst off (Anderson 1998: 340–342).

But the strongest reason why Anderson considers Mill’s educational theory to be democratic is that Mill thought that “the only school of genuine moral sentiment is a society between equals”, and he tried to promote three kinds of egalitarian society: workers’ cooperatives, companionate marriages, and democracy itself. The first two were supposed to create equality in the workplace and at home, which would then lead to equality in society in general since neither the workers nor women were repressed anymore. The biggest difference here with Anderson’s discussion of Mill and Gutmann’s discussion of him is that Anderson is concentrating on the informal part of education since, according to her, it was impossible for Mill to bring such egalitarian societies about via formal education. (Anderson 1998: 347–349)

The obvious tension between Anderson and Gutmann arises, of course, from the simple fact that both of them seem to take for granted that they know what democracy is and then define Mill’s educational model on the basis of this understanding of democracy. But since neither of them actually gives any real insight into what they think democracy is, the conflict inevitably arises. This is also the mistake Brighouse makes: that he doesn’t define the desirable society that the educational model he is describing is trying to achieve. Dewey on the other hand actually starts his chapter on the democratic conception of education by stating that one must first define the ideal society before one can start defining the ideal education, and this is why his conception is probably the most justified, but not necessarily the most accordant with our intuitions.

1.2 Dewey’s and Gutmann’s Democratic Conception of Education

As stated already, Gutmann takes from the previously described liberal educational model the neutrality of values and conceptions of the good life, but feels that this educational model needs improvement since it will develop free individuals without concentrating on creating a free environment for those free individuals. This is why she proposes her own conception of education, which she names democratic education, and defines it quite briefly as conscious social reproduction. (Gutmann 2006: 403–404)

Although Gutmann does not describe very extensively what she means by democratic in political terms or what would the society, which is supposed to grow out from this educational model, would look like, she gives some underlying premises and does elaborate on the given definition. One of the main premises is taken from the State of Individuals, and it claims that no one has the right to act as if their conception of the good life were better than anybody else’s. But she also combines premises of the other two educational models discussed by her: from the Family State, that the state should cultivate via education certain virtues (namely democratic virtues (such as veracity,
Gutmann puts her main emphasis on solving the conflict between the communitarian education of citizens and the liberal education of individuals. According to her, either one can only be achieved by suppressing the other, so under the classical understandings there can not be a educational model nor a society that fosters both. Gutmann feels that the choice between virtue and liberty is morally false and her democratic conception of education rejects this dichotomy, just as Dewey who has influenced Gutmann would have, by trying to combine the two aspects or at least give them equal priority. (Gutmann 2007: 160–161)

This gives us a better chance of understanding what Gutmann means by her definition of democratic education — conscious social reproduction. By conscious, she means that education aims to cultivate the capacity to reflect on one’s own actions and the actions of others; by social, she means that this reflection must not be directed at only personal but also at social level; and by reproduction, she means that that there are acknowledged decisions being made and informed steps taken, not mere replication (Gutmann 2006: 404). Democratic education and democracy in general should not be understood as just process where a certain democratic method is applied in making decisions, but it should be understood as an ideal where the end is having the whole adult membership of the society equipped with the skills and knowledge required to participate in collectively shaping their society (Gutmann 1998:33–34). Gutmann thinks that this definition of democratic education (which is bound by two principles, discussed further below) creates a framework that provides maximum room for the citizen while at the same time guaranteeing their basic liberties as individuals (Gutmann 2006: 404).

Since Gutmann feels that this conception still might fall victim to majority rule, it should be bound by two fundamental principles: the principle of non-repression and the principle of non-discrimination. What she means particularly by the non-repression principle is that rational consideration and critical thinking ought not to be repressed, so education should never be used to restrict rational deliberation about different ways of life. The non-discrimination principle is meant in the sense that no one should be excluded from education, that education should not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, social factors etc. between different children. (Gutmann 1998: 32–34)

Although she manages to reinforce her definition and save it from being misused for non-democratic purposes, these principles open up a whole range of new problems. One of the most famous cases is, for example, the already mentioned Wisconsin v. Yoder case where an Amish community appealed to the fact that the public education given to the children would poison their minds and delay their opportunity to contribute to the nonviolence, toleration})) and, from the Family State, that parents also must have some say in the educational process, so that the children would not be merely members of the state (Gutmann 1998: 34).
community, so the mandatory schooling age should be lowered for the Amish children. Gutmann also mentions some other cases where the religious beliefs of the parents require the children to be excluded from public education or at least some part of it (Gutmann 1998: 36). But if the state were to allow for this, then it would seem as if it were endorsing or preferring some conception of the good life over others, or that they would be violating the rights of the children to be educated to be free.

This is why Gutmann concludes that the two main issues within the democratic conception of education are the questions of civic education and national education (Gutmann 2006: 409). The former is a problem, since if democratic education wishes to be neutral among different conceptions of the good life and not to become the Platonic Family State, anything more than the minimal civic education would be illegitimate. The problem here is, of course, that there are many competing definitions of civic minimalism and preferring one over the other means that we would be back at the beginning. The second issue is at its core very similar to the first; some might even say it is a derivation of it since the main question is the same as how much schooling in a certain direction is allowed to stay within the limits of the democratic conception. In the case of national education, the direction taken is how much cultural differences should be emphasized or suppressed within public education and in society in general. I have dedicated the second chapter of this thesis to the issue of civic education with more extensive discussion of the issue.

Since for Gutmann the popularly worded principle that should be the credo of the democratic society is “You cannot govern unless you have first been governed. You must govern after you have been governed” and she wants to reinstate the synonymy between the expressions “to govern” and “to educate”, as in the times of Plato and Locke, her conception of education is set up in a way that would best train members of the society to live like that (Gutmann 1998: 28; 36). Gutmann has to admit one serious difficulty with her educational model: along with the refusal of the fundamental choice between communal values and individual liberties, education has in her conception great pedagogical demands (Gutmann 2007: 164). I would not argue that those demands are so enormous that they are either impossible to meet and/or impossible for the children to meet, but I would like to point out that for real life some modifications will probably have to be made, which is not a huge problem, since moral philosophers should first think of desirability and only then achievability; but this is something that has to be taken in consideration.

In his most general discussion of education and education for self-government, Harry Brighouse presents quite a similar case. As has already been pointed out, Brighouse finds that everybody should be educated and no one should be left out, as this is the only warranty for children to be able to make free and informed choices in the
future. Although Brighouse uses slightly different terms to describe his understanding of a democratic education, he comes to quite similar conclusions that children should not be deprived of free and informed choices about the good life they want to pursue by biasing them towards some conception via education (Brighouse 2006: 14–15).

The term Brighouse sets up as the aim of education is the ability to lead flourishing lives, but in its content it does not differ very much from Gutmann’s understanding of free life; in other words, one of the components of a flourishing life is that the life has to be lived “from the inside”, that the person living that life must identify himself with that life as the best way of living, meaning it is similar to Gutmann’s view that people should be able to make conscious and free decisions. But the second and quite problematic component is that, according to Brighouse, a flourishing life will contain objective goods. (Brighouse 2006: 15–16).

Although he admits that any list of objective goods will be controversial and comfortably pushes aside the justification of what makes something objectively good on the grounds of not having enough space (Brighouse 2006: 16), I still feel that evoking this kind of notion implies some sort of moral realism or just ignoring some conceptions of the good life. The same theme arises later when he speaks about what makes one a good citizen and he argues that in some societies (like Nazi Germany), one has no chance of being a good citizen since he lives in an unjust society (Brighouse 2006: 63). I find this quite troubling since it narrows down the options one might face even when one has no chance of influencing those options.

It is interesting to note here that there are quite a few other similarities between Brighouse’s conception and Gutmann’s educational model: for example, Brighouse asserts that one cannot live a flourishing life on one’s own; a social context is needed for a fully developed life (Brighouse 2006: 19–20). It seems to me that this aspect is very similar to Gutmann’s social aspect in her definition of democratic education, but I must admit that it might only be because we have come to live in such a world that an educational model without a social aspect is inconceivable, and Brighouse is not copying or repeating what Gutmann said but simply pointing out what has become obvious.

For Brighouse, being able to live a flourishing life is tied to the achievement of a certain level of autonomy and one factor that contributes to this is diversity. He suggests that the educational environment should be as diverse, both on the students’ and on the teachers’ side, as the society and not for the reason that each student would find a teacher who best suits with his world view, but that one would encounter as many different kinds of conception of the good life as possible (Brighouse 2006: 21–22). Although Brighouse claims that the aim of such an environment is not to promote toleration but to enable children to see different perspectives, I would still claim that this is quite similar to what Gutmann says: that toleration is a necessary condition for a well
organized society and a democratic education must cultivate mutual respect for reasonable differences in moral opinions (Gutmann 1998: 31).

The suggestions Brighouse makes concerning the curriculum are also along the same lines of thinking that Gutmann represents. While emphasis must be put on teaching different skills such as critical thinking and the ability to reflect on one’s actions, facts about the real world should not be forgotten and pushed aside as something secondary (Brighouse 2006: 23–24; Gutmann 2007: 164). But it is important to note here that: first, whatever facts are taught, according to both authors, they should be either objective facts about positive sciences or presented with no bias. This means that there is nothing wrong in presenting statistical facts that most people in the world have a religious affiliation and the largest portion of those people are Christians, but to make the further (implicit) claim that therefore religious life in general is better than non-religious life and Christian life is better than any other religious life, would not be acceptable. Secondly, it is necessary not to confuse the method with the content; so that the skills of critical thinking and moral reasoning become the factual content that is taught to be universally true just as laws of nature are. This means that while democratic education has a certain approach to the deliberation of issues, other approaches cannot be ruled out as false but just incompatible with democratic education (I will discuss this point more in the second chapter).

However, there are of course some differences between the two otherwise quite similar conceptions of education aiming for democracy and self-government. One of the biggest is the aforementioned fact that Brighouse assumes that there are some objective goods that one should have in their life, which as already pointed out is somewhat problematic (although the idea that some things are objectively good is quite appealing, since that gives at least a chance that some debates could be conclusively resolved). The second difference, which is also quite substantial, is that Brighouse thinks that even if the educational model suggested by him would be implemented and carried out perfectly, this would not guarantee anything on its own but would still need the right kind of socio-political environment (Brighouse 2006: 25–26). So while Gutmann was of the opinion that the right kind of education will produce the right kind of society, Brighouse says that education is just one necessary condition.

Dewey, on the other hand, draws slightly different conclusions from all the historical perspectives he explored. First, although all the educational models tried to distinguish individual and social education, their attempts were futile since they did not have the right kind of context. In Plato’s case, individual and social education are the same and the individuals are dissolved into the society; in the 18th century natural education case, they are once again the same and the society is lost between the emancipated individuals; and in the case of German idealist education, they were yet
Volberg, The Democratic Conception of Education, 20

again the same when they were united in political subordination and social discipline (in other words, those approaches narrowed the conception). So the solution Dewey proposes is the hypothesis he raised earlier in the chapter: that first one ought to define the kind of society one would like to have, and only then is it possible to derive some kind of educational model from that (Dewey 2001: 101). As stated before, this is something Brighouse and Gutmann do not put much emphasis on.

The second conclusion Dewey makes is quite similar to the conclusion that Gutmann makes and which in some way reflects the structure of this paper: that the fundamental problem in and for democratic education is solving the conflict between nationalistic and wider social aims. Dewey describes his current situation, which in principle has not changed much, by saying that, on the one hand, there are quite many fields of human activity that have become international and transcended national borders such as commerce, science and art, but at the same time national sovereignty is the central value in political life and every nation state lives in permanent state of possible conflict with each other. (Dewey 2001: 101–102)

Dewey tries to provide a remedy for the second conclusion by asking whether the current educational agent — the state — which is inherited from the German idealistic educational tradition is even able to provide a satisfactory solution. He thinks that internally we should take a deeper look at the current-class divided society to see whether this is a product of education and, if so, then mere recognition will not make it go away: some change has to be brought about. Externally, the problem is to reconcile patriotism with universal positive values that all people could accept as their own, which means that we should all want peace instead of not wanting war. (Dewey 2001: 102–103)

As for the first conclusion, we have to turn back and see what Dewey has to say about democratic society to know what democratic education should look like, since a certain society implies a certain education (Dewey 2001: 103). But even before one can start to speak about a democratic society, one should clear up what one means by the word “society”. Dewey suggests that it is one word, but many things; that within every larger group of people there is a multitude of smaller groups, from political and industrial, to scientific and religious subdivisions. This would imply quite a loose definition of society, but it is important for Dewey not to fall into extremes and make the notion of society too ideal so that there would be no arrangement of social affairs which could meet its requirements, this move would not be practical; nor make it too loose, so that the current world would already constitute a prefect society. (Dewey 2001: 86–87)

Dewey proposes two factors that should be measured to tell us whether a society is democratic or not: first, whether there are any commonly held interests present, and how strong and binding they are (for example, a political party or a food cooperative
would be examples of a society according to this measure); and, second, whether there is cooperation within the society and how well it interacts with others like it (for example public libraries or research centers would be examples of a society according to this measure). Dewey notes that while one can find common interests even in despotic states, these are usually limited and imposed externally, not to mention the fact that a despotic society rarely communicates with others in a way Dewey sees a democratic society communicating, and this is also the reason why a band of thieves would not constitute a society, since they do not interact or cooperate with others. (Dewey 2001: 87–88; Dewey 1998: 294–295)

For Dewey, the prerequisite for having a sufficient number of consciously shared interests is to have a free movement of goods, services, and so on in the society, something which is lacking in a despotic state. Without such freedom there will be neither novelty nor change and the society will be divided into classes for maximum efficiency, thus restricting the cooperation and interaction between different groups and removing also the possibility of having some shared interests. (Dewey 2001: 88–89)

It is also important to point out here that while a larger society might be democratic within its borders (different sub-societies meet the two criteria), it might not be democratic when compared to other such large societies. Dewey emphasizes the constant conflicts and competition between different nation states, which does not spring from the fact that they could not communicate. On the contrary, Dewey claims that every era has had its new and better ways of communication. The reason is rather that people have identified themselves with a certain culture and history, thus fearing and excluding everybody who does not share this background. (Dewey 2001: 90)

On the one hand, Dewey is right that our era has a newer and better ways of communication, namely the Internet, and nation states have become more cooperative and constitute a more democratic society on a domestic level in Dewey’s terms; but, on the other hand, things have changed somewhat from the time Dewey wrote his book: the new level of major conflicts between societies is not on the level of nation states, as it was mainly in the beginning of the 20th century, but on the level of ethnicity (Handelman 2002: 78). Only a third of the World’s states are ethnically homogeneous or have a large ethnic majority; on the other end of the spectrum, a third of states do not have an ethnic group that constitutes half of the total population (Handelman 2002: 82). So, in a way, what Dewey said is correct: we might find democratic societies on a domestic level which are not democratic on the international level, but, under the current state of affairs, these communities are ethnic groups rather than nation states.

It ought to be repeated here that when Dewey talks about democracy in his Democracy and Education, he is not talking about a form of government, a distinction which he stresses both there and in his later book, The Public and Its Problems. Most of
the time for Dewey, democracy is a “social idea” (Dewey 1998: 293) or a “mode of associated living” (Dewey 2001: 91). But this does not mean that he does not care for democracy as a system of government, which is necessary to achieve the democratic ideal in the social sense, since a political system that is based upon popular suffrage and voluntary subjection of external authority can only be achieved when those who govern as well as those who are governed are educated; but education is a necessary condition for democratic society in the first sense; so democracy in the political sense helps not only to uphold itself, but also bring about democracy in the social sense (Dewey 2001: 91; Dewey 1998: 294, 297, 301).

Dewey also points out that the development of democracy as a system of government was not a conscious process, but rather a by-product of the advancement of technology, communication, commerce, and so on; he does not feel that there is something intrinsically good about universal suffrage or regular elections, but their value is purely instrumental for the fulfillment of this political system. (Dewey 2001: 92; Dewey 1998: 293–294)

During the eleven years between the publication of Democracy and Education and the publication of The Public and Its Problems, Dewey’s ideas on the democratic ideal as a social notion and the emergence of democracy as a political system did not change. But he does state more explicitly that the notion of the “omnicompetent” individual who is able to participate in politics with a full grasp of the causes and effects of the decisions he makes has proven to be illusory, which means that education must devote at least some effort to the creation of responsible citizens (Dewey 1998: 298). Moreover, he finds that with the enormous growth of human knowledge, the amount of errors and half-truths has also grown, probably even more, so now more then ever education is needed to help develop critical methods in order to discriminate between these and to be able to navigate through a huge body of information (Dewey 1998: 299–300; Dewey 2001: 92).

The situation described by Dewey has become even more confusing in the last 80 years: the Internet and the availability of other media allow anyone to become a published author or a commentator, which means that if we are to have a democracy in the political sense according to Dewey, the burden placed on education is even greater than that which Dewey describes. But at the same time, it should be pointed out that those very same media that create confusion also are the media that can relieve it and provide the necessary means of communication within and between different groups.

Bearing in mind the distinction Dewey makes between democracy as a social idea and democracy as a form of government, and looking at the democratic educational models proposed by Gutmann and Brighouse, it becomes clear that the latter are using the word ‘democracy’ in the later, political sense, but at the same time they are not even making such a distinction, taking it as the only possible meaning. This different use of
terms creates a certain incompatibility between different views of democratic education, but this does not mean that they could not be used together. If Dewey concentrates more on the social side and only touches on the political side, then the approaches taken by Gutmann and Brighouse can be used to supplement that part of Dewey’s theory.

1.3 My Synthesis of Democratic Conception of Education

The first reason why Dewey’s educational theory could not be successfully implemented in its original form today is that it would fail to deal with the practical political issues that we face daily. Although Dewey liked to talk about democracy as a mode of social life, it nevertheless is a form of government and one that requires its citizens to be educated, as he notes himself; a community that depends on knowledge and resources that lie beyond its immediate generation, when spoken information is replaced with written information, must also set up an educational agency to adequately insure the transmission of that knowledge.

There is also a second reason to which Axel Honneth points and that is based on Dewey’s conception of democracy itself. Honneth discusses the development of Dewey’s democratic theory and, as should be quite obvious by now, Dewey rejects the widely held premise about democracy being something instrumental which could be reduced to a purely numerical principle of majority rule. Although Dewey sees a place for the government (or the state in my terms) in his conception of democracy, he describes that role using analogues with language and thought: government is to the society what language is to thoughts; it communicates its purposes and is able to execute them. (Honneth 1998: 767–768)

But such purposes do not originate from the government, but from a prepolitical community which integrates all the citizens into a single unit. Those citizens in interaction and communication with each other first decide on changes that affect only those who are immediately involved, but gradually they will also affect others, who will then want to take part in future decisions which affect them; this will create a public sphere of discussion and only from there will the government take over to implement the decisions that were made by the public (Honneth 1998: 774; 776). This means that Dewey’s main emphasis is not on the political aspect of democracy; his conception is in some sense weaker than other conceptions which begin to build on a political community.

This, then, is why I think that something like Gutmann’s conception of democratic education is also needed to cover also the political dimension, taking it up from where Dewey left it. Now one might wonder why we should not just stick with a modern conception and discard Dewey’s theory if it is so out of date and unable to deal adequately with the problems at hand. The matter is not so simple: taking only Gutmann’s conception we might end up in a situation where individualism is taken to the
extreme and communal values lost: millions of people might still live in big cities in close proximity, but still be alone since they do not consider themselves to be a society. And this is not only a hypothetical situation; in the age of globalization is has been suggested that we, the West, should not propagate our way of life to the rest of the world as the best possible way, since serious flaws have emerged showing that communal ties are lost within Western societies (Marglin 2007: 23–25).

To put this in other terms, and possibly quite problematic and ambiguous ones, Dewey’s educational model is excellent at providing a strong civil society, referring to “the formal and informal associations and networks in society, which exist outside the state” (Hendriks 2006: 488). The need for a strong civil society could be, according to Hendriks, traced back to the fundamental debate in political philosophy between liberalism and communitarianism: while modern states are largely liberal and promote individuality and personal autonomy, then civil society serves as a counter-weight to that which is needed for a well-functioning democracy according to Michael Walzer and Robert Putnam, as Hendriks points out.

So the democratic model of education I wish to defend here will combine elements of both Dewey’s and Gutmann’s approach, and have a Deweyian democratic conception of education which is able to deal with the practical issues that arise in today’s democratic states.

The very first and most important component of democratic or actually any conception of education that is present both in Dewey’s and in Gutmann’s conception is that education should reproduce the society and the state. But this should not be a rigorous mechanical process, so it would rule out any possibility of progress, nor should it be a mindless unreflective activity, such that people would be unaware of both the justification and consequences of reproduction of that particular society. It should involve making conscious decisions, in the sense of being familiar with alternatives and having a clear grasp of the reasons for doing something, which enables us to detect the necessity for change where circumstances change (for example, where scientific advances demand a new kind of political arrangement).

There are several reasons on a general level for this; for example, if education is not organized to facilitate the needs and requirements of future members of society and the state, that society or state could not survive when the current generation dies. But, more specifically, a democratic society and state are thought both by Dewey and Gutmann (and by many others) to be non-dogmatic and open to new solutions; such an underlying principle of education would help to secure the possibility of progress. Since democracy also values and is largely based on participation, and one cannot participate properly when one is not aware and conscious of the educational process, that element of reproduction is also necessary when talking about a democratic conception of education.
Secondly, I believe that education should be seen as building a community or integrating the people who are being educated into a democratic society and this aspect should be measured by the two criteria offered by Dewey — first, by the amount of commonly held interests and how strong and binding they are; and, second, by the amount of cooperation there is within the society and how well it interacts with others like it. This is basically the central claim of Dewey’s understanding of democratic education when we look at the political aspect and leave the issues concerning pedagogy and methodology aside.

The reason I think this important is that it is very complicated or near impossible to have an efficient democratic state if the society in which it operates is not democratic in the Deweyian sense — while democracy welcomes difference in opinion, “a government of the people, by the people, and for the people” is not achievable if the people strive for opposing aims (by this I do not mean different solutions to the same problem, I mean actual disagreement over aims) and/or have no or poor communication between them. And, secondly, political participation in the democratic state is after all voluntary and not all-consuming, meaning education should also foster skills and knowledge that are needed when conducting our business outside the immediate political sphere and state apparatus.

Thirdly, I think that education should be seen as creating responsible individuals, who are both able and willing to consciously choose their own conception of the good life and pursue the political (or in some cases non-political) aims to realize that conception; in other words, education should help to build a liberal state. While doing that, education should not be wholly neutral or empty and allow any logically possible aims to be pursued, but be restricted by the two principles offered by Gutmann, namely that no one should be left out of education (non-discrimination) and rational thinking should not be smothered (non-repression).

As mentioned in the introduction, I will take the existence of the state for granted since that is the reality in which we, so the aspect of education helping to produce one is rather obvious: not only can and will the state, which is produced by a democratic education, resolve issues better than any non-political entity (for example, the organization and execution of the universal educational process or defense against foreign invaders). But the main reason for this third element is to avoid a situation where some people are unjustifiably biased towards or against some conception of the good life; thus different points of view should be allowed to coexist, but be limited by a higher authority so that they themselves could not restrict some other conception.
An educational model which follows these three principles and in that order\(^3\) is for me an educational model which can truly be called a democratic one and also have some real practical value in solving educational issues in a modern democratic state. As an example of this, I will now turn to the issue of civil education and explore the issue and then provide my solution based on the principles just presented.

To recap I will briefly the go over them again. Based on the works of Dewey and Gutmann I think that the democratic conception of education should consist in three elements:

(i) the aim of education should be the reproduction of the environment in which it occurs, but this should not be a mechanical replication but a reflective process where there is awareness of the reasons and consequences of that process;

(ii) the aim of education should also be the integration of the members of the environment in which it occurs, so that they would have as many and as strongly shared common aims as possible and at the same time would have active communication and cooperation within their society and with others like it;

(iii) the aim of education should be the preparation of the members of the environment in which it occurs for a conscious and politically responsible life, offering necessary knowledge and skills for successful operation as a citizen of a democratic state, while not excluding any conception of the good life that is in accordance with a democratic society and state.

\(^3\) What I mean is that I consider the first aim to be more important than the second one, and that more important than the third one. In other words, the last two would be rather meaningless without the first and the third without the second.
2 The Problem of Civic Education

When we take into consideration the de facto political situation in which we find ourselves, we realize that we live in a world where the state (which should be differentiated from the society) is not only always present and has a considerable role to play in our everyday life, but is also an institution that we have come to think of as a normal state of affairs. Now if we look at the educational model proposed at the end of the previous chapter, it is rather obvious that the state it will produce will be such that, there should be a civic education, but at the same time its limits and content are probably harder to define and defend than other educational issues.

But before I dive into this discussion, two preliminary points have to be made, which hopefully help us to develop a clearer picture of this discussion. First, the term “civic education” — education to be a good citizen of a certain state — should not be confused with “national education” — education to be a member of a certain nation. The reason I bring up this distinction is that Yael Tamir (who also points to the connection of the state and education (Tamir 2006: 501)) points to the fact that there was a time when national education was civic education and vice versa (Tamir 2006: 501), and the same idea seems to be present in Penny Enslin’s writings about nation-building in the case of South Africa (Enslin 1998: 363). But, as Tamir points out, the world has become such a place that nation states are no longer homogenous, so civic education still serves its aim of producing citizens for the given state but national education has acquired a more specific purpose of preserving certain cultural, religious and linguistic tradition (Tamir 2006: 501–502).

2.1. The Concept of a “Good Citizen”

In connection with the first point, it should be noted that if civic education is understood as education to be a good citizen of a certain state, then what is meant by the concept of a good citizen should be explained. Harry Brighouse has developed one such concept for the purpose of providing an answer to which kind of civic education is justified in a (liberal) democracy. He starts off with the statement that civic education is justified since it produces well-functioning citizens who will benefit others, i.e. the rest of the society, by committing less crime, being politically more capable etc. (a similar claim is made by Milton Friedman (Friedman 2007: 194–195)) and also themselves, in the sense of knowing how to live a good and responsible life in a given state (Brighouse 2006: 62).

He then elaborates on what he exactly means by “good citizen” and, just as I criticized him earlier for implying some kind of moral realism, I will do so again since the
criteria for being a good citizen for Brighouse are not tied to a specific state but to some universal laws. This means that a good citizen in a liberal democracy (a just state) would obey the laws of his state, but a citizen of Hitler’s Germany (an unjust state) would not (Brighouse 2006: 63); this demonstrates very clearly that for Brighouse the notion of a good citizen is not tied to a specific state, but to some other, more general moral rules.

I, on the other hand, would not only tie the notion of a good citizen to the specific state in which the citizen lives, but would also make any judgment about that citizen in the scope of that state. Even when it happens to be the case that the given state could be considered unjust (since it is not democratic, for example), it is highly improbable that every single aspect of that state taken individually is also unjust; and secondly, there are ample examples of people being good citizens in an unjust state and still being able to overturn the regime and thus lay the foundation for a new just state (Estonia’s singing revolution being one of them).

So, while Brighouse means for his conception of a good citizen only to apply in a liberal democracy, I think that it should not be restricted like that and that with a few modifications the conception could serve as a general conception of a good citizen, independent of the justness of a state; but that will not play a significant role here, since the educational model proposed by me would produce a society and a state that Brighouse would consider to be just. In short, his conception consists of three dispositional components: first, the disposition to obey the law, which is a fundamental part of being a good citizen, though Brighouse mentions that there are occasions where this disposition might be overridden. There are no obvious problems with simple cases — speeding to get someone into hospital on time — but to say that not to obey the law “is sometimes justified in pursuit of justice or other great goods” (Brighouse 2006: 64) is somewhat problematic, since it makes way for a lot of debate, which could be avoided if people would concentrate on making the laws just and serving great goods in the first place.

The second disposition, which is related closely to the first one, but concentrates more on the political aspects of the citizens’ life, is to engage in political matters with legal measures and set only legitimate political aims. What this means is that a good citizen will choose the option of voting and lobbying rather then terrorism and revolution when deciding on what means to use to pursue his or her political aims and that he or she will not try to get elected with the intent of implementing a racist tax law (Brighouse 2006: 64–65). This seems pretty reasonable since the legitimacy of political means and ends should be fairly easy to define within a given state, since they would be based on promulgated laws of that state.

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4 Nazi Germany, for example, had rather progressive laws on animal rights, environmentalism and also tobacco use. From our current perspective they definitely seem just and good laws. See Uekötter 2006, Bruggemeier et al. 2005, Proctor 2000, Sax 2000, Arluke and Sanders 1996.
The third component is the disposition to engage in political participation with respect to the norm of reciprocity. According to Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (quoted by Brighouse):

Any claim fails to respect reciprocity if it imposes a requirement on other citizens to adopt one’s sectarian way of life as a condition of gaining access to the moral understanding that is essential to judging the validity of one’s moral claims. (Brighouse 2006: 67)

This means that while in a debate about political and societal matters one should not make statements which require others to adopt one’s world view in order in order to agree with those statements. Brighouse gives an example of someone not acting according to this disposition: someone who claims that abortion should be banned since all human life is sacred and that fact is derived from divine revelation, unless her opponent adopts the world view about divine revelation she is not able (not even in principle) to agree with the person making the claim nor is she able to fully judge such moral claims (Brighouse 2006: 67–73). This is probably the most important of the three dispositions, as we will see in further discussion when we go into detail about civic education, the clash between the liberal and the religious world view is at the core of the debate over civic education. This disposition also carries the sentiment that some of the other authors represent (Galston 1998: 50): that democratic civic education is only meant to operate within a democratic political system.

Although the democratic society and state that should be produced by my conception of democratic education would be liberal and thus pluralistic, the norm of reciprocity, which would be cultivated in citizens, would definitely set limits to the extent of pluralism. But those limits would only apply in the public and political sphere and not in the personal, meaning that everybody would still be allowed to hold religious convictions, but they would have to engage others in non personal matters without using those beliefs as grounds for arguments. This is necessary to have any kind of effective public debate, since otherwise if people would not share a common ground they very likely would become deadlocked, where both parties would accuse the other in begging the question. This point will be discussed further later in this chapter.

2.2 Compatibility of Civic Education with Democratic Education

Now that we have clear understanding of what civic education is and what it strives for, we can start asking whether its execution is compatible with the democratic

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5 It should be noted here that the norm of reciprocity only becomes important when people who hold different world views engage in discussion. So its demands about arguments do not concern the content, but the form; in other words, it is not that religious claims can not be used in public discussion at all, it is that they can not be used when not everybody engaged in or concerned by that particular discussion do not share those claims.

In addition a similar point has been argued by Juho Ritola in the field of epistemology (Ritola 2007).

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conception we have in mind. Since civic education is something that is for the state, something that mainly the state cares about (but not exclusively, as became clear from Brighouse’s discussion of why would we even want education for citizenship), then it is wholly logical that the state would be the agent to carry it out (the distinction that Mill made about the state as the agent of education and the state as vehicle for education should be kept in mind here), and that is one of the main points that Milton Friedman makes in his discussion on the topic; it is the de facto situation that education is being paid for and organized almost entirely by the state, with a few exceptions of non-profit organizations\(^6\), and this is a situation we take for granted (Friedman 2007: 194). He proposes two reasons for it: first, the “neighborhood effect”, that is, the education of a child does not only benefit the child but also the child’s family and the society at large, but since it is not feasible to identify the particular individuals who have benefited from that particular child’s education, it would also be unreasonable to make certain individuals pay for that education. And the second is a simple paternalistic care for the future of children; the state is willing to take care of the education of children just to be sure that they receive an education (Friedman 2007: 194–195).

Although Friedman’s approach concentrates more on economical issues and is from a rather different tradition of thought, he is able to identify the main point of the problem of civic education, which also demonstrates why this topic even is problematic in a democratic setting: for the benefit of society, the state is interested in education and therefore is the main agent, but this creates a situation where one might think about whether a particular system of education is providing general social values that serve the aim of a stable society, or whether it is a hard-core indoctrination on behalf of the state, Friedman’s answer is that this distinction is much easier to mention than actually define (Friedman 2007: 196). And that particular question is in my mind at the centre of the whole issue of civic education, especially when we are considering its compatibility with the democratic conception: it is quite clear that civic education serves the first component — if education produces citizens it necessarily reproduces the society — and in most cases probably serves the second component — providing people with a common civic education for individual purposes they are at the same time integrated into society — but question remains: does it satisfy the third component and is it to restrictive on the choices that should be opened to one?

So although we might have a more or less clear understanding of what civic education is for — to produce good citizens — and what that aim means — the dispositional components proposed by Brighouse — and we might have a descriptive

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\(^6\) Although the money used to pay for the education is coming from the taxpayer there are taxpayers who do not have any children in schools and probably there are taxpayers who either would not pay any money for the education at all, or would pay less if the state were not collecting the taxes to pay for the education, so in the end it is still the state who makes the effort to raise the money and the state who spends it.
approach to why the state is the agent of that education, we would still need to answer the question of the content of civic education, provide a proper normative justification as to why the agent of that education should be the state (or some other agent), but most importantly define the limits of that education and the limits of the authority of agent carrying out that education. The limits matter the most since the framework in which I am discussing civic education is a democratic educational model and one of the main objectives of this is to provide the freedom of choice or in other words the consciousness of the choices, and too excessive an intervenient might compromise those aims.

Before I get to contemporary authors I want to take a look at what Dewey has to say about this issue. As became clear earlier, Dewey had a slightly wider conception of what democracy is and therefore what democratic education should be. The same is true of the question of civic education: he makes quite a clear statement that the school should provide the moral training which is necessary for social life; that the ethical principles cultivated within schools cannot differ from those cultivated within society. This is because the school is the fundamental institution of society with the aim of keeping the society going and thus a part of that society. But the problem for Dewey is that this moral training is too often understood too narrowly, meaning only a education for citizenship; not only that, but the notion of citizenship is usually very limited, meaning only a capacity to vote, having a disposition to obey the law, etc; in other words, quite a similar meaning to what Brighouse proposed. (Dewey 1998: 246)

Dewey finds that if someone wants to abstract education from a specific society and convey only general skills of citizenship, then they have understood the aims of education falsely; education for citizenship must always be, in addition to the skills mentioned, an education to be a member of a particular society. In the case of Dewey’s contemporary America, it is a progressive and democratic society. This means that not only must the child be educated for leadership and obedience (the basic democratic understanding of politics and education; in Gutmann’s words, emphasis on the connection of governing and being governed, which was mentioned earlier), but also the child must not be educated for a fixed situation, but capable of adopting to change. (Dewey 1998: 247)

So, while Dewey finds that civic education in the contemporary sense (for producing good citizens) is necessary, it should not be limited to just that purpose, and this correlates with his general rather non-political understanding of education. But since we identified in our current discussion the issue of civic education concerning only the third component of the educational model proposes, and the other objectives that Dewey would want to achieve with what he calls civic education will be covered by the first two aspects of the democratic conception of education, I will not concentrate very much on Dewey here and try to put more emphasis on contemporary authors.
Harry Brighouse takes a closer look at the case of civic education in the UK, and by analyzing this makes his final conclusions about it. He first describes the current situation and how the civic education curriculum has been built up, which seems reasonable taking into account the aim that civic education has according to Brighouse (provide knowledge and understanding about becoming an informed citizen; developing skills of enquiry and communication; developing skills of participation and responsible action). Brighouse notes that the current program of civic education in the UK was introduced with minimal resistance, meaning that only a few people thought that the state might exceed its limits with this particular kind of civic education. (Brighouse 2006: 115–117)

However he has a problem with the reason, which was offered as a justification — the declining level of civil commitment (lower voter turnout and decline in participation in civil society) — he nevertheless holds the position that there should be civic education (Brighouse 2006: 130), since without it, it would be impossible to have a properly functional society: people would be unaware of the duties and rights they as citizens have in a particular state, which means that they would be unable to operate properly within the system. Following this line of argument, it is clear that some kind of civic education has a vital role to play in the democratic conception, since without it would be difficult if not impossible to sustain the society and the state in which we live. Someone might think that there should be foundational changes made to our current way of life and the democratic conception of education does not exclude that possibility, but it does require that measures taken would be in accord with the current state, so an education which would teach what are the available means and ends to someone with the desire to transform the current society, is still necessary; in addition, I will claim that any change that does come about in the society should be the result of informed decisions and actions rather than pure necessity (for example, an over-simplified case where people stop living in states and form anarchical communities, just because at one point no one knows any more how to operate a state).

But Brighouse is not naive about his proposal, he acknowledges that there are some serious dangers with civic education: firstly, everybody might not agree on the specific conception of good citizenship; secondly, if everybody agreed on a proper curriculum, then that curriculum sets quite high standards for the teachers implementing it (a similar point is made by Gutmann about democratic education in general (Gutmann 2007: 164) and by Tamir about national education (Tamir 2006: 503–505)); thirdly, the civic education given to children should not be politically biased (Brighouse 2006: 121–127). So in the end he admits that compulsory civic education is a complicated matter, but if it is received at the appropriate age with the appropriate content, which keeps in
mind the limits of legitimacy and the possible dangers of civic education, then there is no problem in exercising civic education (Brighouse 2006: 128–130).

William Galston basically shares the same position that civic education is both necessary and possible in a liberal democracy, and that the critics (who say that the society can be ran well enough without it; that one single conception of civic education that would include something for all members of the society cannot be formed; or that whatever is proposed will discriminate against some people or groups) are mistaken, but their points have to be taken into account when the curriculum for civic education in a liberal state is devised. (Galston 1998: 44)

Before he gets to his argument, Galston makes a distinction, which is in some sense quite trivial, but still quite important, between philosophical and civic education. Most authors discussed so far have been implicitly using this distinction, but none of them has explicitly stated the actual difference. For Galston, the aim of philosophical education is to seek truth and to do this by conducting rational inquiry; it is not shaped by any specific political or social ideology (it is impossible to distinguish “Jewish” or “Aryan” chemistry) and it can actually have undermining effect on those ideologies (truth seeking can lead to the collapse of authoritarian regimes). But civic education differs in all those respects; its aim is not to seek truth and it always functions within and for a specific political community (Galston 1998: 44–45). So when different authors write that education should be neutral when it comes to values or that education should be strict only when it comes to facts, then what they are saying in Galston’s terms is that philosophical education should be taught as it is, but civic education needs to be considered more carefully.

From this distinction, it should be clear that there is a conflict between the two educations, but since liberal democracies are more open to different opinions, the conflict seems to be lacking in a liberal democracy. But Galston points to the fact that very few people will adopt the principles of the liberal society only through rational inquiry; thus, civic education does have to incline people towards some political ideas (Galston 1998: 44–45). So what we see here is a reformulation of the issue of civic education, since the democratic conception of education proposed earlier is rather liberal, and liberalism should strive to be neutral between different world views. The question arises: how can liberalism justify itself (and liberal civic education) when working within its own framework?

If the liberal state is neutral with respect to religious and ethical issues, it should also be neutral on questions of politics and morals, object the critics. To this Galston replies that although liberal neutrality and diversity are important, it should not be over-exaggerated, for there are some basic political values and civic virtues we share and must share, if we want to be able to live together within the same state. The virtues and
values he lists are quite similar to those already listed by other authors, such as: the disposition to obey the law, tolerance towards different opinions, ability to evaluate the performance of public officials, and so on. But, at the same time, Galston criticizes Gutmann, for example, because he thinks that her conception of civic education and its aim — democracy — are too narrow and constitute just a part of his conception of civic education (Galston 1998: 47–48). The problem here is of course that if the list of liberal virtues and values which are supposed to be common to all of us gets too long, then someone might start question whether it is a liberal society anymore and if it had not become something Gutmann calls the Family State, where philosophical, education i.e. truth-seeking and critical thinking, are subjugated to civic education.

In the traditional political community, all conflicts between the political authority and sub-political groups are resolved in the favor of the political authority, but in a liberal society this primacy is far less present and thus, claims the third objection raised against civic education within liberal society, whatever conception of civic education is proposed, it will be discriminatory towards some group and they have the right to object to it. But Galston invokes here one of the oldest purposes of the state, and also the aim of civic education, and that is to protect the citizen and to maintain civil order and for that reason the liberal state has the right to oppose or even suppress ideas and groups that threaten the liberal society itself. Furthermore Galston distinguishes between persuasion and coercion; the fact that it is not legitimate for a state to command obedience within a liberal framework, does not entail that it could not offer arguments for, or instruction in, obedience. (Galston 1998: 49–50)

Galston justifies this with a Hobbesian argument that even in a liberal state we must give up some of our freedoms in order to guarantee others; that the rights and obligations of citizenship come all at once in a single package. But if for some reason one feels that he would like to be left out from one of the obligations and one’s reasons are exceptional enough, then, according to Galston, the state should allow that citizen to step aside from pledging allegiance to the flag or fighting in combat7; also in a extraordinary cases, Galston finds, the liberal state should allow its citizens to renounce all the benefits of being a citizen (security, health care, public transport, etc.) in order to be free from all the obligations of being a citizen (Galston 1998: 51). Although this position does not contradict the liberal view of the state, it seems to me that allowing such special cases could lead to a slippery slope situation, where people demand exceptions on grounds that would not have been taken seriously before but are now; or to a situation where all agree that with a good enough reason exceptions are allowed,

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7 A similar argument is made by George Silberbauer who discusses ethics in small-scale societies and finds that if it is easier for the whole group to accept a previously unethical situation than it is for a single member to stay within the current ethical scheme, then it is justified let that member engage in that unethical behavior (Silberbauer 1993: 20–21)
but do not agree on what constitutes such reasons or whether one set of reasons are
good enough or not.

One of the major points of conflict in civic education is that its secular values
either contradict or fail to support the religious world views that the citizens might have.
The two most famous court cases cited in this context of liberal civic education and social
diversity are both based on religious conflict: first, the aforementioned Yoder case, where
the Amish community pleaded for exemption from public schooling on the grounds that
public schooling would corrupt the young and that they did not need education for life
outside the Amish community. And the second is the Mozert case (Mozert v. Hawkins City
Board of Education, 827 F.2d 1058), where parents pleaded for exemption from
mandatory reading materials which they thought was teaching values their
fundamentalist Christianity considered sinful (Gutmann 1998: 36–38).

Amy Gutmann in her discussion of these cases points to the fact that in a liberal
state religious ways of life are of course considered to be valuable, but that does not
mean that we ought to deny the values that are necessary for living well together with
others (Gutmann 1995: 576). She also argues that if such exceptions were taken into
consideration when devising the civic education curriculum, then in the end what we
would have would be citizens who are only competent in the three R’s and nothing else
(Gutmann 1995: 571–572). This is a clear sign that Gutmann shares with Galston the
position that what it boils down to is a clash between parents and the state; in other
words, when the state uses civic education to convey values and virtues that the parent
would not teach to his children. They both argue that the parent does not have exclusive
rights over children; the parent cannot punish the child in any way he wishes for
example, and denying civic education is also forbidden in a liberal state, but this does not
mean that civic education should always be skeptical towards the views of parents
(Gutmann 1995: 567; Galston 1998: 51–52). From this Galston concludes, similarly to
Gutmann, that neither the state nor parents should have exclusive educational authority
over children when it comes to civic education and both sides — the state and the
parents — are restricted in their activities by the limits of the liberal framework, so that
both sides have a right to intervene when the other is imposing itself on children

No matter which perspective you adopt, the issue of civic education is always a
matter of priority. Which is more important: the interests and views of the state or those
of parents, religious communities, etc.? Since all of the actors involved should be
interested in the reproduction of the society and the state, there should not be a conflict
on the first aspect of democratic education.

However, there might still be a slight conflict since the state and the other party
might have different understandings of what it means to integrate everybody into a
society, but as we saw from the definition of civic education used here — civic education is concerned with what might called the public sphere, more specifically the political part of the public sphere, as opposed to the private sphere and the non-political part of the public sphere — civic education has little to do with the second aspect of the democratic conception of education put forth here.

But the problem arises when we look at the third aspect, since different actors have different value systems and even political aims. First of all, I think that since on the macro level everybody operates within the state (with perhaps some rare exceptions like the Amish), the state with its civic education should take primacy over micro level actors such as parents or churches. As we saw already, the norm of reciprocity set limits to the set of beliefs citizens can bring with them into debates conducted in the public sphere, since no matter what our religious, sexual or even ideological views are, only the very basic values that all the people as citizens of a democratic state share should be norms of discussion. The only reliable method to guarantee the conveying of those values is universal public schooling with a civic education curriculum.

Secondly, since the actors who usually oppose civic education are interested in excluding some views, in declaring them false without rational deliberation, their claims are incompatible with the third aspect, which follows the principle of non-discrimination (that no one should be left without proper education) and non-repression (that no rational deliberation should be suppressed).

Thus, my conclusion is that in a state which is produced following the principles of democratic education which I proposed in the first chapter, civic education is necessary and justified; but although it should take primacy over the personal convictions of the parents for example, it should still abide by the principles of democratic education and thus not become a process of indoctrination.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I started off with the premise that there is a strong connection between education and the society and/or state\(^8\) in which it is given, such that the education plays a crucial role in constituting that particular society and state. This means that having a certain kind of society and state in mind, there should not be a contradiction between the education and its environment, since that would lead to discord and probably would hinder progress.

From those premises, I concluded that, since we are living in a democratic society and state (used in the broadest sense) and have come to value that way of life, the education provided in our society and state should also be democratic so that we could (i) have a more democratic society and state and (ii) sustain the situation that we have created for ourselves. This explains my search for a clear and adequate concept of democratic education.

I first took a look at various historically dominant educational models as presented by John Dewey and Amy Gutmann, and showed which elements they adopted for their own democratic conception. After this, I took a closer look at those conceptions of education.

At their core, while both are democratic conceptions, they differ on a crucial point, namely, what they took to be the priority of democracy and thus the education which should foster it. For Dewey, democracy is not only a form of government and he understands democracy in a social and communal sense, a sort of civil society approach, as we might call it today. Therefore, the main aim of education is to create a society out of individual people and he had two aspects by which to measure how well the society has developed: first, whether there are any shared values and interests present and how strong they are; and, secondly, how well the members communicate and cooperate with other members and with other societies like their own.

For Gutmann, though influenced by Dewey, democracy is mainly a political thing and it should be pointed out that she tends to fall into the liberal democracy camp. This means that for her the primary aim of democracy, and thus of education, is to have politically responsible and critically deliberative individuals. Education should then produce citizens who would not be indoctrinated by the state to blindly accept any political or social state of affairs but to be able to reflect on them and act accordingly (by trying to bring about change or to preserve the status quo).

\(^8\) As stated in the introduction, when I make general claims about education I use society and state as equivalents, though I am aware of the distinction between them
Although they both concentrated on different aspects — to put it crudely, Dewey saw education as something for the society and Gutmann as something for the state — their views are not contradictory (they actually even share one very basic principle), and therefore I decided to combine elements from both. So the democratic conception of education presented here, which should provide the basic principles on which education should be founded in a democratic country, would include both the aspect of having a community of people who not only feel but are united into one and the aspect of having individual citizens who are able and preferably willing for political action, with the first most general aspect of reproduction of the society and the state.

So the kind of democratic country I have in mind when presenting such a conception of education is one which has a strong civil society, meaning that there is active participation towards common goals in the not directly political realm (from apartment building cooperatives to interest groups), but at the same time people would be able to participate in the political realm in a more general sense (take part in referendums and elections with a full grasp of what they are voting for or against) and in a more specific sense (having politically responsible people in parties and state institutions).

From such a model of what could be called deliberative democracy it is easy to see that education for citizenship is something that is probably the most pressing issue in education, since independent of whether you participate directly and daily in politics, one should still be able to participate indirectly. The second reason I took the issue of civil education under consideration in the second chapter was to demonstrate how to apply the principles introduced to a real and actual problem.

To get a better understanding of what the issue is all about, I first outlined a concept of the aim of civil education, namely the good citizen, and then based on that concept clarified what the actual issue is. In order for a democracy, based on the education discussed so far, to operate properly, the members of that society all need to share some common values and aims, in other words to constitute a society, and those values and aims must also extend from the social sphere to the political one, which means people cannot have different values in different spheres.

The aim of civil education is to cultivate some basic values which would pave the way for a mostly liberal democracy. The problem arises when the personal values of the parents or the values of some larger community (such as the church) clash with the values promoted by the state in citizens in order to sustain a proper democracy. After discussion of the issue, I concluded that while there definitely is a need for a civil education and it should have priority over some protective claims made by the parents, at the same time it must not indoctrinate future citizens, since that would clash with the political aspect of democratic education taken over from Gutmann.
Without the latter limitation, we would not have any guarantee that future citizens receive the education needed for them to function properly in the society and the state, and this restriction is put very nicely by William Galston, who notes that while the state can not demand obedience from people, there is no harm in trying to convince people to be good citizens. So civil education in the end actually serves two purposes: first, the cultivation of certain knowledge and skills to create a properly functioning citizen, which is a purely instrumental aim; and secondly, when not too excessive, it serves as a warranty that everybody receives the education to which all the aspects of the democratic education apply.
References


Resüümee

Antud töö aluseelduseks on põhimõtteline seos ühiskonna ja riigi ning neis toimiva haridussüsteemi vahel, selliselt et kindlat tüüpi haridus suudab taastoota kindlat tüüpi ühiskonda ja riiki ning kindlat tüüpi ühiskond ja riik vajavad kindlat tüüpi haridust, et edasi püsida.

Sünteesides nii John Dewey kui Amy Gutmanni, kes mõlemad samuti eelpool mainitud eeldusele tuginevad, demokraatliku hariduse kontseptsiooni esitasin oma kolme osalise versiooni, millised peaksid olema demokraatliku ühiskonnas ja riigis oleva hariduse alusprintsiibid.

Esmalt peaks hariduse eesmärgiks olema selle keskkonna, milles ta toimib, kaalutud taastootmine, mis tähendab, et tegemist ei peaks olema mehaanilise kopeerimisega vaid reflekteeriva protsessiga.

Teiseks peaks hariduse eesmärgiks olema selle keskkonna, milles ta toimib, liikmete integreerimine ühtseks kogukonnas, nii et liikmed jagaksid võimalikult palju võimalikult tugevalt ühiseid huve ja eesmärke ning samaaegselt oleksid omavahel ning teiste omasuguse kogukondadega aktiivses suhtluses ja koostöös.

Kolmandaks peaks hariduse eesmärgiks olema selle keskkonna, milles ta toimib, liikmete ettevalmistus eneseteadlikuks ning poliitiliselt vastutustundlikuks eluks, pakkudes vajalikke teadmisi ning oskuseid edukaks toimimiseks demokraatliku riigi kodanikuna, välistamata ühtki hea elu nägemust, mis on demokraatliku ühiskonna- ja riigikorraga kooskõlas.

Töö teises peatükis rakendasin neid printsiipe kodaniku hariduse probleemile, et näha kui palju see nende poolt piiratud peaks olema. Järeldasin, et kahe esimese eesmärgi ulatuses on võimaliku konflikti tõenäosus väike ning kolmanda osas peaks riik olema eelistatud vanematele, religioossetele kogukondadele jms.
Summary

The underlying premise of this thesis is the relation between society-state and the education system within them, so that a certain kind of education will produce a certain kind of society-state and a certain kind of society-state will need a certain kind of education to persist.

By synthesizing John Dewey’s and Amy Gutmann’s accounts of the democratic conception of education (since they both share the same premise), I proposed a threefold conception of education which should provide the underlying principles of education in a democratic society-state.

The first aim of education should be the reproduction of the environment in which it occurs, but that should not be a mechanical replication but a reflective process in which there is awareness of the reasons and consequences of that process.

The second aim of education should be the integration of the members of the environment in which it occurs, so that they would have as many and as strongly shared common aims as possible and at the same time would have active communication and cooperation within their society and with others like it.

The third aim of education should be the preparation of the members of the environment in which it occurs, for a conscious and politically responsible life, offering necessary knowledge and skills for successful operation as a citizen of a democratic state, while not excluding any conception of the good life that is in accordance with a democratic society and state.

In the second chapter I applied these principles to the problem of civic education to see how much it should be restricted by the principles. I concluded that there should be little or no conflict in the light of the first two aims; and in the light of the third, the state should be given primacy over the parents, religious groups, etc.