

TOO YOUNG FOR DEMOCRACY?

AN ANALYSIS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN REPRESENTATIVE, DELIBERATIVE AND AGONISTIC DEMOCRACIES.



(Riot, n.d.)

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As the focus of democratic theorists has shifted from a vote-centric towards a talk-centric democracy, the participation of adolescents in talk-centric democracies is often neglected. This research examines the accessibility to participate for adolescents in a vote-centric democracy. This research shows that adolescents' current inability to participate in a representative democracy through voting is unjust. Furthermore, the difficulties and opportunities for young people to participate in talk-centric democracies, a deliberative and an agonistic democracy, are displayed. This is done by analyzing the characteristics of adolescents and evaluating the compatibility of these characteristics with the required virtues of each democracy. Both alternatives offer different opportunities for young people to participate, especially because schools are an excellent environment to prepare adolescents for both a life in a deliberative and an agonistic democracy. Still, it is argued that an agonistic democracy is more inclusive to young people. An agonistic democracy allows adolescents to channel their emotional responses, which is necessary for their well-being. However, young people may still encounter group-specific difficulties in an agonistic democracy, which should be acknowledged in order to truly include them.

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This thesis contains the concepts ‘young people’, ‘competence’ and ‘participation’ that should be made concrete. Therefore, a short conceptualization of these recurring terms will first be presented.

Young people

For two reasons, I use various terms to address the same group: Young people. First, because it is more pleasant to read a varying, dynamic text. Second, because different articles addressing young people may do so by using different terms as well. Most societies have an age threshold of eighteen, which centers the discussion on voting rights around the age group just below this threshold. The literature therefore often refers to the characteristics of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds and how these link to conditions for suffrage. For this reason, ‘young people’, ‘older teenagers’, ‘youth’, ‘adolescents’ etcetera, regard sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, unless otherwise specified. Nonetheless, this does not rule out that some of the arguments presented in this thesis will be applicable to under sixteen-year-olds as well.

Competence

Competence regards the ability to meet the requirements for a certain task. It is a fluid concept, since these requirements are different per task: An incompetent football player lacks physical requirements, while an incompetent mathematician lacks intelligence requirements. Different types of democracy have different requirements, meaning that the ‘competence threshold’ will concern political knowledge and interest in one democracy, but concerns emotional self-control and empathic abilities in the other. It should therefore be conceptualized as ‘the ability to meet the requirements that have to be met for specific democratic tasks’.

Accessibility to participation

Similar to ‘competence’, participation has a different implication in various democratic systems. For example, participation in a representative democracy regards voting, while participation in a deliberative democracy regards discussing. ‘Accessibility to

participation' should therefore be conceptualized as 'the opportunity to become actively involved in the most important political processes of a democracy'.

Pericles can be seen as one of the founders of Athenian democracy. Such a statement seems counterfactual since, before Pericles, all adult male citizens were already allowed to participate in the Athenian democracy (Podes, 1993). All main political decisions were taken by a vote. However, the democratic process in which the public had to participate took a lot of time and effort. The average male citizen had to work and was not able to get involved with politics due to economic barriers. In the fifth century BC 40.000 Athenian citizens were allowed to vote, yet only 6000 actually did.

Pericles introduced *μισθός* (pay) for political participation. This allowed ordinary citizens to participate and therefore increased the democratic inclusivity. *μισθός* became so integrated in the Athenian society, that Aristotle later wrote: “The principles of democracy are these: . . . that there be a *misthos* [pay] for everyone - for attending the *ekklēsia* [people’s assembly], sitting on the *dikastēria* [court panels] and holding office...” (Crawford & Whitehead, 1983). Pericles shows that a democratic system is not just depending on the right to participate, but on the accessibility to participation as well. The introduction of *μισθός* brought down economic barriers for democratic participation, thus founding democracy.

Still, only all adult male citizens were allowed to participate. Women were excluded from politics: They were not allowed to vote, speak at or participate in democratic gatherings (O’Pry, 2012). O’Pry (ibid.) notes that Athenian women had opinions, values and intellect of their own, but they were never allowed to voice themselves. The common conception was that they were unfit to discuss politics. The assumption that women were politically less capable than men, formed a competence barrier that would exclude women from democratic participation for ages to come.

This exclusion remained present until 1919 (in the Netherlands), even though the aggregated democracy had replaced the direct democracy of Ancient Athens. In an aggregated democratic system, a system that accumulates individual interests, there is no clear competence threshold that needs to be met (López-Guerra, 2012). Women that were excluded from voting based on their capabilities were therefore unable to meet a criterion that did not even exist. Even when women were enfranchised, these criteria

remained unaddressed. Women's suffrage came from pleas and protests against discrimination; the dichotomy between men and women was addressed, but not the paradox of the non-existent criterion. Today, this paradox still exists for the disenfranchisement of older teenagers. For example, Dahl defended the exclusion of older teenagers from the electoral process by stating that "they are not yet fully qualified" (Dahl, 1991, p.127). The question is: What are these qualifications?

A minimalist interpretation for political competence in an aggregate democracy could be "the ability to differentiate political parties, candidates and policies in terms of interests, aims and goals" (Archard, 1993, p.101). A more demanding qualification (e.g. education, intelligence) risks the exclusion of adult voters from voting. On what grounds does society assume that older teenagers do not meet this qualification? There is evidence that a decrease in political involvement, a lower turnout, will not occur if older teenagers would vote (Zeglovits & Aichholzer, 2014). In order to justify the disenfranchisement of older teenagers, a competence threshold needs to be formulated and it needs to be proven that older teenagers are unable to pass it.

Contemporary aggregated democratic systems rely on electoral mechanisms, which makes democratic participation undemanding. There is a public debate in order to convince voters, but there is no obligation to follow or to contribute to the debate. The absence of obligations allows individuals to participate in democracy, without having to make economic sacrifices. Therefore, no *μισθός* (pay) is needed to get people to participate. In addition, the qualifications for voting (the competence threshold) are easily met. Only passive suffrage requires more excessive time and competence.

Vote-centric to talk-centric

'Democracy' is derived from the combination of the Greek words 'δῆμος' (the people) and 'κρατία' (rule). From its etymological definition, democracy means 'rule by the people'. Rule has been treated as the most influential aspect of democracy, because of the power that is attached to it. For years, democratic theorists have therefore looked at the formal institutions that can regulate this power, by focusing on constitutional rights and procedures for decision making (Kymlicka, 2002). The electoral system is the designed mechanism that justifies who gets to rule (within the limits of other designed

mechanisms). The role of the people is to exhibit their individual interests through voting: A vote-centric democracy.

In the past, the δῆμος (people) remained overlooked by democratic theorists. Contemporary democratic theorists have shifted their focus from formal democratic institutions to the behavior of the people that operate within these institutions (Kymlicka, 2002). A shift towards a talk-centric democracy was made, with the goal of reinstating the public dimension of the democratic process. Since the shift has been made, theorists have discussed how public conversations about politics would ideally take place. Deliberative democracy and agonism are two of the most prominent theories in this field.

The democratic participation of young people in a vote-centric democracy has not been overlooked. There exists a large academic debate on the appropriate voting age in an aggregated democracy (Merry & Schinkel, 2016) (Lecce, 2009) (Weinstock, 2020) (Olsson, 2008). However, the participation of young people in the more demanding talk-centric democracy has been neglected. It would be interesting to investigate whether young people would flourish in and contribute to a talk-centric democracy. Talk-centric forms of democratic participation are widely discussed (Mouffe, 2000b) (Ercan, 2014) (Rummens, 2012), but not in combination with the inclusivity of teenagers.

The aim for more demanding forms of democracy incites the risk of forming a more demanding competence threshold. For example, what if citizens would be obligated to join the public debate and offer their own insights on the topics discussed? They would have to extend the understanding of their own interest towards a response to the interests of others. In addition, they would have to understand the rules of the discussion and learn to make their argument understandable to others. The competence threshold that will derive from more demanding forms of democracy cannot be lowered by simply offering μισθός (pay). Someone can be economically inclined to participate, but still not have the skills necessary to participate.

For the two prominent alternatives to a representative democracy, deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy, a more complicated interpretation of political competency is needed. Both theories can be linked to a specific, different skill set that citizens need to acquire before being able to participate in democracy (Enslin, Pendlebury & Tjiattas, 2001) (Jones, 2014). Regarding democratic participation of adolescents, this

sheds a new light on the qualifications argument between political scientists. Do alternative democratic systems heighten the competence threshold and if so, would older teenagers still be able to participate in these democratic systems? The following research question is central in exploring these alternatives:

How should the shift from a vote-centric to a talk-centric democracy transpire, in order to make democratic participation accessible to teenagers?

RELEVANCE FOR SOCIETY

Looking into the possibility of democratic participation for children is relevant for several reasons. First of all, there are age thresholds with regard to voting in every country. These thresholds vary from 16 years to 21 years (Ace Project, 2022). In Europe, Austria (in 2007) and Malta (in 2018) lowered the legal voting age to 16. Zeglovits and Aichholzer (2014) show that this change in the Austrian democratic system did not reduce democratic participation, disproving the claim that younger people show a lack of political interest and would therefore not vote. This paper contributes to informed decision making concerning political participation of young people by providing an assessment of the desirability to get young people involved in politics, dependent on different views on democracy.

Secondly, the political involvement of young people is partially dependent on how 'politics' is constructed in society. Zeglovits and Aichholzer (2014) emphasize that the non-decreased voter turnout in Austria could be explained by awareness-raising campaigns aimed at young voters. The degree to which a society takes the political participation of older teenagers seriously may impact the overall degree of participation positively. A society should thus not only be concerned with lowering the age threshold for voting, but with political campaigning, education and empowerment as well. Simply lowering the age threshold might not be enough to ensure democratic participation. The public debate has to be accessible for older teenagers as well.

It is unrealistic to expect equalization of accumulated political participation between groups once the law has changed. It took, for example, 64 years in the USA to have an equal turn-out between men and women after women's suffrage was introduced (Corder & Wolbrecht, 2019). Even though deliberative and agonistic democracies are theoretical

concepts, they can be used to show the mechanisms behind a representative democracy. The accessibility to the public debate can explain voter behavior. This thesis therefore offers a different and more elaborated view on democratic participation of older teenagers.

Lastly, there are generation-specific political problems that make political exclusion of new generations unjust. This is especially the case with climate change policies. In order to avoid disaster, “global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching ‘net zero’ around 2050” (IPCC, 2018). The consequences of climate change will affect new generations the most and these generations are, until now, without any political power to actively prevent it.

RELEVANCE FOR SCIENCE

Participation has always been a challenge for both deliberative theory and agonistic democracy. For deliberative democrats, there is already a concern that in their reasoning citizens tend to take information short-cuts, they do not want to take responsibility and they are not reflective (Ryfe, 2005). Deliberative democrats have imbedded in their theory possible solutions to overcome these problems. They often give a positive spin to the capability critique, claiming that deliberation puts forward more sophisticated, tolerant, and participative citizens (ibid.). However, the degree to which citizens are able to acquire the necessary skills associated with deliberative democracy is up for discussion.

An example of such a skill is reasonable speech. As Sanders (1997) notes, some citizens will be better at articulating their arguments in a reasonable or rational manner than others. Logically, in a deliberative society, this will lead to political inequality between those who are able to learn this reasonable speech and those who are unable to learn. This general concern for inequality will be analyzed in this paper. Furthermore, the question will be raised whether young people are by definition in a position that makes them less able to learn. Their position is different from adults, because they 1. have underdeveloped cognitive abilities and 2. have a different social position (e.g. constricted freedoms, stereotyping, obligatory education).

Agonistic democracy also faces challenges when it comes to the participation of older teenagers. For agonism, the concept of politics is characterized by an 'us' versus 'them' distinction (Mouffe, 2000b). The 'other' is accepted as a political opponent. As a result, expressing political emotions are regarded as an acceptable element in a debate (Tryggvason, 2018). However, the expression of emotions must not turn into violence or exclusion: "While emotion fuels agonism, it should not transform agonism into antagonism" (Mihai, 2014, p.45). This paper will address if older teenagers are capable of channeling their political emotions, if these political emotions are sustainable and if the expression of political emotions would positively affect the well-being of teenagers.

The current debate on voting rights for older teenagers only tackles competencies regarding voting decisions (Merry & Schinkel, 2016) (Lecce, 2009) (Weinstock, 2020) (Olsson, 2008). With deliberative democrats and agonistic democrats arguing in favor of a more elaborated and a more demanding form of democracy, the accessibility for older teenagers in such a system needs to be analyzed as well. Even though implications on inclusivity and education in both systems are already being discussed, the position of older teenagers is not part of the debate. This paper will contribute to science in three ways. First, it will broaden the debate on democratic participation of older teenagers. Second, it will offer a critique on two prominent democratic theories regarding inclusiveness for older teenagers. Third, it will show how the democratic position of older teenagers can be improved in alternative democratic systems.

THESIS STRUCTURE

It is important to show how alternative democratic systems might affect the political participation of older teenagers. To do this, the debate on political participation in contemporary Western representative democracies should first be explicated. This will be done in chapter 1. First, contemporary assumptions and rhetoric on the subject will be presented. Then, arguments in favor and against suffrage for older teenagers will be critically examined. Lastly, I shall conclude whether the capabilities required for participation in a representative democratic system legitimizes the disenfranchisement of young people or not.

In chapter 2, the consequences of a deliberative democratic system on political participation of teenagers will be explored. This will be done in three parts. In the first

part, a theoretical framework on deliberative democracy will be presented. In addition, the qualifications that are attached to participating in a deliberative democracy will be displayed. In the second part, I will discuss how a deliberative democracy can be institutionalized by the use of deliberative mini-publics and schools. The third part presents the competences of teenagers in relation to the earlier discussed deliberative virtues.

Chapter 3 has a very similar outline as chapter 2. The consequences of an agonistic democratic system on political participation of teenagers will be explored. The first part contains the same elements: A theoretical and a more practical outline of an agonistic democracy. In the second part, concept of an agonistic micro-public will be explored, with an emphasis on schools' potential for agonistic political conduct. The third part presents the competences of teenagers in relation to agonistic virtues.

In the conclusion, the possible integration of adolescents in all three democratic systems will be summarized. The degree of inclusiveness for older teenagers per theory will be weighed against each other. This way, it will become clear if political participation is accessible to teenagers when democratic participation is moved from vote-centric towards talk-centric democratic systems. I will also discuss the role of schools in the implementation of talk-centric democratic systems. Furthermore, I will argue which theory is more likely to ensure young people's accessibility to democratic participation.

A plea for voting rights for young people would not be taken very seriously in most developed Western countries. For example, in the Netherlands, the general public is against the idea of voting rights for young people: More than 75% of the people are opposed to it (Van der Schelde & Kanne, 2022). Even young people themselves, between the ages of sixteen and seventeen, do not think that their peers should be granted voting rights. The reason is that most people do not think that young people know enough about politics to vote (ibid.). Again, not even young people think that they have acquired the necessary knowledge. There thus seems to be a general consensus about this topic.

However, I argue that discrimination based on age is a minimized issue. In addition, I argue that the general public consensus derives from common misconceptions about the political knowledge, responsibility and capabilities of young people. These misconceptions are so persistent in society that it even affects young people's perception of themselves. The discussion about voting rights for young people should not be neglected because of the minimization of the issue of minor disenfranchisement and these misconceptions. I shall conclude that the role of young people in a representative democracy should be reconsidered.

MINIMIZATION OF THE ISSUE

It is remarkable how little salience the movement for voting rights for young people is getting. At the cap of the women's suffrage movement, more than 5000 protesters were marching in Washington (Harvey, 2001). It was not the case that the protesters were widely supported (there was a lot of ridicule and belittlement), but the issue was part of the public discussion. It is now regarded as one of the greatest democratic injustices, with recent pleas in Great-Britain for formal government apologies to the suffragettes (Labour, 2018). It would be expected that initiatives like Vote16USA (2022), advocating to lower the voting age to sixteen, would dominate the political agenda. The issue remains minimal however.

One difference between minor suffrage and women's suffrage, is that age is linear. This linearity simply entails that everyone was a teenager once, without suffrage. This could be a possible explanation for the social reluctance to take the issue seriously. The non-adult group is not subjected to the inescapable discriminatory action other social groups

endure (McNamara & Williamson, 2012). While women were stuck in an unjust democratic system, young people are guaranteed to break free from it once they reach voting age. However, I argue that this aspect does not legitimize the minimal attention to the issue of minor disenfranchisement.

First, while age might be a continuum, politics is not. Political issues and the degree in which issues enter the political agenda vary among generations. Contemporary young people are dealing with issues that young people in the past did not have to deal with. Prominent examples of such issues are climate change and the escalated housing crisis. If the social environment is especially hostile towards young people, then the disenfranchisement of young people has considerably more consequences for contemporary generations than for past generations.

Secondly, once young people turn adults, they have the power to change the discriminatory position of young people. However, there is no longer an incentive to do so, because they are no longer being discriminated against and might as well enjoy their position of power instead of changing the system. Even if it is concluded that minor disenfranchisement is harmful to society, it would not necessarily lead to a political reform. Following this rhetoric, linearity is not providing an argument that legitimizes disenfranchisement, but is an aspect that conceals the harm disenfranchisement is doing to society.

MISCONCEPTIONS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Similar to the poll from The Netherlands, a poll among residents from the Bay State area (USA) shows objection to underage voting as well: 65 percent of people oppose the idea of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds voting for Congress and Presidential elections (WNEUPI, 2019). Interestingly enough, a majority of the respondents does support civic engagement for young people in the form of protests and community service. What could explain this contradiction and why are young people eligible to engage in democracy, but not to vote? By refuting several arguments against voting rights for young people, I will show how common misconceptions on young people shape this public attitude.

Several prominent arguments against voting rights for older teenagers, heard both in society as in academic literature, will be explicated. Four arguments will be laid out: The experience argument, the impulsivity argument, the political interest argument and the

knowledge argument. These arguments all regard the political competence of young people in a representative democracy. There is no claim that these arguments embody the opposing side entirely, but they do cover most of its views. After the introduction of each argument, the argument will be criticized. This way it will be shown to what degree each argument against voting rights for older teenagers is well-founded.

1. The experience argument

One argument against political participation for older teenagers comes from Aristotle in his work 'Nicomachean Ethics' (Aristotle, 340B.C.). He uses an argument that is known as the *experience argument*. Aristotle states that people are good at making decisions about things they are familiar with. Since politics regards actions of life, making good decisions in politics requires being familiar with situations that regard life. In other words, you need life experience in order to make the right choices in politics. Aristotle concludes that children are therefore unfit to become students of politics.

In contemporary representative democracies, this argument is often used (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021). There are several political concepts that young people are familiar with, but do not have experience with (paying taxes, buying a house, the job-market). If young people are getting experienced with a political concept, it can lead to suffrage. For example, the age of voting in the USA was decreased from twenty-one to eighteen, because of eighteen-year-olds actively participating in the military (Brown, 2020). Since a lot of people under eighteen have no experience with several important political concepts, they are not suitable to vote on these concepts.

In many developed societies, minors are excused from certain social duties and responsibilities, causing milder judicial penalties and a lower tax demand. Their protected position in society evokes an argument against suffrage: "Society clearly does not view 16-year-olds as fully adult - and denying them the vote is not, therefore, manifestly unfair but a logical consequence of the role that they play in society" (Cowley & Denver, 2004, p.59). Of course, this is a descriptive claim, since the protected position could be changed. However, taking away the protected position of minors, for example in penalizing them, raises new ethical concerns (Powers, 2009).

Critique

The experience argument is based on a few selected topics (job-market, taxes) that minors are excluded from. Why are experiences regarding these topics essential for suffrage? Since politics regard almost all aspects of life, political decision making is done in countless areas of which the average person has no experience with. A citizen that never visits a museum, never takes public transport or has never needed medical care still gets to vote on these topics through a representative. Why are these experiences not essential for suffrage? Since the concept of 'life experience' cannot be quantified or compared (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021), it is hard to argue that an individual teen has less of it by definition.

It could be argued that the teenage group has less experience on average. There inevitably are experiences that the group could not obtain, since there are age thresholds for certain social matters. Yet, there are also experiences that adults are unable, or less likely, to obtain. A good example would be the impact of social media on mental health. Young people use social media more often and have more experience with the negative consequences (Sharifian, Kraal, Zaheed, Sol, Morris & Zahodne, 2021). In addition, older age groups will never experience the threat of long-term problems (like climate change), since they will die before the problems occur. Each age group therefore has its own characteristics, its own position and its own 'inexperience'.

2. The impulsivity argument

Aristotle argues that young people lack self-restraint and are more likely to follow their impulses (Aristotle, 340B.C.). This is a concern by itself, since it may cause them to vote according to their preferences and not their interests. Preferences are what people feel that they need, prior to further reflections (Galston, 1994). Interests are formed by a process of deliberative inquiry (ibid.). The preferences and interests of a person may coincide, but they can also be very different. For example, it might be a preference to eat junk food, smoke and drink. However, upon further inspection, it is not in the person's interest to live such an unhealthy lifestyle. Young people could therefore vote against their own interests, when they obtain suffrage.

Research in the field of psychology has shown that adolescents between the ages of fourteen and seventeen tend to take risks more often than adults between the ages of

eighteen and twenty two: “Both sensation seeking and inhibition are correlated with age (albeit not always linearly), it is likely that the Age/BIS factor reflected net contributions of these and other maturational and developmental factors” (Reyna, Estrada, DeMarinis, Myers, Stanisiz & Mills, 2011, p.1138). This leaves the question how this risk-taking, associated with impulsivity, would manifest itself regarding choices on political voting. Since big political risks are undesirable, young people's votes may be harmful to society.

A second way in which impulsivity may manifest itself, is that political groups would effectively target and manipulate them into a specific vote. There is scientific evidence that suggests that marketing to children works differently per age group (Livingstone & Helsper, 2006). Children would be most influenced by virtual stimulus and older children by approval of role models. Teenagers would be influenced mostly by advertising, brand loyalty and persuasive arguments. Instead of pursuing their own interests, young people would cast a ‘manipulated’ vote once they get the opportunity.

A third way in which impulsivity manifests itself, is that young people are more susceptible to social pressure (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021). This is indicated by the similar political views young people have to those of their friends and parents. This causes them to vote according to values and interests of the group instead of making an individual choice (ibid.). This supports Aristotle's theory that young people would not vote according to their own interests, once they get the opportunity.

Critique

The standpoint that teenagers act more impulsively than adults is true in an emotional context (Casey & Caudle, 2013). However, research has shown that adolescents show similar self-restraint capacities as adults in a neutral context. This means that the impulsivity argument is only applicable in an emotionally charged political environment. The environment in which a vote is casted is often neutral; sometimes neutrality is even ensured by the government to prevent impulsive decision making. For example, in the Netherlands, election posters are not allowed near the voting booth (AD, 2019). Ironically, the more supported civic engagement for young people, a protest for example, is more likely to be exercised in an emotional environment.

The second argument from opponents, that young people will be manipulated by political parties, do not hold much ground either. Teenagers are more susceptible to advertising

strategies (Livingstone & Helsper, 2006). However, the way in which young people are being persuaded by marketing is similar to adults, namely by brand loyalty and arguments. Persuasion by arguments and identification with certain political parties could be considered desirable in politics. It relates to a well thought out voting choice and political involvement. The insinuation that political marketing to young people will have a negative impact on democracy might therefore be wrong.

The third argument from opponents is that young people are influenced by social pressure. While it is true that young people tend to have similar views as that of their friends and family, it is an assumption that this is caused by pressure. Political values and opinions are by social by nature; a political group creates a feeling of unity and a shared identity between members. From this perspective, all political identities are shaped by a social environment (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021). The political identity of young people is therefore not subjected to group pressure, but a “product of normative, dynamic developmental processes” (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021, p. 446).

3. The political interest argument

Another argument against minor enfranchisement is that young people are not interested enough in politics. If there is a lack of political interest, this would pose several problems for a representative democracy. First, young people may not vote at all, which would decrease the vote turn-out. For example, presidential elections in the USA show that voter turnout increases with age (McDonald, 2020). If the vote turn-out of a country decreases, it gives the image of a general disconnection between the people and their political representatives. Second, even if young people would vote, their vote may be less thought out due to their disinterest in politics.

When taking a look at Austria, to see if minor enfranchisement affects the turn-out, we see that the turn-out of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds did not significantly differ from the average turn-out (Zeglovits & Aichholzer, 2014). However, young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five still have a lower voter turn-out than the country's average. Possible explanations for a high turn-out of under eighteen-year-olds are the ‘first time voter boost’ and the political campaigns aimed at under eighteen-year-olds (ibid.). Another possible explanation that was not mentioned by Zeglovits and Aichholzer, is that issues relatable to under eighteen-year-olds have become more salient.

Even with the first-time voter boost and extensive campaigning, young people vote less often on average. Research has shown that an age effect is operating in the age group sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, regarding interest in politics (Chan & Clayton, 2006). Political interest inclines as people turn eighteen, and continues to incline as people grow older (ibid.). This could potentially be the reason for the lower voter turn-out. Even if the turn-out is not different from the average, as it is the case with seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds, it can be reasonably assumed that a large part of the turn-out consists of less-interested voters. This introduces an argument against voting rights for older teenagers, since less-interested voters would also be less-informed and indifferent about their choice.

Critique

I argue that the term 'political disinterest' is misleading when it is used to describe a group's natural characteristic. Most people have (albeit modest) comprehensive goals in life: Friendships, careers, marriage, family, etcetera (Scanlon, 1998). These abstract comprehensive goals generate a set of more concrete goals that relate to the pursuit of the comprehensive goal. For example, if the goal is to make a career in physics, the more concrete goals are to find the right educational program, read some books, follow courses, etcetera (ibid.). Failing to achieve these goals has a significant impact on the quality of people's lives.

The achievement of these concrete goals is partially influenced by the political environment in which they are pursued. For example, political decision making will influence the educational system: What are the requirements for studying? How much will it cost? To pursue a career in physics does not only depend on personal choices and capabilities, but on these political decisions as well. Some goals may be more dependent on politics than others. The political disinterest in groups can then be (partially) explained by the independency of comprehensive and concrete goals from political decision making.

It could be argued that the goals of young people are generally of a more private nature (relationships, friends, family), which would explain the political disinterest of young people. However, I argue that these goals are private because young people are being discouraged to pursue goals that relate to social issues. Young people are disenfranchised,

expected to focus on achievements in school and when they show that they are pursuing a goal related to a public issue it often incites negative responses (Mayes & Hartup, 2021). From this perspective political disinterest is not a natural characteristic, but a result of social and political exclusion.

4. The knowledge argument

Political knowledge is crucial for participating actively in a democracy, since it motivates and informs civic action (Hart & Atkins, 2011). When it comes to voting, political knowledge allows a citizen to differentiate social issues, their own interests in these issues and the positions of political parties on these issues. Political knowledge and cognitive abilities are often linked to political competency (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021). The knowledge argument can be used in two ways: Young people do not have enough knowledge to vote, or, young people do not have the cognitive abilities to acquire information regarding politics.

Not a lot of research has been done on the effect of age on political knowledge. Lau and Redlawsk (2008) investigated the age effect on political knowledge in the USA¹. They found that as age increased, political knowledge increased as well. Despite small differences between the ages of sixteen to twenty-three, the difference in political knowledge between entire generations is relevant. Apart from empirical evidence, it is also logical that the political knowledge of young people is smaller than that of older people. Older people have had more time to witness and take part in the political system to acquire political knowledge.

When it comes to processing new information, younger people are outperforming older people (Ramscar, Hendrix, Shaoul, Milin & Baayen, 2014). Typically, this difference is attributed to a 'cognitive decline' that would come with age. However, another perspective should be considered towards this cognitive decline. Research has shown that information processing of animal names becomes more difficult as more animal names are learned over time (ibid.). This indicates that the brain has more difficulty with processing new information, when there is already much information present.

¹ It is noteworthy that these results are likely depending on cultural, political and educational factors.

It can be concluded that young people have the ability to process new information regarding politics, because they do not know much about politics yet. From this perspective, the first argument on knowledge is supported (teenagers know less about politics), while the second argument is refuted (teenagers have more difficulties acquiring information regarding politics). There is an additional concern (apart from capableness) that young people would have voted differently, had they known more about politics. A valid argument against youth suffrage could then be made: Young people should first learn about politics, before they get to participate in it.

Critique

Even though political knowledge increases with age, that does not mean that sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds do not have the adequate knowledge to vote. Research has shown that political knowledge of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds is comparable to that of people between eighteen and twenty-three years old (Lau & Redlawsk, 2008). Democratic participation of twenty-year-old people has not been contested however; they have proven themselves to be capable enough to vote. This raises the question at what age adequate knowledge is obtained.

Revisiting the minimalist interpretation of voting eligibility gives an adequate understanding of the minimal knowledge needed. The minimalist interpretation for political competence was “the ability to differentiate political parties, candidates and policies in terms of interests, aims and goals” (Archard, 1993, p.101). It turns out that these abilities determine voter choices, and that additional political knowledge does not change political attitudes: “voting requires having interests and knowledge about how candidates might represent those interests, and propositional political knowledge likely does not inform one’s candidate choices” (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021, p.3).

There is no indication that young people are incapable of this differentiation. An argument could even be made that young people are more likely to distinguish these interests, aims and goals of political parties. As it turns out, young people have higher explorative capabilities in navigating the online landscape (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021). This makes them more informed, because they have acquired a “practical skills to obtain and interpret correct and relevant information from the government and other sources” (Oosterhoff, Wray-Lake & Hart, 2021, p.444).

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, the disenfranchisement of young people remains a minimized issue that deserves more political saliency. Arguments against voting rights for young people are based on political inexperience, impulsivity, disinterest and a lack of knowledge. Opponents of voting rights for young people are able to prove that young people have a different mind-set and different capabilities when it comes to politics. However, the arguments that are presented do not adequately show that these differences will have a significant unfavorable effect on the voting behavior.

It is important to stress the impact of this conclusion in the current political environment. Due to climate change, the issue of voting rights for teenagers demands immediate political attention. Since new generations will be increasingly harmed by climate change, it is all the more unjust that precisely these generations are being held from political power. The urgent need for youth representation in politics in combination with the weak case against voting rights for young people, makes their disenfranchisement morally indefensible.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how accessible a deliberative democracy is to the participation of young people. This will be done in three parts. In part 1, the concept of a deliberative democracy will be explicated. In part 2, I will evaluate the institutions in which young people can participate in deliberation: Mini-publics and schools. I will show whether these institutions can be shaped in such a way that they are inclusive for adolescents. In part 3, I will evaluate the characteristics of young people and how these relate to the civic virtues derived from part 1 (in bold letters). In the conclusion, I will summarize to what degree a deliberative democracy can be made inclusive for young people.

PART 1: OUTLINE OF A DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

A deliberative democracy is a talk-centric democracy. This means that the way in which the political debate is held within society, whether it is through public fora or day-to-day social interactions, constitutes democracy. A theory that centers around a talk-centric democracy automatically focuses on the virtues of its citizens, instead of institutional mechanisms (Kymlicka, 2005). After all, the way in which the public debate is held depends on the attitudes and capacities of citizens. The fundamental elements of a deliberative democracy, its goals and benefits, are therefore based on the attitudes and capacities of the people.

The main goal of a deliberative democracy is that citizens make an effort to understand the values and interests of others (Kymlicka, 2005). They are not acting strategically to pursue their own personal interests, but are committed to a mutual understanding. As stated earlier, the achievement of this goal depends on citizen's attitudes and capabilities. A deliberative democracy demands a specific form of active participation from its citizens, in order for it to work. This begs the question what is expected from citizens when they participate in a deliberative process. For this research this question is especially important, since meeting these expectations may not be feasible for young people.

The main benefit of a deliberative democracy is that citizens will provide their insights in the decision making process, instead of unilaterally exclaiming their own interest through a vote (Kymlicka, 2005). This allows them to reject beliefs that were proven indefensible

in the public deliberation process. As a result, better and more legitimized decisions will be made. In addition, the act of deliberation will result in a connection between citizens which will increase mutual understanding, unity and solidarity (ibid.). Furthermore, it is believed that consensus may be reached. However, this is neither a guarantee, nor a necessity for a deliberative democracy (ibid.). When consensus is not reached, voting will still be decisive.

Another claim that deliberative democrats often make, is that a deliberative democracy offers particular benefits to minority groups (Kymlicka, 2005). If decision making was done in a vote-centric democracy, it will be difficult for minority group to win the majority vote (ibid.). However, if decision making is done by the exchange of reasons, minority groups are capable of forming the public opinion by persuading others. This way, they are more likely to be represented in politics than through voting alone. For this research this claim is especially interesting since it could mean that young people, as a minority group, are benefiting more from deliberative democracy as well.

Expectations of citizens

Deliberation is about weighing reasons against each other and making a decision based on that weighing (Cohen, 2007). This weighing process comes with a few requirements for citizens. First of all, reasons must be presented with the only motive of settling the discussion with the strength of the argument (Cohen, 1989). Arguments should not be presented if it is the goal that another external force would settle the debate. For example, a participant in deliberation that consistently interrupts other participants, uses sarcasm or raises their voice, is trying to settle the discussion by force. Citizens are required to abstain from such behaviors.

A deliberative democracy is often associated with **an exclusion of emotions** in the public debate, because emotions may instigate the usage of an external force. For example, the expression of anger is strongly associated with a raised voice. Emotional outbursts, whether it is frustration, anger or sadness, may therefore impact how the discussion is settled. Nevertheless, some theorists find that emotions still play an important role in a deliberative democracy. They argue that emotions stand at the start of the translation of 'normative data' to explicit propositions (Neblo, 2020). In other words, emotions allow people to express dissatisfaction with some aspects of society and therefore create a

starting point for the deliberative process. Emotional outbursts can be used to bring up topics that should be deliberated on. Emotions thus have a function, but they may also form an obstacle in the process of deliberation.

The fact that reasoning has to be at the central to the process of public decision making (Cohen, 2007) means that citizens must **be able to get persuaded** by reasons. They must be able to weigh reasons against each other, with their own perception of what would contribute to the common good as a reference. Forces apart from the reasons that are provided (personal interests or emotional involvement) should not affect citizens. The exchange of reasons is an interactive process, meaning that a citizen must both be able to provide reasons to others and comprehend reasons from others.

It is important that citizens present reasons by using shared 'situation definitions' (Habermas, 1984). Situation definitions are the terms and concepts that are applicable to an argument. The 'situation' can be broadly conceptualized as the bundle of views, beliefs and values that are applicable to an argument. According to Habermas (ibid.), each participant has a different interpretation of the 'situation', due to different world views. There are thus a variety of situation definitions that are not shared between citizens. If a reason is presented from an individual situation definition, it is not possible to persuade the other. In an argument, it is then the duty of all participants to establish a shared situation definition: "For both parties the interpretive task consists in incorporating the other's interpretation of the situation into one's own" (Habermas, 1984, p.100).

It is thus important to understand the position of others, even when these experiences are not shared. The ability to understand another person's point of view is often referred to as 'empathy' (Hannon, 2020). Basic empathy entails the understanding of other people's perspective through observable indicators, like body-language, facial expressions or tone-of-voice. **Reenactive empathy** means that the thought-process of other people is imitated, by using deliberative or cognitive abilities (ibid.). Basic empathy is, for most people, something that happens automatically. Reenactive empathy does not seem difficult to master, but political polarization does form a challenge for citizens to empathize with people from different groups (ibid.). Therefore, another form of empathy should be discussed, namely, **radical empathy**.

Empathy is radical if an effort is made to understand the other “even when our own visceral affective responses are steeped in fear, disgust, or anger” (Caswell & Cifor, 2016, p.25). In other words, radical empathy is the ability to reenactively empathize, despite an instinctive response of repulsion. A most notable example of radical empathy would be Daryl Davis, who, as black man, attended KKK rallies to understand its ideology (TEDxTalks, 2017). Not everybody is able to, even if they wanted to, commit to such an understanding for a repulsive group ideology. Therefore, radical empathy should be seen as a skill.

How can a person be taught radical empathy? It is important that a person can recognize their own emotions, take a pause to reflect on them and then reconnect with their conversation partner (Jordan & Schwartz, 2018). After all, emotions are a product of the instinctive response. Furthermore, there are several techniques that can be applied to a conversation that encourages radical empathy. The speaker must learn, for example, not to use blaming, criticism or contempt in addressing the listener (Gottman & Gottman, 2015). The listener must in their turn not argue with the speaker, but actively listen and ask questions. This empathetic technique is used in couple therapy, but there is no reason that it would not work for a political conversation.

Lastly, a deliberative democracy demands that its citizens have a certain amount of **faith in the deliberative process**. Citizens need to believe that other citizens are putting in an effort to reach a mutual understanding, despite their different customs, values and beliefs. Citizens also have to accept that these differences will inevitably cause people to discordantly judge which social items contribute to the common good the most (Rawls, 2005). Evidence can be complex and certain benefits of a decision may be weighted differently across doctrines. Even though a consensus may not be reached (and a vote is thus still needed), citizens must then still believe that the deliberative process was meaningful and legitimate.

PART 2: INSTITUTIONALIZING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

In the theoretical overview it became clear what a deliberative democracy entails, what attitude it demands from its citizens and how citizens should practice deliberation. In this part I will explicate how specific deliberative institutions can be structured in a variety of ways. In addition, I will emphasize how these varying structures may increase or

decrease the accessibility for youth participation. I will present two ways of institutionalizing a deliberative democracy: Mini-publics and schools.

MINI-PUBLICS

The first way to practice deliberative theory is through *mini-publics*, which refers to small scale forums in which face-to-face discussions will ideally reconstruct the will of the general public on certain issues (Rummens, 2012). This can be done for urban deliberation, but can also apply to nation-wide deliberation, as exemplified by the g1000 summit in Belgium (Jacquet, Moskovic, Caluwaerts & Reuchamps, 2016). Who gets to participate in these mini-publics and to what degree the deliberation will constitute a binding decision, depends on the summit. It is therefore not always clear how mini-publics are linked to the general public and to what degree policies can derive from them (Rummens, 2012).

The composition of a mini-public can be divided in several stages (Setälä, 2017). Stage one describes the design of the assembly: Who gets selected and what kind of topics are being discussed (how the agenda is set). The second stage regards how the deliberation is actually going: How it is run, the quality of the deliberation and whether the participants' views are moving a certain direction. This stage is heavily dependent on the construction of the first stage. The third stage regards the outcome of the deliberation: How the conclusions from deliberation relate to actual decision making. Each mini-public can vary in its structure depending on how these stages are taking shape. The first stage is the most important for this research, because it determines the role of young people in the deliberation process: If and how they should participate. Therefore, I shall explicate the selection process and topic selection below.

Participant selection

The participants of the mini-public must represent the citizens that will face the consequences of decisions coming forth from deliberation. Random selection seems to be the most logical solution and the most adequate representation of the people. However, minority groups will be less represented or even not represented at all with this selection process. This will lower the quality of deliberation, since knowledge gained from experiencing society as a minority is lost when minorities are not participating. Even if minorities are represented as a minority in a mini-public, it is more difficult to speak

freely towards a majority of people who do not share the same identity (Farrell, Suiter, Cunningham & Harris, 2020).

Hughes (2020) describes how an aim for unity within a deliberative public forum may be counter-productive for the deliberative process. A diverse group of people will be less likely to reach a consensus, due to their differences in values. This deficiency should be acknowledged as a 'fact of democratic life' instead of trying to counter it with homogeneity. Homogeneity may lead to consensus quicker, but if it is established by exclusion it would contradict what deliberative theory is about, namely aiming for consensus despite differences in values or identity. Cohen (1989) even mentions this pluralism as a condition for a deliberative democracy.

Instead of a random selection, a mini-public could also have a descriptive selection: This means that certain groups (e.g. women, persons of color, teenagers) are guaranteed to participate by using demographic quota in the selection process. As Farrell, Suiter, Cunningham and Harris (2020) point out however, these quotas would not cover all possible identity traits in society. Nonetheless, it could ensure that the most dominant differences regarding social identity are taking part in the deliberative process. The most obvious traits in need of a quorum would be gender, race, economic status, religion and age, due to differences in values between the groups and their different position in society. To be clear, other traits (e.g. physical abilities, sexual preference) could arguably need quota as well. That discussion remains open-ended.

Finally, it could also be argued that the selection process should depend on the subjects that are being discussed. The mini-public in Ireland in 2017 centered around the topic of abortion (Farrell, Suiter, Cunningham & Harris, 2020). The way that abortion is made accessible in a society is especially relevant for women, since women have a right of self-determination that is in conflict with denying access to abortion. It must therefore be made sure that, for this subject, the voices of women are not restricted within the deliberation process. In a similar way, disability is of importance when deliberation on wheelchair accessibility is held. What makes things difficult with this approach, is that it could be argued that a topic is linked to several identities. Abortion, for example, also concerns age (responsibility of parenthood), economic status (the costs of having a baby) and religion (moral issues of breaking off a pregnancy).

I argue that random selection does not adequately represent young people in mini-publics. A random selection is only concerned with providing a population sample and thus fails to recognize the importance of representing certain groups specifically. Young people would benefit from a descriptive procedure that would recognize their different traits and their different position in society. Young people have a different mind-set when it comes to politics, as I have shown in chapter 1. This should be taken into account when constructing a mini-public, in order to prevent a discriminatory structure in which young people are less inclined to actively participate.

Secondly, a subject-based participant selection procedure recognizes that certain issues are affecting specific groups in society more than others. For example, issues concerning education, climate change, housing² or child protection services are more relevant for young people. There are two advantages in ensuring young people are being heard on these topics. First, it empowers young people if they are themselves able to speak out about what is troubling them. Second, young people's personal experiences will increase the quality of deliberation, since they stand so closely to the issue.

Topic selection

Which topics should be discussed in mini-publics? To answer this question, it should first be made clear that not all governmental decision-making can be done by mini-publics. There are simply too many decisions that have to be made. When it comes to purely technical decision-making, it is cheaper and more efficient to let experts take a decision. However, a mini-public might still be beneficial if the real-world knowledge of participants will contribute to the efficiency and justification of technical decision-making (Solomon & Abelson, 2012). Topics that rely on the lived experiences of the participants are 'hybrid topics'.

Another reason a topic should be deliberated on is when the decision is not technical, but based on values existing in society. 'Ideal topics' and 'controversial topics' should be differentiated. Decisions that regard conflicting public values can be referred to as 'ideal topics', since it is these topics that could easily be embedded into a deliberative

² If this link is less obvious, homelessness is a big problem for young people in Western developed nations like Australia (Fact Check, 2016).

democracy and potentially result in consensus. 'Controversial topics' are topics that regard conflicting values, yet are accompanied by a divisive social stigma. It is more difficult for a person to reason from a shared paradigm, when a topic causes social division. Therefore, it becomes more difficult to adhere to the deliberative principles of being open-minded and accepting the burdens of judgment. There is a low chance that discussing controversial topics in a mini-public would result in a consensus on the topic. However, deliberation would result into a better articulation of the underlying values and paradigms behind the topic (Solomon & Abelson, 2012). Therefore, deliberation can still have the purpose of creating a better understanding among the public.

Another reason to discuss a topic in a mini-public is if the topic is linked to low trust in the government. Deliberation in mini-publics increases "transparency and accountability between policy-makers and the public" (Solomon & Abelson, 2012, p.3). When 'low-trust topics' are being discussed in mini-publics, deliberation might therefore reestablish trust in the government. The condition is that the goal of deliberation is not to reestablish this trust, but to genuinely aim for a consensus among the participants. Otherwise, if the implementation of the deliberative process is done poorly, the plan might backfire resulting into a decrease in trust (ibid.).

To summarize, the reasons for deliberating a topic can be to make use of citizens' lived experiences, an aim for consensus (or, if that is not possible, to create a better understanding of different values attached to the topic) and to increase trust in the government. The importance of young people participating in mini-publics depends on these reasons. For example, young people might have a very distinct lived experience. Then, young people will have an important contribution in mini-publics when topics require knowledge based on these experiences. In addition, young people may have distinct values that could add to the aim of a shared understanding.

SCHOOLS

A school is an excellent tool to teach people the virtues necessary to participate in a deliberative democracy. First, this is the case because a school has a closed environment in which education and practice with deliberation can take place. Second, because the performance of deliberative practice can be monitored in schools; it is relatively easy to measure whether a mutual understanding is present in schools. Third, because young

people are in a phase of their lives in which their social and political behaviors are in development. The way in which they act and communicate is moldable. Fourth, because in most developed nations, children are obligated to attend school up until the age of eighteen.

A school can impose, in its lectures, a way of deliberative communication and can educate its students on the importance of deliberation. In political theory, such educational designs on deliberative democracy are already being discussed (Hanson & Howe, 2011). In the next part, I argue that schools should aim at creating shared experiences between students. Creating shared experiences will contribute to a mutual understanding. In addition, schools should propagate deliberation, for example through advertising or lectures on deliberative theory. However, I choose to focus on shared experiences because these experiences regard the actions of students instead of propagating to them; it is more interactive.

Shared experiences

Qualities that are often used to describe a society are unity, community, loyalty to the public good and mutual sympathy (Dewey, 1916). However, what really constitutes a society is not uniformity, but a pluralism of smaller societies. In these smaller societies, the same qualities are present, no matter whether their contribution to the larger society is viewed positively or negatively. For example, unity and loyalty are extremely high-praised qualities between members of street gangs, which is shown by the existence of their own 'codes' (ibid.). Therefore, these qualities cannot really determine how a society would ideally take shape.

There are two core elements that are needed for a society: A shared interest and a certain amount of cooperation (Dewey, 1916). Again, this statement is applicable to states as well as to street gangs. To give normative value to the socialization process, it should thus be taken into consideration what this shared interest is and how the group cooperates. If the shared interest is to rob a place and the habits of the gang are to use violence, then this 'society' would not be validated, no matter how uniform or loyal its members are. Similarly, the validation of a deliberative society does not depend on its uniformity or loyalty. It depends on its shared interest, which is to enlarge the common good. If this is

done fairly, the enlargement of the common good is, from a utilitarian perspective, a praiseworthy cause.

To create awareness of this shared interest, the enlargement of the common good, participants must have shared experiences. “The experience of each party loses in meaning, when the free interchange of varying modes of life-experience is arrested” (Dewey, 1916, p.124). This makes sense for a deliberative democracy, since an isolated perspective on society would make reasoning within the same paradigm between citizens more difficult. Therefore it is necessary that, if there is a social division, all citizens would experience in some way the problems and values attached to life in the ‘other’ group.

Schools are often trying to create uniformity, instead of shared experiences. This is done by the usage of school uniforms, a school emblem or a sports team. The underlying assumption is that uniformity will lead to less behavioral problems and better academic achievement. However, research has shown that there is no evidence that a measurement like school uniforms has any positive effects on students (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998). Uniformity is not a proper element to validate a school's environment. I argue that, in order to convey deliberative communicative action to students, attempts to increase uniformity will not be efficient.

Instead, schools should aim to create shared experiences by identifying differences between students and making these different students interact with each other. A student that enjoys reading creates an isolated ‘school experience’ that is unknown to a student that enjoys sports instead. In order to create an understanding of each other's point of view, schools should aim to make students get a taste of the plurality of existing school experiences. This can be enforced by, for example, setting up programs or activities and randomly assigning students to it.

PART 3: YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS AND CIVIC VIRTUES

In the first part of this chapter, I explained the concept of a deliberative democracy. In addition, I showed that youth participation in mini-publics and deliberative practice in schools could contribute to the constitution and cultivation of a deliberative democracy. However, I have also argued that the accessibility for young people would depend on characteristics linked to adolescence. To participate in a deliberative democracy, young people must be able to acquire the virtues that are connected to the deliberation process.

In this third part, I will present group characteristics of young people that may be relevant for deliberative democratic participation. Thereafter, I will consider whether these characteristics enable young people to participate or if the deliberative structure is too demanding. The degree to which the structure is demanding, depends on the compatibility between the group characteristics and the deliberative democratic structure mentioned in the first part. In the conclusion, I will go over the benefits and disadvantages of youth participation, both for a deliberative democracy and for young people themselves.

DELIBERATIVE REQUIREMENTS

What are the required virtues for practicing deliberation? In part 1, four desired attitudes or capabilities came up: 1. Emotional self-control, 2. Persuadability, 3. Reenactive and radical empathy, 4. Faith in the deliberative system. An additional virtue that I have added to this list is 5. Political self-esteem. I have indicated that it is essential that young people voice their political perspective in a deliberative democracy. To speak in front of others about politics, self-esteem is necessary. This virtue was added, because it is expected that young people may have more difficulty with this than adults.

1. Emotional self-control

In part 1, I explained that emotions before deliberation takes place could benefit the quality of a deliberative democracy. However, to make sure that forces apart from arguments are left out of the deliberation process, the expression of emotions is undesirable during deliberation. Therefore, it is important that participants have enough emotional self-control to leave their emotions out of the deliberation process. Do young people have the emotional self-control to present arguments unemotionally? And, if not, how should young people be expected to participate?

Research indicates that the regulation of emotions increases with age. A possible explanation is that older adults are “more able to understand and acknowledge their inner subjective experiences and not feel the need to express their emotions” (McConatha, Leone & Armstrong, 1997, p.505). Another possibility is that older adults simply are experiencing fewer negative emotions and are therefore expressing themselves less emotionally. Either way, it is a reasonable expectation that young people

in deliberation will have more difficulties expressing themselves in a dispassionate, predominantly rational way.

Apart from the question whether young people are able to contain their emotions, there are ethical concerns with the demand to contain emotions. Suppressing emotions, like anger, can impact the physical health of participants: “the tendency to suppress anger has been linked to more pronounced carotid arterial stiffness and intima-medial thickness, sub-clinical indices of CHD, compared to individuals rating high on anger expression” (Vella & Friedman, 2009). Correspondingly, there is evidence that links the suppression of emotions with premature death (Chapman, Fiscella, Kawachi, Duberstein & Muennig, 2013). Even if it is concluded that a democracy can best be constructed by deliberative processes, it should be acknowledged that the containment of emotions can be harmful.

Even if the benefits of emotional control to the deliberation process outweighs the negative consequences on health, there is still an issue of inequality. Young people will likely have more health issues than adults, because they have more difficulties with emotional control. In mini-publics and schools, this issue may be moderated by the introduction of designated moments for emotional expression. However, if emotional expression would be viewed negatively in day-to-day conversations, young people would still feel obliged to contain their emotions. Therefore, this requirement is discriminating against young people. The degree to which the requirement excludes young people from deliberation, depends on the degree of harm that emotional suppression would do to them.

2. Persuadability

In order for someone to be effectively persuaded by an argument, they must be able to weigh reasons against a background of their own values and beliefs. The participant should have acquired a certain amount of knowledge on the subject to do this. The knowledge-argument has a different basis in a representative democracy than in a deliberative democracy. In a representative democracy, a participant must understand the electoral system and recognize which actor is representing their interests and values. In a deliberative democracy, a participant has to understand which argument contributes to the common good, according to their own perspective of life.

The ability to recognize and validate an argument is generally acquired at the age of five and can be acquired at the age of three if the child is trained (Köymen, O'Madagain, Domberg & Tomasello, 2020). Still, five-year-olds cannot participate in deliberation, because the socio-political concepts that are being discussed (e.g. abortion, economic division, infrastructure) are unknown to them. An attempt could be made to teach about these concepts, but they will not be able to obtain an understanding profound enough to contribute to the deliberation process. They simply are not intelligent enough yet³. Older teenagers however, are believed to be capable of understanding these complex structures. That is why fifteen-year-olds are able to be taught civic education in The Netherlands. However, the degree of civic knowledge is dependent on whether schools focus on civic education or not (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz, 2001). The bottom-line is: If knowledge on the socio-political subject is being offered before deliberation starts, older teenagers will be able to understand the concepts.

In terms of persuadability, it could also be a concern that young people are less easily persuaded or too easily persuaded. When it comes to the first concern, there is no real evidence that this would be the case. The only concern that is left then, in terms of persuadability, is that young people might be more susceptible to forces other than the argument. In chapter 1, I showed that young people are perceived as being susceptible to political group pressure and advertising. However, I concluded that this is a common misconception; there is not a major difference between adults and teenagers. In addition, it is less likely that advertising or other forces would be present in a deliberative democracy, since they are perceived as undesirable.

3. Reenactive and radical empathy

In early Christian philosophy, it was assumed that empathy was an inherent human trait that was either present or not (Kuhmerker, 1975). If a teenager was inherently unempathetic, education could be used to inculcate desirable behavior through rewards and punishment. If the teenager was inherently empathetic, education was there to make sure this empathy could unfold naturally (ibid.). In modern times however, empathy is

³ Hyper-intelligent kids may be an exception. Research has already shown that intelligence in kids is positively linked to political efficacy (White, 1968). It would be interesting to find out how well hyper intelligent kids can analyze and validate an argument about a complex socio-political issue.

considered to be a developing capacity (ibid.). Contemporary educational philosophers consider empathy to be a developmental process. This allows reenactive empathy, the understanding of someone else's position through cognition, to be taught as a skill.

In part 1, I voiced the concern that cognitive development may prevent teenagers from adequately obtaining the necessary empathic skills for deliberation. Research has suggested that emotional processing in the teenage brain, as well as cognitive appraisal systems, are still in development (Choudhury, Blakemore & Charman, 2006). This development could explain social behaviors of young people. To what degree does this development impact the way in which young people empathize? Decety and Lamm (2006) state that reenactive empathy, contrary to basic empathy, is not fully developed until adulthood is reached. This is due to maturation of the prefrontal cortex that happens from birth until adulthood. It is therefore a reasonable worry that young people may have more difficulties with understanding other people's perspectives.

Because empathy can be seen as a developmental process, education may contribute to the growth and stimulation of empathy (Kuhmerker, 1975). Even though children have less empathic abilities, cooperative training could still be useful for stimulating positive psychological emotions and behavior (Muñoz, Gonçalves, Vieira, Cró, Chisik & i Badia, 2016). If teenagers are required to wait for their conversational partner to express themselves, quietly and without obtrusion, the development of empathic skills may be stimulated. Research has pointed out that such training with problematic teenagers will lead to an increase in empathic expressions (Dos Santos, 2019).

However, research has also shown that teenagers are more susceptible to affective empathy than to cognitive empathy (Giroux & Guay, 2021). Affective empathy entails taking in the perspective of other's by *feeling* their experience, while cognitive empathy entails taking in the perspective of other's by *reasoning* from their perspective. This has significance for how the empathic exercises for young people are most effectively construed. Instead of focusing on the logic behind certain political perspectives of others, it is more efficient to make young people aware of the feelings that go along with certain social or political positions.

This aspect poses a serious problem for the participation of young people in a deliberative democracy, since it is expected in these processes that empathy would be generated

through the exchange of reasons. An unemotional, logical environment may not be the best for young people to express themselves and to understand others. Especially because understanding a different perspective is already challenging for young people, the process of learning reenactive empathy should be adjusted to their personal characteristics.

For a deliberative democracy to be efficient, it is required that its participants are able to understand the position of other participants. It is also required that reasons are the driving force in deciding the outcome of deliberation. For young people, these two requirements are opposing each other. To explain the position of others to teenagers, the reasonability component has to be loosened and the communicative process should open up to emotional expressions. It is therefore likely that teenagers will naturally have more difficulties participating in a deliberative environment, where such expressions are undesirable.

An additional concern for young people is that empathic capacities will be limited due to their social position. For people who have faced social ridicule, oppression or other injustices, radical empathy might be more difficult to learn. A group of people that has faced social injustice, already is forced to become acclimatized to the perspective of others on a daily basis. For example, in a conversation on race, Victor Lewis spoke about the unfairness of expecting black people to empathize: "You know, I am not going to trust you, until you are as willing to be changed and affected by my experience, and transformed by my experience, as I am everyday by yours" (Lee, 1994). It should therefore be taken into consideration which conversations, which topics, cause pain to oppressed groups in such a way that they should not be expected to radically empathize (reenactively empathize despite initial repulsion).

Are young people the blunt of an oppressive social structure? When assessing the problems and treatment young people endure, the answer is yes. It has been shown that young people are confronted with stereotypes and negative depiction in the media (Lepianka, 2015). Like no other social group, the problems that young people encounter are written off as pathological issues linked to puberty (Finn, 2001). In addition, the taboo of stereotyping certain groups is absent when it comes to young people (Males, 1996). I would even argue that hate towards young people is somewhat normalized, as

exemplified by the invention of the 'mosquito', a device that produces a high pitch noise young people hate (Mosquito, n.d.). If a similar device would be invented for other groups (women, black people, homosexuals), the amount of social backlash would be enormous.

It is therefore clear that it cannot be expected from young people to take the perspectives of others, in a similar way as it is expected from adults. This is due to the cognitive development that happens in the prefrontal cortex. In addition, the social position of young people makes it more difficult for them to radically empathize. It is possible to teach young people to reenactively empathize, however, the way this learning process would transpire is incompatible with a non-emotional deliberative environment. It can therefore be concluded that young people would not flourish in a deliberative democracy, when it comes to the demand of reenactively and radically empathizing.

4. Faith in the deliberative process

Young people are a politically cynical age group. In the current Western representative democracy, young generations are increasingly dissatisfied with democracy (Foa, Klassen, Wenger, Rand & Slade, 2020). This is possibly caused by their disadvantaged economic position, withholding them from buying a house or securing a job. In addition, young people are trusting others less in comparison to older people (Rainie, Keeter & Perrin, 2019). Political cynicism is correlated to political efficacy; the belief that participation in the political process matters (De Vreese, 2005). This leaves me to believe that young people are less likely to have faith in the deliberation process.

The impact of political cynicism on a deliberative democracy may differ from its impact on contemporary representative democracies. It should be emphasized that political cynicism is difficult to conceptualize. For example, Agger, Goldstein & Pearl (1961) categorize political cynicism by using six items. These items reflect the integrity of politicians and the flaws of the political system. It is evident however, that political cynicism would manifest itself differently in a deliberative democratic structure. The role of politicians and politics would change and therefore the desirable behaviors and ambitions as well.

Is a cynical attitude necessarily bad for a democracy? Political cynicism is positively linked to knowledge and interest in the political process (De Vreese, 2005). This indicates that cynicism may not lead to an indifferent attitude, but to an (exaggerated) critical

evaluation of the political process instead. This could be considered beneficial for a deliberative society before the process of deliberation starts. In constructing a mini-public for example, cynicism may offer a critical evaluation of the structure making the mini-public more inclusive, more likely to result in consensus regarding policy, more efficient, etc.

However, during deliberation cynicism is most likely not going to be beneficial. When reasons are presented, participants must accept that others will have different values and beliefs. In addition, they must accept that others will weigh the reasons that are presented differently than they do (burdens of judgment). Participants must not be discouraged by these differences, but aim for a mutual understanding despite these differences. With a cynical attitude, this essential encouragement may be undermined.

Can it be concluded that young people will have less faith in the deliberation process? On the one hand, their lack of general trust (Rainie, Keeter & Perrin, 2019) and discontent with democracy (Foa, Klassen, Wenger, Rand & Slade, 2020) indicates that they will. On the other hand, these characteristics were measured in a representative democracy. It could be the case that a deliberative democratic structure will somewhat mitigate these cynical features. It can thus not be concluded, but there is a strong suggestion that young people will have less faith during deliberation.

5. Political self-esteem

It is important that participants of a deliberative democracy are able to voice their own arguments. If certain groups are less eager or capable to speak, then the deliberation process will miss their perspective and values in the exchange of arguments. For young people, there is the concern that they will not speak out during deliberation, because they do not have enough self-esteem. I will analyze whether a low self-esteem in youth is a natural characteristic. In addition, I will argue why a deliberative structure might still benefit self-conscious young people more than a representative structure.

There has been little research on a comparison between adolescents and adults when it comes to stress during public speaking. However, research has shown that there is a link between the presence of the stress hormone 'cortisol' in the body and age, during the anticipation phase of public speaking (Sumter, Bokhorst, Miers, Van Pelt & Westenberg, 2010). During mid-adolescence and advanced puberty, cortisol levels peaked in

comparison to pre-adolescence. This indicates that puberty affects an individual's self-consciousness during public speaking.

Other research has shown that self-esteem increases during adolescence and continues to increase, more slowly, during young adulthood (Erol & Orth, 2011). Therefore, young people are naturally less secure than adults are. It is therefore a reasonable presumption that young people will be less confident in sharing their perspective in a public speaking situation. Consequently, young people may be sugarcoating their view to match the most socially desirable view, or worse, may keep quiet. Furthermore, younger generations are often negatively depicted in the media (Lepianka, 2015). Society's portrayal of young people may contribute to youth silence in a deliberative process.

A low self-esteem may be problematic for the deliberation process. However, I still argue that a deliberative structure may still be the best political environment for young people, as long as measurements are taken regarding young people's inclusivity. A deliberative structure that protects the active participation of young people (I have argued in part 1 how this can be accomplished), will ensure that these young voices are heard. The problem of a 'silent youth', regardless whether the silence is caused by themselves or by a social paradigm, will be acknowledged in a deliberative democracy. In a representative democracy, the absence of young voices in the public debate would not be monitored.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the basic requirements, goals and benefits of a deliberative democracy were explicated. An emphasis on civic attitudes and capabilities were attached to the constitution of deliberative democracy. These attitudes and capabilities were emotional self-control, persuadability, reenactive and radical empathy, faith in the deliberative process and political self-esteem. I have analyzed whether young people are more or less likely to possess these virtues than adults. I put the overall findings in the table below:

Emotional self-control	Teenagers are less able to contain their emotions. Participation in a deliberative democracy will be more difficult for them and even causes health concerns.
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Persuadability	Teenagers are just as likely to be persuaded as adults are.
Reenactive empathy	Teenagers will have more difficulties with reenactive empathy, especially because it has to be done in a non-emotional environment.
Radical empathy	It is more difficult for teenagers to empathize radically because of their disadvantaged social position.
Faith in the deliberative process	It is within reasonable expectations that young people will have less faith in the deliberative process, due to a more cynical political attitude.
Political self-esteem	Teenagers have less political self-esteem and will have more difficulties expressing themselves as a result.

It can be concluded from these findings that young people will likely have more difficulty in active participation in a deliberative democracy, based on these five virtues.

Nevertheless, the institutionalized structure of a deliberative democracy can significantly influence the accessibility for young people. I have shown how the selection process of participants and topics in mini-publics can positively influence youth participation. In addition, I have shown how schools are an excellent environment to prepare young people for participation in a deliberative democracy. Young people may therefore have more difficulties to participate, but a deliberative democracy can be institutionalized in such a way that accessibility for young people is taken into account.

The outline of this chapter will be similar to that of chapter 2. In this chapter however, the feasibility of young participants in an agonistic democracy will be explored. In the first part of this chapter, I will present a theoretical overview of agonism. I will stress how agonism cannot be institutionalized. In addition, I will present the civic virtues attached to agonism. In the second part, I will explain how agonistic communication in micro-publics takes place. In the third part of this chapter, I will question whether the required attitudes in an agonistic democracy derived from chapter 1 and 2 (in bold) are easily obtained by young people or not.

PART 1: OUTLINE OF AN AGONISTIC DEMOCRACY

An agonistic democracy is a talk-centric democracy, just like a deliberative democracy, meaning that there is a focus on the public dimension of politics. However, an agonistic democracy has a very different idea on the way in which communication between citizens should occur. To explain the basic requirements, goals and benefits of an agonistic democracy, I shall mostly present the works of Chantal Mouffe. She is considered as one of the most influential agonistic scholars. Her ideas on antagonisms, hegemony and agonism will be explicated below.

Mouffe (2000b) stresses that the plurality of values inherent to a democracy creates an ineradicable dimension of antagonism. According to Mouffe (2013), political decision making always regards a choice between a plurality of conflicting alternatives. If decisions are only of a technical nature, they might as well be left to experts. This conflict between alternatives cannot be rationally solved. It is in this context that an antagonistic division between friend/enemy can arise (Schmitt, 1932). Political participants judge whether other participants are trying to determine their way of life. If this is the case, then the 'other' turns into an enemy that must be fought off in order to preserve their way of life (ibid.).

Mouffe argues that the political antagonisms constitute a hegemonic social order (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Between different political ideologies, one is the most dominant and has therefore established hegemony. She builds her theory on hegemony from Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which focused on capitalist hegemony. The hegemonic capitalist ideology was characterized by the antagonisms between social classes. However, Mouffe

(ibid.) argues that a variety of social identities can be in such an antagonistic struggle. This means that the concept of hegemony applies to the continuous antagonistic struggle between those that have power and those that do not.

Mouffe argues that social objectivity is always constituted by power derived from this hegemony (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Those who have power will determine the social norm. This is why Mouffe is considered an opponent to a deliberative democracy. If political decision making would be seen as a consequence of rationality instead of power, the hegemony of those in power would not be acknowledged, masking inequalities. The consequences of 'consensual' policy making would therefore be disastrous for oppressed groups (LGBTIQ+, black people, women, young people).

Every consensus must be seen as "a temporary result of a provisional hegemony, as a stabilization of power" (Mouffe, 1996, p.11). The temporal aspect of hegemony deserves more attention. If hegemony is decisive for political decision making, then political contestation for hegemony will be inevitable. Instead of overthrowing a hegemonic power through revolution, the concept and temporality of hegemony should be accepted and politics should be seen as a continuous battle over it. Accepting hegemony allows certain policies to be in favor of certain groups, because it accepts that "relations of power are constitutive of the social" (Mouffe, 2000a, p.758). 'Winners' and 'losers' are then easier to identify, which makes it possible for the losers to make their disadvantages more salient.

In short, agonism has two major benefits. First, by accepting the antagonistic nature of the political, politics are more efficiently focused on the negation of these antagonisms. Political institutions can aim at containing political emotional outbursts instead of achieving an impossible consensus. The deliberative model counteracts these goals: "consensus and the refusal of confrontation lead to apathy and disaffection with political participation" (Mouffe, 2000a, p.761). The result could be that passions are left uncontrolled, inciting emotional and potentially violent outburst. Second, by accepting hegemony, agonism makes discriminatory decision making in politics transparent.

The goal of agonism is to make hegemony visible. When hegemony is made visible, participants of an agonistic democracy can contest the dominant values and beliefs. In doing this, participants should see each other as mutual enemies, yet the enemy is

legitimate. The legitimacy of the enemy derives from the shared principles of liberal democracy, namely liberty and equality (Mouffe, 2000b). Mouffe calls this legitimate enemy an 'adversary'. The way in which citizens must interact with each other, as adversaries, is subjected to a few requirements that I will explicate below.

Agonistic virtues

The first requirement for citizens is that they show '**agonistic respect**' to other citizens (Connolly, 2005). Agonistic respect is a result of the shared experience of the battle between different identities. In other words, it is recognized that other citizens are struggling to represent their interests, values and beliefs, even if these are different from your own. Agonistic respect forms the basis for viewing others as adversaries instead of enemies that need to be eradicated. Mouffe acknowledges that agonistic respect is an important virtue for citizens, but also points at the limitations that this respect may have (Mouffe, 2013).

A second requirement is that of **agonistic expression**. When an ideology has hegemony, it is expected of citizens that they will challenge this ideology in order to transform the institutions in power (Mouffe, 2013). Agonism is by itself incompatible with an institutionalized structure. Agonism can be seen as an 'ethos of disturbance', which relocates the focus from top-down democratic institutions to a critical attitude towards politics (Tambakaki, 2011). Agonism is performed by challenging, disturbing and resisting anything that is hegemonically viewed as a final solution. Therefore, it moves away from formal participatory democratic processes and towards securing political mobilization (ibid.). It moves away from institutionalized decision making processes and towards an affirmation of the open political contest (Schaap, 2006). Citizens are expected to actively participate in this open contest.

Van Leeuwen (2015) points out that active participation in this contest can be agonizing. Being contested on values or beliefs means that identity differences are recognized and representing these differences through agonistic debate can be tiring. Especially since agonistic contests may be emotional and critical. On the one hand, it is desirable that a clash of identities occurs, on the other hand, this clash may be too much to handle for participants. It is therefore necessary that participants have enough stamina to have their differences contested and to contest other's differences.

When a contestation occurs, what would this contestation look like? I argue that a distinction should be made between agonistic dialogue (between two people) and agonistic debates (in front of several others). Agonistic dialogue focuses on the understanding of the other, even though differences and disagreements are inevitable (Maddison, 2015). The role of differences and disagreements is important, since making these more transparent through dialogue increases this understanding. Exposing differences would result in “transforming the antagonist in the conflict into a ‘complete, full-bodied entity’” (Maddison, 2015, p.1021).

Agonistic debate however, will add an element of competition to the conversation. Early Indian philosophers, the Naiyayikas, describe three types of debates: Vada, jalpa and vitanda (Sudarsan, 1999). Vada is a reasoned and cognitive form of debating, which is associated with a healthy dialogue. **Jalpa** is a form of dialogue where the goal is to win the debate, distinguished by debating tactics and statements that aim to triumph over the opponent. Vitanda is a type of debate where debaters limit themselves to the refutation of the opponent's argument. Jalpa (and arguably, vitanda⁴) can be present in agonistic debates, since an agonistic debate incites competition between participants.

Contrary to Maddison's interpretation of the agonistic dialogue, I argue that even a dialogue between two people contains a competitive element. The initial reason for agonistic dialogue may be to create a better understanding of the other, but the way in which this is done is through contestation of the other's views. Losing the debate implies that someone's values are less rational, that someone's identity is less logically defensible. 'Winning' or 'losing' may not influence a third party, but it may influence the self-respect of the people involved. Even in an agonistic dialogue, jalpa argumentation may therefore occur.

Furthermore, it is important that citizens are **open to being converted** in an agonistic democracy. Mouffe (2000b) argues that altering subjectivity in agonism, the shift of opinions, regards a conversion of political beliefs. This differs from the deliberative rational persuasion, since a conversion regards a shift in political identity. While only briefly discussed by Mouffe, the possibility for conversion has significant relevance for

⁴ Since vitanda is linked to the aim of vanquishing the opponent, it could be argued that this form is antagonistic

her interpretation of agonism. By admitting that conversion is possible, there seems to be a paradox in the conceptualization of 'identities' (Dryzek, 2005). On the one hand, identities are fixed, enabling a vibrant clash between them. On the other hand, identities are fluid, enabling the possibility for conversion.

I argue that agonism needs identities to be flexible (i.e. requires citizens to be open to conversion) in order to be a useful approach to democracy. After all, how can dominant hegemonic ideologies in society shift if the identities that constitute this hegemony are fixed. All that would be left is the exchange of basic information regarding the practical needs and interests of others; a sort of reciprocal recognition (Dryzek, 2005). There might be more efficient ways to communicate these practicalities than the agonistic contestation. If agonism only incites reciprocal recognition, it could even be argued that institutions could manage the specific needs and interests of others. There is then not a lot which agonistic expression would achieve.

Lastly, Mouffe foresees that the antagonisms in politics need to be channeled through institutions in order to prevent a violent outburst between friend/enemy groups (Mouffe, 2013). She argues that an agonistic debate will prevent dangerous outlets of passion (fundamentalist movements, particularistic demand and non-negotiable moral issues) (Mouffe, 2012). The outlet of political passions in xenophobic ways is, according to Mouffe, caused by a lack of agonistic debate. From this perspective, Agonistic debate will not incite, but prevent violent outburst. Contemporary violent outbursts of far-right extremists in the USA (Unite the Right rally, Capitol storming) show what violence looks like in the absence of an agonistic debate. An agonistic debate would channel the passions that are currently ignored, into a democratic outlet (ibid.).

A distinction can be made between violence within the debate and outside the debate. I argue that Mouffe refers to the potential violence that will occur outside of the debate. If the agonistic debate is absent, or does not adequately channel passions, it leads to other expressions of passion. These expressions are dangerous and can become violent. However, my concern about violence lies within the debate. The ability to **abstain from violence** when confronted by opposing political identities may be difficult to some. Considering the tiresome process of contestation and the emotions that accompany political contestation, a violent outburst within the debate is plausible.

In chapter 2, the concept of deliberative mini-publics has been presented as an institutionalized tool to enhance democracy. A deliberative mini-public has an organized structure: A formal assembly of participants who represent the larger population. I argued in part 1 that agonism moves away from these institutionalized decision making processes. Agonistic political expressions could never flourish in the deliberative structure of the fabricated mini-public that was described in chapter 2.

A clash of identities is an essential part for an agonistic democracy (Mouffe, 2000). A clash of identities is characterized by emotional expression, frustrations and day-to-day personal experiences. To moderate such social contests by pre-designed conversational spaces is contradicting the way in which agonistic political expression is executed. A fabricated mini-public offers structure and control, which would only restrain the clash of identities. Changing the design in such a manner that a clash is more likely to happen would not be desirable either. It would replace the natural political clash for an artificial polarization of groups in a controlled environment.

SCHOOLS

For agonistic democratic theory, it is therefore better to look at political mobilization as it occurs in micro-publics instead of constructing an assembly meant for agonistic political expression. Micro-publics are “spaces of association, with a limited entry for the general public, in which dialogue, debate and prosaic negotiations are compulsory” (Van Leeuwen, 2019, p.11). In these micro-publics, daily negotiation of differences and everyday social contact and encounters occur (Amin, 2002). Sport clubs and the workplace are micro-publics, but more importantly for this research, schools are micro-publics as well.

Agonistic practices in school can be successfully implemented in the educational system (Koutsouris, Stentiford, Benham-Clarke & Hall, 2021). Schools can become a place where young people get exposed to the challenges of democratic procedures (ibid.). They will engage in heated public debates, requiring them to incorporate the civic virtues attached to an agonistic democracy. This will make them prepare for a political life in an agonistic democracy, making them better citizens. A school can provide lessons on agonism,

teachers can somewhat regulate the debate if undesirable attitudes are displayed and agonistic expressions in schools can easily be monitored.

Agonistic education provides several benefits (Koutsouris, Stentiford, Benham-Clarke & Hall, 2021). Schools are a safe environment (at least, they should be), in which teenagers can safely disagree with others. Marginalized adolescents get the opportunity to make their voices heard. Educational programs will teach adolescents to show agonistic respect to others and to channel their political emotions in an appropriate manner. Lastly, a school can be a space where its ideological hegemony, the meaning of democracy and politics, is continuously reconstructed (ibid.). In order to make this hegemony contestable, a school should allow its students to challenge school policies.

An agonistic educational structure will thus contribute to the development of young people's civic virtues. Furthermore, as an agonistic democracy will improve society, an agonistic educational structure will improve a school's environment as well. Agonism stimulates mutual respect and prevents violence in a democracy. In schools, the absence of respect and the presence of violence can become a serious problem. The presence of antagonisms in school and the incorrect channeling of the emotions that are attached to it can incite violent outbursts: There have been 119 school shootings in the USA in the past five years (Education Week, 2022). I hypothesize that an agonistic educational structure has the potential to prevent these outbursts.

PART 3: YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS AND CIVIC VIRTUES

In the first part of this chapter, I explained the concept of an agonistic democracy. Furthermore, I explicated several requirements for citizens to contribute to an agonistic democracy. To participate in an agonistic democracy, young people must be able to acquire the virtues that are connected to the deliberation process. In addition, I showed that schools could make participation for young people in an agonistic democracy more accessible.

In this third part, I will present group characteristics of young people that may be relevant for agonistic democratic participation. Thereafter, I will consider whether these characteristics enable young people to participate or if the agonistic democratic structure is too demanding. The degree to which the structure is demanding, depends on the compatibility between the group characteristics and the agonistic democratic structure

mentioned in the first part. In the conclusion, I will go over the benefits and disadvantages of youth participation, both for an agonistic democracy and for young people themselves.

AGONISTIC REQUIREMENTS

What are the required characteristics to act in an agonistic micro-public? In part 1, five desired attitudes or capabilities came up: 1. Agonistic respect, 2. Agonistic expression, 3. Abstinence from jalpa, 4. Openness to being converted and 5. Abstinence from violence.

1. Agonistic respect

The relation between people that constitutes desirable actions⁵ in a shared space, is a relation of mutual recognition (Scanslon, 1998). Mutual recognition contains the idea of acting in a way that others could not reasonably reject. I argue that this social agreement, a mutual recognition, is still open for interpretation until the principles of social interaction are determined. Only when a principle has been determined, for example that different values should be contested in social interactions, it is possible to determine which social behavior is desirable and which is not; which action can be reasonably rejected and which not.

In an agonistic democracy, the relation of mutual recognition is characterized by agonistic respect. Connolly's definition of agonistic respect is this: "mutual appreciation for the ubiquity of faith to life, and the inability of contending parties, to date, to demonstrate the truth of one faith over other live candidates" (Connolly, 2005, p.123). Consequently, there are two principles attached to this mutual recognition (Connolly, 2005). First, a person must be able to absorb agonistic contestation, having their own core values and beliefs put into question by others. Second, contest others in such a way that it shows agonistic respect: An emphasis on the non-superiority of your own beliefs.

Is there a reason to believe that young people have more or less difficulty with adhering to either one of these principles? Research suggests that adolescence is a period in which values are in development: Commitment to specific values emerge and solidify during adolescence (Daniel & Benish-Weisman, 2019). The lack of commitment to certain values explains why adolescents have not yet fully developed their political identity (Rekker,

⁵ Scanslon mentions 'moral' actions, but to analyze democratic behavior I think 'desirable' actions are more applicable

Keijsers, Branje & Meeus, 2017). This characteristic may make it easier for young people to adhere to the first principle: When adolescents are not fully clinging to their own values, it is easier to have these values contested, since it does not provoke doubts about political identity.

It can be assumed that adolescents generally comply with the second principle more easily as well. The lack of commitment to a specific value makes it less likely that opposite values would be confronted with an air of superiority. The lack of commitment to young people's own values already implies a sort of non-superiority. It would be illogical to condemn another person's point of view, when their own values are not sorted out completely. I expect that the development of personal values, the instability of their own value system, will make it easier for teenagers to challenge other people's values respectfully.

2. Agonistic expression

It is clear what is required from members of an agonistic democracy regarding agonistic expression: Challenging dominant political identities and values. However, what kind of characteristics would accompany this requirement? First of all, before the expression, there would need to be an incentive for this challenge. Young people have to recognize differences and be willing to challenge them. Secondly, during the expression, young people need to have an agonistic stamina: They need to be able to challenge and be challenged without getting harmed in the process. Thirdly, their expression should not hold back passionate and emotional feelings. Lastly, at the end of the expression, young people need to accept that the current hegemonic ideology may proceed to exist and not get discouraged.

To be incentivized to challenge someone's values, a clear and strong perception of your own personal values is needed. Otherwise, how would it be possible to identify the values opposing your own; the values that should be challenged? For young people, their values are not yet fully developed. The development and settlement of values happen during adolescence (Daniel & Benish-Weisman, 2019). From this point of view, it is plausible that young people would not challenge others as much as adults do.

On the other hand, adolescence is often associated with rebellion (Pickhardt, 2009). Challenging the authority of adults can be done by contesting their rhetoric, values and

believes. It is then plausible that teenagers would have more incentive to challenge adults than adults have. This rebellion may not be limited to adults. During adolescence, teenagers also show a rebellion of non-conformity which entails a refusal of socially accepted standards. They are therefore more likely to challenge present dominant social values, regardless of the person advocating these values. Peer-to-peer challenges may therefore occur as well.

In chapter 1 it was explained that agonistic theories have neglected the idea that it can be exhausting to have your values challenged. In order for young people to participate in an agonistic democracy, they must be able to not get harmed by agonistic dialogical fatigue in the process. Van Leeuwen's critique on agonism (2015) applies to all people, not just teenagers. For people in general, there is logically an unavoidable limit to their capacity of debating differences. To explore whether young people are less suited to participate in an agonistic democracy, the differences between adolescents and adults regarding agonistic dialogical fatigue must be elaborated on.

On the one hand, it could be argued that young people would have less problems with fatigue since a confrontation of their values will less likely cause a shift of political identity. On the other hand, adolescents are in a transformational period of their lives in which their complex peer relationships are more sensitive to acceptance and rejection (Pfeifer & Blakemore, 2012). Even though agonistic contests happen with respect to the individual, teenagers may feel that they would be 'rejected' when their values are challenged. Even though agonism constitutes a general acceptance of the existence of different values, teenagers might actively want validation of their values from others. Contestation may therefore fatigue teenagers more than adults.

Another requirement of agonistic expression is that emotions are not held back. Teenagers generally like to express themselves in a more emotional way than adults do (McConatha, Leone & Armstrong, 1997). Agonism offers teenagers an outlet for their natural emotional responses. In contemporary politics, a patronizing attitude towards adolescent political emotional outburst is normalized. This is seen in media depictions of young climate activists (Mayes & Hartup, 2021). When young people show political emotions, they are perceived as ignorant zealots, anxious pawns and rebellious truants

(ibid.). The normalization of emotional expression in an agonistic society would tackle condescendence.

Lastly, teenagers must be able to accept the non-consensus that accompanies the agonistic contestation. Research has shown that teenagers more often believe that consensus about their own ideas has already been reached (Yinon, Mayraz & Fox, 1994). In other words, they more often believe that their ideas have hegemony. This false-consensus perception of adolescents can be explained by their more homogeneous social environment. Agonism may provide teenagers with a broadened view of socio-political identities present in society. The homogeneous environment may then have less of an impact on false-consensus perception, improving the political attitude of young people.

3. Abstinance from jalpa

I explained in part 1 how agonistic debates are extra vulnerable for the appearance of intellectually dishonest debating tactics. Some of these tactics include dodging questions, deception and 'dirty' debating (Snow, n.d.). There are two concerns with youth participation in an agonistic debate, that will be addressed here. First, are teenagers able to differentiate honest debating from dishonest debating? If not, it they are less likely to defend themselves against it. Second, are young people more likely to seek refuge in dishonest debating tactics. If so, the participation of young people would be accompanied by a less honest and transparent debating environment.

As far as the first concern goes, that of teenagers being manipulated, it seems not to be the valid. The logical fallacy is not very difficult to detect for teenagers. Even for 11- to 13-year-olds fallacies can be grasped under familiar conditions, with experience-based models showcasing the relations involved (Christoforides, Spanoudis & Demetriou, 2016). For adolescents, logical fallacies are recognized even in hypothetical context, showing a thorough understanding if the concept. However, little research has been done on the likelihood of teenagers being manipulated by these tactics in comparison to adults. Even though there is no indication that young people will have more trouble with recognizing dishonest tactics, it cannot be ruled out either.

The second concern is that teenagers may use these tactics more often. Competitiveness would be a solid indicator for the use of these debating tactics (Sudarsan, 1999). Remarkably, no noticeable research has done a comparative analysis of competitiveness

between adolescents and adults. Research either focusses on gender differences in competitiveness during adolescence (Dreber, Von Essen & Ranehill, 2014), or compared age groups after adolescence (Mayr, Wozniak, Davidson, Kuhns & Harbaugh, 2012). Therefore, I will present my argument by focusing on the impact of hormones that tend to peak during puberty and their respective effect on competitiveness.

Research has shown that a rise of testosterone and cortisol can be associated with competition (Casto & Edwards, 2016). In a different study, higher levels of estradiol were associated with competitiveness as well (Stanton & Schultheiss, 2007). It is therefore expected that during adolescence, when these hormone levels are rising (Peper & Dahl, 2013), competitiveness levels will be higher than competitiveness levels of adults. Further research should aim to make transparent what the exact relationship is between adolescence and competitiveness, in order to make conclusive statements about competitiveness of young people in comparison to adults.

To conclude, it is very unlikely that young people will be manipulated by nasty debating tactics. However, it is expected that they are more likely to use these tactics themselves due to their adolescent competitiveness. There is thus a risk that young people would transform the open and transparent clash of values into a closed competitive debate, when they participate in a micro-public. However, the exact degree and impact of their competitiveness is not clear enough to reasonably claim that this risk is imminent.

4. Openness to being converted

In chapters 1 and 2, the concept of persuasion was discussed. It was concluded that adolescents did not differ from adults in such a way that persuasion would have a relevant impact on democratic participation. Conversion differs from persuasion, because conversion requires an initial political identity that the participant gets detached from. For persuasion this political identity is not as strong, since there is no friend/adversary distinction. No research has been done on the political conversability of adolescents in comparison to adults. To evaluate how adolescents differ from adults regarding conversion, the relationship between participation in the public debate and political identity should be elaborated on. If it can be determined that their political identity shifts easily when public debate takes place, it can be assumed that young people are more easily converted.

Research has shown that the political identity of adolescents is, in comparison to that of adults, still in development (Rekker, Keijsers, Branje & Meeus, 2017). The public debate has an effect on political identity, and political identity somewhat determines the position in a public debate. It turns out that the effect of cultural issues on political identity is heightened for young people (ibid.). This means that adolescents shape their political identity when a cultural issue is raised in the public debate. It can be assumed that teenagers are more flexible in terms of political identity, if their identity is shaped by the debate itself.

On the other hand, research has also shown that self-uncertainty may be resolved by group-identification (Hogg, 2014). It is believed that this connection explains the behavior of teenagers joining gangs for example. For an agonistic democracy, it is important to take into consideration what pressure a vibrant debate can put on adolescents. It can be imagined that at certain moments, when the debate is concerning various divisive groups, teenagers would feel comfortable in a shared group identity. This will take the uncertainty caused by their undeveloped political identity away.

Much is therefore still left undetermined, when it comes to the convertibility of young people in an agonistic democracy. It is unsure whether teenagers would 'stick' harder to their political identities more than adults. Furthermore, it has not been defined yet what the desirable convertibility would be in an agonistic democracy. In part 1, it was concluded that some degree of flexibility is necessary. However, if young people's political identities shift too easily, a vibrant clash would not be possible either. After all, how can a clash between political identities be vibrant if they are so close together that shifts are very common? Whether young people would have the desired degree of convertibility remains unclear.

Still, the effect of an agonistic democracy on shaping young people's political identities should be addressed as well. In both approaches, young people's political identities are considered to be in development. The political identity approach suggests that young people would be more easily converted, while the self-uncertainty approach gives the opposite picture. In both theories however, it is stated that young people are still developing their political identity. How would the environment of an agonistic democracy affect this development?

I argue that, either way, attempts for conversion would be harmful for the developmental process of political identity. If teenage political identity is flexible, as Rekker, Keijsers, Branje and Meeus (2017) argue, then the position of young people in an agonistic democracy would be unequal to that of adults. Even though flexibility in an agonistic democracy is necessary to some degree, it is not a virtue to shift from one position to the other easily. It would put teenagers in a weakened position: They would become the passive object that can be moved instead of the active object participating in the vibrant clash of identities.

If teenage political identity is less flexible, due to self-uncertainty resolvment, it would still harm teenagers to participate in agonistic democracy. Taking in a political identity before an attitude towards social issues is determined, undermines the developmental process of the political identity. It would be illogical: A Christian who has not really thought about God and whether it exists. Conversion in an agonistic democracy forces young people to take the stance and double down on their group-identity. It would be better to let teenagers figure their identity out first by themselves. Therefore, I conclude that teenagers would not flourish in an environment where a conversion of political identity takes place.

5. Abstinence from violence

Violence should be understood as a learned process (Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). This implicates that violence will, when it occurs, incite more violence at a later moment. Violence in movies, video games and music is therefore sometimes perceived as problematic and potentially dangerous (ibid.). Humans learn alternatives to violence as well. Humans have learned to replace violence with dialogue. However, it should be noted that the learned aggressive behavior is not unlearned by these alternatives. It is often met with surprise when a law-abiding citizen acts in a violent manner, despite the fact that violence is learned and ready to be used whenever the alternatives do not meet the needs of the individual any longer (ibid.).

I argue that an agonistic debate pushes the human limit in requiring humans to use non-violent alternatives in political debates. It depends on context if a debate will potentially turn violent. For example, an ethnic issue in South Africa will have an increased risk of turning violent when debated, because of the history of apartheid. I do not claim that an

agonistic debate will lead to violence per se. However, the contestation of differences forces citizens in an agonistic democracy to use their non-violent alternatives to compete with others. At some point, this demand cannot be met, because physical aggression naturally functions as a mechanism to compete for resources (Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). At some point the alternatives will no longer fulfill an individual's needs, meaning that they have to resort to violence.

Youth participation in an agonistic democracy leads to two potential problems. First, violence may occur more often in an agonistic democracy, since young people are less capable of using non-violent alternatives to political confrontation. Research has shown that adolescents show more violent behavior than adults do (Tremblay & Nagin, 2005). It is believed that this violent behavior is caused by heightened hormonal levels. Therefore, it can be assumed that young people will breach the non-violent alternative point more easily than adults. In an agonistic democracy, youth participation will then increase the risk of violence.

Second, young people may be more vulnerable to a violent environment than adults. Young people will learn from the violent behavior of others, and have an increased risk of showing violent behavior themselves (ibid.). In addition, when violence occurs in a transitional period of someone's life, it has a larger impact on the course of their life. Adolescents are more vulnerable to violent exposure, because they are in a formative period of their life (MacMillan, 2001) (Hagan & Foster, 2001). Therefore, violent outburst within the agonistic debate will harm teenagers more extensively than adults.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the basic requirements, goals and benefits of an agonistic democracy were explicated. An emphasis on civic attitudes and capabilities were attached to the constitution of an agonistic democracy. These attitudes and capabilities were agonistic respect, agonistic expression, abstinence from jalpa, openness to being converted and abstinence from violence. I have analyzed whether young people are more or less likely to possess these virtues than adults. I put the overall findings in the table below:

Agonistic respect	Due to the development of teenagers' political identities, it is expected that they will have less difficulty with showing agonistic respect than adults have.
Agonistic expression	Teenagers have different characteristics than adults, but it is unsure whether these characteristics will make them more or less likely to contest others. It is also unsure whether teenagers would be more easily tired of this contestation or not. Teenagers will benefit from agonistic expression in the sense that their emotional responses will get a natural outlet and that their homogenous views will be broadened.
Abstinence from jalpa	Teenagers are just as likely to be influenced by jalpa as adults, but they are more likely to use it themselves.
Openness to being converted	Teenagers are more likely to meet this requirement, but they might be overly open to this conversion. It is a valid concern that young people may get harmed if their yet to be developed political identities will be open to conversion.
Abstinence from violence	Young people are more likely to act in a violent manner and are harmed more severely by violent conduct.

While an agonistic democracy poses age-specific challenges for young people, it also seems that young people will benefit from an agonistic environment in certain aspects. In some aspects, young people may even participate in an agonistic democracy more easily than adults do.

In addition, I argued that schools can focus on agonistic expression, preparing young people for participation in an agonistic democracy. This will not only be beneficial for the agonistic political development of young people, it will also increase the quality of the school's environment. I have hypothesized that an agonistic educational structure may even decrease the chance of violent outburst in schools. An agonistic democratic

structure thus seems to include young people relatively well and can be adequately implemented in young people's social environment.

In democratic theory, there has been a shift of focus from a vote-centric democracy to a talk-centric democracy. This research follows this shift by an examination of talk-centric democratic alternatives, deliberative and agonistic democracies, to the current vote-centric representative democracy. There is an extensive debate between democratic theorists on the possibility of letting young people participate in a representative democracy. Until now, democratic theorists have not extensively investigated what the implication of this shift is for young people's participation in democracy. This research therefore analyzed young people's accessibility to actively participate in vote-centric democracies.

First, the debate on adolescents participating in a representative democracy was explicated. The current disenfranchisement of young people remains undisputed among the general public. Common misconceptions about young people's competency and the underestimation of the severity of the issue contribute to this silence among the public. Opponents of enfranchisement claim that young people are not competent enough to vote. Arguments defending this political disenfranchisement of adolescents are based on political inexperience, impulsivity, disinterest and a lack of knowledge.

It is true that young people have specific group characteristics when it comes to experiences, impulsivity, interest and knowledge. However, the causal claim that these differences lead to voter incompetency has not been proven. The claim that differences between adolescents and adults will have an unfavorable effect on democracy is therefore poorly substantiated. The poor support for the justification of youth disenfranchisement is especially remarkable, since young people are faced with the existential threat of climate change. This makes the goal for enfranchisement more urgent and the lack of saliency and poor substantiation of opponents considerably more outrageous.

A shift to a deliberative democracy would be accompanied by different requirements than that of a representative democracy. Therefore, it could be that this shift would create competency thresholds that would make participation for young people more difficult. The virtues of a deliberative democracy that I went through are emotional self-control, persuadability, reenactive and radical empathy, faith in the deliberative process and

political self-esteem. As it turns out, young people were less able to meet these requirements, with the exception of persuadability. The shift towards a deliberative democracy creates a higher demand for young people, which may result in their exclusion from democracy. If young people would participate in deliberative democracy through mini-publics, these mini-publics have to be structured in a way that makes them more inclusive to teenagers.

A shift to an agonistic democracy is accompanied by these virtues: Agonistic respect, agonistic expression, abstinence from jalpa, openness to being converted and abstinence from violence. Young people differ from adults in the ability to acquire these virtues. However, some of these virtues are actually more applicable to the characteristics of adolescents than those of adults. Especially when it comes to emotional expression, teenagers will benefit from an agonistic outlet. Therefore, the demand of an agonistic democracy does not seem to be heavier for adolescents than for it is for adults.

How should the shift from a vote-centric to a talk-centric democracy transpire, in order to make democratic participation accessible to teenagers? For both the shift to a deliberative democracy and to an agonistic democracy, the school will play a big role in the political development of young people. Because school attendance is obligatory, all adolescents will be in a controlled and easily monitored environment. This offers the opportunity to teach adolescents the necessary skills to actively participate in democracy.

However, the content of this educational program differs between both democracies. A deliberative democracy focuses more on civic friendship: Trying to establish a mutual understanding, which will ideally result in consensus. An agonistic democracy will focus on creating an open contestation between political adversaries, in an environment of agonistic respect. Since both theories have such a different approach to how citizens should interact with each other, I think that it is best to choose one line of citizenship over the other. However, both theories have their own strengths and weaknesses regarding youth inclusivity, as I have shown.

Taking all benefits and disadvantages in both democracies into consideration, I argue that an agonistic approach to democracy would make democratic participation for young people more accessible than a deliberative approach. The deliberative requirement to hold back emotional responses and argue purely by reason is a big demand for young

people. The emotional outlet that agonism offers is more compatible with young people's natural characteristics. In addition, it offers young people a possibility to express concerns about their disadvantaged position in society.

However, this does not mean that young people will not face problems if the shift towards an agonistic democracy takes place. Young people may still need to learn to debate in an intellectually honest manner and deal with the tiredness that agonistic contestation may cause. They must also abstain from violent conduct when participating in a heated agonistic debate. The differences between adolescents and adults must still be acknowledged, in order to educate young people correctly and in order to understand their limits in an agonistic democracy. Only when these differences are recognized and accepted, can an agonistic democracy be truly inclusive.

DISCUSSION

In order to make any statement about youth participation in a deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy, I had to elaborate on what constitutes these democratic concepts. The theoretical and practical dimensions of both needed to be presented. The framework I offered on a deliberative democracy was a result of a specific perspective on deliberative democracy. Similarly, the framework I offered on an agonistic democracy was a result of a specific perspective on agonism. Therefore, some alternative requirements to participate derived from other perspectives may have been overlooked.

Without going into detail about every possible alternative perspective to deliberative or agonistic democracy, I will shortly discuss an alternative to deliberative democracy to illustrate the point I am making. Hoggett and Thompson (2002) build on the idea of a deliberative democracy, but argue that the presence of emotions will contribute to the deliberation process. They argue that commitment to a mutual understanding will be derived from emotional expression, since emotions are at the basis of communication and learning the other's perspective (ibid.). Therefore, they opt for a 'democracy of the emotions'. The shift towards a 'democracy of the emotions' is similar to that of a deliberative democracy, but offers an emotional outlet.

This new interpretation demands a new analysis of youth accessibility. Especially because I have concluded that the lack of emotional outlet in a deliberative democracy

was a big disadvantage for young people. It can be imagined that several other alternatives to deliberative democracy or agonism would require new analyses for youth participation as well. The conclusion of this research, favoring agonism over deliberative democracy, is therefore solely applicable to the specific interpretation of deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy that was presented in this paper.

Furthermore, the scope of this research has been limited to face-to-face social interactions and political conversations. However, recent developments in democratic theory focus on the emergence of social media as an online space in which these interactions occur. Recent technological developments in the field of social media cause an increase of political polarization due to algorithms (Cho, Ahmed, Hilbert, Liu & Luu, 2020). This political polarization may influence ideas on mutual understanding and existing antagonisms. Young people use social media the most often (Sharifian, Kraal, Zaheed, Sol, Morris & Zahodne, 2021). Further research could investigate how social media affects youth participation in both an agonistic and deliberative democracy.

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