E-Journal of Philosophy of Education

International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan

Symposium

Teaching Democracy in School

Thematic Research

Rethinking Education and Subject (-ivity)

: Neither Protection nor Exclusion, neither Integration/Inclusion nor Liberation

ISSN 2435 - 5364

Vol. 10, 2025

Title: E-Journal of Philosophy of Education: International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10

Published: 1 September 2025

ISSN 2435-5364

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education: International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan is published annually by the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan. The Office Address: Graduate School of Education, Hiroshima University, 1-1-1, Kagamiyama, Higashi-Hiroshima City, Hiroshima 739-8524, Japan. Email: phil.ed.soc.jp ＠gmail.com

Contents

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

Kant's Theory of Education from the Perspective of the Concept of "Resistance": Beyond the Theory of "Discipline"

Yuya KUSHIGETA
The University of Tokyo

The theory of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who lived in the Age of the Enlightenment in the 18th century and who exemplified both the culmination and the overcoming of the Enlightenment, can be considered to form the basis of modern pedagogy, as Kant set the goal of enlightenment, education, and self-cultivation as the realization of maturity (Mündigkeit) and autonomy. In previous research, his pedagogical work *On Education* (*Über Pädagogik*, 1803), edited by Friedrich Theodor Rink, has been examined from the perspective of the theory of individual moral development and from the perspective of aporia in the relationship between autonomy and education, as guidance of children by an educator. However, these studies have paid no attention to the concept of "resistance" (Widerstand)[1], which Kant mentions repeatedly in this work. In recent years the concept of "resistance" has assumed a pivotal role in pedagogical theories—for example, in the theory of Gert Biesta (2017: 13–14)—but Kant had already paid attention to the pedagogical meaning of this concept. Furthermore, in Kant's educational theory, "resistance" represents the nexus that binds the text *On Pedagogy* with his concept of enlightenment as "emergence from immaturity," and that also offers insight into the relationship between moral autonomy and "constraint" (Zwang)[2]. This paper will therefore seek a new framework of *On Pedagogy* and the knot between Kant's educational theory and moral autonomy, as well as enlightenment, by rereading and reconstituting his theory from the perspective of the "resistance" concept.

To achieve this objective, the previous research will be analyzed in section 1. In sections 2 and 3, the concept of "resistance" will be focused on, and Kant's argument about this concept will be extracted from his text *On Pedagogy* to clarify its meaning. Here, its connection to his educational theory will be also examined in reconsidering the concept of "lawful constraint" (gesetzlicher Zwang). Section 4 revisits the characteristics of "resistance" from its uses in Kant's moral and historical philosophy, and section 5

Correspondence:
Yuya KUSHIGETA, The University of Tokyo. Email: yuya.zokoi@gmail.com

summarizes these considerations and presents five characteristics. In the "Conclusion," the possibility that this "educational theory of resistance" could be regarded as connecting Kant's theory of enlightenment and pedagogy will be considered.

1. Analysis of previous research on Kant's theory of education[3]

Research on Kant's text *On Pedagogy* has, above all, often been performed from two perspectives: the theory of moral cultivation and the contradiction between education and autonomy. When the text is studied from the first perspective, the sequential progression of education in *On Pedagogy*—"care" (Wartung), "discipline" (Disziplin) or "Training" (Zucht), "cultivation" (Kultivierung), "civilization" (Zivilisierung), and "moralization" (Moralisierung)—and the transition from an animal existence to a human and moral existence, as well as from an existence in nature to a social existence, are examined with emphasis. The research of Akira Mori tries to grasp Kant's educational thought—especially that in his work *On Pedagogy*—from his entire critical philosophy and in relation to the development of the theory of *Deutsche Bildung*. Mori states that, in Kant's educational theory, the way to the formation of a moral and free-acting subject constitutes the main theme: "a series of nature (animal nature) → discipline → morality (personality) thus forms one of the main outlines" (Mori 1955: 243). These stages of development or education also "can be traced through his pedagogical account that unfolds across the *Methodenlehren* [Doctrine of Method]" (Munzel 2003: 61) in his critical philosophy. This relationship to Kant's critical philosophy is often referred to from the perspective of his theory of educational stages. Kant's educational theory can also be examined by using the moral development theories of Lawrence Kohlberg and John Rawls as models for extracting Kant's distinct theory of moral development (Formosa 2014: 163–175).

The second perspective of the research focuses on the contradiction between autonomy and education. According to Kant's formulation, autonomy means that the will becomes the universal law, which is given direct to the will by itself. In contrast, education is about directing a person toward a particular course of reason or life, which results (whether consciously or unconsciously) in prevention of the person's autonomy, thereby giving rise to contradictions between education and autonomy or enlightenment. In short, in the formulation of Saoji Yano, "guiding" towards "autonomy" contradicts autonomy itself" (Yano 1994: 116). Jun Yamana indicated also the possibility that Kant's text on enlightenment itself could be read as guiding a person towards maturity, which might hinder the attainment of "maturity" (Yamana 1989: 97). He demonstrated, from this perspective, a possible interpretation of the reason for Kant's definition of enlightenment

as merely "exit from immaturity" and the ambiguity of the description in his text *On Pedagogy*. This paradoxical characteristic is the problem of the geographical boundary between the inner self and the outer world, which could also be interpreted as introducing the problem of the educational relationship between closeness and distance in relation to the child and the problem of the limits of educational intervention (Løvlie 2014: 116). Yano grasps these as a polarity between which education continues to swing, and he states that "dissolving this polarity and thinking of education with only one of two poles would certainly eliminate the paradox, but at the same time this would also result in disappearance of the specific domain of "education" in its modern sense." (Yano 1994: 128)[4].

In response to this polarity between education and autonomy, recent research has sought to point out the relationship between these two elements without contradiction. For instance, Paul Guyer investigates Kant's emphasis on the need for examples in moral education in terms of their roles and clarifies three roles of them in moral education, namely bringing "consciousness" to a priori moral law and related concepts, teaching the "contents of particular duties," and teaching "moral possibility" (Guyer 2014). Not only are these uses of examples consistent with Kant's critique of the use of examples in moral theorizing (Guyer 2014: 124–128), but also this education by means of examples seems to be able to contribute to moral cultivation without being the yoke of autonomy. Hiroshi Suzuki, in his examination of *On Pedagogy* through the lens of Kant's pre-critical and critical philosophy, suggests that there is a complementary relationship between moral autonomy and constraint, as Kant's concept of freedom has two dimensions, namely "the freedom of spontaneity that is assumed to be inherent, and moral freedom that is to be acquired through education" (Suzuki 2017: 198).

Regarding this paradox as a problem of enlightenment or autonomy, excluding the intervention of others, leads also to a discussion about the pluralism within Kant's philosophy and his concept of enlightenment (Hinske 1980: 57–63; Utsunomiya 2006: 30–55). Kant's pluralism is characterized by the maxim of "extended mode of thought," to "think oneself in the position of someone else" (IX57; cf. VII200), which belongs to the maxim of enlightenment, and which is also connected to Kant's cosmopolitanism. Yuzo Hirose suggests that "geography education" functions as a concrete method of education for the cosmopolitan who "can examine their own thoughts and ideas by opening themselves to concrete others and placing themselves in the position of others, without regarding their own thoughts as absolute" (Hirose 2017: 351). This focus on Kant's pluralism indicates the possibility that the subject and others are associated for the purposes of enlightenment and maturity.

However, in research from this last perspective, the main focus has been on studies of moral and historical philosophy and anthropology, and the text *On Pedagogy* has received insufficient consideration. This oversight consequently results in a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between the "exit from the immaturity" and *On Pedagogy*. Consequently, this paper will re-examine *On Pedagogy* with reference to the perspective of the abovementioned recent research. The investigation will focus on the concept of "resistance," which has been overlooked in previous research. It will explore how Kant presents, in *On Pedagogy*, the position of pluralism as to "think into the place of the other" (VII200), as well as a critical reflection on the exit from immaturity and the method of cultivating moral autonomy.

2. "Resistance" as an element of the theory of "discipline"[5]

So how is "resistance" described in *On Pedagogy*? Kant's first reference to this concept can be seen at the beginning of the "Introduction," where he discusses the function of "discipline," which "prevents man from being turned aside by his animal impulses from his destiny, which is humanity" (IX442).

> If he is allowed to have his own way and is in no way *resisted* in his youth, then he will retain a certain savagery throughout his life. (IX442, emphasis by quoter)
>
> It is a common error made in the education of princes, that, because they are destined to become rulers, no one really *resists* them in their youth. (ibid., emphasis by quoter)

Kant asserts here that "resistance" plays a pivotal role in the process of discipline, and that the absence of resistance in childhood will result in children retaining "a certain savagery." In accordance with the formulation of Mori, the step from "nature (animal nature)" to "discipline" cannot be achieved without "resistance." Kant gives "education of princes" or education "by all too much motherly affection" (IX442) as an example of education without "resistance." In particular, Kant compares the education of high society with public education and speaks highly of the latter. In the education of high society, "resistance", which is supposed to be given in public education, is not present, and therefore children continue to be "bold" (IX 465) and to have "savagery" (Wildheit), which is "independence from the laws" of humanity (IX442). Hence, "resistance" assumes a role in the phase of "discipline" as subjecting children to the law and restraining their animal impulses.

The next reference to "resistance" can be observed in the following metaphor of a "tree."

> But a tree which stands alone in the field grows crooked and spreads its branches wide. By contrast, a tree which stands in the middle of the forest grows straight towards the sun and air above it, because the trees next to it *resist*. (XI448, emphasis by quoter)

The metaphor of the tree serves to illustrate the relationship between the subject and others through "resistance." The tree standing in the middle of the forest—which represents the subject in society—can grow straight only with the "resistance" of the surrounding trees—in other words, the others in society.

So how should education be conducted to give children this "resistance"? First of all, Kant asserts that parents are permitted to provide their children with "resistance"—particularly "natural resistance"—in their role as educators. "Natural resistance" means refusal to comply with demands that are derived solely from selfishness and unnecessary sensible desires (IX479-480). This can be regarded as a concrete form of "discipline" by "resistance."

What kind of attitude is then required of children? Kant does not make a direct statement on this, but he does make an interesting description about sexual desire.

> If one directs one's inclination towards the other sex, one always still finds some *resistance*, but if one directs it towards oneself, then one can satisfy it at any time. The physical effect is extremely harmful, but the consequences as regards morality are far worse yet. Here one transgresses the boundaries of nature, and inclination rages without arrest because no real satisfaction takes place. (IX497f., emphasis by quoter)

The assertions made here apply not only to sexual desire. Desires or inclinations directed toward oneself also illustrate desires or inclinations directed exclusively toward oneself—in which case the inclinations can definitively be fulfilled—or toward other beings, who do not "resist" the subject but try to satisfy his or her desires, and over whom the subject has the advantage. In other words, this indicates the case in which the subject directs his or her inclinations only toward the realm from which any possible "resistance" is excluded. This does not carry a moral connotation; rather, inclinations should be directed externally, and children "must find resistance" (IX464). It is required of children, for their morality, to overcome their immanence and to be exposed to possible "resistance" in the world. Moreover, in another passage, Kant ascribes the encounter with "resistance"

to the process of character formation (IX487), and in the citation above he clearly relates it to moralization. But why can this encountering of "resistance" contribute to the cultivation of "morality"? This relationship between "resistance" and "moralization" must be revealed if we are to comprehend the whole role that "resistance" plays in Kant's educational theory.

3. "Resistance" and "lawful constraint" toward "moralization"

The following argument by Kant concerning the paradox of enlightenment and education provides valuable insights into the relationship between "resistance" and "morality."

> One of the biggest problems in education is how one can unite submission under lawful constraint (gesetzlicher Zwang) with the capacity to use one's freedom. For constraint is necessary. How do I cultivate freedom under constraint? I shall accustom my pupil to tolerate a constraint of his freedom (Zwang seiner Freiheit), and I shall at the same time lead him to make good use of his freedom. (…) He must feel early the inevitable *resistance* of society, in order to get to know the difficulty of supporting himself, of being deprived and acquiring—in a word: of being independent. (IX453, emphasis by quoter)

In this formulation, Kant makes reference to the concept of "resistance" in relation to freedom. However, this formulation gives rise to questions. First, how are freedom and constraint juxtaposed as "constraint of his freedom," while in the first passage they are opposed to each other? Secondly, how does "resistance" contribute to the moralization of the subject?

In the passages that follow this citation, Kant sets out three points that are crucial for the cultivation of freedom. The first and second points are to leave the child free, unless "it is in the way of others' freedom," and to show the child that "it can only reach its goals by letting others also reach theirs" (IX454). Cultivation of freedom demands the regulation of our unrestricted freedom, as unrestricted exercising of freedom may infringe upon the freedom of others and hinder the achievement of one's own aims. It is the "inevitable resistance of society" that is encountered when our unrestricted freedom infringes upon the freedom of others. When the responsibility to ensure that children are prepared to enter society falls on education, then, in education, children should know how to use freedom insofar as it does not infringe on the freedom of others. As stated in the third point, such constraint as will "lead him to the use of his own freedom" should be given by the teacher, with reasonable explanation, when the child exercises his freedom

unrestricted (IX454).

Here, constraint (Zwang) indicates not the kind of constraint that hinders moral autonomy under some form of authoritative force (which can be justified only under the order of "might makes right"), but rather one that is justified by its recognition of the freedom and rights of others. This latter constraint can be interpreted as "reciprocal constraint" (wechselseitiger Zwang) (VI232–234). This refers to the constraint or coercion, which, as Chris W. Surprenant writes, exists "when an individual coerces another in a manner that is consistent with the "coexistent freedom" of both individuals" (Surprenant 2014: 53). This constraint, in other words, "is used to compel one individual to recognize the right of other" (ibid. 56) and brings about the transition from the nature state to civil society, so it is the constraint that "is used to prevent someone from acting in a manner that violates the autonomy of another individual or himself" (ibid.). "Reciprocal constraint" is indeed an external restriction on one's freedom, but not every constraint makes autonomy impossible, and a demand that "individuals could never be free unless they had access to all possible options or, at the very least, to the option that they would have chosen from that range of all possible options" is "quite clearly unreasonable" (ibid. 54). The restriction of some options for action under constraint does not render autonomy impossible. In his philosophy of law, Kant asserts that the law (Recht) is entitled to impose constraint, and that "the constraint" imposed by this law, insofar as it is opposed to the exercise of freedom as a hindrance of freedom, is right. In this case, the law is seen "as being a hindering of a hindrance of freedom, and as being in accord with the freedom which exists in accordance with universal laws" (VI231).

The concept of "lawful constraint" in the citation of *On Pedagogy* can also be interpreted in the same way as "reciprocal constraint," which enables the autonomy of both subjects and others, and not as a constraint on natural conditions. This latter kind of constraint follows the principle of "might makes right" and markedly restricts the options, rights, and freedoms of others. As Hiroshi Suzuki shows, the "moral freedom" that is acquired through education and includes accordance with the will of others in the meaning of choice exercises the constraint of moral law, and this constraint does not contradict freedom as autonomy but enables it (Suzuki 2017: 179–201).

Encountering "resistance" is of great significance in the application of this lawful constraint to oneself, insofar as it demonstrates that the unrestricted exercising of freedom infringes on the freedom of others and it relies not on reciprocal constraint but on unrestricted freedom under the conditions of nature. The encounter with "resistance" makes known the necessity of "lawful constraint" and requires resistance against one's own inclinations, so that achieving both one's aims and moral freedom will be possible.

Therefore, "resistance" highlights the difficulty of freedom, promotes it, and leads to moralization. In education without "resistance," individuals may extend their freedom to those who never resist, yet in reality they stay within their immanency.

Education, which can be understood as cultivation of the ability to make use of one's freedom, can be paraphrased as letting the child know that we live in "society, where the world must be big enough for the child, but also big enough for others" (IX469). In acting within society, it should be assumed that there exist others who have equal degrees of freedom and rights. Therefore, individuals should be subjected to constraint to ensure that their freedom and that of others are secured and not unjustly infringed upon. This interpretation corresponds to Kant's statement that public education is superior to the education of high society without "resistance" in enabling the child to learn both "to measure one's powers" and "restriction through the rights of others" (IX454). The focus should be directed toward oneself—one's own freedom or desire—to acquire "lawful constraint."[6]

From the above, the concept of "resistance" in *On Pedagogy* can be summarized as follows: "Resistance" is a crucial moment, not only in the process of removing one's savagery, but also in the process of "moralization" in giving a clue to restrict one's own freedom in harmony with the freedom of others. It is necessary for children to direct their desires to the outside and to interrupt their immanence. In these processes, they find out about "resistance" and learn to recognize and value the freedom and rights of others, and they internalize lawful constraint, thereby promoting the "moral freedom" that is to be acquired through education.

4. "Resistance" in moral and historical philosophy

So far, we have discussed "resistance" in relation to discipline and moralization, but according to Kant's theory of development there are a further two steps in between, namely "cultivation" and "civilization." The research by Mori, to which I referred in section 1, also shows that, besides the series of "nature (animal nature) → discipline → morality (personality)," there are a further two series, namely "nature → skill" and "nature → society" (Mori 1955: 243). Therefore, the connection of "resistance" to these steps needs to be clarified. However, Kant does not discuss this in depth. In this section, therefore, we broaden our perspective and look at the way the concept of "resistance" is used in moral and historical philosophy.

First, in moral philosophy, "resistance" appears as inclinations and sensible desires:

> Such constraint [of moral imperative], therefore, does not apply to rational beings as such (there could also be holy ones) but rather to human beings, rational natural beings, who are unholy enough that pleasure can induce them to break the moral law, even though they recognize its authority; and even when they do obey the law, they do it reluctantly (in the face of *resistance* from their inclinations), and it is in this that such constraint properly consists. (VI379, emphasis by quoter)

It is inclination that resists when "finite" rational beings make moral law the determining ground of their will. The inclinations that are combined with sensible desires, pleasure, or subjective causes resist the will. This is also the reason why human beings are "finite" rational beings, and because "a perfectly good will" transcends finiteness and always corresponds to moral law, duty or imperative does not make sense to this will (IV412–414, V32). Rational beings can have morality insofar as their inclinations exist as resistance. Duty and human morality appear only in the realm where resistance against inclinations exists and subjects act reluctantly against these inclinations.

Similarly, in historical philosophy, "resistance" from others is understood to have a positive meaning. In the fourth proposition of the text *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* (*Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, 1784), Kant sees the medium that nature uses to cultivate all of its predisposition in "antagonism," and antagonism lies in the "unsociable sociability" of human beings (VIII20). This sociability refers to the inclinations of human beings both to establish a society and to be alone at the same time. Because of this, they "resist" and anticipate "resistance" from others (VIII21). However, "it is this resistance that awakens all the powers of the human beings, brings him to overcome his propensity to indolence (…). Thus happen the first true steps from crudity toward culture, which really consists in the social worth of the human being; thus all talents come bit by bit to be developed, taste is formed, and even, through progress in enlightenment, a beginning is made toward the foundation of a mode of thought," which forms society into "a moral whole" (VII21). Kant describes these things that surround the human formation that is established by "antagonism" from "unsociable sociability" by using the metaphor of a tree in *On Pedagogy*:

> [j]ust as trees in a forest, precisely because each of them seeks to take air and sun from the other, are constrained to look for them above themselves, and thereby achieve a beautiful straight growth (…). (VIII22)

Given these concepts of "resistance" in moral and historical philosophy, "resistance" in

educational theory can be further explained as follows. "Resistance" inserts the freedom of "others" into the maxim assumed by the subject, and it directs the subject to reflect on his or her own desires or inclinations by coming from "outside" to the subject, who uses his or her own freedom in an unrestricted way. This directs the discussion to one's own inclinations and makes it known that the will, which is to follow the moral law, is confronted with "resistance of inclinations," and the subject can go toward "moralization" in resisting this second resistance. Thus, as stated in historical philosophy, this resistant relationship between individuals enables them to overcome the propensity toward indolence and turns the subject toward a moral, autonomous, and civil existence that respects the freedom of others and follows "lawful constraint."

As I already mentioned above, in Kant's historical philosophy, or in his theory of education, there are two stages that precede "moralization" in the transition to a civilized condition: "cultivation" and "civilization." In historical philosophy, Kant says that "resistance" awakens all the powers of human beings, after which they cultivate their talents and taste. If this is true, then it can be said that "cultivation" and "civilization," which cultivate skillfulness and prudence, could be led by "resistance." Indeed, "resistance" requires critical reflection on one's inclinations, desire, and freedom, insofar as it appears to interrupt one's own freedom, but if the subject lacks the physical ability or intelligence to act freely, then resistance will direct the subject to develop a "technical" and "pragmatic" presupposition (VII322).

"Cultivation" is mainly "didactic," and the "resistance" discussed in this paper cannot itself contribute directly to the process of cultivation. However, one of the moments that invite the subject to engage in this process is "resistance." This means that one learns to know that, in every competition in society, "no one enjoys any advantages, because one feels resistance everywhere, and because one can only make oneself noticed by distinguishing oneself through merit" (IX454). Moreover, one learns from this "resistance" in the competition to "measure one's powers." If one thinks that the reason for "resistance" lies in the lack of his ability, then one will be tempted to cultivate one's ability.

As regards civilization, Kant says in his historical philosophy that "all culture and art that adorn humanity, and the most beautiful social order, are the fruits of unsociability" (VIII22), and it can be supposed that "resistance" that is caused by "unsocial sociability" can lead to the cultivation of "prudence." If we are confronted with such "resistance," for example, to an extent that we can only reach our goals by letting others also reach theirs (IX454) (as discussed already in the third section), then the possibility that this will lead to the cultivation of "worldly" prudence, which is "the art

(…) of how to use human beings for one's purposes" in human society (IX486), cannot be denied. When one encounters this kind of "resistance" again, after having acquired "prudence," then one will be led to moralization. Thus, being directed toward the development of the ability to act freely precedes the stage of reflection on one's own inclinations.

5. Characteristics of "resistance" in Kant's pedagogy

From the discussion above, the characteristics of the concept of "resistance" in Kant's educational theory can be outlined as follows.

First, "resistance" manifest itself as an interruption of the unrestricted exercise of freedom. Secondly, "resistance" directs subjects towards the overcoming of crudity and savagery and the acquisition of "skillfulness," as well as "prudence." Thirdly, "resistance" directs subjects beyond "cultivation" and "civilization" and towards reflection on their own inclinations and desires that infringe on the freedom of others, as well as reflection on the range in which they direct their desires and on their own freedom in relation to the freedom of others. When "resistance" directs the discussion towards the "resistance of inclinations" in oneself, in other words, when it "turns to the subject,"[7] then "resistance" invites subjects toward "moralization."

Fourthly, this "turn to the subject" establishes lawful constraint and enables a transition from the freedom of spontaneity that is assumed to be inherent to the "moral freedom" that constrains one's inclinations. This can be achieved because the moral reexamination that "turn to the subject" brings about makes one's own inclinations visible. The subject who is directed towards himself or herself encounters "resistance" both outside and within as inclinations.

Finally, the subject is required to find out about the "resistance" that comes from "outside." The demand to find out subjectively about this "resistance" seems incompatible with the argument that "resistance" should be given from "outside." However, "finding resistance" means here to direct one's own desires towards the outside, as articulated by Kant in *On Pedagogy*. In other words, to "direct oneself to the realm where resistance could be encountered." The encounter with "resistance" cannot be anticipated beforehand; it can be encountered only through trials and experiences in this realm, and without the transition to this realm we cannot encounter it.

From these characteristics, it is evident that Kant's "resistance" is not merely a moment of "discipline," but is also a significant moment that invites subjects to every stage of his educational theory of development. This concept is of particular educational

significance, especially in directing individuals towards "moralization"—that is, moving them towards "moral freedom" by leading them to a society with others.

Conclusion: "Resistance education" and "enlightenment education"

In this paper, we have discussed "resistance education," which can be seen as the new framework of Kant's pedagogy. In the text *On Pedagogy*, Kant emphasizes the importance of "resistance" that comes from "outside" for moral autonomy and of "turn to the subject," which restricts the unrestricted use of freedom and imposes "lawful constraint." This leads to the process of becoming human—in other words, of leaving savagery and moving from animal nature to personality in two ways. The subject, on the one hand, is required to move to a place where freedom is restricted through the freedom of others and thus through reciprocal constraint. On the other hand, encountering "resistance" demands the transition from dependence on one's own inclinations to autonomy, in which the subject can resist his or her inclinations.

Moreover, focusing on this concept of "resistance" yields an answer to the critique that Kant's autonomy is isolated. His autonomy is by no means a monological act by an isolated subject. As mentioned in section 1, Kant's enlightenment also means moral enlightenment from the perspective of pluralism, which has, as one of its maxims, the requirement to "think in the place of the other" (VII200). For enlightenment education, Kant emphasizes "resistance" in *On Pedagogy*. This is because "resistance education" requires one to bracket one's own thoughts in an encounter with the "resistance" of others and to reflect on oneself in the place of others; this establishes "reciprocal constraint."

This "resistance" is also important for the sake of enlightenment in the sense of emancipation—of exit from immaturity. This process should begin with one becoming aware of one's immaturity and leaving one's own position, reflecting on one's own thinking from outside to determine what restricts one's use of understanding. In this sense, "resistance education" goes beyond a negative educational stage of discipline that removes savagery and can be seen as a moment of "enlightenment education" that combines the perspectives of pluralism, enlightenment as emancipation, and moral autonomy.

There are many themes that have remained undiscussed in this paper. One of them is consideration of the question 'What kind of "resistance" can lead to moralization?' Even though the subject encounters "resistance" after having cultivated his or her ability, it is up to the subject as to whether this will lead him or her to "turn to the subject". We therefore have to consider the transition from "resistance" to moral reflection and the way

in which we can give the "resistance" that leads to moralization. To clarify the concept of "sublime" could help to answer this question. According to Kant's text *Critique of Judgement* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1790), "sublime" is "an object (of nature), the representation of which determines the mind to think of the unattainability of nature as a presentation of ideas" (V268). The experience of this "sublime" can also be interpreted as an experience in which the subject is directed toward the moral law in him or herself by encountering resistance from others that comes from outside the subject or his or her framework of understanding. This schema overlaps with the schema in pedagogy. Therefore, a clue for further clarifying the "resistance" that leads to "moralization" could be found by considering this concept from the perspective of the "sublime."[8]

Note

1. In this paper, the term "resistance" in quotation marks refers to its usage in Kant's educational theory, whereas use of the term without quotes refers to the more general meaning of the word. I translate the German word "Widerstand" (which can be also translated as "opposition," depending on the situation) consistently as "resistance" to emphasize that Kant uses the same German word.
2. The German word "Zwang" means "constraint," "compulsion," or "coercion," and these words are used in the translation of Kant's works in accordance with each context. However, in this paper, to emphasize that Kant uses the same German word "Zwang," I translate the word consistently into "constraint."
3. The Japanese paper contains some insufficient descriptions of previous research. They have been corrected here.
4. In this paper, I generally agree with the point that education swings between autonomy and heteronomy, insofar as Kant's "maturity" is understood as an unattainable ideal. In this sense, not only education, but also enlightenment, is regarded as swinging between the two poles of autonomy and heteronomy. Kant's statements about "the greatest problem of education" (IX453) will be discussed later.
5. In the Japanese paper, the Japanese word "kuniku" was used as a translation of both "Zucht" and "Disziplin" in some sentences. This could cause confusion and needs correction, even though Kant uses both words in parallel. In this paper, "training" is used as the translation of "Zucht" and "discipline" as the translation of "Disziplin."
6. Kant's statement in the citation above, therefore, can be interpreted that there is a difficulty, because educators have to educate children to use their own freedom in such a way that constraint is included within the freedom.

7. This concept of "turn to the subject" is put forward by Theodor W. Adorno in *Education for Maturity* (*Erziehung zur Mündigkeit*, 1971). With this concept, Adorno describes the important act of fighting against anti-Sarmatism to enable people to become aware of the mechanisms within themselves that cause racial prejudice, because even if one were to show them the facts of what the Nazis did, they would normalize these acts as an exception (Adorno 1971: 26–27). Therefore, in this paper, I use this concept of turning discussion to the subject itself to describe the reflection on one's own inclinations that is caused by "resistance." However, whereas Adorno's "turn to the subject" relates to the social and political problem and structure that operate within the subject and cause prejudice, Kant's "resistance" relates to the moral problem. I therefore use this concept in this paper in the meaning of turning the discussion toward the subject and leading to moralization.

8. As mentioned in the introduction, Gert Biesta also discusses the educational role of "resistance" in relation to his concept "to exist in and with the world in a grown-up way" (Biesta 2017: 13–14). He also considers the concept of "emancipation," which backs up Kant's enlightenment concept (Biesta 2017: 59–81). However, Kantian pluralism in his enlightenment concept is not taken into account here. In another paper, I will try to compare and examine the differences and significance of the concept of "resistance" from this perspective.

Bibliography

Note: References to Kant are to *Kant's Collected Works* (*Kant's gesammelte Schriften*), edited by the Prussian Academy of Science (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1900–). Citations from Kant are followed by the volume number in Roman numerals and the page number in Arabic numerals. Translations are my own, but I used the *Cambridge Edition of the Writing of Immanuel Kant* (1992–).

Adorno, Theodor W. 1971: Erziehung zur Mündigkeit. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Biesta, Gert 2017: The Rediscovery of Teaching. New York: Routledge.

Formosa, Paul 2014: From Discipline to Autonomy: Kant's Theory of Moral Development. In: Roth, Klas and Surprenant, Chris W. (eds.): Kant and Education: interpretations and commentary. New York: Routledge, pp.163-176.

Guyer, Paul 2014: Examples of Moral Possibility. In: Roth, Klas and Surprenant, Chris W. (eds.): Kant and Education: interpretations and commentary. New York: Routledge, pp. 125-138.

Hinske, Norbert 1980: Kant als Herausforderung an die Gegenwart. Freiburg/München: Karl Alber.

Hirose, Yuzo 2017: Kanto no sekai shiminteki chiri kyôiku: ningenkeiseironteki igi no kaimei (Kant's Cosmopolitan Geography Education: Considering the Meanings of Human Formation). Kyoto: Minerva.

Løvlie, Lars 2014: Kant's Invitation to Educational Thinking. In: Roth, Klas and Surprenant, Chris W. (eds.): Kant and Education: interpretations and commentary. New York: Routledge, pp. 107-123.

Mori, Akira 1955: Kanto no kyōikushisō no kenkyû: sono tetsugakuteki haikei to hihanteki saikōsei (Study of the educational thought by Kant: the philosophical background and critical reconstruction). In: Memoirs of the Faculty of Literature Osaka University. Vol. 4, pp. 203–375.

Munzel, G. Felicitas 2003: Kant on Moral Education, or Enlightenment and the Liberal Arts In: The Review of Metaphysics. Vol. 57. No. 1, pp. 43-73.

Surprenant, Chris. W. 2014: Kant and the Cultivation of Virtue. New York: Routledge.

Suzuki, Hiroshi 2017: Kanto no hihan tetsugaku no kyōiku tetsugakuteki igi ni kansuru kenkyō (Research on the meaning of Kant's critical philosophy in the philosophy of education) Tokyo: Kazamashobō.

Utsunomiya, Yoshiaki 2006: Kanto no keimō seishin: jinrui nokeim keimō to eien heiwa ni mukete (Kant's Spirit of Enlightenment: Towards the Enlightenment of Humankind and Perpetual Peace). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Yamana, Jun 1989: Kanto no keimō ishiki ni miru michibiku koto no mondai: Kanto no "Seijinsei(Mündigkeit)" o megutte (The problem of "guiding" in Kant's concept of enlightenment: centered around Kant's concept of "Mündigkeit"). In: Kyōiku tetsugaku kenkyō (Studies in the Philosophy of Education). Heft 59, S. 88–101.

Yano, Satoji 1994: Kyōiku kankei no paradokkusu: kyōikukankei ni okeru "Niritsuhaihan" mondai ni tsuiteno komyunikeishonronteki ningengaku no kokoromi. (The paradox of the pedagogical relationship: An attempt to solve the problem of an "antinomy" of pedagogical relationship from the perspective of an anthropology of communication theory). In: Kano, Yoshimasa und Yano, Satoji (Hg.): Kyōiku no paradokkusu/ Paradokkusu no kyōiku (The Paradox of Education/The Education of Paradox). Tokyo: Toshindo, S. 105–134.

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 24KJ0737.

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

Teachers Drifting in between:

In Reference to the Discussion of Critical Pedagogy

Hideyuki ICHIKAWA
Chiba University

Abstract

In democratic education, teachers teach students the knowledge and skills necessary for democracy and simultaneously build a democratic relationship between them and the students. This role can theoretically be overlapped by that of political leaders in a democratic society. While we regard schools as the important institutions of democracy, undemocratic tendencies often exist within schooling. Such tendencies often make it challenging for teachers to practice democratic education as their relationships with the students, which constitute the basic structure of schools, can transform into an undemocratic form. As with other theories of democratic education, critical pedagogy is challenged with this problem and has tried to find the key to solving it. Among various possible solutions, in this report, I focus on teachers' attitudes. In a dialogue with Ira Shor, Paulo Freire states that schools have limitations for social change. His statement suggests that the goal of critical pedagogy might be realized; however, many of the students do not come to school with such an aim. Under such circumstances, teachers must implement democratic education. This requires an attitude of drifting between the realities faced by teachers and the ideal form of democratic education. To explain this attitude, I refer to Freire's idea of creating a contradiction. Although Freire thinks that teachers should teach knowledge and skills to fulfill students' requirements, he maintains that they should also relativize and sometimes deny what they teach for social change. Showing contradictory attitudes toward what they teach may lead to constructing democratic relationships in a classroom.

Key words: democratic education; critical pedagogy; Paulo Freire

Democratic education

I regard "Teaching Democracy in School," which is the theme of this symposium, as

Correspondence:
Hideyuki ICHIKAWA, Chiba University. Email: h-ichikawa@chiba-u.jp

practicing democratic education in schools. Based on the discussion of critical pedagogy, this report proposes the teacher's attitude of drifting in between as one of the requirements for teaching democracy in schools.

Julian Culp, Johannes Drerup, and Douglas Yacek regard democratic education as a synthesis of education *for* democracy and education *as* democracy (italics in original; Culp et al., 2023). Education *for* democracy means a type of education that is practiced under "the belief that human communities and individuals flourish most, or become the most just, when they commit to a basic principle of equality among all human beings and when they keep opportunities and social roles open to all who strive to achieve them" (Culp et al., 2023, p. 4). Education *as* democracy, as expressed by democratic pedagogy, means a type of education that is practiced democratically (Culp et al., 2023, pp. 5–6). These two notions of democratic education "constitute two practical desiderata that limit and complement each other" (Culp et al., 2023, p. 6). For education *for* democracy, education *as* democracy has the role of regulating the use of undemocratic means to realize an end. For education *as* democracy, education *for* democracy has the role of showing an orientation for practices and providing guidelines to achieve better results.

Teachers in schools as sites for democratic education

I focus on teachers in this report because schools are seen as sites where democratic education is practiced. Yasuto Miyazawa states that schools constitute a concentrated form of education, which is "'what happens between those who teach and those who are taught'" (Miyazawa, 1992, p. 164). From this viewpoint, Miyazawa argues that we should focus on "the relationship between teachers and students" (Miyazawa, 1992, p. 164) to understand schools. If "the relationship between teachers and students," as Miyazawa calls it, can take various forms depending on the various characteristics that schools can possess, then, in schools where democratic education is practiced, teachers and learners[(1)] should not only share the purpose of realizing a democratic society and the ideal of a democratic person but also build the democratic relationship that constitutes education *as* democracy.

This democratic relationship affirms the image of the teacher as a leader. In *Minshushugi*, a social studies textbook for Japanese junior high and high schools published in 1948 and 1949, Monbusho (Ministry of Education) states: "The school is a

[(1)] The term learner is used in this report except when the context limits the school type and in the quoted sections.

society formed mainly by teachers and students. Therefore, in order to understand the democratic formation of the school as a society, we should consider the relationship between teachers and students and the voluntary cooperative relationship among students" (Monbusho, 2018, p. 352). It further writes, "It is natural that people with outstanding talent, deep experience, and strong responsibility should be nominated by others to take on an important mission and to lead a lot of people. In this sense, teachers lead their students in schools" (Monbusho, 2018, p. 354). These statements emphasize that teachers are expected to have the knowledge and practical skills necessary for democracy, and, without subjugating learners with such knowledge and skills, to build and maintain relationships required for education *as* democracy.

These expectations of teachers are not incompatible with democracy, which holds equality as a fundamental principle. After reviewing studies that try to reconcile leadership with democracy, such as the view of leaders as "first among their peers" (Yamamoto, 2020, pp. 93–94), Kei Yamamoto argues that "the existence of 'moderate' leaders without charisma," such as Benjamin Barber's facilitating leadership, "will promote people's political participation and proactive engagement, and contribute to making democracy more effective" (Yamamoto, 2020, p. 96)[(2)]. Given Yamamoto's argument, if we consider teachers as leaders of democracy, the legitimacy of the theory and practice of democratic education is assured even if the relationship between teachers and learners is not necessarily equal and the roles of the two are not identical.

While this way of thinking is possible, turning to the realities teachers face in schools, we can think of a case in which it is difficult for them to establish the type of relationship with learners that is required for democratic education. According to James Beane and Michael Apple, due to such undemocratic elements as competition for grades, status, resources, programs, and so on, catering to the interests and aspirations of the most powerful groups and ignoring those of the less powerful, for example, schools have been undemocratic institutions (Beane & Apple, 2007, p. 13). The elements that make schools undemocratic inevitably affect the relationship between teachers and learners. For example, competition for grades constitutes a teacher–learner relationship based on the selection and distribution of useful human resources rather than on the assumption that while teachers lead learners, both parties are democratic agents. In such a relationship, the inequality between them and their different roles do not connect with democracy itself

---

(2) Yamamoto (2020, pp. 96–97) also warns against the idea that leadership can be controlled by people.

or education *as* democracy, and the practice of democratic education will consequently fail.

The attitude of drifting in between

What I propose in this report, referring to the discussion of critical pedagogy, as among the things required to continue democratic education in situations where it is difficult to do so, is the teachers' attitude of drifting between the reality they face in their schools and the ideals of democratic education they uphold. In the following, I sketch, albeit partially, this attitude.

Critical pedagogy is founded primarily on Marxist thoughts, such as Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Paulo Freire's problem-posing education, whose core is dialogue (see Gottesman, 2016). In addition, Eric Freedman points out the following:

> To its advocates, critical pedagogy constitutes a democratic process of instruction that aims to achieve certain democratic results. In the Freirean tradition, "democracy" refers to a state of affairs in which everyone has an equal ability to shape collective or communal knowledge. Hierarchies of all types—racial, economic, patriarchal, and so on—are seen as anti-democratic in that they amplify the voices of certain individuals or groups while muting those of others. (Freedman, 2007, p. 443)

Given these points, we can say that critical pedagogy is a theory/practice of democratic education based on Marxist theory, which aims to educate people in dialogical rather than hierarchical relationships to engage in politics.

Critical pedagogy has sought to deal with the problems caused by schools' practical conditions that prevent the full development of itself or learners' responses that the teacher does not expect (e.g., Gitlin & Ingerski, 2018; Reynolds, 2015). In this context, this report focuses on Freire's remarks in a dialogue with Ira Shor to roughly explain a teacher's attitude of drifting in between. While Freire states, "Precisely because education is *not* the lever for the transformation of society, we are in danger of despair and cynicism if we limit our struggle to the classroom" (italics in original; Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 129), he also says, "We should know that it is possible to accomplish something important in the institutional space of a school or college in order to help the transformation of society" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 130). Although he admits that schools can be a site for social change, he also states that through education in public schools and colleges, some people may increase their curiosity and consider their political positions, and a few of them

become more strongly engaged in the process of transformation (Shor & Freire 1987, p. 130). As suggested by these comments, the goals of critical pedagogy could be realized in schools; however, it does not necessarily follow that learners will invest themselves in this possibility and desire to be democratic agents.

With the above-mentioned recognition, Freire proposes creating a contradiction as a way for teachers to practice education for social change. In discussing with Shor the situation in which students want to acquire useful knowledge and skills that will help them secure jobs, Freire notes that "The liberating educator will try to be efficient in training, in forming the educatees scientifically and technically, but he or she will try to *unveil* the ideology enveloped in the *very* expectations of the students" (italics in original; Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 68). What this brings about is not confusion but a contradiction (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 69). According to Freire, students "must understand what contradiction means, that human action can move in several directions at once, that something can contain itself and its opposite also" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 69). Teachers, who are expected to transmit the knowledge, skills, and values that are valued in today's society, play their roles and simultaneously relativize and sometimes deny them. They then strive to emerge as leaders of democratic education, trying to form a relationship with their learners. Of course, whether they will share the same ideals with the learners and establish the required relationship is always uncertain. Creating a contradiction is an example of the type of teacher who drifts in between in that teachers accept the uncertainty of their action and simultaneously try to practice democratic education under the given conditions without giving up thereon.

Concluding remarks

In this report, I propose that among the requirements for teaching democracy in schools is the teacher's attitude of drifting in between. This is not so much an elaboration of a theory of specific democratic education as it is an inquiry into how teachers should respond to the situations that are often found in schools. To further this inquiry, it will be necessary to describe the multilayered nature of the teachers' attitude of drifting in between through a detailed examination of situations in which learners are not democratic agents in schools.

Funding

This report was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP22K02227.

References

Beane, J. A., & Apple, M. W. (2007). The case for democratic schools. In M. W. Apple, & J. A. Beane (Eds.), *Democratic schools: Lessons in powerful education* (2nd ed.) (pp. 1–29). Heinemann.

Culp, J., Drerup, J., & Yacek, D. (2023). What is democratic education and why should we care? In J. Culp, J. Drerup, & D. Yacek (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of democratic education* (pp. 3–10). Cambridge University Press.

Freedman, E. B. (2007). Is teaching for social justice undemocratic? *Harvard Educational Review*, *77* (4), 442–473. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.77.4.hm13020523406485

Gitlin, A. D., & Ingerski, J. (2018). Rewriting critical pedagogy for public schools: Technological possibilities. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, *9*(1), 7–28.

Gottesman, I. (2016). *The critical turn in education: From Marxist critique to poststructuralist feminism to critical theories of race*. Routledge.

Monbusho. (2018). *Minshushugi* (*Democracy*). KADOKAWA.

Miyazawa, Y. (1992). Gakko o kyudan suru mae ni: Otona to kodomo no kankeishi no shiten kara (Before denouncing schools: From the perspective of the history of the relationship between adults and children). In Y. Saeki, T. Shiomi, & M. Sato (Eds.), *Gakko no saisei o mezashite 1 Gakko o tou* (*For revitalization of schools 1 Questioning schools*) (pp. 161–195). Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai (The University of Tokyo Press).

Reynolds, W. M. (2015). Critical pedagogical praxis: Risk and the hopeful struggle. In B. J. Porfilio & D. R. Ford (Eds.), *Leaders in critical pedagogy: Narratives for understanding and solidarity* (pp. 1–15). Sense Publishers.

Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*. Bergin & Garvey.

Yamamoto, K. (2020). Shido to minshushugi: Minshuteki ridashippu o motomete (Leadership and democracy: In search of democratic leadership). *Nempo Seijigaku* (*The Annals of Japanese Political Science Association*), *2020* - II, 82–99. https://doi.org/10.7218/nenpouseijigaku.71.2_82

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

Discussing Morality and Democracy:

Focusing on Discourse Ethics

Kayo FUJII
Yokohama National University

Abstract

This paper re-examines discourse ethics from the perspective of the democratic public sphere, with a focus on its implications for moral education. By analyzing the relationship between discussion activities and democratic will-formation, it highlights the importance of cultivating solidarity alongside moral justice. The study argues that discussion itself should be understood as a form of democratic practice and calls for a reconsideration of moral education based on the local contexts of each community.

Key words: moral education, discourse ethics, democratic public sphere, will-formation, solidarity

Introduction

How can moral education be transformed into democratic education? To consider this question, I examine Jürgen Habermas's discourse ethics, which is referenced in research on communication-based moral education in Japan. This paper investigates the democratic aspects of communication in moral education by rethinking discourse ethics and clarifying the relationship between the activities involved in communication and the democratic public sphere

1. Discourse ethics as a moral universalism sensitive to difference

To explore the theoretical framework of discourse ethics, I will refer to the essay "A Genealogical Analysis of the Cognitive Content of Morality" from *The Inclusion of the Other*. Its content can be summarized as follows. The understanding of morality in

Correspondence:
Kayo FUJII, Yokohama National University. Email: fujii-kayo-tb@ynu.ac.jp

Europe can be traced back to the religious world of Catholicism, in which values and norms became concretely persuasive. The moral imperative was the Bible. The relationship between God and believers is characterized by two moral relations: the solidarity of the community of believers and the justice as "a unique person individuated by his life history" (Habermas, 1999a: 10). However, as it gradually became increasingly difficult to derive the validity of moral imperatives from a religious foundation, and as the foundations of post-metaphysics were sought, a direction emerged to reconstruct morality from "the reason and the will of its participants" (Habermas, 1999a: 12). After explaining this shift in moral understanding, Habermas turns his attention to communication as a discourse on norms, which has been viewed as a function that "every moral system provides a solution to the problem of coordinating actions among beings who are dependent on social interaction" (Habermas, 1999a: 16‐17).

Three characteristics can be observed in this understanding of morality. First, while recognizing the significance of moral emotions, Habermas distinguishes between "the better reasons" and "the more impressive expressions of feelings," stating that agreement based on feelings is not sufficient (Habermas, 1999a: 18‐20). Second, he makes an important distinction between the concepts of "justice" and "the good," arguing that "without the priority of the right over the good one cannot have an ethically neutral conception of justice" (Habermas, 1999a: 28). The third point concerns the understanding of solidarity with strangers as a matter of justice. While equality—where everyone is equally recognized—may be achievable through ethical goodness, it is only through understanding the universalist content of morality as justice that we can explain the moral obligation to "take responsibility for another" (Habermas, 1999a: 29). This understanding of morality represents an attempt to "project a universally binding collective good on which the solidarity of all human beings—including future generations—" (Habermas, 1999a: 28) can be grounded. The community here is conceived from "the enlarged first person plural perspective of a community that does not exclude anybody" (Habermas, 1999a: 30).

This understanding of morality expresses the position of "a moral universalism sensitive to difference" (Habermas, 1999a: 40). This position is based on the idea that "the equal respect for everyone else" takes "the form of a *nonleveling* and *nonappropriating* inclusion of the other *in his otherness*" (Habermas, 1999a: 40), and that "the missing of a 'transcendent good' can be replaced in an 'immanent' fashion only by appeal to the intrinsic constitution of the practice of deliberation" (Habermas, 1999a: 41).

As we have seen thus far, discourse ethics attempts to address the difficult problem

of deriving principles for the reconstruction of morality from a postmetaphysical perspective. In discourse ethics, morality is concerned with procedures that secure the legitimacy of moral norms rather than prioritizing any particular content. In other words, instead of determining and promoting specific values, discourse ethics emphasizes higher-order principles through which such values can be assessed, suggesting a shift toward reevaluating these principles as constitutive of morality. In this sense, discourse ethics seeks to understand morality within a universalist framework, while recognizing the importance of individual value communities and affirming the moral significance of sustaining both dimensions.

2. Moral education based on discourse ethics

If we base our thinking on the idea of discourse ethics, the only moral principle is the principle of universalization. This principle, known as (U), states: "Unless all affected can *freely* accept the consequences and the side effects that the *general* observance of a controversial norm can be expected to have for the satisfaction of the interests of *each individual*" (Habermas, 1999b: 93), the norm cannot be considered morally valid. Habermas argues that the principle of universalization is an "intuition" tacitly presupposed by anyone who participates in discourse (Habermas, 1999b: 92–93).

Given this distinction between theoretical and practical discourse, it is clear that a norm acceptable to all without coercion does not presuppose an external truth. Since the central idea is that moral norms are generated through reflection in practical discourse, Habermas formulates the following discourse principle (D): "Only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse" (Habermas, 1999b: 93). This explanation demonstrates that all participants are assumed to have access to the discourse. The reason for universalism is that a valid norm is one that all individuals can accept without coercion. Furthermore, it reflects a consistent understanding of justice—one that values not only the particular good of each community but also justice itself and the ideal of an open, inclusive community.

Habermas argues that certain conditions must be met for a successful discussion. He identifies the following four conditions, all of which must be present: "(i) Nobody who could make a relevant contribution may be excluded; (ii) that all participants are granted an equal opportunity to make contributions; (iii) that the participants must mean what they say; and (iv) that communication must be freed from external and internal coercion

so that the "yes" or "no" stances solely by the rational force of the better reasons"(Habermas, 1999a: 44).

Discussions satisfying these conditions are expected to lead to social integration through their outcomes, thereby contributing to the conceptualization of a democratic society. As Habermas explains, "Deliberative politics acquires its legitimating force from the discursive structure of an opinion-and will-formation that can fulfill its socially integrative function only because citizens expect its results to have a reasonable *quality*" (Habermas, 1998: 304).

In this sense, moral education based on discourse ethics involves contacting the values and formation of morality by emphasizing discussion activities related to morality; from a classroom perspective, it entails being a practice that leads to the conception of a democratic society. This practice does not rely on externally imposed standards of rightness; rather, teachers and students collaboratively determine the validity and goodness of norms through discussion. In Japan, aspects of this moral lesson research have been introduced and discussed by scholars in the field of the philosophy of education. Drawing inspiration from previous studies, the following joint research project on moral lessons was developed.

3. Research on moral education classes

For several years, I have been collaborating with teachers to revitalize discussion-based activities in moral education classes in junior high schools. Specifically, I have engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the moral education department at one such school to deepen our shared understanding of the challenges surrounding moral education, and since last year, we have been working together to design classes that enrich students' discussion experiences. A request to consider the types of questions that could be used in moral education classes emerged during a meeting with junior high school teachers. In response, I proposed the following three types of questions: (1) questions that encourage students to examine their own opinions based on underlying reasons, (2) questions that promote group consensus building, and (3) questions that guide the class toward the development of more comprehensive (holistic) perspectives and opinions. To prevent discussions from turning into personal attacks, students collaboratively established discussion rules, such as respecting the opinions of their peers, and we took steps to create a classroom environment conducive to calm and thoughtful dialogue. Joint research was conducted by first administering a pre-survey to students, implementing and recording moral lessons

using the specially designed questions, and finally, conducting a post-survey. The key findings of this process are outlined below.

Students' interest in moral education lessons was found to be closely related to their sense of psychological safety toward the teacher. Furthermore, psychological safety within the discussion groups increased after moral education lessons that incorporated the specially designed questions[1]. In addition, students who reported higher psychological safety in the pre-survey tended to demonstrate a stronger attitude toward comprehensive consensus building in the post-survey. However, no significant change was observed in the students' general attitudes toward consensus building or in their discussion participation behaviors between the pre- and post-surveys. In their written reflections, some students mentioned not only forming their own opinions but also deepening their understanding of others' ideas and considering what is most important. However, there were no comments reflecting the value of the discussion activity itself or the process of verbalizing one's thinking.

These findings highlight both the significance of efforts to create moral values and reconcile differing views through discussion, and it is difficult to get a grip on such activities. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how the experience of discussion can be further enriched within moral education. In light of this collaborative research project, let us revisit the relationship between discussion and democracy.

4. Rethinking discourse from the perspective of democratic public sphere

One issue that emerges from research on moral education is that students may not fully engage with the public dimension of discussion activities—activities with the potential to generate shared moral values. This suggests the need to further explore the educational value of discussion in moral education and pursue an approach that reflects the democratic process of opinion formation, as emphasized in discourse ethics, rather than confine learning to the private sphere.

Axel Honneth's concept of the democratic public sphere is crucial here. This sphere encompasses individuals' practical actions; it is not only of historical significance but also offers important insights for addressing contemporary issues. The concept of the democratic public sphere is understood as the need "to include everybody affected by decisions about the future political order in the free process of will-formation" (Honneth, 2014: 288). This notion emphasizes that the democratic public sphere entails continuous effort toward achieving equality. Central to this idea is the cultivation of "a culture of

democratic inclusion" (Honneth, 2014: 304). From this perspective, this can be seen as an expanded interpretation of Habermas's notion of accepting the other, framed within the broader context of democratic inclusion.

From the perspective of political culture, "the motive for such commitment to the public good in modern democracies generally springs from the binding force of solidarity among citizens, which obligates the members of society to feel responsible for each other and make the necessary sacrifices" (Honneth, 2014: 292). According to Honneth, these "feelings of solidarity" are "revitalizing the democratic public", however, today, "the national basis of solidarity among citizens is in the process of dissolving" (Honneth, 2014: 293). We are now confronted with the challenge of conceptualizing civic connectedness in terms of abstract solidarity.

In light of the challenge of redefining civic connectedness through abstract forms of solidarity, it is necessary to reconsider the role of moral education from the perspective of the democratic public sphere. When re-examining moral education in terms of discourse ethics within this framework, several key issues emerge.

First, because discourse ethics adopts "a concept of the individual as essentially socialized" (Habermas, 2001: 60), it must be reconstructed with attention to the educational process of children and young people who are still in the midst of becoming socialized. Second, people's actions and commitments to discursive activities must be sustained over time. In this respect, discourse ethics, as a form of universalism sensitive to differences, must place greater emphasis on democratic behavior as a moral sentiment that fosters solidarity. Third, since opinion formation entails "participation in the process of will-formation" (Honneth, 2014: 288), educational practices must aim to create opportunities in which students come to value the very act of collaborative engagement.

In general, discourse ethics values the formation of inclusive perspectives that incorporate everyone involved in the process of opinion formation without excluding anyone. However, such inclusivity does not arise spontaneously; rather, it must be actively realized through practice. The idea of including all people in their diversity, along with the practices necessary to achieve this, must be regarded as foundational. In other words, activities in which people work together to form a collective must be emphasized. From this perspective, discussion is not simply a communication tool but a distinctive practice through which moral values and opinions are generated. Therefore, each specific moral education lesson requires not only an analysis of the diversity among students but also consideration of the unique conditions that shape the classroom as a whole.

Concluding Remarks

This study, by re-examining discourse ethics from the perspective of the democratic public sphere, demonstrates that discourse places value on discussion as a crucial component in sustaining both morality and democratic will-formation. In particular, the need to recognize solidarity as an essential element alongside moral justice has come to the fore. To realize these aims, it is necessary to develop a mode of thinking that regards deliberation not merely as a tool for refining one's own ideas but as a form of democratic behavior in itself. In other words, the future direction of moral education is to incorporate solidarity as part of the democratic process of will-formation and to rethink practices from the specific local contexts of each community.

Note

1 Note that this study was a longitudinal investigation conducted in a single classroom without a control group. Therefore, the observed increase in psychological safety may also be attributed to growing familiarity or closer relationships among group members over time rather than solely to the intervention itself. For a detailed analysis, see Kayo FUJII, Mizuho SHINADA, and Masami SHIGEHIRO, "Research on Discussion in Moral Lessons at a Junior High School," *Journal of the College of Education, Yokohama National University. The Educational Sciences,* no. 8 (2025) : 252–266.

References

Habermas, J. (1998) *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, translated by William Rehg, MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1999a) *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, edited by Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff, MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1999b) *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, translated by Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (2001) *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, translated by Ciaran P. Cronin, MIT Press.

Honneth, A. (2014) *Freedom's Right : The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, translated by Joseph Ganahl, Polity.

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

On the Political Nature of Political Education: The Characteristics of the German Approach from a Japanese Perspective

Takahiro KONDO
Waseda University

Abstract

In the field of Japanese educational studies, there are two somewhat vague and opposing perceptions of German political education. While some researchers see these educational initiatives as an effort by educational institutions to maintain a democratic system, others point out the danger of government control over political thought. There is also the view that it is undesirable for education to become involved in politics. This diversity of opinion on political education is not limited to Japan.

It is important to note that these conflicting understandings also exist in Germany. Political education is an idea that is extremely broad in scope and not limited to school education. Even when the focus is narrowed down to schools, the relationship to a new type of activity called democracy pedagogy, which is sometimes included in the broader concept of political education, is complex. Within the narrow definition of political education, there has been and continue to be a variety of approaches associated with different political ideas, such as conservative and progressive, and different educational theories. Moreover, the recent spread of right-wing extremism has highlighted differences in approaches to political education.

It is therefore inaccurate to assume that the existence of a political and pedagogical consensus in Germany on the nature of political education makes such activities possible. This misunderstanding stems from the assumption that the political neutrality of education must be protected at all costs, regardless of the lack of clear criteria for judging it. The German example shows that political education does not depend on a consensus about its content, but rather on the recognition that it is essential for the maintenance of a democratic system. Consequently, political education for democracy is always open to political controversy.

Key words: Beutelsbacher Konsens, critical political education, Demokratiepädagogik, political

Correspondence:
Takahiro KONDO, Waseda University. Email: t-kondo@waseda.jp

neutrality, right-wing extremism

Introduction

The present study focuses on political education (*politische Bildung*) in Germany with the objective of deliberating on the role of education, particularly school education, in sustaining a democratic system[1]. It is important to note that the intention of the author is not merely to emulate the German model. Rather, the study seeks to illuminate the nexus between democracy and education by analyzing the distinctive features of political education in Germany, and to underscore issues that frequently elude Japanese educational researchers.

The findings of this paper are likely to be of significance to the studies of education in countries other than Japan. Regarding political education, which developed in Germany after the war, it is probably not well known in the field of education in other countries, apart from neighboring countries such as Austria. The number of English-language publications on this topic is relatively small, and many of the existing papers have been written by researchers in fields other than education, such as history, politics, and linguistics[2].

It is evident that articles written in languages other than English and German may also present challenges for the author in terms of accessibility. In light of this understanding, the present paper does not aspire to offer immediately applicable insights derived from German political education. Rather, its objective is to establish a reference model for analogous research endeavors in other nations. To this end, the paper presents the views of the author, who has been conducting research within the Japanese academic

---

[1] In this paper, the term "democracy" is used to refer to liberal democracy. The difference between democracy and liberal democracy is important in today's world, where right-wing populism is attracting support by advocating (non-liberal) democracy, but in the context of Japanese educational studies, liberal democracy has effectively been referred to as democracy, so in this paper, the term "democracy" is used in accordance with academic conventions.

[2] For example, see Roberts, Geoffrey, K. (2002), *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 55, Issue 3, pp. 556-568; Cavalli, Alessandro (2019), Political Education in Germany, *The Federalist Debate*, [https://www.federalist-debate.org/archive/year-xxxii-number-3-november-2019/comments/political-education-in-germany]; Zagelmeyer, Stefan (2022), Varieties of political education: A taxonomy of political education approaches in higher education based on a journey through time in Germany (1701-2021), *IHRMI Discussion Paper,* 2022/02, pp. 1-24; Yu, Junyi (2022), The Enlightenment of the Development of Citizenship Education in Germany to the Promotion of Ideological and Political Education in China, *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 317-323. There is also a publication in Japanese, edited by specialists in applied linguistics, as follows. Najima, Yoshinao & Yasuko Kanda eds. (2020), *Uyokupopyurizumuni kosuru shiminseikyoiku: Doitsuno seijikyoikuni manabu* (*Citizenship education to resist right-wing populism: Learning from German political education*), Akashi Shoten.

community.

The Distance to German Political Education

The initial observation to be made is the recognition that there is a paucity of Japanese-language research on political education in Germany.

To begin with, while many educational researchers and teachers in Japan recognize the value of democracy, they have not been actively committed to it. Engagement in education for democracy can easily lead to involvement in real political conflicts. This kind of anxiety has also had a discouraging effect on research on educational efforts for democracy in other countries.

On the other hand, there has been a remarkable interest in German education in Japan since before World War I, and there are many examples of the translation and introduction of the works of prominent educational scholars, including many that contain content related to political education. There are also a few studies that use the term "political education" in their titles[3].

However, following the 1960s, despite the establishment of chairs of political education at universities across Germany (Sander 2014: 19), this trend did not attract much attention in Japan. A few researchers who have studied education with an awareness of the importance of democracy have focused on schools and educational thought in the United States. Conversely, Germany, with its negative image of Nazism, anticommunism in the West and communism in the East, remained outside their purview[4].

This is not the sole rationale. Despite the facts that German history education, which is recognized for the considerable effort it has made to overcome the past, has attracted attention in Japan, and that political education in a broad sense, including modern and contemporary history education, has attracted the attention of historians and political scientists, educational researchers have been reluctant to pursue it. German political education is particularly challenging for educational researchers to handle, and this can

---

[3] For example, Fujisawa, Hoei (1978), *Gendaidoitsu seijikyoikushi* (*A History of Political Education in Modern Germany*), Shinhyoron; Miyano, Yasuharu (2014), *Seijikyoiku to minshushugi (Political Education and Democracy*), Chisenshobo, etc.

[4] In a book published in 2024, Ian Bremmer commented to a Japanese interviewer that in today's world, some people want to create a democracy like Japan or Germany, but no one wants to become like the United States. This suggests that the understanding and evaluation of the United States and democracy in the Japanese field of educational studies is facing a significant challenge. (Bremmer, Ian (2024), Daisanjisekaitaisen eno kiki (The threat of World War III), in Ohno, Kazumto et al. eds., *Minshushugino kiki* (*Crisis of democracy*), Asahishimbunshuppan, p. 36.)

be seen from the following two points.

Firstly, the German term "politische Bildung" refers to a wide range of educational activities. When trying to translate this term into English, several possibilities come to mind, such as political education, civic education, and even citizenship education.

In fact, it includes a wide variety of adult education, while also emphasizing the teaching of subjects such as social studies and political science in schools. When we look at school education, there are individual programs for each type of school in each state. When taking a broader view, there is also a national organization such as the Federal Agency for Civic Education. This complicated structure poses difficulties for Japanese educational researchers, who are used to developing research by focusing on specific objects.

The complexity of political education in Germany is also noted by researchers in that country. In the *Lexikon der politischen Bildung,* published in 1999, Peter Massing already wrote that "there is no generally accepted definition of political education" (Massing 1999: 185). Ten years later, Wolfgang Sander stated that political education is "a term commonly used in German-speaking countries and refers to learning opportunities provided with the educational aim of developing political skills and knowledge" (Sander 2009). According to this definition, processes in which political skills and knowledge are learned in an environment without the intention of educators are excluded from political education. However, when deciding how to teach in school, for example, it is necessary to understand the situation of the students, and this is nothing other than the result of unintentional learning. Sander's definition suggests not only the activities included in the concept of political education, but in fact a variety of related phenomena that go beyond it.

A further issue arises from the characteristics of German education research in Japan, where there is a prevailing practice of interpreting the German terms "*Bildung*" and "*Erziehung*" as discrete activities. Specifically, Bildung is frequently translated as "*toya*" (which translates to "cultivation" or "formation"). However, the various activities classified as "politische Bildung" encompass some that are more aptly designated as Erziehung. This descrepancy poses a significant challenge to education researchers, a problem that is not faced by historians or political scientists.

As mentioned below, the author acknowledges the importance of using the term "toya", but has also suggested translating "politische Bildung" as political "*kyoiku*" (education). This proposal is based on two factors. Firstly, the term "toya" is used infrequently in contemporary discourse. Secondly, there is a necessity to revise our conceptualization of the term "political education."

It is first essential to ascertain the existence of the expression "*politische Erziehung*." Prior to and following the war, the term was frequently utilized, as evidenced by a paper authored by W. Flitner in 1955, where the terms are used together in the form of "*politische Erziehung und Bildung*" (Flitner 1955). At the same time, he differentiates between the terms Erziehung and Bildung, using the former to refer to educational initiatives within the school system and the latter to refer to the process by which individual learners achieve political knowledge and character formation. Moreover, the title of the paper exclusively utilizes "politische Erziehung," thereby implying that Erziehung held a more predominant status in comparison to Bildung at the time.

However, the entry for "politische Erziehung" is not included in the *Lexikon der politischen Bildung* published in 1999[5]. Notably, Peter Massing, the author of the entry for "politische Bildung," asserts that in democratic countries, these two concepts form a continuum (Massing 1999: 186). This comment suggests an understanding that, although these two activities are certainly different, there is no need to emphasize the differences between them. The difference between Flitner's use of the term "Erziehung" in the title of his paper and the use of "Bildung" in the entry in the *Lexikon der politischen Bildung* suggests that, over the course of half a century, the former's image of the exercise of vertical authority was rejected. Instead, the importance of supporting the political maturation of learners while also considering learning outside of school was recognized. As stated above, the author believes that there is sufficient validity in referring to both Bildung and Erziehung as "kyoiku" without distinguishing between them. However, there is also validity in using the word "toya," and it cannot be denied that this has caused some confusion for Japanese researchers observing German education.

The delicate relationship to democratic education

In this section, the relationship to so-called democratic education will be examined to clarify the outline of political education. In Japan, the term "political education" has a negative connotation of political indoctrination, and it was not used for a long time. In contrast, the term "democratic education" has a somewhat innovative ring to it, and it has been commonly used. In Germany, it could be argued that political education emerged first with democratic education following suit to complement it. While the Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Bildung (DVPB) has been active since 1965, the Deutsche

[5] To be precise, the entry "Politische Erziehung in der DDR (Political Education in GDR)" does exist.

Gesellschaft für Demokratiepädagogik was established in 2005[6]. Despite the common goal of promoting education for democracy, the following differences in awareness of issues can be observed[7].

Firstly, the objective of political education is to preserve a democratic system, or more precisely, a liberal-democratic system. It fosters comprehension of actual politics among citizens, equipping them with the capacity to act in accordance with their understanding. In contrast, democratic education underscores the cultivation of a democratic culture through the experience of life within a democratic community. In the context of school education, the former places significant emphasis on subjects related to politics, while the latter places value on extracurricular activities such as student councils. This discrepancy in educational approaches suggests that democratic education may be founded on the belief that political education places excessive emphasis on social science-based knowledge, potentially overlooking the significance of experiential learning for students.

The latter approach is readily comprehensible to numerous Japanese pedagogues, who are influenced by empiricism. There is also no doubt that political education has historically pursued the acquisition of accurate knowledge rather than experience. For example, DVPB's declaration in 2020 underscores the significance of competencies to observe, judge, and act (Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Bildung 2020).

The most important point to consider is that this pedagogical approach is firmly grounded in academic theory. There has long been a distinction between political learning and social learning.

According to the above-mentioned lexicon, the latter "aims at promoting the recognition and understanding of various emotions and social relationships, and at acquiring social competence" (Hoppe 1999: 235f.). Sibylle Reinhardt offers examples of this competence, including "helping others," "treating everyone equally," and "caring about others" (Reinhardt 2009: 121).

In contrast, political learning is defined as "a process in which individuals or groups actively transform their knowledge, ideas, and possibilities for action regarding public affairs through various repeated experiences." (von Olberg 1999: 203) The important thing is that what is being asked are knowledge and ways of thinking about "public

[6] From 2002 to 2007, before the activities of this association began, the federal government and 13 state governments worked together to promote the BLK-Programm - Demokratie lernen & leben.

[7] The following description of the difference between political education and democracy education is based on a handbook for schools in Hamburg. Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung (2020), *Positioniert euch! Was politische Bildung darf*, Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, pp. 15-16.

matters". Private matters are not included in the category of political learning unless they are interpreted as public matters.

In this regard, Sibylle Reinhardt states that "private space, where many experiences are shared, and differences can be easily tolerated" and "public space of democratic politics" are different things. According to her, what characterizes the public space of democratic politics is the struggles over decisions, and it is important to recognize that "struggles are neither avoidable nor harmful but are appropriate in terms of the equal respect of diverse members" (Reinhardt 2009: 122).

Furthermore, based on the results of a large-scale survey conducted in Saxony-Anhalt in 2000, she points out the problem that many students have acquired social competence, but this has not led to political learning (Reinhardt 2009: 121). While many students recognize the value of helping others and treating everyone fairly, they perceive conflicts of interest as a threat to the common good. According to Reinhardt, this suggests a lack of understanding of democratic principles.

The findings of such empirical research must be carefully considered in terms of their generalizability. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that social learning may not inherently lead to political learning. It could be argued that the basis of political education is predicated on the understanding that there are limits to what can be learned from experience in a life of democracy.

Contemporary Issues

So far, two key characteristics of political education in Germany have been identified. Specifically, they are its comprehensive nature and its emphasis on recognizing political issues. These elements are not currently part of the Japanese education system, and they have the potential to attract attention.

However, political education in Germany is also facing various challenges. Even if the focus is limited to school lessons, it cannot be said that sufficient time is allocated[8]. A more pressing issue is the need to respond to the rise of right-wing extremism that has

[8] According to a survey by Norbert Sendzik and others at the Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsverläufe, the number of hours spent on political education-related subjects increased nationwide from the 1970s, peaked in the 1990s or 2000s, and has since been on a slight downward trend. The recent decrease is likely to be due to the reduction in the length of the gymnasium course and the increase in economics-related subjects. It has also been observed that the number of hours of such classes is higher under governments led by the SPD and lower under governments led by the CDU/CSU. Sendzik, Nobert, Ulrike Mehnert and Marcel Helbig (2024), *Feuerwehr der Demokratie? Politische Bildung als Unterrichtsfach an allgemeinbildenden Schulen der Sekundarstufe I in der Bundesrepublik Deutschalnd von 1949 bis 2019*, LifBi Working Paper, No. 114, pp. 42-45.

been apparent since German unification. The latter has notably elevated expectations for political education, while also attracting criticism regarding its current approach. The concept of democracy education, as discussed in the previous section, has garnered attention in the context of the ongoing challenge of right-wing extremism, despite continuous political education initiatives.

Consequently, as more effective political education is called for, critical political education has emerged as a movement for renewal. In 2015, 23 political education researchers drafted the "Frankfurter Erklärung. Für eine kritisch-emanzipatorische Politische Bildung."

The fundamental idea is based on the recognition that we live in a society where inequality is structured. The aim of political education has been set as encouraging learners to act towards a more just society by making visible issues of power that we are usually unaware of. In addition, the inequality that is assumed includes not only socio-economic problems, but also problems caused by environmental destruction, and it is intended to respond to changes in people's consciousness (Eis 2015).

The background to the popularity of this political education theory is the situation where right-wing extremism is promoting political messages from the perspective of the socially disadvantaged, critiquing EU bureaucracy and the Euro. In response to this populism, appealing to the legitimacy of today's democracy is likely ineffective. Instead, addressing the social inequality experienced by the populace is crucial to address their anxiety and dissatisfaction. This approach is essential for providing them with a comprehensive understanding of society. By doing so, a more rational revitalization of democracy can be fostered.

This critical political education is a valuable approach, but there are at least two problems associated with it. One is that by recognizing that there are structural problems in today's democratic society, we are partially affirming the current perceptions of right-wing extremism.

Secondly, this social perception is not universally shared among those involved in political education. It is not only in conflict with the understanding of political education held by conservatives, but also among political education experts who believe that political education should be critical, there is diversity of opinion. The approach mentioned above is just one of the critical opinions. In addressing this issue, it is crucial to examine the limitations of the "Beutelsbacher Konsens," which serves as the foundation for political education in Germany.

This German consensus, which consists of three principles: "Teachers must not overwhelm their students;" "what is controversial in academic and political debates must

also appear controversial in the classroom;" and "students must be able to understand a political situation and think about what is in their own interests" (Wehling 1977: 179f.) is widely known in Japan today. Notably, the so-called controversiality principle is regarded as a commendable alternative to the requirement of political neutrality when promoting educational activities that address real political issues in Japanese schools.

However, this consensus also indicates that during the 1970s, there were divergent views regarding the nature of political education in Germany, and a common understanding could not be reached between them.

It is undeniable that the emphasis on students forming their own views freely has led to the development of diverse political education initiatives. However, it is important to remember that political education experts were also politicized by the opposition between conservatives and progressives in the world of politics. Namely, while conservatives sought to preserve the existing democratic society, progressives believed further democratization was necessary. The attempt in Beutelsbach to rescue political education from escalating conflict led to the consensus, but it merely confirmed the mutual tolerance of both conservative and progressive positions.

Advocating critical political education means challenging the political compromise surrounding political education. Its educational theory shares many similarities with the ideas of 1970s progressives. According to Kerstin Pohl, the ideas presented there are diverse, but it is common for them to be critical of globalization and neoliberalism, and to emphasize the importance of citizens' participation in democracy (Pohl 2015).

Critical political education seeks to step into the ambiguous terrain that has sustained the Beutelsbacher Konsens. This means that the expansion of right-wing extremism has shed light on the cracks that existed within the liberal political consensus.

It is quite difficult to determine which side is correct in the reactivated debate about the form that political education should take.

In fact, the resolution "Demokratie als Ziel, Gegenstand und Praxis historisch-politischer Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule (Democracy as a Goal, Subject, and Practice of Historical and Political Education in Schools)" revised and announced by the Kultusministerkonferenz (Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the States) in 2018 acknowledges both approaches. However, although it refers to the significance of empowering the socially disadvantaged within the context of an unequal society, as articulated in the Frankfurt Declaration, the underlying tone emphasizes the transmission of politically correct values and associated competencies, such as human rights, human dignity, the rule of law, and tolerance, which are foundational to contemporary society.

Conclusion

From the standpoint of the Japanese educational context, the distinctive features of political education in Germany can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, it is important to note the breadth and narrowness of the initiative. In terms of breadth, the initiative encompasses both school and extra-school education. Additionally, it encompasses both Bildung and Erziehung. A variety of ideas have existed since the past, from those that emphasize the maintenance of existing democratic societies to those that aim to democratize them more actively. Conversely, in terms of narrowness, although so-called social learning is also included in the scope of view, the focus is on political learning based on the premise of public space. This breadth and narrowness suggest that a wide range of resources have been concentrated on political learning to maintain and develop a liberal-democratic system.

In this way, political education has been given a high priority, and as a result, it has become quite political, which is the second characteristic. The Beutelsbacher Konsens is symbolic of the coexistence of opposing political education theories. In this respect, it is notable that right-wing extreme political parties, which are often positioned as a threat to liberal democracy, have repeatedly demanded the neutrality of political education[9]. Furthermore, while educational theories with highly political stances, such as critical political pedagogy, have made a comeback in the face of their growth, it is also interesting that educational theories with weaker political stances, such as democratic education theory, have appeared, which seek to protect democracy through culture rather than through political insight. Where there is a highly political theory of education, the fact that it is weak can also be seen as a form of political character.

In Japan, the Fundamental Law of Education confirms the importance of the cultivation of political literacy, and since the end of the war, schools have consistently provided social studies instruction on the legal framework and political systems that underpin the democratic system. However, there have been attempts to maintain the neutrality of education by avoiding the introduction of real political conflicts into the classroom. Both the left and right camps hoped to use education for their own political gain, but they also kept a close eye on each other. As a result, schools have become a

[9] The AfD's pamphlet for the 2023 state elections (AfD Fraktion Sachsen 2023) claimed that, based on the perception that one's own independent thinking is discouraged by political and democratic education, the party advocated the removal of political influence from schools, in particular by reducing the hours of political education and increasing the hours of teaching economic knowledge necessary for life, and that since 2019 the party has submitted several motions to pursue this goal in the budget deliberations.

political vacuum.

It is often pointed out that the absence of a consensus among different political parties when dealing with political content presents an obstacle to initiatives such as political education in Germany. However, this perception is not accurate. There are a variety of political education theories in Germany, and the Beutelsbacher Konsens merely rejects political indoctrination. The distinction between Japan and Germany is not whether there is a consensus on the ways in which political education should be conducted, but whether it is required to be neutral. In other words, this is a difference between whether we consider political education to be essential for sustaining democratic systems, or we think it would be better to have it.

Finally, it is evident that possessing the elements deemed essential for maintaining democracy does not ensure its sustainability. There is no such thing as perpetual democracy. Additionally, in a country following the collapse of democracy, there may be political education to justify the system. Political education is an integral component of politics.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that political education should not take place. It has an intrinsic educational value that goes beyond fighting right-wing extremism by forming free and critical individuals. Even if we think in a pragmatic way, if there is a democratic nation and we want it to continue to exist, then such efforts are still worthwhile. As the demand for political neutrality by right-wing extremists symbolizes, it has at least the significance of a canary in the coal mine of democracy.

References

AfD Fraktion Sachsen (2023), Broschüre: Bildungspolitik. [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://afd-fraktion-sachsen.de/bildung/]

Bremmer, Ian (2024), Daisanjisekaitaisen eno Kiki (The threat of World War III), in Ohno, Kazumto et al. eds., *Minshushugino Kiki* (*Crisis of Democracy*), Asahishimbunshuppan.

Cavalli, Alessandro (2019), Political Education in Germany, The Federalist Debate. [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://www.federalist-debate.org/archive/year-xxxii-number-3-november-2019/ comments/political-education-in-germany]

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Demokratiepädagogik (2005), *Magdeburger Manifest, Gründungsdokument 2005*. [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://degede.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/05/degede_manifest.pdf]

Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Bildung (2020), Politische Bildung für die

Demokratie! Positionspapier der Deutschen Vereinigung für Politische Bildung zum Verhältnis von Politischer Bildung, Demokratiepädagogik und Präventionspädagogik. [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://dvpb.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DVPB-Politische-Bildung-fuer-die-Demokratie.pdf]

Eis, Andreas et al. (2015), Frankfurter Erklärung. Für eine kritisch-emanzipatorische Politische Bildung. [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://uol.de/f/1/inst/sowi/ag/politische_bildung/Frankfurter_Erklaerung_aktualisiert27.07.15.pdf]

Flitner, Wilhelm (1955), Die zwei Systeme politischer Erziehung in Deutschland, in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 32: 481-487. [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/archiv/524892/die-zwei-systeme-politischer-erziehung-in-deutschland/]

Fujisawa, Hoei (1978), *Gendaidoitsu seijikyoikushi* (*A History of Political Education in Modern Germany*), Shinhyoron.

Gläser, Georg and Gudrun Hentges (2024), Politische Strategien der extremen Rechten im Feld der (politischen) Bildung, in Chehata, Yasmine et al. eds. (2024), *Handbuch kritische politische Bildung*, Wochenschau Verlag, 550-558.

Hellmuth, Thomas (2014), Politische Bildung in Österreich, in Sander, Wolfgang ed., *Handbuch Politische Bildung*, Wochenschau Verlag, 2014, 541-551.

Hoppe, Heidrun (1999), Soziales Lernen, in Richter, Dagmar and Georg Weißeno eds., *Lexikon der politischen Bildung*, Bd. 1, Wochenschau Verlag, 235-236.

Kultusministerkonferenz (2018), Demokratie als Ziel, Gegenstand und Praxis historisch-politischer Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 06. 03. 2009 i. d. F. vom 11. 10. 2018). [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2018/Beschluss_Demokratieerziehung.pdf]

Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung (2020), *Positioniert euch! Was politische Bildung darf*, Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg.

Massing, Peter (1999), Politische Bildung, in Richter, Dagmar and Georg Weißeno eds. *Lexikon der politischen Bildung*, Bd. 1: 185-188.

Mittnik, Philipp et al. eds. (2018), *Was darf politische Bildung?*, Pädagogische Hochschule Wien.

Miyano, Yasuharu (2014), *Seijikyoiku to minshushugi* (*Political Education and Democracy*), Chisenshobo.

Najima, Yoshinao & Yasuko Kanda eds. (2020), *Uyokupopyurizumuni kosuru shiminseikyoiku: Doitsuno seijikyoikuni manabu* (*Citizenship education to resist*

right-wing populism: Learning from German political education), Akashishoten.

Pohl, Kerstin (2015), Kritik: Wie kritisch soll politische Bildung sein? [Retrieved February 15, 2025, https://www.bpb.de/lernen/politische-bildung/193192/kritik-wie-kritisch-soll-politische-bildung-sein/]

Reinhardt, Sibylle (2009), Ist soziales Lernen auch politisches Lernen? Eine alte Kontroverse scheint entschieden, in *Gesellschaft – Wirtschaft – Politik*, 1: 119-125.

Reinhardt, Sibylle (2010), Was leistet Demokratie-Lernen für die politische Bildung? Gibt es empirische Indizien zum Transfer von Partizipation im Nahraum auf Demokratie-Kompetenz im Staat? Ende einer Illusion und neue Fragen, in Lange, Dirk and Gerhard Himmelmann eds., *Demokratiedidaktik. Impulse für die Politische Bildung*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 125-141.

Roberts, Geoffrey, K. (2002), Political Education in Germany, in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 55: 556-568.

Sander, Wolfgang (2009), Was ist politische Bildung? [Retrieved February 15, 2025, www.bpb.de/lernen/kulturelle-bildung/59935/was-ist-politische-bildung/]

Sander, Wolfgang (2014), Geschichte der politischen Bildung, in Sander, Wolfgang ed., *Handbuch Politische Bildung*, Wochenschau Verlag, 15-30.

Sendzik, Nobert, Ulrike Mehnert and Marcel Helbig (2024), *Feuerwehr der Demokratie? Politische Bildung als Unterrichtsfach an allgemeinbildenden Schulen der Sekundarstufe I in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949 bis 2019*, LifBi Working Paper, 114.

von Olberg, Hans-Joachim (1999), Politisches Lernen, in Richter, Dagmar and Georg Weißeno eds., *Lexikon der politischen Bildung*, Bd. 1, Wochenschau Verlag, 203-204.

Wehling, Hans-Georg (1977), Konsens à la Beutelsbach? Nachlese zu einem Expertengespräch, in Schiele, Siegfried and Herbert Schneider eds., *Das Konsensproblem in der politischen Bildung*, Ernst Klett Verlag, 173-184.

Yanagisawa, Yoshiaki (2023), Gakkozentaide torikumu minshushugikyoiku (Democracy education involving the whole school), in Arai, Fumiaki et al., *Sekaini manabu shukenshakyoikuno saizensen* (*The Forefront of Citizen Education: Learning from the World*), Gakujishuppan, 104-133.

Yu, Junyi (2022), The Enlightenment of the Development of Citizenship Education in Germany to the Promotion of Ideological and Political Education in China, in *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, 8-4: 317-323.

Zagelmeyer, Stefan (2022), *Varieties of political education: A taxonomy of political education approaches in higher education based on a journey through time in*

Germany (1701-2021), IHRMI Discussion Paper, 2022/02.

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP23K02094.

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

Teaching Democracy in School

Chiharu FUJII
Waseda University

Masamichi UENO
Sophia University

Regarding the teaching of democracy in school, Dewey emphasized not teaching democracy itself, but rather experiencing it through democratic life. This approach was grounded in his recognition of the limitations of intentional and institutional schooling. He also envisioned school as "embryonic societies" that would incorporate democratic life, a concept that contributed to the social center movement, which ultimately ended in the 1930s without fully realizing its original purpose. Teaching democracy in school presents significant theoretical challenges.

The recent development of various theories of democracy and education can be seen as a response to the challenges of our time. These include the normative theory of democracy, as exemplified in Rawls' theory of justice, the publicness debate within participatory democracy, the tension and mediation between deliberative and agonistic democracies, the rise of radical democracy in response to these tensions, and the ethics of care, all of which have garnered considerable attention.

This symposium aims to review and propose principles for democratic education in school, taking into account this growing interest and organizing the issues and points of contention.

First, there is the practical issue of where and how democracy should be taught in school, which are often constrained by limited human and material resources as well as time and space limitations. In terms of subjects, we might consider moral education, social studies, civics, integrated learning (inquiry), special activities, and others. Past research often highlights democracy, education, politics, and citizenship education. Two patterns of democratic education based on educational philosophy emerge: one centered on moral education and the other on political education. Citizenship education may be seen as an integration of the two. Where and how should we teach citizens, the bearers of

Correspondence:
Chiharu FUJII, Waseda University. Email: chiharu-f@waseda.jp
Masamichi UENO, Sophia University. Email: maueno@sophia.ac.jp

a democratic society, both within and beyond the formal curriculum? Should certain fields (e.g., art) be treated as distinct from academic subjects?

It is also worth noting the diverse developments in democratic education theory in the context of the antagonistic relationship between deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy, and their application to school. Various theorists offer differing perspectives in a dynamic interplay. Can the novelty and originality of these theories be reflected in the principles of teaching democracy in school? The inheritance and development of critical theory and critical pedagogy will be crucial, but what does "criticism" really mean? What does "criticism" imply in relation to global environmental issues, inequality, or even doubts about democracy itself? An examination of "criticism" will also be important when constructing the principles of inquiry-based activities in school.

The old and new question of whether citizens can be the bearers of democracy has also been a subject of discussion. In recent years, concerns about populism, post-truth, and fake news have led to calls for epistocracy (rule by experts and those with common sense). In contrast, "epistemic democracy," which relies on the perceptions of ordinary people and citizens to guide better democratic decisions, has been proposed as an alternative. The rise of generative AI and the promotion of DX (digital transformation) are also reshaping how democracy is formed. The GIGA school concept is being promoted in school, and we are left to wonder what impact this will have on the development of democratic citizens.

In this symposium, we hope to deepen our understanding of the principles for teaching democracy in school, considering the factors mentioned above, and to provide an opportunity for collective reflection and exploration of this important topic.

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

How the Unseen and Unheard Become Subjects:

The Political Potential of the "Social" in Hannah Arendt

Mayuko ISHIGAMI
Toyo Eiwa University

Abstract

This paper examines the political potential of the "social" by focusing on Hannah Arendt's (1906-1975) theory of "civil disobedience."

Arendt's political theory has often been interpreted through the lens of the public/private dichotomy. However, her discussion of "association" within the social realm appears to describe a process through which those who are unseen and unheard make their existence visible. This paper explores the political possibilities embedded in Arendt's conception of "the social" by interrogating its meaning in her thought. Specifically, it highlights "association" as a foundation for civil disobedience, compares it with Judith Butler's concept of the subject, and examines its potential as a site for the emergence of those who are unable to appear in the public sphere.

Key words: Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, the "social," appearance, subjects

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the political possibilities of the "social" by focusing on Hannah Arendt's (1906-1975) theory of "civil disobedience."

Arendt's political theory has traditionally been understood through the lens of a public-private dualism. However, this paper seeks to reinterpret that framework by interrogating the meaning of the "social" and exploring its political potential.

In particular, this paper will focus on "association" as a foundation for civil disobedience and examine its potential as a site for the appearance of those who cannot emerge in the public realm.

Correspondence:
Mayuko ISHIGAMI, Toyo Eiwa University. Email: mayuko.ishigami@gmail.com

1. Subject(ization) in Hannah Arendt

Although subject(ization) is a central theme in Arendt's political thought, she does not address the concept directly or thematically. While Arendt frequently explores what it means to exist politically, she appears to deliberately avoid using the term subject(ization) in her discussions.

From her perspective, understanding political existence is difficult if approached through a subject-object dualism or by seeking common traits shared by all subjects. For Arendt, politics is constituted by the free speech and actions of individuals, but crucially, it is mutual action among a plurality of people (men), not the solitary act of a single person (man) [HC:7].

Even if we posit a political subject, it does not precede this mutual action; rather, it emerges through it.

Accordingly, if we are to identify the subject in Arendt's work, it is most evident in her concept of "appearance." In *The Human Condition*, Arendt uses "appearance" to describe how people emerge in the world: through being "seen and heard by others" [HC:57], one can "show who one is" [HC:57].

She further explains this as "exposing who-ness (who)" [HC:175], referring not merely to identity but to the dynamic nature of being perceived by others. The "who" is exposed through interaction in the public realm. Subject(ization), in Arendt's account, is thus a relational process that arises through speech and action in the presence of others.[1]

This understanding shares common ground with Judith Butler's (1956-) view of the subject, which she formulates in critical dialogue with Arendt. Like Arendt, Butler sees subjectivity as fluid and shaped by social context and discourse.

However, in Butler's account, politics involves the struggle of those excluded or rendered invisible within the public realm to make that exclusion visible (to be seen and heard). She criticizes Arendt for maintaining a rigid division between the public and private realms, thereby overlooking the struggle over who is recognized as a legitimate subject of politics (Butler, Spivak 2008). While Arendt redefined politics through the concept of "appearance" and laid the theoretical groundwork for reconstructing the

[1] Muramatsu, for example, points out that "the issues of will and voluntariness are of unique significance in that they open up the possibility of understanding them differently under chance and fundamental passivity, rather than recovering and discarding them to the modern concept of 'subject'." (Muramatsu 2017:10).
Higuchi also points out the "non-sovereign nature of 'action'" by stating that "action" is not performed by a "singular person" but assumes a "plurality of persons" and that the 'actor' is "not only a doer but also a sufferer at the same time." (Higuchi 2025:128)

public-as-political realm, her framework remains bounded by the public-private dualism.

Indeed, scholars have noted that the more Arendt sought to redefine and reconstruct the public realm , "the more she continued to set firm boundaries between the private and public realm s" (Okano 2007:39).

Butler's critique targets this limitation: that in theorizing the politics of manifestation, Arendt overlooks the possibility of manifestation by those who remain invisible in the private realm . But was Arendt solely concerned with the dualistically defined public realm? Might her delineation of boundaries instead be understood as an attempt to make possible their configuration?

2. The "Appearances" of Those Who Are not Seen and Heard.

Arendt does not neglect the question of how those who are not seen and heard might become visible in the public realm.

Her discussion of civil disobedience offers important insights into how individuals rendered invisible in politics can come to appear in the public-political realm.

In particular, her analysis of "association" in the social realm appears to describe the process by which those previously unseen and unheard make their presence visible. In what follows, we examine Arendt's theory of "association" to explore the possibilities of political subjectivation within the social realm.

(1) Civil Disobedience and Association

Arendt contrasts the French Revolution with the American Revolution, assessing the former as oriented toward liberation from poverty, while the latter pursued political freedom. She then highlights the political potential of civil disobedience, pointing to the fact that it was civilly disobedient individuals who propelled the civil rights movement in the United States.[2]

First, Arendt identifies the existence of "associations" as the "core" of such movements.

According to her, "association" refers to "a group established and acting in

[2] Analyzing Arendt's interpretation, Canovan also wrote, "The American Revolution succeeded and set up freedom because it was a political revolution and had been so all along, and because it gave priority to freedom and to the form of governance. In contrast, the French Revolution failed and became a tyranny because it was quickly overwhelmed by political considerations, namely, the desire to free the masses from poverty" (Canovan, 1995:159).

accordance with the principle of consent based on mutual promises," formed when people voice their demands or resistance. By asserting their objections and resistance collectively, "their words are listened to" [CR:95].

However, Arendt argues that this alone does not necessarily constitute political resistance. A union of individuals brought together by mutual consent may qualify as an "association," but it is the emergence of civil disobedience as a form of voluntary association in a state of emergency that signifies political resistance [CR:101-102].

(2) Civil Disobedience

What, then, does Arendt mean by "civil disobedience"? Following her classification, we examine it through three key characteristics.

1 The Distinction Between "Conscientious Objection" and "Association" Based on a Promise

According to Arendt, there are two forms of resistance to the prevailing political order: "conscientious objection to military service" and "civil disobedience."

While both forms resist existing political structures (i.e., law), the former is motivated by "common interest," whereas the latter arises from "common opinion" and is grounded in mutual agreement.

In other words, Arendt distinguishes civil disobedience as resistance based not on personal interest or moral conviction, but on dissent expressed collectively (CR:56-57).

2 Homogeneity

The second characteristic is homogeneity. Civil disobedience arises "when a significant number of citizens become convinced that their complaints will not be heard or addressed" (CR:74). When many citizens share an understanding of their grievances and objections (CR:76), they are bound together by "common opinion" or "agreement," forming a homogeneous group.

This may be described as solidarity in the realm of the "what" preceding the "who" in the public realm.

3 Open and Public

The third point is characterized by openness. Civil disobedience involves openly asserting one's rights within the existing polity, rather than breaking the law to avoid public attention (CR:75).

(3) The Perils and Political Potential of "Association"

However, Arendt does not value "association" in and of itself.

The danger of "associations" lies in their tendency toward homogeneity and uniformity, as they are inevitably bound together as groups operating under the principle of the "protection of life." There is always the risk that people may become "animalized" within them. This risk is reflected in Arendt's critique of the "social." For Arendt, "the social" refers to a realm in which the boundary between public and private becomes blurred, and matters related to human life and its needs are reduced to economic and material concerns (HC:41).

3. Education as the "Social"

Given Arendt's concepts of "appearance," "association," and "civil disobedience," what kind of educational "association" could serve as a potential foundation? Can schools function as centers of resistance (civil disobedience), and if so, in what sense?

In Arendt' thought, clear boundaries exist between the public, social, and private realms, and it is not easy to trace a direct path from "civil disobedience" to "appearance."[3] However, by redrawing these boundaries, that is, by reconsidering the relationships and their recombination within "social things," we may find possibilities that point toward

[3] For example, Maniwa analyzes the principle behind the legitimization of civil disobedience by referencing the concept of "tacit consent," but he remains cautious about its political potential. He argues that "to make civil disobedience possible and to guarantee the possibility of restructuring the public realm, any political entity must recognize the opportunity to deny its absolutes and guarantee the opportunity for resistance to appear in the world as a new 'beginning' in its own right" (Maniwa 200: 271-279). In other words, the opportunity must be guaranteed, which makes him cautious about the political feasibility of civil disobedience (Maniwa 2020: 271-279).
Kawai similarly points out that the argument for locating publicness in associations remains insufficient. He notes that in the "Little Rock" essay, associations are categorized under the "social," and that "voluntary associations" are likewise discussed as "social" in the "Civil Disobedience" essay. At the same time, however, he observes that Arendt looks beyond a mere understanding of "social things" toward the possibility of public "activities." He emphasizes that Arendt's thinking reflects a commitment to engaging with the contemporary world in pursuit of publicness, without being overly optimistic about either category (Kawai 2020: 261-270).

subjectification.

＊This paper is a substantially revised version of the following.

・Mayuko Ishigami, Azusa Egawa, Satoshi Eguchi, Tomoki Tanaka, Yasuhiro Suzuki, Sunji Lee (2016)
"Rethinking Education as "the Social" : How "the social" becomes political, and in what scene?"
Center for Excellence in School Education, Graduate School of Education, The University of Tokyo Working Paper Series in Young Scholar Training Program No.9. pp. 33-37.

・Mayuko Ishigami(2018) "The Political Potential of the "Social" in Hannah Arendt", The 61st Philosophy of Education Society of Japan
General Presentation (at Yamanashi Gakuin Junior College), distributed material

References

Works of Hannah Arendt
CR: *Crises of the Republic*, Harcourt Brace, 1972.
HC: *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Other Works
Okano, Y., 2007, "Feminism ni okeru koukyousei 'monndai'" (What's the matter with the public from the feminist perspective?), *Ritsumeikan hogaku vol. 316*, pp. 1630-1653, The Ritsumeikan University Law Association.
Canovan, M., translator: Terashima, T., 1995, *Hannah Arendt no seijishisou* (*The political thought of Hannah Arendt*), Miraisha.
Kawai, K., 2020, "Shakaiteki na mono/Shakai" ("the Social") *Arendt dokuhonn*,Hannah Arendt Research Society of Japan(ed.)., Hosei University Press.
Kodama, S., 2003, *Citizenship no kyouiku shisou* (*Educational Thought of Citizenship*), Hakutakusha.

In: Kodama, S. (eds.) 2023, "Houkokusho 18sai seijinn jidai no shukennshakyouiku wo kanngaeru -subject to agency no aida de-" (Research Paper), The University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Education, Kodama Shigeo Laboratory.
Butler, B., translator: Takemura, K., 2018, *Jender Toraburu (Jender Trouble)*, Seidosha.
Judith Butler, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, translator: Takemura, K., 2008, *Kokka wo utau noha dareka* (*Who Sings The Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging)*, Iwanamishoten.
Higuchi, H., 2025, *Hannah Arendt no kyouiku rironn– "hoshu" to "kakumei" wo megutte–*, Keisoshobou.
Honig, B., (eds.), translator: Okano, Y., Shimizu, K., 2001, *Hannah Arendt to Feminism (Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt)*, Miraisha.
Maniwa, D., 2015, "Teikou heno seiji, seiji heno teikou-H. Arendt no shiminntekifufukujuuronn ni okeru "annmoku no doui" gainenn wo megutte-", *Memoirs of Institute of Humanities, Human and Social Sciences, Ritsumeikan University*, Vol105, pp. 163-184.
Maniwa, D., 2020, "Shiminn teki fufukujuu" (Civil Disobedience), Hannah Arendt Research Society of Japan (ed.), *Arendt dokuhon,* Hosei University Press.
Muramatsu, T., 2017, "H. Arendt ni okeru "Seishinn no seikatsu" no seiji sei" (Political Implication of Hannah Arendt's "Life of the Mind"), *Kindaikyoikuforamu* (The forum on modern education), 26, pp. 1-12.
Momoki, B., 2018, *Arendt no Marx-roudou to zenntaishugi-*, Jinnbunnshoin.

I would like to thank Editage (www.editage.jp) for English language editing.

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

The Concept of the Child in the Law

Akihiro TSUCHIYA
Kanazawa University

Abstract

"Children" are typically subject to unilateral restrictions on their legal rights, such as to acquire property and vote, simply because of their status as children. They are deprived of their rights because of their age. However, the legal boundary between "adults" and "children" is unclear. In Japan, the right to vote, which allows one to express one's political will, can only be exercised by individuals aged 18 or over; however, like adults, individuals aged around 12 can be held liable for damages. Even the legal age that distinguishes between childhood and adulthood is variable. Whether or not children are recognized as subjects with legal rights and obligations, that is, as "legal subjects," is determined by the purpose of each law.

First, a "legal subject" is a legal concept constructed by modern law based on the model of the ideal "merchant," that is, an individual who supports a contractual society. The law, owing to its requirements for efficiency and stability, unilaterally and collectively categorizes entities that deviate from the "merchant" model, restricting their rights such that they cannot participate in a contractual society. In other words, children are considered entities that have been unilaterally recognized by law as deviating from the "merchant" model and, thus, are deprived of rights.

However, rapid technological innovation in recent years is enabling children to make the same decisions as adults. This blurring of the boundary between children and adults raises the possibility that restricting children's collective rights may be considered a violation of human rights, forcing a legal reflection on and reassessment of the traditional binary view of children and adults.

Key words: child, adult, regal subject, legal boundary, social change

Introduction

In the home, school, and many other places of society, "children" are typically made to follow the decisions made by "adults" because, as children, they cannot

Correspondence:
Akihiro TSUCHIYA, Kanazawa University. Email: aktsuchi@staff.kanazawa-u.ac.jp

object. This logic is generally left unquestioned. The law also restricts various rights granted to adults to minors under the age of 18, such as denying them the right to vote and requiring the consent of their parents or guardians for contracts and other legal acts. However, just as the age of majority was lowered from 20 to 18 years old in April 2022, the legal boundary between children and adults (legal age) is arbitrary and variable. This paper aims to clarify the origins of the legal restrictions on children based on the concept of "legal subject." It also considers the fluctuating boundaries between children and adults in modern society.

1. The legal boundary between children and adults

Although Japan's Constitution references "adults" (Article 15(3), the right to vote) and "boys and girls" (Article 26(2), compulsory education), it leaves the age that separates adults from children to be determined by subordinate legislation. At the same time, the Civil Code stipulates that "the enjoyment of private rights commences at birth," (Article 3(1)), in principle recognizing that all individuals have "legal capacity" ("legal personality")[1] from birth to death, regardless of age.

However, the Civil Code invalidates legal acts of persons who are not deemed to have "mental capacity"[2], which is considered equivalent to the mental capacity of an individual between seven and ten years of age. Furthermore, based on the distinction between minors and adults at the age of 18 (Article 4), legal acts by minors "in principle require the consent of a legal representative"(Yamanome 2022:66)[3]. "Minors do not necessarily have the ability to judge their own interests

---

[1] "Legal capacity" is defined as the "the capacity to seek, in one's own name, legal protection for personal interests such as freedom, life, and body, to establish an individual's responsible property, to acquire rights related to property, to seek the protection and guarantee of a status that enables one to earn from and dispose of that property, and to be a contributing member of a legally recognized family relationship" (Kawakami 2007:25).

[2] It is said to be the ability to "recognize and judge the legal consequences of one's own actions" (Kubono 2015:201).

[3] Minors are called "persons with limited legal capacity" because their "capacity to act," which is the ability to perform legal acts alone, is limited. However, this does not mean that all legal acts performed by minors are not recognized. For example, the level of "mental capacity" required for a "relatively simple legal act" such as purchasing an item will be different from that required for a "more complex legal act" such as renting an apartment

and gains compared to adults, and they may conclude disadvantageous contracts because they have little experience in transactions" (Kubono 2015:201). Furthermore, minors are subject to restrictions, such as not being recognized as qualified to become the guardian of an adult or the executor or witness to a will (Ishiwata 2025).

However, under the same Civil Code, people aged 15 or older are recognized as being qualified to consent to ordinary adoption, negotiate the dissolution of an adoptive relation, and write wills. Furthermore, if minors are deemed to have the "responsibility" to recognize that their own actions are illegal and that they will bear legal responsibility (approximately 12 years of age), they will be held liable for damages just as adults are[4].

Additionally, the right to vote and the right to vote in national referendums are granted to citizens from the age of 18 and the right to be elected from the ages of 25 (House of Representatives, prefectural assemblies, mayors, and municipal assemblies) and 30 (House of Councilors and prefectural governors)[5]. According to Juvenile Law, a "juvenile" is defined as anyone under the age of 20; it sets the age at which a person can be held criminally responsible (capable of responsibility) at 14 or above. Thus, there is no universal boundary; instead, the legal boundary between children and adults is established separately in accordance with the purpose of each law (provision)[6].

However, these laws appear to have two things in common. First, they treat

---

(Yamanome 2022:57).

[4] In the case of the bullying suicide in Otsu City, the claim for damages against the two assailants, who were second-year junior high school students at the time, was accepted (Osaka High Court ruling, February 27, 2020 (Reiwa 2) and finalized).

[5] Some local government referendum ordinances stipulate that the eligibility to vote is 15 or 16 years of age (Yonezawa 2016:79).

[6] The Civil Code also establishes the concept of "minor children" in relation to marriage expenses and support. This draws the line between children and adults for each individual, regardless of age, based on whether or not they are economically independent (Habu 2020). As a supplementary note, the Basic Act on Children's Policy (to be enacted on April 1, 2023) defines children as "those who are in the process of mental and physical development." In other words, it does not set an age category (Article 2).

children and adults as binary constructs and determine the extent of the rights, qualifications, and obligations of the former based on the latter. Second, the laws that specify the legal age, in particular, treat different individuals uniformly based on their age. In the next section, I consider the social and legal background of grouping children in opposition to adults, focusing on the concept of "legal subject."

2. Legal subjects and children

According to Kashimura (2005), "the law" is "an attempt to regulate or control social interaction through norms" (p. 31), while a social norm encourages general obedience and is justified by the state. However, to efficiently and stably regulate and control the enormous number of daily social interactions, stripping the interactions of their inherent context and formalizing them are necessary. For example, disputes over borrowing and lending money, which frequently involve complex circumstances and human emotions, are addressed using legal aspects such as whether or not there is a "loan agreement" under the Civil Code, the repayment deadline, interest, and prescriptions, etc. In this process, individuals are stripped of their individuality and are treated as abstract constructs of various legal concepts, such as legal and mental capacity, and are subject to legal regulation and control. These individuals are abstracted by the concept of "legal subject."

"Legal subject" generally refers to "a subject that has rights and obligations" (Kojima 2022:10). However, this fictional subject is constructed by law in accordance with the demands of modern society. Thus, such subjects cannot exist before the law exists, nor can they exist independently of the law. Obata (2007) states the following about the human image that is the model of this "legal subject:"

> The image of a person envisioned by modern civil law can be considered as follows. Economic development based on the capitalist mode of production dismantled the premodern, communal social relations that had existed until then and promoted the formation of a free labor market. In this process, people, as subjects of commodity exchange, recognized each other's independence and free will, and social relations were formed, in principle, as contractual relations based on free will. The legal person as the owner of the goods, placed at the center of the idea of a contract between free, independent and equal parties, is

> endowed with the attributes of freedom, independence, equality and intelligence with an excellent ability to calculate interests, following the model of the merchant. [Omitted] This modern civil legal image of humans had the character of an average type that was more than an ideal, fictitiously constructed entity, and so the legal order was constructed on the basis of the simple belief that this abstract image of humans was real. (226–227)

According to Obata, modern (civil) law is a legal model constructed from the "merchant model" as the "legal subject" to support a contractual society. Therefore, the "legal subject" assumed by law is an individual who is free, independent, equal, and intelligent with "an excellent ability to calculate interests." As Max Weber (1974) argued, the formation of formal and rational laws that define in advance the responsibilities and sanctions associated with legal decisions such as contracts contributed significantly to the development of capitalism, and modern law guaranteed that those with the ability to rationally pursue wealth by their own free will could become parties to a contract by fictitiously defining them as "legal subjects." Conversely, individuals who do not meet the "merchant image" or those for whom it cannot be assumed that they do fit it are considered as deviating from the definition of "legal subject," and, thus, are excluded in whole or in part from contractual society. This exclusion is based on the requirement of legal efficiency, which categorizes groups as sharing certain attributes; otherwise, it would be extremely costly to prove the actual capabilities of individuals who do not take the "merchant image" for granted.

Thus, legal children can be understood as a group whose distance from the "merchant image" is measured collectively, who are evaluated as "incomplete legal subjects" without being allowed to raise objections, and who are excluded from contractual society. As Fukuoka (2021) stated, "Although there are large individual differences in the level of development of minors, due to the need for legal stability, it should be judged uniformly based on age rather than individual differences"(1). In other words, the constraints placed on children are nothing more than a manipulation according to legal necessity.

3. The fluctuating boundary between children and adults

Currently, the traditional legal status of children is being challenged from two

angles: from the fluctuating boundary between children and adults that may be affected by the rapid advancement of technology and from the criticism of legal studies.

(1) Will children remain children?

Recent technological developments may force us to reconsider the boundary between children and adults. Legal sociologist Saito (2022) argued as follows:

> Just as with barrier-free access for the elderly and people with disabilities, barrier-free access for children's participation in society is expected to progress significantly over the next 30 years or so in terms of scientific and technological feasibility. In particular, the development of AI technology is progressing rapidly, and many issues that have not yet emerged in today's society are expected to emerge. [Omitted] As technology develops to assist in judgment and decision-making, it is expected that in the future, even the average five-year-old child will be able to make political and everyday decisions that are in line with their own interests. (12)

In the future, when children are able to accurately access information needed for voting and legal acts in a way they can understand regardless of their age, and can make appropriate decisions assisted by AI, will children become “full legal subjects” like adults? Or will children remain “incomplete legal subjects” and continue to have their rights curtailed? If children's rights continue to be restricted by the current law even after they have the same abilities as adults, it must be persuasively proven that such measures do not constitute unjust discrimination[7]. This also calls into question the need to distinguish between the two.

(2) Worry-free thinking of legal studies

Civil law scholar Yamamoto (2006) criticized the “worry-free thinking” of legal studies.

---

[7] Through an examination of American law and precedents, Saito (2022) argued that it is necessary to strictly question the discriminatory nature of restrictions on rights imposed on “children.”

> Traditional jurisprudence has often portrayed a very pleasing image of the subject, such as “free and equal parties,” “autonomous parties,” “self-determining subjects,” “rights subjects,” “party autonomy,” and so on. In this context, the subject that desires and creates legal effects of its own volition is considered to be the basic or fundamental form, and the subject with missing parts is given the status of “subject in need of protection.” The role of jurisprudence has been found in refining legal thoughts, techniques, and concepts for this purpose. [Omitted] On the one hand, while praising “autonomous agency that can take responsibility for one's own decisions,” it also seems to have a “worried-free thinking” characteristic of traditional legal studies, which labels those who “lack autonomous agency (as legal studies think)” as “victims” or “the weak,” thereby justifying the lawyers' brazen involvements as “carriers of relief for the vulnerable.” (4-5)

The law has constructed an image of the “legal subject” demanded by modern society, positioning children as “subjects lacking autonomous subjectivity,” and restricting their rights uniformly. Legal studies have rested comfortably on the concept of children as constructed by the law, and, in protecting and rescuing the “vulnerable,” they have ignored questioning the appropriateness of restricting children's rights in their self-initiated activities. However, if we understand “legal subject” as a “subject” created for the convenience of the law and society, then it is the responsibility of legal studies to reimagine the legal status of children in line with changes in society.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we confirmed that the legal boundary between children and adults is determined in accordance with society's demands. This also suggests that the existing boundary may be reset or even abolished due to social change. Now that the boundary separating the two is fluctuating, critically examining what children are, what adults are, and the very framework of thought that regards the two as opposing concepts, is critical.

References

Fukuoka, K. (2021) *Miseinensya no Kihontekijinken—Kenpogakuteki Kosatsu (The Fundamental Human Rights of Minors)*, Horitsu Bunka Sha.［in Japanese］

Habu, K. (2020) "'Kodomo' wo Dassuru Jiki--Shinzokuho no Sekai (Time to Leave Childhood)," 784 *Hogaku Seminar* 45-51.［in Japanese］

Ishiwata, H. (2025) "Kodomo wo Megutte--'Kodomo'to'Otona'no Kyokai to Kongo no Kadai (About Children)," 842 *Hogaku Seminar* 82-87. [in Japanese］

Kashimura, S. (2005) "Hosyakaigaku no Syudai Toshiteno 'Shi to Sei'--'Shi no Hosyakaigaku ni Mukete'('Death and Live' as the Subject of Sociology of Law)," 62 *Hosyakaigaku* 31-40.［in Japanese］

Kawakami, S. (2007) *Minpou Sosoku Kogi (Civil Code General Provisions Lecture)*, Nihonhyoron Sha.［in Japanese］

Obata, S. (2007) *Hou niokeru Ningen, Ningen niokeru Rinri (Human in Law, Ethics in Human)*, Showa Do.［in Japanese］

Kojima, S. (2022) "Hito nitsuiteno Niso no Giron--Hontokusyu heno Goannai (Two-Layered Arguments About Human)," 498 *Hogakukyoshitsu* 10-13.［in Japanese］

Kubono, E. (2015) "Kodomo no Syakai tono Majiwari (Children's Interaction with Society)," in Omura, A. et al. *Kodomo hou (Child Act)*, Yuhikaku.［in Japanese］

Saito, H. (2022) *Kodomo to Hou--Kodomo to Otona no Kyoukai wo meguru Hosyakaigaku (Child and Law)*, Tokyodaigaku Syuppankai.［in Japanese］

Yamamoto, K. (2006) "Housyutai no Yukue' (The Destination of Legal Subject)," 64 *Hosyakaigaku* 1-11.［in Japanese］

Yamanome, A. (2022) *Minpou Gairon1 Minpou Sosoku Dai2han (Introduction to Civil Law 1: General Provisions [2nd Edition])*, Yuhikaku.［in Japanese］

Yonezawa, K. (2016) *Kenpou to Kyoiku 15kou Dai4han (Constitution and Education 15lectures [4th Edition])*, Hokki Syuppan.［in Japanese］

Weber, M. (1974) *Housyakaigaku (Sociology of Law)*, (Sera,K.trans.), Soubun Sya.［in Japanese］

E-Journal of Philosophy of Education:
International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, Vol. 10, 2025

Reconsidering the Design-Based Education

Jiro MORIOKA
Osaka Metropolitan University

Abstract

Education is often conceptualized as a "design" process—that is, a system in which inputs and outcomes are logically linked. We are preoccupied with the belief that by preparing curricula, developing teaching materials, and employing appropriate pedagogical approaches, we can reliably achieve educational "achievement goals." This paper refers to such a perspective as "Design-Based Education."

Recently, the idea of fostering "subjectivity" through education has gained attention. This refers to nurturing the "subjectivity" required for students to develop the "ability and will" to act responsibly in uncertain times. However, much of this discourse overlooks the generative and transformative aspects of subjectivity. Subjectivity is not merely something that is deliberately expanded, shaped, or developed in stages; it can undergo sudden, dynamic transformations beyond the control of either educators or learners. Such transformations are not rare. It is in this inherent "uncertainty" of education that its unique significance and value lie.

There are limits to designing and structuring education based solely on utility and rationality. Education entails a dimension of "impossibility." It is an indefinite and unpredictable interaction among living human beings, and as such it often "does not succeed." This paper offers a brief discussion aimed at critically rethinking "Design-Based Education" while remaining grounded in this fundamental reality.

Key words: Design-Based Education, subjectivity, Ability and the Will, metric fixation, "Impossibility" of Education

1 "Design" to "be able to do".

Some time ago—probably over the past few years—university teachers have been

Correspondence:
Jiro MORIOKA, Osaka Metropolitan University. Email: j-moriok@omu.ac.jp

required to include "achievement goals" in their course syllabi, phrased with the student as the grammatical subject. For example, one of the courses I teach states: "Students will be able to examine a wide range of educational and human-related issues from philosophical and historical perspectives."

I believe I have set a rather far-reaching, abstract, and ambiguous "achievement goal." Although this goal makes a nearly meaningless statement about the specific "abilities" (what one should be able to do) to be acquired, I still hope that such a goal can be achieved. Nevertheless, I continue to feel uneasy about the requirement to write these "achievement goals" in the format "to be able to ~," using the learner as the subject.

To achieve these "achievement goals," the course content is broken down into detailed components, each allocated to one of the 15 class sessions, along with designated outside-of-class preparation and review. This structure implies that if students attend all 15 sessions and engage in the corresponding study tasks, they will accomplish the "achievement goals" and thereby "become able to do" something.

A syllabus is a document that describes the educational content (learning/study) of a class in a "designed" way. Unfortunately, even if students take my class 15 times, they will not be able to achieve the "achievement goals" as described above. Rather, it is impossible to measure whether or not the abstract "achievement goals" have been achieved by objective measures.

It could, of course, be argued that the way the goals are set is flawed. If more concrete goals were used—ones measurable by test scores—it might be possible to align class content accordingly and ensure their achievement. Alternatively, a rubric may make it possible to evaluate abstract "achievement goals" in a concrete and objective assessment method. Such research on curriculum design and refinement of evaluation methods is meaningful, but it is not the subject of this report.

This report instead aims to discuss the "Design-Based Education" as represented in syllabi, an approach that presumes a correlation between educational efforts and learning outcomes, and to propose a fundamental problem (a "messy topic") for rethinking this assumption.

2 Transformation of "Subject" with "the Ability and the Will"

Children's "Subjectivity" is being touted. For example, "Proactive, Interactive, and Authentic Learning", "an attitude of proactive learning", "A proactive attitude towards learning with a diverse range of people". The concepts of "subjectivity" and "proactive"

that appear in these texts are not always clear in their meanings, and are used with changing meanings depending on the context. And their use in policy statements, recommendations, and reports from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has had a significant impact on educational discourse in Japanese schools.

In contemporary educational discourse, "subjectivity" is treated as a type of ability that can be developed through education. The reason why predicates such as "develop," "grow," and "draw out" are used is that it is considered to be something that can be cultivated and developed through education.

The concept of forming a "subject" through education from an existence that has not yet become a "subject" is a basic motif of modern education, but in recent years, emphasis has been placed especially on "subjectivity" as an "ability" that can be achieved.

The concept of "agency" appears in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) "Education 2030" project. Sometimes translated as "agency in action," this concept is based on the principle that students possess both the ability and the will to positively influence their own lives and the world around them. It is defined as "the capacity to set a goal, reflect, and act responsibly to effect change" (OECD 2019: p. 2).

Here, it is assumed that the student has the "ability and will" beforehand. Thus, it is different from the image of "subjecting" an entity that does not yet have the "ability and will". In a future in which the existence of beings who already have clear "ability and will" will become 'VUCA' (a business term that stands for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), the ability required to realize "The Future We Want" is called "Agency".

Shun Shirai explains that the "agency" described in "Education 2030" has both goal-oriented and process-oriented dimensions: "the aspect of developing the competency of agency, and the aspect of developing agency as a process to develop the competency" (Shirai 2020: p. 88). If we substitute "subjectivity" for "agency" and "ability" for "competency," we can say there are two dimensions: the development of subjectivity as an ability, and subjectivity as a process for developing ability.

Subjectivity itself is to be nurtured as an ability, enabling students to learn responsibly toward a desired future by setting their own learning goals. The development of "agency" = "subjectivity" = "ability" as described is seen as necessary for navigating a VUCA world.

Let us now return to the syllabus example mentioned at the beginning of this paper.

The readers of the syllabus are, first of all, the students of the class. The syllabus assumes that the students have the "ability and will" to learn. The syllabus clearly states

to the students the goals they are expected to achieve and the "abilities" they are expected to develop after 15 lessons of the class.

The already "subjective" being quantitatively expands his/her own "ability" through learning. They are able to increase the number of items that can be listed on their resume by acquiring credits and qualifications in line with the learning objectives that they have "subjectively" set for themselves. If we assume such a learning model, the items listed in the syllabus are reasonable.

In such an educational model, the state of the student ("subject") after taking a class is imagined as becoming "able to do" certain things. Naturally, however, the transformation of the "subject" beyond the boundaries of one's imagination cannot be imagined. The qualitative transformation of the "subject" beyond imagination cannot be explicitly shown to the educated person prior to receiving education, and even if it could be shown, it would be impossible for the educated person to understand.

To encounter knowledge beyond one's lived experience, to engage in previously unconsidered dialogue, and to perceive the world through a radically new lens—these are transformative experiences. In such moments, the learner's prior perspective is dismantled, and a new self emerges. This dynamic transformation of the subject through education (learning) cannot be described in a "designed" way.

The educator approaches the educated person with intention ("by design"), transmitting knowledge and skills, and attempting to transform the educated person in a "preferable" direction. First, the goal is to become "able to do" something.

However, such efforts often "fail." It is difficult to transform the educated person (to form "ability") as the educator wishes. If the transforming phase of the process is the formation or transformation of the "subject," it is even more difficult to be able to operate in a way that is manipulative.

It is common for learners not to change in the ways educators envision. Likewise, it is also common for learners, who are assumed to engage with "ability and will," to learn something unintended, or to learn nothing at all.

When I asked students who took my classes to write their "reflections" on the class, I found many comments that they were strongly impressed by "asides" that were not included in the syllabus or textbooks. Many do not even recall what the teacher formally explained. These incidents may appear to be "failures" of "designed education," but they suggest that students sometimes learn more (or less) than what was intended, outcomes that may extend beyond the "achievement goals" of the course.

And that, simply, is the point. The true value of education lies in this uncertainty, in the sudden, unpredictable transformation of the learner that exceeds the designs,

intentions, or imagination of both educator and student.

3 Attitude of Undertaking the "Impossibility" of Education

If the purpose of education is set exclusively on "being able to do", then those beings who "are not able to do", no matter how many efforts are made, will be excluded from the subject of education. Whether it is a concrete "ability" such as reading, writing or calculating, or an abstract "ability" such as "subjectivity" or "agency", there will continue to be those who cannot achieve 'ability' through "designed education" (e.g. those with serious "disabilities"). Rather, we can say that by setting educational 'achievement goals', we continue to produce beings who cannot reach the 'goals.' We have a history of creating beings who do not have the "ability and will" ourselves, separating them under the name of protection, discriminating against them, excluding them, and erasing them from existence.

Moreover, if the focus is on efficient "becoming to be able," the acquisition and augmentation of "ability" may not take place through texts and oral traditions, but in a more certain and direct way, for example, through the development of genetic engineering and human engineering, or through medical interventions. In these cases, changes are made directly to the human being to ensure capability. This represents the reduction of "impossibility" in education.

The idea of human modification through genetic modification and medical procedures, however science fiction-like, is similarly fictional, as is the "design-based education" portrayed in the syllabus.

In recent years, education and schooling have increasingly been discussed in business terms: the PDCA cycle, accountability, quality assurance, selection, and focus. If education is practiced as a business transaction aimed at developing "ability," then "rationality" and "usefulness" become essential criteria. However, as mentioned above, education does not "succeed" in the same way as a business transaction. In a business situation, it is impossible to assume that you will not get the goods you paid for, but in education, such "uncertainty" often becomes apparent. Education and business cannot be discussed analogously.

In his book, Jerry Z. Muller critically discusses the pathology of "metric fixation" in modern organizations. According to Muller, "metric fixation" is the belief that it is possible and desirable to replace judgment, acquired through personal experience and talent, with numerical indicators of comparative performance based upon standardized

data (metrics); that making such metrics public (transparent) ensures that institutions are actually carrying out their purpose (accountability); and that the best way to motivate people within these organizations is by attaching rewards and penalties to their measured performance, rewards that are either monetary (pay-for-performance) or reputational (rankings) (Muller 2019: p. 18).

Educational activities cannot all be quantitatively measured and evaluated. However, those who fall into the "metric fixation" cannot admit this fact and continue to develop new measurement standards one after another. They seem simply convinced that they can achieve higher "goals" by providing incentives for measurable performance based on clearly defined evaluation criteria. "Design-Based Education" is a manifestation of the pathology of "metric fixation."

There is nothing negative about conceiving education in a "designed" way. The educator is performing educational work with the goal of "becoming able to do" and the learner is also trying to "become able to do." Measuring "ability" can also be meaningful.

However, after fully recognizing the significance of "being able to do" and "being measurable," it also seems important to recognize their limitations and have an attitude of acceptance of "not being able to do."

This means not fixating on achievement goals centered solely on ability development; not becoming trapped in the binary of "Success/Failure" defined by the "Design-Based Education"; and instead focusing on what is rendered invisible by "metric fixation." It requires standing before the foundational principles and ethics of education, which encompass uncertainty and impossibility, and reexamining the prevailing logic of "Design-Based Education," one governed by notions of utility and rationality, without submitting to political and economic imperatives.

Education is an indefinite and uncertain process between living human beings. For this reason, it often "does not succeed." This paper is grounded in that obvious yet essential truth.

References

Morioka, Jiro. (2022) *Kyoiku no "Fukanosei" to mukiau* (*Confronting the "Impossibility" of Education: Eugenics, the Disability Liberation Movement, and the Desire for Others*), Osaka Metropolitan University Press [in Japanese].

————————(2024) Diversity and Opacity of the "Other" in Educational Relationships: A Critique of the "Metric Fixation" and the "Tyranny of Meritocracy", *Educational Studies in Japan*, 18, pp. 41- 54.

Morioka, Jiro & Fukuwaka, Masato. (2022) "Dekiru" you ni narukoto wo shiko suru kyoiku-kan, Ningen-kan ni taisuru alternative no tankyu (A Critical Condideration about Alternatives to Educational and Human Views Being Oriented toward "Being Able to Do"), *Annual Report of Kansai Kyoiku Gakkai*, No. 46, pp. 6-10. [in Japanese].

Muller, Jerry Z. (2019) *The Tyranny of Metrics* (the paperback edition), Princeton University Press.

OECD（2019）*OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 Conceptual learning framework STUDENT AGENCY FOR 2030*（https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/about/projects/edu/education-2040/concept-notes/Student_Agency_for_2030_concept_note.pdf）.

Shirai, Shun. (2020) *OECD Education2030 Project ga egaku kyoiku no mirai: Agency, shishitsu, nouryoku to Curriculum* (*The Future of Education as Described by the OECD Education2030 Project Agency, Quality, Competency and Curriculum*), Minerva-shobo. [in Japanese].

Summary Report on Thematic Research

Shinji NOBIRA
Aichi University of Education

Reiko MUROI
Iwate University

1. Purpose of the thematic research

Subject(-ivity) has long been criticized. Nonetheless, pedagogical discussions of subject(-ivity) are now being reactivated today under the acceleration of the internationalization of education, corresponding to the globalization of economics and politics. A trend can be identified of promoting the bringing up of the subject anew and for the future, as can be symbolized by the concept of agency. This concept combines two major approaches to subject(-ivity) in modern education: (1) citizenship education to form subjects of private law and (2) political education to develop subjects of public law. This trend or movement is said to cope with the current situation where overflowing political problems could determine the fate of humankind and the earth itself. However, one may raise the question that the convergence of educational practice on the development of modern subjects as explained above would narrow education to assistance with politics and economics. If so, how can we conceptualize another subject that is different from useful human resources for politics and/or economics?

In this symposium, we attempted to reexamine this issue with Mayuko Ishigami, who studies Hannah Arendt's philosophy of education; Akihiro Tsuchiya, who studies educational issues from the perspective of the sociology of law; and Jiro Morioka, who studies problems of eugenics and education. Each of these presenters made a presentation, the details of which can be read in this volume of this journal.

2. Discussion

Correspondence:
Shinji NOBIRA, Aichi University of Education. Email: nobira@auecc.aichi-edu.ac.jp
Reiko MUROI, Iwate University. Email: muroi@iwate-u.ac.jp

In this symposium, the discussion was first begun from questions posed by the participants and replies or comments by the presenters. We summarize it as follows:

2.1 On design-based education

Contemporary educational politics and practices tend to set up learning knowledge and acquiring competencies themselves as goals of education, analyzing and determining their contents, and seeking to achieve this through PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Action) and/or AAR (Anticipation-Action-Reflection) cycles. Several participants raised questions concerning design-based education that underlie this tendency. Morioka replied as follows: "One may or may not be able to do something, regardless of whether s/he has an impairment or sufficient time. It is important to not simply connect the time spent and the results but rather to rethink the premise that a goal can and must be achieved. We should not exclude from educational processes the uncertainty that unintended results may occur, for better or worse. Although a way of seeing that does not put a value on mere achievement of goal(s) could take on various forms, we should be aware that this way of seeing itself could be farther analyzed, measured, and taken up into the concept of utility."

2.2 The dichotomies adult/child or subject/non-subject, and a child's subjectivity

How should we regard the political and/or ethical implications of putting value on being a subject and making a child into a subject, as well as not putting value on being other than a subject? How should we find the limit of this dichotomic recognition?

Ishigami commented on these issues as follows: "In contemporary society, where the social is increasing and strengthening, it seems difficult to realize the public realm as conceived by Arendt, but it is not impossible to grasp the "appearance (of something)" in the public realm, the phenomenon of making audible voiceless voices of those who are not easily recognized. For example, social withdrawal cannot but provoke the problematic of inclusion/exclusion if we capture it within the frame of employment, public health, or social welfare. However, to actualize the voiceless voices of people as a political issue, it might be useful to utilize Arendt's concept of association. Regarding categorization among A, Not-A and Neither of These, it seems important that we do not think of making Not-A into A, but conceive subjectivity as a process of visualization of what has been invisible."

Tsuchiya commented on this as follows: "It is an important issue in jurisprudence, too, how we approve as legal person someone who is outside of the dichotomy we are discussing. For example, in the U.S., the sale of books that are harmful for youth is not always restricted by age but, in some states, is judged by capability of the individual child. The problem of legal certainty remains in those states, however. In Japan, there have been bullying cases, in which victim students sue offender students for tort liability. There is no legislation to distinguish between adult and child in such cases, so it must be judged on case-by-case basis. According to law reports, the boundary of liability would be around 12 years old or older. It should be noted that the actual situation is uncertain, as it depends on the development of the individual child's capability."

Morioka made the following comment: "As soon as we name something out of a dichotomy, there arises a risk of fixing it as a third (ternary) item. Nonetheless we can continue, while suspending the third item, our research in philosophy of education. And I think it is important that we keep on asking our position and/or perspective again and again, even if we can grasp our reality only within dichotomic cognition."

At the end of symposium, an audience member raised the following question: in the current situation, where "agency" and "proactive learning" are emphasized, should we regard this trend as taking the form of a movement toward completion of the modernity based on the principles of autonomy and democracy or as a movement of an anti-modernity that is characterized by "escape"? The panelists made concluding comments, including responses to the question above, as follows.

Ishigami: "I guess subjectivity is emphasized in part in the stuck situation of democracy, but I have a doubt whether a "tamed subject" who conforms to the expectations of politics and/or society is worth calling a subject. I have learned that there are attempts to seek suffrage for young children as the innovation of AI technology and so on progresses; I think it will be important to consider who expect what under the name of child subjectivity."

Tsuchiya: "In divorce negotiation (or conciliation), for example, children often, worrying about making their parent sad, cannot manifest opinions of their own, or cannot make a judgment on one's (their) choice(s). It is difficult to conclude one's (their) manifestation of opinion(s) to be children's subjectivity. At a children's cafeteria (community kitchen for children), there are some staff members who would not ask children's opinions but can understand their minds well. Therefore, we might say that respecting subjectivity of children depends on the way of grasping. We are required to make a sound judgment between contradictions of restriction and protection of children's rights as well as conflicts between general criteria and individual cases."

Morioka: "I do not raise an objection to direction toward forming subjectivity. But I think it is nonsense to consider education to merely involve analyzing and measuring directions or achieving certain goals. I think we should challenge how we can escape a logic which add conditions to competence and existence, or evaluating them from usefulness only. I would like to find an idea in educational relationship in which orientation toward the formation of subjectivity will not lead to a ranking of human beings."

3. Conclusion

It has been long since the subject(-ivity) generated by the modern era was put in doubt, nonetheless discussion of it has not been exhausted, and we confront it even today. Against the self-evident premise of "modern subject" in politics, law, and economics, pedagogy has made "being not a subject yet" visible. We have struggled to form such a being as a modern subject and realized the fictionality of modern subject, as well as the difficulty of subjectivation. In this situation, education and pedagogy have approached subjectivity in various ways that cannot be converged on citizenship education and the political education that we discussed above. Ishigami, Tsuchiya, and Morioka undertook the task of considering and responding from their own perspectives to our questions that have not been verbalized clearly.

Ishigami's presentation is interesting in that voluntary associations have been, at least in the U.S., a remedy against uncertain situations related to failures of institutions or the unreliability of human behavior. The way that such association's function overlaps with daily practice of education, which must accept that something cannot work in a given way, as it involves uncertainties and impossibilities, as Morioka suggests. The ethics of education in such difficulties makes Tsuchiya's suggestion that we must critically examine a conceptual framework in jurisprudence persuasive. That is, although legal theories tend to regard the legal status of child and the boundary of between child and adult as self-evident with intention to keep legal certainty as a top priority, we must reconsider it (and, in fact, this attitude is being criticized recently as "worry-free thinking" even in discussion on jurisprudence, as Tsuchiya says).

Another interesting point here is that presenters' comments suggested in common the subject of a non-identical and co-existential being, which may contain a contradiction in a sense, in considering how we can envision a subject that will not be reduced to design-based education. For example, Tsuchiya described the staff of a children's cafeteria who would not ask children's opinion(s), but grasp their mind well. Ishigami

suggested a possibility of political subjectivation bringing to light voiceless voices within a public realm through the collaborative (communal) action of association. These examples suggest a subject that exists in a collaborative (communal) way, so to speak, unlike a platonic, identical subject that represents an inner intention (purpose) as one's own opinion (voice). Morioka emphasized the importance of questioning and suspending a third (ternary) item that cannot be grasped by dichotomy, with a danger incidental to naming and identifying in mind. Although the thought of identity/identification, as well as the design-based education, has a strong influence even today, it is also an important task for the philosophy of education to examine human being and its transformation from various perspectives, spreading beyond the thought of identity/identification. We hope the discussion of this topic will continue for a long time.