The Children of Today are the Democrats of Tomorrow – and Today?

Abstract

Although there has never been more commitment to democracy during history than in contemporary times, there are still undemocratic features to be found which puts the full legitimacy of democracy as the political power to question. The paper at hand criticises the lack of legitimacy of liberal representative democracies measured against the idealist ground principle of democracy, the rule by the people in form of self-governance. Investigating upon the question whether the inclusion of young people by the means of civic education could enhance the level of democracy it is argued that democracy can only be established as a legitimate political power when the norms and values of democracy itself are ingrained throughout all layers of society and internalised by every citizen and public institution. Deliberative democratic thought suggests means and mechanisms for the fostering of the people's participation in political processes with an advanced internalisation and institutionalisation of democratic practices and values. Civic education particularly includes the marginalised group of children and young people by educating them in democratic understanding and including them in political processes. The active inclusion of the young nurtures the process of anchoring the values and practices of the system throughout the citizenry and modifies public institutions to becoming more democratically open and hence, rooting the pursuit of democracy in state institutions.

The argumentation and conclusion the paper at hand has provided is no practical recommendation and it is acknowledged that a highly idealist approach is being pursued.

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1.   Introduction

Democratic thinking and practice has undergone various changes throughout history. Since the democracy of the Greek city-state of Athens, democratic thought had to develop in the contexts of monarchies and despotic systems. The general political commitment to democracy is a rather new phenomenon, even though the 'invention' of democracy is dated back to 800 to 500 BC (Held, 2006). A clear definition of democracy cannot be given easily as it is a contested concept and various forms have been established over time. However, the concept is rooted in the Greek concept of 'demokratia' which is composed of 'demos', the people, and 'kratos', rule. "Rule by the people" (Held, 2006, p. 1) is the underlying basis to democracy. With the establishment of the nation-state in the late nineteenth century, democracy has become the predominant form of statecraft. Generally, it is assumed that democracy is the best system there is (Gabriels, 2012). In the post-communist Western world, liberal representative democracy has become the legitimate system by guaranteeing equality and justice (Phillips, 2006).

Even though the post-war Western societies have faced the establishment of democratic systems to secure peace and equality and even a certain internationalisation of democracy with the establishment of bodies such as the European Union and the constitution of international law systems, contemporary democracies 'lack democracy'. Aspects of modern democracy include the pursuit of self-governance, majority rule and vivid public spheres open to political debate for the citizens to formulate interests and demands. However, contemporary established liberal representative democracies come with a set of paradoxes. Apart from an increasing introduction of undemocratic means to ensure state-security and power or the rather autocratic forms of public administration, the exercise of power still lies in the hands of small elites (Gabriels, 2012). Moreover, the system itself implies problematic features for the pursuit of democracy as the constitution of the rule by the people, or self-governance. Liberalism, as the philosophy behind twentieth-century nation-states, is acknowledged to grant political equality on the one hand, but also to bring about economic and societal inequality on the other hand (Phillips, 2006). Furthermore, a representative democracy goes hand in hand with the exclusion of those not represented, as the idea is that the people is the sovereign that confers legislative and executive powers to representative bodies (Held, 2006).

Political science has presented certain indicators for democracy. For instance, Robert A. Dahl, a leading political scientist of the twentieth-century, has outlined five criteria a political system has to meet to being recognised as a democracy. These criteria are based on ground perceptions of democratic practice: participation and a deliberative public sphere with open

access. Summarising, Dahl states, that in a democracy, only with minimal exceptions, all permanent adult residents must have full rights of citizenship. Citizens must be granted political equality, an enlightened understanding of the relevant policy and their alternatives; they must have the control over the political agenda to decide upon the matters placed on the latter; and citizens must have equal and effective opportunities for participating in the development of a policy (Dalton, 2004). Obviously, these criteria mark an ideal form of democratic citizenship, however, a political system being committed to democracy as the true form of political governance, should pursue the goal of democracy as such: the self-governance of the people.

The paper at hand argues that without having reached the ideal democratic goal of the rule by the people, there is a lack of legitimacy to proclaimed democratic systems. Democracy only becomes a political power when legitimised by the will of the people and through the empowerment of the people (Gabriels, 2012). To establish a political power, it has to be established throughout all layers of society and societal institutions (Scott, 2001). The people as the citizenry hold rights and obligations. If this is lacking or not completely fulfilled, the system is not legitimised in terms of political power.

As outlined by Dahl, citizen participation is of crucial importance to a democratic system. It implies access to information to then participate in a public sphere, or public organisation, of choice with the aim of realising the will of the citizenry. Often young people are accused of not being interested in participating in political processes, for becoming an uninterested, inactive citizenry and forming a tired polity. However, most critics do not recognise that the non-participation of the youth again is rooted in the system itself. Citizenship can be defined as the "participative membership of a body politic" (Storrie, 2004, p. 57). Even though in most cases citizenship as such is acquired by the birth of a child in the respective country or system ('Nationality Act')[1], the degree of participation depends "upon personal competence to know how to enjoy the rights and discharge the responsibilities" (Storrie, 2004, p. 57). A core value of liberalism is the preservation of the private sphere to the individual (Held, 2006), hence, it lies in the citizens' own responsibility to make use of their rights and obligations as a citizen. To become a responsible citizen and being a "player in democracy" (Roth, 2010, p. 15) needs to be learned from childhood onwards (Storrie, 2004).

In order to investigate upon the question whether the inclusion of young people[2] into active citizenry by the means of civic education could lead to 'more' democracy, the paper at hand firstly examines representative democracy in the light of the concept of power to illustrate

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[1]Here: example of Germany. Nationality Act = *Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*
[2]Here children and young people are regarded in line with the UN's definition of children, setting the age of 18 as the upper limit of childhood.

how a democratic system becomes a legitimate political power. Secondly, deliberative democracy is introduced, arguing, that a more deliberated and enlightened citizenry becomes more participatory and enhances the pursuit and internalisation of democratic thinking and practice. Thirdly, the exclusion of young people will be scrutinised to then suggest that, civic education with its varying tools leads to the inclusion of the target group into the active citizenry. The legitimisation of democratic systems as political powers would be advanced.

2.   Democracy as a Political Power

"Liberty is a core value of democracy" (Gabriels, 2012, sl. 20). The concept of power as such tackles liberty from two sides: 'negative power' states the instance of being free from the intervention of other agents, while 'positive power' describes the state of being free to act upon something. Generally, "power is the production of causal effects" (Scott, 2001, p. 1). Conceptualising power means to analyse the relationship between two agents, one of which is the principle and the other is the subaltern. In this constellation, the principle exercises power over the subaltern. Power now is the intended or causal effect of action between the agents. As an agent, one has the ability to trigger causal power by action over one's own performance and those of others (Scott, 2001). Thereby, the freedom of the agents is of importance. The agents have to be free to choose from a set of possible actions to pursue a certain course of action. The principle can increase his power by restricting the subaltern's set of choice. This implies that the exercise of power always leaves room for resistance (ibid.). Furthermore, it is important to differentiate between exercising power from holding power. The exercise of power can be seen as the principle's intentional intercession in the course of action to alter the subaltern's way of action to an intended degree (ibid.). Having, or holding, power does not necessarily involve the exercise of power as "power is, at root, a capacity" (Scott, 2001, p. 5). The principle can hold the power, the potentiality of intended action towards the subaltern for exercise at an undefined point in time. As Max Weber states it, "[p]ower is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance" (Weber in Gabriels, 2012). According to Foucault, one of the most influential scholars on the concept of power, "power exists throughout the social sphere that surrounds and penetrates the public, political sphere of sovereign power" (Scott, 2001, p.11). This statement explains the effect of power being held over a polity. In Foucault's view, power is the origin of social control or discipline. Discipline is the "physics or an anatomy" (Foucault, 1979, p. 215) of power. By establishing a certain power-system or a concrete image of the potentiality of exercised power over the people

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living in a system, a disciplinary society is created. Under the perfection of power, the actual exercise of power has become unnecessary. In a perfectly disciplined society, the relevant power-structure and the adjacent norms would be present throughout smaller hierarchical levels impacting and disciplining the education of the society and would interact with the juridico - political level of society. The "disciplinary individual" (Foucault, 1979, p. 227) would automate a behaviour following expected patterns as he/she lives in these internalised structures under the constant expectation of power being exercised[3], as the simple potentiality of the power which might be exercised serves as a disciplining mechanism. Thereby, a certain type of system becomes internalised throughout all layers and institutions of society. With this establishment of a set of common behavioural patterns and norms to peculiar ideas, the system or these ideas take on legitimation (Giddens in Scott, 2001).

Looking at democracy in terms of power, democracy embodies the "political power legitimized by the will of the people" (Gabriels, 2012, sl. 26). Constituting the 'rule by the people' the people form the sovereign in power, hence, the empowerment of the people constructs the system at its very base (Scott, 2001, Gabriels, 2012). In the light of the concept of power outlined above, a logical argumentation would be the establishment of democratic structures throughout all layers and institutions of society in order to legitimise the system and grant its power. Nevertheless, reality is never congruent with the ideal (Gabriels, 2012). Democratic systems face issues of legitimacy. In line of the conceptualisation of democracy as the power of the people, there are three main obstacles to be found in contemporary systems. First, the public administration, among numerous other institutions, is rather run autocratically than democratically. Second, it is argued, that power is held in the hands of a few, so-called power elites, that subvert the democratic power by the citizenry. Third, the representative democratic systems based upon the thought of liberalism has brought about unequal economic and societal conditions among citizens (Phillips, 2007), and therewith relativizes the principle of equal access to information to obtain equal opportunities to participate in the democratic processes (Gabriels, 2012).

Liberal democracy has become the "only legitimate bas[i]s for equality, justice and democracy" (Phillips, 2007, p. 171). It has developed around the idea of a free and equal citizenry which is protected by the state which in turn does not intervene in the private lives of its citizens (Held, 2006). Consequently, the citizenry has become more heterogeneous as compared to classical democratic systems. The classical Athenian citizenry was composed only

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[3] In case of non-compliance, negative power could be exercised by the sovereign in power, the latter being for instance the state, the police or the monarch, in form of punishment.

of adult males of a certain societal and economic standing (ibid.), while contemporary recognised citizenries are, ideally, composed of all residents (Dalton, 2004). However, representative democracy[4] already implies the exclusion of those not represented. As in a representative democracy, the people as the sovereign confers power to representative bodies, the people are not in need of active engagement in the legislative process. As established above, a political system to be legitimised as a power has to be constituted throughout all societal levels and institutions. Hence, it is not necessary for the whole of the citizenry to engage actively in legislative and executive on every political level, which is why the people have conferred their power, the will of the people, to elected representatives. However, there is the danger of the development of "power elites and ruling classes that undermine the democratic control by the people" (Gabriels, 2012, sl. 26). Radical democrats even state, that political representation cannot be trusted (Young, 2000, p. 124). In order to establish a democracy as a legitimised power, democratic means and practices have to be internalised and exercised by all societal institutions. Hence, the need for the citizenry's democratic action has to go far beyond electing representatives into office. Democratic practice and values have to be anchored in public institutions and to be internalised by the citizenry. Therefore, these principles and values have to be communicated and educated.

3. Towards more democratic Democracy

„How can we become a citizen culture, a country whose inhabitants think it is normal, right and even pleasurable to be concerned with and actively involved in public affairs? [. . .] And by public affairs is not just meant the relationships of inhabitants to the state and government, but also to all those institutions intermediate and mediating between the individual and the state which we call civil society"

(Bernard Crick in Roth, 2011).

3.1 Deliberative Democracy

The model of deliberative democracy does not provide a concrete solution to the problem outlined above. However, it provides a sound theoretical framework of ideas to distribute democracy throughout various societal institutions to not only leave it in the hands of a few. Furthermore, deliberative democracy stresses the importance of civic education to democratically enlighten the citizenry.

Deliberative democracy does not pursue to change existing democratic systems, but to

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[4]In the line of argumentation, it is presupposed, that representative democracy is the most prominent established democratic system in the Western nation-state (Gabriels, 2012).

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"supplement and enrich existing democratic procedures, and to enhance the quality of democratic life without assuming the high levels of political participation demanded by classical, Marxian and participatory democrats" (Held, 2006, p. 246). The core of democracy, the rule by the people, is enhanced by deliberative tools, as every citizen is offered the possibilities and resources to develop a reasonable judgement on issues and institutions affecting his life. By deliberation, democratic politics are not only followed passively by the citizenry, but it becomes a reflective process, aware of the pursuit of legitimacy through the reasonable formulation of the will of the people.

At the centre of the model of deliberative democracy lies the understanding of democracy as "a means not an end" (Held, 2006, p. 231) forming a system that protects its citizens and provides the necessary resources and tools "for citizens to go about their self-chosen ends and objectives" (ibid.). Deliberative democracy seeks to increase the basis of democracy, the rule by the people, throughout the whole of public life (Held, 2006). In order for the people to choose their ends and objectives, there must be room for them to discuss issues of interest and formulate deliberate opinions to then transfer them onto the political agenda. The people should have access to necessary means to develop reasonable political judgements. Thereby the principle of reciprocity should be followed, seeing the process of the development of reasonable judgements in the context of "learning within politics and civil society" (Held, 2006, p. 231). With the formulation of opinions and the fostering of channels through which these can be put on the political agenda, citizens engage in the political process regularly and thoroughly and not only every few years by voting. This would lead to an "upgrade of the quality of citizenship" (Held, 2006, p. 234) in its objective and subjective meaning. According to A. Sen, democracy should be seen as public reason. He outlines that the act of balloting does not go without free speech, access to information and freedom of the dissident, being the conditions for open public discussion in the Athenian democratic sense. Sen calls for institutional changes to create opportunities for the "practice of public reason" (Sen, 2009, p. 337). With the process of a the citizenry setting the political agenda out of deliberate opinion-formation, the ideal form of accountable public decision-making and self-governance would be met a little further, since decisions would be taken upon reasonable explanations and accounts. "The key objective [of deliberative democracy] is the transformation of the private preferences via a process of deliberation into positions that can withstand political scrutiny and test" (Bohmann in Held, 2006, p. 237).

The paper at hand argues that with a more deliberative representative democracy, also the legitimacy of the system as a political power would be strengthened further. Since the

deliberated reasonable judgement of the whole of the citizenry would build the system, democratic practice would go through all layers and institutions of the public life.

Citizen participation is crucial for the functioning of representative institutions (Young, 2000). By participating in civil society and formulating opinions in a reasonable manner they might be transferred to the political agenda, hence, the representation of the respective opinion, most probably coming from a particular group of people, will be represented in political decision-making. In deliberative democracy, citizen participation is differently essential than in Athenian classical democracy. Not every citizen must participate actively, but the whole of the citizenry is given the opportunity to develop sound and reasonable judgements on the politics affecting their lives. There is no force to participate actively, but society and public institutions are provided with the necessary means and knowledge for active participation. The citizens obtain the opportunity to engage in the political process by discussing and therewith stirring the direction of the political agenda to a certain extent. An important precondition for this is the access to deliberation. All citizens must be provided with political equality, equal access to information to develop a reasonable opinion, and with equal access to the relevant discussion to bring forward their opinion. For this, through all layers of society, public institutions and the citizenry itself have to be open for these processes and have to have internalised the assimilated values and meanings. Referring back to democracy as a political power, if representative democracy became 'more deliberative', implying a sound establishment of the core democratic value and practice of open and public discussion, the democratic system could become 'more' legitimised as it would establish itself institutionally and would be anchored in the values and norms of the citizens.

Nevertheless, the skills to become a deliberate citizen and the institutional openness to necessary channels need to be acquired and acknowledged first. Deliberative democratic theory suggests civic education as an important means to teach and learn democracy.

3.2   Anchoring the System – Starting with the Youngest

Usually, children and young people are excluded from the democratic processes until they are old enough to vote. This exclusion hinders the system to be rooted in all layers and parts of society. As outlined above, being a citizen who has internalised the norms and values of democracy and citizenship and is able to act upon this knowledge as a deliberate citizen, needs to be learned. Furthermore, when talking about the institutional and societal ingraining of democracy as a political system one cannot leave out all citizens under the age of 18 and the

institutions directly affecting their lives.

When children and young people are not taken seriously by the adult society and never experience that their opinions are of value, the consequence might be mistrust and tiredness of societal organisations and politics in general. In most contemporary democracies, the situation of children as actual part of the citizenry is unique as they are excluded from the very basics of representative democracy. Children are excluded from balloting; hence, they do not have a choice of person that would represent arguments and opinions on issues affecting their lives. Moreover, children do not have alternative channels to formulate and express an opinion publicly. Also, most rights they enjoy are indirect and exercised by adults on their behalf (Roche, 2004). The relationship between children and adult society is quite complex. Children's rights and resources are controlled by adult society and the extension of these are operated by the latter "to make adult society feel better" (Roche, 2004, p. 56). Recalling that democratic structures need to be established throughout all layers of society in order for the democratic system to be legitimised as the political power, it is crucial to note, that this does not take place for the citizenry under the age of 18, hence, leaves out a very large part of the society.

Again, the reason for this exclusion lies in the system itself. Although, as noted above, representative democracy implies the exclusion of those not represented, the exclusion of children is rooted even deeper. Following a social constructivist point of view, people take over certain roles and behavioural patterns according to their social positions, gender or age. The perception of these self-assigned roles and behaviours can vary across societies. Over time, these roles become the norm and society evolves around these norms and structures. Since these structures are socially constructed they can be altered or broken over time (Giddens, 2009). The model of The Life Cycle shows which behavioural patterns are said to be normal at certain ages throughout the life course. It "refers to pathways through the age-differentiated life span, to social patterns in the timing, duration, spacing and order of events" (Elder in Giddens, 2009, p. 306). The highpoint of the life course is adulthood and both society and politics are focused on this episode. Adults form the "centre of society and children and older people [are found] on the margins of society" (Giddens, 2009, p. 306). The social status of children is set to be marginal to society. However, children endeavour to reach adulthood and are trained to become good adults. Society is structured around adulthood being the goal to be pursued and reached. Children are waiting to be adult while old people wish back their adult youth (Giddens, 2009).

There is no need to break children free from adult care and protection, however, children and young people should be included into the democratic processes of society. Only with their inclusion, a more democratic and more legitimised system can be rooted. Children and

youngsters should not only learn how to be good grown up citizens, but should have access to opportunities to build up a public sphere for their own to formulate issues affecting their lives which can be set on the political agenda. The ideas of deliberative democracy provide civic education as a good tool to learn and internalise the norms and values of democracy. Different approaches to civic education also call for an active participation of children and young people. Thereby, the representative democratic system can be further ingrained and legitimised throughout society.

3.3   Learning by Doing – Civic Education

Democracy as the rule of the people implies the self-governance of the people. Self-governance as an active involvement of the people in the politics of their governance has to be learned through civic education. The citizenry has to learn how to govern themselves since the ideal form of democracy is reached when every citizen finds their share in their governance (Stimmann, 1998). Hence, the system of self-governance must be established through and internalised by all layers of society. The 'students' in civic education are the citizens as citizenship is marked as the membership in the political community (ibid.). Alongside the characteristics of deliberative democracy, citizen participation in the political processes of governance goes hand in hand with an "informed, critical reflection and . . . understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities that go with that membership" (ibid.). Civic education in a democratic system is needed to communicate and teach the ideals and values of democracy to enable the people to reasonably formulate opinions and actively take part in the political processes. This learning process serves two important ends: first, the citizen learns and internalises his rights and obligations as a citizens and how to develop, express and make use of them. Second, civic education assists the system to constitute itself by rooting values and practices throughout society and institutions. Both aspects are necessary to maintain or bring further the legitimacy of the democratic system (Abowitz, 2006).

Making use of the possibilities citizenship as the membership to the political community offers is crucial for the system. However, to obtain the understanding of this importance and the knowledge to participate in the process of self-governance as outlined above requires a process of learning. Civic education can serve as a "citizen apprenticeship" (Storrie, 2004) as citizenship can be learned and internalised through the engagement in social and political environments where relevant behaviour and knowledge can be observed and obtained. Ideally, civic education is part of every child's education from childhood to early adulthood and further. Civic education

promotes the ability for the citizenry to develop public reasoning and deliberate public choice (Held, 2006).Theory and practice of where and how civic education should take place is not always congruent. David Held suggests "micro-forums" (Held, 2006, p. 252) as classrooms. These micro-forums would include all groups addressed by a certain issue or institution, meaning formation such as "political parties, national and other parliaments, supra-national committee networks, private or voluntary associations, courts, diverse public sphere of protected enclaves or subaltern counterpublics" (ibid.).

In practice, civic education is part of several democratic systems but can be found in different forms with varying approaches. For example, some Anglo-Saxon countries, such as the USA and Australia, rely on civic education taking place at school. Australian pupils are taught the democratic system of governance, the rule of law, the meaning of citizenship and the attached rights and obligations, values and practices and political issues related to the respective democratic system. The intention is "to prepare young people for active citizenship, which implies democratic participation" (Print, 2007, p. 330). The aim is to teach children how to become good democratic citizens as adults. Henceforth, democratic education focuses on the preparation for on adulthood and children and young people are not further or actively included into the political processes.

In order to achieve a rooting of the understanding of the system and the importance of participation, the paper at hand argues that civic education should rather take a more practical stand. Other democratic systems, such as Germany[5], provide opportunities for active youth participation. Therewith, already children and young people have the opportunity to internalise practices and values of self-governance. Furthermore, by the process of 'learning by doing', which should not take place in training-camps but serious institutionalised structures, children and young people already become active citizens and are not excluded from the political processes until reaching voting-age. Prof. Dr. Roland Roth is one of the leading German scholars on civic engagement and the inclusion of children and young people in the political process. He pursues the stand that civic education should take place in form of civic engagement. Civic engagement is part of democratic politics. It contains the empowerment of citizens and adds direct-democratic features to representative democracy. Engaged citizens become actively part of an interconnection within their group and between other groups. Thereby they engage in a very specific public sphere where they engage in issues and fight for achievements the aims of which are formulated upon reasonable judgements of the status quo and deliberate opinions.

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[5]Germany does not provide one specific program for civic education to teach active engagement, but the government and interest groups and political agencies offer opportunities. Some federal states include children and young people in the work of a 'youth commissioner' or launch youth parliaments (Roth, 2010).

This citizen interaction is crucial for the maintenance of the democratic common good and thought (Roth, 2011). With the fostering of civic engagement, existing liberal representative democracy can be restructured towards a "citizen democracy" (ibid.). The engagement in societal organisations and social movement on the grounds of a reasonable opinion-formation nurtures societal inclusion and the politicisation of issues, meaning that issues become communicated and set on the political agenda. Deliberation can then take place within the organisations or groupings the citizens engage in and thereby become a "platform for public sphere" (Held, 2006, p. 253).

Citizenship education cannot only take the form of teaching democratic values and practices in school or the form of 'learning by doing' in civic engagement, but also the opening of public institutions to more democratic structures. The socialisation of children sets in during the earliest years of their lives and takes specific forms when entering the first public institutions. Already kindergarten should "teach the ability to empathy and other social competences" (Roth, 2011) as the basis of a self-understanding of being a democratic citizen. Furthermore, all school forms, also preschool, should work on the foundation of democratic practices for participation and decision-making for children and young people (ibid.) to internalise the system as such and to root the democratic system in the public institution 'school'. For instance, the introduction of class- and school-councils anchors democratic practice throughout the school and further teaches to be in contact and communication with public institutions (ibid.). The children learn to find their place within a peer group, how to communicate issues within this group and how to formulate opinions and demands which are then to be discussed in the institutionalised councils of the school. In Held's words, the school becomes a micro-forum.

Both, Roth and Storrie call for young people to 'learn citizenship' by practising in the sense of altering existing structures to give children a say in the political processes affecting their lives and restructuring the respective public institutions. With this inclusion, the societal perception of children only playing a marginal role is being changed and the rooting of democratic practice and values is continued into further parts of society as a whole. Conclusively, civic education can take different forms, however, the values and practices of democracy are best taught by 'learning by doing'. Civic engagement and taking part in democratic structures in public institutions offer the opportunity to practice deliberation and political participation. Furthermore, the establishment of these practices as the norm constitute democratic thought and practice throughout society and become ingrained already in the most basic public institutions. Henceforth, civic education can lead to a more legitimised system of democracy.

**4.	Conclusion**

The paper at hand has outlined, that a democratic system, in order to be a legitimised democratic system, has to fulfil certain criteria. Robert Dahl has provided political science with clear criteria every system has to meet in order to being democratic. These exemplify the aspects of a modern democracy such as self-governance, the establishment of the will of the people (create the laws) and a free and vivid public spheres fostering political discussion on issues of common interest (Gabriels, 2012). Assuming that representative democracy is the most prominent political system in the Western world, which has established itself with the nation-state, and acknowledging that there has never been more commitment to democracy during history than in contemporary times, there are still undemocratic features to be found within democratic systems which put the full legitimacy of democracy as the political power to question. Often even ground principles of democracy are shaken, such as participation and equal access to information and the creation and maintenance of public spheres to keep up a reasonable opinion-formation. The system of representative democracy based on liberalism, provides many problems itself. First, a representative system automatically implies the exclusion of those not represented. Second, liberalism has been promoting political equality, however, the ground principle of liberalism states that the private sphere of the citizenry is of no concern to the state. Therewith, social and economic equality cannot be regulated or guaranteed. With the resulting unfairness of access to the political processes of self-governance, the problem of legitimacy begins.

The paper at hand has criticised the lack of legitimacy of liberal representative democracies measured against the idealist ground principle of democracy, the rule by the people in form of self-governance. Investigating upon the question whether the inclusion of young people by the means of civic education could enhance the level of democracy, the paper has firstly provided a theoretical framework by analysing representative democracy in the light of the concept of power. Democracy can only be established as a legitimate political power when the norms and values of democracy itself are ingrained throughout all layers of society and internalised by every citizen and public institution.

Following this conceptualisation, secondly, the thought of deliberative democracy has been introduced. Deliberative democracy does not foresee the implementation of new systems and structures but the altering and enhancing of existing structures in more democratic ways. The citizenry is activated to take part in the process of deliberation, the process of reasonable

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opinion-formation. Every citizen is granted equal access to participating in public spheres without forcing him to do so. The citizenry becomes the opportunity to formulate deliberate opinions by participating in civil society, which might become an issue on the political agenda. With the ability of every citizen to participate in organisations or structures of his choice to communicate his standpoints and concerns, and the following option of this being put on the political agenda, the level of representativeness rises. Furthermore, as every citizen can take part in this process, hence, obtain information and participate, everyone if familiar with the understanding or the rules of the game 'democracy'. The citizenry internalises the values and practices of democracy. Additionally, institutional channels are emended to being open to the communication of deliberation. Henceforth, deliberative democracy roots the ground principle of the communication and constitutionalisation of the will of the people through all layers of society, so every citizen internalises the latter, and throughout public institutions which form the framework for deliberation to happen.

Often young people are accused of growing up without any interest in politics and in participating actively in the political processes affecting their lives. Thirdly, the paper has identified the lack of participation of children and young people as crucial to the issue. With the exclusion of children and youngsters large parts of the citizenry are left out the political processes intentionally. The target group should be included for two reasons: first, they need to learn how to become 'good' democratic citizens making use of their rights and following obligations, and second, in order to establish democracy as a political power, all layers of society have to be incorporated in the political processes which cannot only start at age 18, when having the right to vote.

The fourth section of the paper has presented three different kinds of civic education to underpin the importance of especially young people learning the values and practices of democracy. In order to internalise the system's structures and ideals and how to use them in pursuing self-governance, the citizenry needs to be educated accordingly. This is best achieved by the approach of 'learning by doing'. Civic engagement enhances the civil society, creates public spheres which foster deliberation and the participants can learn how to participate in political surroundings and how to pursue interests in a deliberative democratic manner.

Conclusively, the inclusion of children and young people in the democratic processes through the means of civic education does lead to 'more' democracy. Democracy as the political power becomes legitimised as the active inclusion of the young nurtures the process of anchoring the values and practices of the system throughout the citizenry and modifies public institutions to becoming more democratically open and therewith also rooting the pursuit of

democracy in the state's institutions. The argumentation and conclusion the paper at hand has provided is no practical recommendation and it is acknowledged that a highly idealist approach is being pursued.

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