Searching for Democracy

A Study of Democracy in Education in English and Norwegian Secondary Schools

Helle Kristin Gulestøl and Svein Arne Farstad

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore participatory democracy in selected English and Norwegian secondary schools. The study applies a comparative approach which aims to identify what factors in the school environments which represent democratic strengths and weaknesses with regard to participatory democracy. The research question to be answered is "What promotes and what hinders democracy in education in selected secondary schools?" To answer this question we applied in-depth interviews with a total of six school leaders from five schools in South East England and seven school leaders from four schools in the Oslo area in Norway. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured fashion, focusing on democratic implications of central areas of daily school life: citizenship education practices, student voice, interpersonal relations and learning environment, inclusion of students' life experiences in school life, and leadership practices. These are some of the findings from the study: With regard to how citizenship education was viewed, all respondents from both countries agreed on the great importance of this area in education. In the English context respondents found it challenging for schools and educators to maintain a commitment to the subject in an educational environment that looked primarily at academic rigour and favoured traditional subjects that are more easily tested. In the Norwegian context, respondents were content with the way citizenship was embedded in the curricula and how this approach worked in practice. The Norwegian respondents were concerned about a possible weakening of student voice due to the removal of the student council slot from years 8 and 9. The influence the English student councils had in school life appeared more limited than what was allegedly the case for their Norwegian counterparts. Leadership approaches in the Norwegian schools were generally less hierarchical, teamwork oriented and informal whereas in the English schools distributed leadership was the general approach and hierarchy was more pronounced. One aspect of the study was to map views on democracy in education in general in the two countries. A rather striking finding was that all English respondents characterized their education system as definitely not democratic whereas the Norwegian respondents meant the Norwegian education system definitely was democratic. Across all sub-areas of the study, dialogue emerged from the data as perhaps the most important factor for the promotion of participatory democracy in the schools. This underscores the importance for educators to make an effort to implement a quality dialogue in interpersonal relations in education.

Foreword

This thesis marks the end of a master programme in school leadership and management at the University of Oslo. It has been an inspiring journey, and we would like to thank the UTLED lecturers for inspiring and thought provoking lectures and also our fellow students for interesting discussions and collaboration on various assignments.

As part of this study we participated in the 2011 Erasmus IP Programme – 'Leadership for Democratic Citizenship in European Schools' – together with students from five other countries. This triggered a stronger personal interest in education for democratic citizenship, so when it was time to decide what to focus on in our thesis, we wanted to explore democracy in education further. A study with international implications seemed like a good idea and a natural follow-up of our IP experiences in Murcia, Spain.

In particular we would like to thank our tutor Janicke Heldal Stray, whose advice and support have been of great value to us throughout the process. We would also like to thank Eli Ottesen who gave valuable advice and direction in the initial stage of our research. Our contact in England, who connected us with relevant interviewees, also deserves our gratitude since without her help we would probably have struggled.

Last, but not least, we would like to thank all our English and Norwegian respondents. If they had not been so forthcoming and generous with their time, and their effort to provide us with valuable information, this thesis would not have come about.

Oslo, May 2015

Svein Arne Farstad and Helle Kristin Gulestøl

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1. Introduction

Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.
(John Dewey, 1980, p. 139).

Democracy is the most fundamental principle and building block of modern society. This point takes on its sharpest focus when democracy comes under attack or when democratic values and ways of life are threatened or challenged in one way or another by extremist forces and sentiments. In recent years the world has seen numerous examples of such challenges, even in well-established democracies. Many countries experience increased intolerance, xenophobia, racism, and political and religious extremism. Sometimes this translates into violence, terrorist acts, or even war. Minor incidents by western standards, like caricature drawings, can sometimes provoke worldwide turmoil.

Long-standing, well-established western democracies also face challenges to democracy of a different nature. For instance, many European countries experience a growing lack of interest in participating in general elections. According to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSDnytt 4/06), this is a global trend that started in the 1970s. Does the lack of engagement suggest that citizens in established democracies take democracy for granted? Or does it mean that many citizens feel they have no say and that social, political, and economic injustices are perpetuated no matter what they do? What seems clear is that many countries struggle to uphold an active democratic society in the traditional representative sense due to a lack of engagement, disillusionment, and distrust of politicians and of the political system among their citizens. According to the Council of Europe (CoE), studies show that "most people throughout Europe are becoming disenfranchised from their political systems. They do not trust politicians, they are confused about political institutions and they are sceptical about the value of voting" (What is EDC/HRE, n.d., para. 6).

On the other hand, to people living under repressive regimes, the democratic ideals of freedom and equality represent a dream with highly explosive powers. This we have also clearly seen demonstrated in recent years, with dictatorships and autocratic and corrupt governments being toppled by popular uprisings (e.g. during the "Arab spring" in several Arab countries and protest movements in other countries such as Ukraine). However, the euphoric sentiments of freedom and hope that arose among people in these cases were soon

suppressed by non-democratic counter-attacks, probably partly due to a resulting political vacuum – the absence of stable political and judicial institutions to uphold law and order – and a lack of democratic knowledge and experience among the populations of these countries.

These initial observations illustrate that we live in turbulent times, with democratic advances and setbacks on many fronts. Democracy is not a static, given entity but rather a complex cluster of intertwined processes in continuous evolution. The realization in society of its ideals cannot be taken for granted, but must be worked with and fought for constantly. John Dewey's words, cited above in the epigraph, underline this need for every generation to help in democracy's rebirth and point out the path for that act of midwifery: through education (1916). In other words, education is the key to keeping democracy alive and aiding in its development. Without genuine engagement and involvement from active citizens in all areas and levels of society – from participation in the local community to engagement in regional and national matters – democracy withers. Only through education can we increase the awareness of how a democracy works – or should work – and decrease the possibilities of a democratic deficit. If education within a democracy is dysfunctional or fails, this could have serious consequences for the future of that democracy.

Along with protecting human rights and the rule of law, protecting democracy is one of the core values of the Council of Europe. Therefore, the Council has for many years worked towards a common European understanding of what education for democratic citizenship should be. In 1997 the Second Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe decided "to launch an initiative for education for democratic citizenship with a view to promoting citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society" (Council of Europe [CoE], 2010, p. 5).

The Council of Europe Charter for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights defines the concept *education for democratic citizenship* (EDC) as follows:

> "Education for democratic citizenship" means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law. (CoE, 2010, p. 7).

In other words, the Council of Europe's main objective with EDC is to empower students to become active democrats in the broadest sense through learning by doing. Democratic countries are dependent on the ability of their citizens to participate actively in society, and the ideal is for all citizens to play a part. EDC is, in its broadest sense, about learning how to live together. According to the CoE Charter (2010), EDC does not just happen in schools during citizenship lessons. It covers all forms of education and is not just about learning to vote. It is also about learning to sort out problems without recourse to violence, and solve disputes fairly.

The environmentalist slogan "think globally, act locally" applies equally well to democratic citizenship education. Building the foundations of a personal understanding, appreciation, and application of universal democratic ideals can only happen on the individual and group levels locally – in schools, homes, and other local arenas of daily life. The school is the most important common arena, as a place where all citizens spend an important formative part of their lives. Schools must function democratically for students to learn through practical experience how to behave and participate democratically in a democratic society. In order to be able to do so, schools should be dynamic institutions able to change and adapt to changes in society; in fact, schools should be at the forefront of such change, contributing to the regeneration and renewal of the concept of democracy.

1.1. Purpose, approach, and delimitation

The purpose of study in this thesis is to explore and analyse to what extent secondary schools function democratically – how they work as "educational sites of democratic living" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 42). More specifically, the purpose is to gain insights into educational practices and leadership practices in selected secondary schools and use these insights to identify factors which promote or hinder democracy in these schools. Considering the great importance of democracy to society, it is of great interest to explore what schools actually do in practice to realize democracy in education. More knowledge and an increased awareness about which phenomena contribute, and how they contribute to the level of democracy in school life, has potential relevance in several respects. This knowledge could be beneficial to both teachers and school leaders in their daily practice as well as to bureaucrats and politicians working with the education system on a local or national level.

The methodological approach is to conduct in-depth interviews with school leaders in selected secondary schools; the data from these interviews provide the empirical basis for the study. To enhance the possibilities of gaining insight into processes which strengthen or weaken democracy in education, we have interviewed school leaders from two countries with quite different school systems and also quite different citizenship education approaches – England and Norway. Furthermore, we have interviewed several school leaders in each country to obtain a clearer picture of possible variations in how the schools function democratically both within each country and between the countries. A total of six English respondents from five secondary schools and seven Norwegian respondents from four lower secondary schools participated in the study. The study thus has a comparative methodological element to support its primary purpose. Furthermore, the rationale for choosing to explore secondary schools is that citizenship education is primarily taught in secondary schools in England, thus facilitating a comparison with the Norwegian context, where citizenship education is taught both in primary and secondary schools.

Another reason for making English and Norwegian schools the subjects of study is the findings of the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education study from 2009 (ICCS). The ICCS report showed a significant decline in civic knowledge and understanding among English students since the IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED) in 1999. They performed rather poorly on questions regarding civic principles such as equity, freedom, and social cohesion, according to the English ICCS report (Nelson, Wade & Kerr, 2010). Support for immigrant rights was among the lowest of all participating countries, and they also had low levels of trust in politicians and political parties. Generally speaking, Norwegian students performed better than the English, with only minor changes since the CIVED study in 1999 (Mikkelsen, Fjeldstad & Lauglo, 2011). These differences between the students of the two countries constitute an interesting back-cloth and a further motivation for choosing these particular countries to study strengths and weaknesses in democracy in education.

To delimit the scope of the thesis we have chosen to focus on interview data connected to areas of central importance to daily life in the school community (i.e. areas where school leaders, teachers, and students alike can have a more or less direct impact and influence on democratic practices). More specifically, the scope of the thesis is defined to include interview data connected to citizenship education practices, student voice, personal relations and the learning environment as well as school leadership and the inclusion of students' life

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experiences in schools. Furthermore, in addition to exploring practices in these particular areas in the selected schools, we also explore what views the school leaders have on the same issues, based on the rationale that views and actions are generally closely related and interconnected.

To be able to express the extent to which the findings in our data represent democratic strengths or deficits – what hinders and what promotes democracy in schools – theory is needed. On the basis of the data analysis, we found that Michael Fielding and Peter Moss's (2011) theoretical educational perspective provided the necessary tools for a general discussion of the findings, and Philip A. Woods's (2005) theory proved appropriate for discussing leadership aspects of the findings. We return to a more extensive presentation of our choices of theory in the theory chapter.

1.2. Research question

This study aims to establish the extent to which central aspects of daily school life in selected schools in England and Norway can be said to have democratic characteristics or features. Through a comparison across different schools in these two democratic countries it seeks to identify factors that can promote or hinder a democratic way of life in the schools. The above introduction provides the background and rationale for the following research question:

What promotes and what hinders democracy in education in selected secondary schools?

In order to answer the research question we introduce these three sub-questions:

- How is citizenship education carried out, and how is it viewed by school leaders?

- How do the schools function as arenas for democratic practices in terms of student voice, personal relations and the learning environment, and the inclusion of students' life experiences – and how are these aspects of school life viewed by school leaders?

- How do school leadership practices affect democracy in the schools and what are the views of school leaders on school leadership and democracy in education?

1.3. Terminology

The Council of Europe quote above defines what is meant by *education for democratic citizenship* (EDC). In this thesis we will also use the term *democracy in education*, which is a wider concept. EDC focuses on the learner, whereas democracy in education is a wider concept and includes all democratic processes within schools.

In this thesis the terms *democratic citizenship education*, *citizenship education*, *citizenship* and The Council of Europe's term *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC) are perceived to be synonyms. Some English schools have democratic citizenship education as a specific subject – Citizenship Education – whereas other schools teach citizenship education as part of their PSHE programme – Personal, Social and Health Education. Thus, when *Citizenship Education* appears capitalized in the text it refers to the school subject, whereas *citizenship education* refers to the concept. In Norway citizenship education is embedded in several subject curricula and is also intended to permeate teaching and school life in general. In this text we will for the most part use the term citizenship education or just citizenship.

1.4. Structure

The thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter is this introduction. Chapter two provides a background on citizenship education in England and Norway, in the form of an overview of the development of the English Citizenship Education throughout the 1990s and up till now and a presentation of the Norwegian Core Curriculum and the Knowledge Promotion Reform. The third chapter presents theory chosen for the interpretation of the interview data. The fourth chapter deals with the study's methodological approach, and the fifth chapter is an analysis or presentation of categorized interview data. In the sixth chapter we discuss our findings in light of our theoretical approach, answer the research questions, and put forward some implications for democracy education practices in schools and ideas for further studies in this field.

2. Background on citizenship education in England and Norway

This chapter offers a brief presentation of the approaches to citizenship education in England and Norway. As the approaches are quite different, the purpose is to give an overview of the most important aspects of the two systems as well as a frame of reference for later use in the thesis. To provide a more complete picture we also present critiques related to citizenship education put forward by prominent voices in the English and Norwegian educational discourses. In the English context the critique concerns citizenship education as such, whereas in the Norwegian context it indirectly concerns the country's citizenship education approach.

2.1. The English approach to citizenship education

> The teaching of citizenship education as a radical and subversive subject can and will change the world. Something has to. (Ralph Leighton, 2012).

Citizenship Education has "been around" in one form or another for the better part of the 20th century. Towards the end of the 1980s, under a Conservative government, it was introduced into the National Curriculum Council's publication *Curriculum Guidance* (Arthur and Wright, 2001) as a cross-curricular element (Berge and Stray, 2012). According to Arthur and Wright (2001), Citizenship Education was taught largely by non-specialist teachers, often with a lack of enthusiasm. More endured than enjoyed among pupils, this non-statutory subject has never enjoyed a high status, nor has it been assessed. For the most part it was introduced to reduce crime and political apathy among young people (Davis, 2012). A Labour government established a cross-party advisory group – the Government's Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy – chaired by professor Bernhard Crick. The Crick report (QCA, 1998) was based on T.H. Marshall's classic definition of the three phases of citizenship – the civil, the political, and the social – ending up with three key dimensions: social and moral responsibility, political literacy, and community involvement (Arthur & Wright, 2001, p. 2). In 2002 Citizenship Education became statutory in key stages 3 and 4, and in 2007 there was a revision of the National Curriculum for Citizenship which added a fourth dimension: identity and diversity. Arthur and Wright also summarize the approaches taken in Citizenship Education this way:

1. education *about* citizenship – knowledge of the political system operating in England, the UK and Europe;

2. education *for* citizenship – the development of skills and values as a means to encourage active citizens;

3. education *through* citizenship – emphasis on learning by doing through experiences in and out of school (Arthur & Wright, 2001).

This corresponds well with Will Kymlicka (1999):

> Citizenship Education is not just a matter of learning the basic facts about the institutions and procedures of political life; it also involves acquiring a range of dispositions, virtues and loyalties that are intimately bound up with the practice of democratic citizenship (in Arthur & Wright, 2001, p. 2).

Ralph Leighton (2012) calls for change in how Citizenship Education is taught; he advocates for a radical approach since he contends that despite the good intentions in the curriculum, Citizenship does not seem to work the way it is supposed to:

> Emphasis is often placed upon the accumulation of "facts", of little snippets of information which are mistaken for learning and understanding, those things which can be easily identified, examined and measured (...) Currently, even the National Curriculum emphasis on skills appears to require naming and explaining such skills rather than demonstrating and developing them. (Leighton, 2012, p. 7).

By *radical* he means there is a need to both face up to and attempt to resolve problems such as "political apathy, political intolerance, political inertia, political disempowerment – and the problem of politicians who neither deserve nor earn respect" (Leighton, 2012, p. 10). A radical approach is to give students opportunities to develop into "constructive and involved citizens" (Leighton, 2012, p. 34).

Leighton's criticism of the way Citizenship Education has been taught focuses on what and how to teach rather than why. The purpose of citizenship education is to equip students with the ability to think critically, to question how society works and how to participate in changing it for the better. The teaching of the subject should also be scrutinized: "To teach the National Curriculum for Citizenship in a critical and radical framework requires that we scrutinize what we are expected to teach about and that we enable our pupils to critically engage with their own learning" (Leighton, 2012, p. 12). Leighton gives an example to underpin what he means. According to The National Curriculum for Citizenship, teachers must teach students that democracy is more or less flawless – something most students will

know is not so. They will have experienced that there is a difference "between the ideals of the democratic experience and practical experience at the local level" (Woods, 2005, p. 33) since there is discrimination and inequality even in a democratic country. Leighton contends that unless the institutions of government are questioned, students end up with a limited understanding of what democracy is (Leighton, 2012). The poor performance of English students compared to students of many other countries on questions regarding civic freedom – as identified in the English 2009 ICCS report (Nelson, Wade & Kerr, 2010) – may have to do with the shortcomings in the approach to Citizenship Education identified by Leighton.

Leighton (2012) sees the need for a change not only within the subject itself: "It is not enough for pupils to be involved in Citizenship Education lessons once every week or so, if the rest of their school experience does not support and reinforce the value and values of the subject" (Leighton, 2012, p. 39). The ethos of a school – the characteristic spirit as manifested in its attitudes and ambitions – is crucial, Leighton claims, seeing it as either the biggest hurdle or the greatest opportunity for pupils to learn through experiencing. The responsibility lies with the school management teams and governing bodies. If citizenship education is not valued, it limits the opportunities for pupils to understand and make progress. For citizenship education to meet the aims of the National Curriculum for England (QCA 2007) – "[to] enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens - not only through citizenship education but through all subjects" – school leaders must be committed to making this happen in their schools.

> If those involved in running a school are not committed to the development of pupils as citizens, the subject will be no different to any other. School leaders, governors, administrative and other support staff, parents, pupils, visitors, the wider community – everyone has to be involved. Once they are fully involved and fully committed, opportunities to develop are limited only by the collective imagination. (Leighton, 2012, p. 44).

In the summer of 2013 the national curriculum programmes of study for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 were disapplied for the upcoming academic year. In September 2013 the new national curriculum for Citizenship Education was published. Its purpose of study is as follows:

> A high-quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In

particular, citizenship education should foster pupils' keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments (…) (National Curriculum for England, 2013).

Leighton's (2012) main criticism of how Citizenship Education has been taught is the focus on what to teach and how to do so instead of why. The revised purpose of study in the new national curriculum is perhaps more in line with Leighton. The next section describes how EDC is structured in the Norwegian educational system.

2.2. The Norwegian approach to citizenship education

This section gives an overview of the Norwegian approach to embed citizenship education in schools as expressed in the Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994) and the Education Act (Act of 17 July, 1998).

The 2009 objects clause of the Norwegian Education Act states that the objectives of education and training "shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking." (Act of 17 July, 1998). Thus the Education Act is explicit on democracy. Furthermore, the Norwegian curriculum aspires to strengthen democracy, as stated in the Core Curriculum:

Education (...) must promote democracy, national identity and international awareness. It shall further solidarity with other peoples and with mankind's common living environment, so that our country can remain a creative member of the global community. (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 5).

The Core Curriculum was implemented as a part of R94 – Reform 94 for upper secondary education and L97 – the Curricula for Primary and Lower Secondary Schools. Its holistic approach is clear:

Education must be dedicated to the personal qualities we wish to develop and not solely to subject matter. The key is to create an environment that provides ample opportunities for children and young people to evolve social responsibility and practical capability for their future roles as adults. (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 32).

In other words, the Core curriculum underscores that to "promote democracy, national identity and international awareness" the whole learning environment must contribute to making this happen. This approach resonates well with John Dewey's words quoted at the beginning of the introductory chapter. Teachers are important role models and should lead the way by their example, structuring their teaching so that the pupils "can take part in the further development of inherited practices and in the acquisition of new [ones]" (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 12). It also clearly states that teachers should work closely together since "contemporary teaching and learning is teamwork" (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 23). In addition, the one teacher-one child model does not apply: the staff function as a community of colleagues who share responsibility for the pupils' development (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 24). Teachers are also responsible for creating a learning environment that involves pupils in sharing responsibility for "planning, executing and evaluating their own work" (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 23). Moreover, it is essential that teachers work closely with parents as well as other professionals and the authorities to form a broad learning environment.

Norway does not have citizenship education as a separate subject because democracy is intended to be a visible element in schools as such in addition to being embedded in subject curricula, particularly in Social Studies and Norwegian, English, Religion, and Philosophies of Life and Ethics. Overarching values of the Core Curriculum govern the subject curricula.

> Education shall promote ethical and critical responsibility in the young for the society and the world they live in. The ultimate aim of education is to inspire individuals to realize their potential in ways that serve the common good, to nurture humaneness in a society in development. (Ministry of Education and Research, 1994, p. 40).

In the year 2000 Norway participated in the PISA programme – the Programme for International Student Assessment. The results publicized in 2001 showed that Norwegian students scored on average in Science, which was the subject being tested that year. This sent shock waves through the country, leading to wartime-like headlines in the tabloids proclaiming that "the best school system in the world", as politicians perceived our educational system to be, was indeed a failure and up for serious rethinking. The "PISA shock" led to a conversation about education, which eventually resulted in a new curriculum. According to Kirsten Sivesind (2013), these developments are part of a European trend in which curricula are based upon experts' recommendations rather than educational policy. A

doctoral thesis from 2010 shows that the ambitions of teaching democracy and citizenship in the schools were given less weight in the overarching documents leading up to the new curriculum. Those documents originated in the Committee for Quality in Primary and Secondary Education in Norway and the White Paper number 30 (2003–2004): *Culture for Learning* (Stray, 2010).

When the Knowledge Promotion Reform (KPR) was implemented in 2006, the Core Curriculum was maintained without alterations despite the change of focus. The reform marks a paradigm shift in education policy in Norway since it focuses on management by objectives: "The reform places increased focus on basic skills and knowledge promotion through outcome-based learning" (Knowledge Promotion – Kunnskapsløftet, 2011, para. 2). As the 1997 curriculum focused on content and what should be taught at different stages, the new curriculum focused on basic skills, competency aims, and learning in addition to a more individualistic approach than that reflected in the 1997 curriculum, which focused on "One school for all – community and inclusion" (Sivesind, 2013, p. 56). The Core Curriculum is based on a communitarian perspective of democracy whereas the different subject curricula from 2006 have a more liberal conception of what democracy is (Stray, 2012). What the two parts of the Norwegian curriculum have in common, though, is the weight given to student participation. The KPR also expects students to be involved in all stages of their learning, including assessment (Sivesind, 2013).

Stray's findings (2010), showing reduced ambitions for working with democracy and citizenship, are interesting in light of the outcomes of the 2009 ICCS study for the Norwegian students. Generally speaking, Norwegian students did well; however, there is a 2 percent decline in their civic knowledge since the CIVED study in 1999. Nine of the seventeen participating countries experienced a decline. The Norwegian ICCS 2009 report suggests there might be a common explanation for this development connected to the international trend of experts' recommendations on education (Mikkelsen, Fjeldstad & Lauglo, 2011, p. 82). For Norway, focusing on basic skills and competency goals in the Norwegian curriculum, instead of emphasizing the subjects that should be taught, might have led to some "minor" parts of the Social Studies' curriculum being left out. It might also have affected the amount of dialogue in the classroom (Mikkelsen et al., 2011).

Ten different research projects (Sivesind, 2012), all commissioned by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Udir) since 2006, have evaluated the Knowledge

Promotion Reform. According to researchers, there is an inconsistency between the Core Curriculum and the Knowledge Promotion Reform in the concept of knowledge. The researchers finished their work in 2012, and their findings are summed up in a report published by Udir, called "Evaluation of the Knowledge Promotion Reform":

> The researchers point out that the concept of knowledge which is expressed in the Core Curriculum is different from that of the subject curricula. This makes the Knowledge Promotion Reform appear ambiguous. The subject curricula meet the new challenges in the Knowledge Promotion Reform by emphasising competence. The researchers believe that the Core Curriculum represents education policy signals not necessarily in accordance with how the various subject curricula are perceived. (Evalueringen av Kunnskapsløftet, 2012, p. 5). (our translation)

The "PISA shock" in 2001 was to some degree the starting point of the process leading to the Knowledge Promotion Reform. Since then, the PISA results and the recommendations from the OECD have in many ways set the agenda for the education policy discourse, at least in the media and among politicians. This has been heavily criticized by several prominent educational researchers. Svein Sjøberg (2013) stated: "PISA has changed the education discourse in the media, the public and among the politicians. It has led to a noticeable change in focus towards test based knowledge" (our translation). His concern is that the PISA results are used to paint an image of the Norwegian schools as a whole, including students, teachers, and society – not only the subjects which have been tested (Sjøberg, 2008). In other words, the PISA results, which are only valid for a few specific subjects, are used to define the quality of the entire Norwegian education system. Thus an essential premise of the current political educational discourse is not valid (Sjøberg, 2008). Based on the above mentioned research and criticism, one might ask whether a Norwegian education discourse more focused on knowledge and competency aims and less on what should be taught could have implications for the focus on democracy in education as well.

In this chapter we have given a brief overview of the approaches to citizenship education in England and Norway. Furthermore, we have presented the essential issues concerning citizenship education in the two countries, for later reference in the thesis. In the next chapter we present our theoretical framework for evaluating our findings in the data section and analysing the extent to which they represent democratic strengths and weaknesses in education.

3. Theory

To be able to express to what extent the findings in our data represent democratic strengths or deficits – what hinders and what promotes democracy in schools – suitable theory is needed and this chapter presents the theory we have chosen for this purpose. While carrying out the data analysis we found that the theoretical educational perspective of Michael Fielding and Peter Moss (2011) to provide the necessary tools for a full discussion of the findings. Their perspective, called *radical education*, constitutes a comprehensive theory explicitly dedicated to participatory democracy in education. Furthermore, it provides a full range of theoretical concepts to define a school based on democratic ethics and values, which appear particularly suitable for discussing the phenomena chosen to be within the scope of the thesis and visible in the data.

For similar reasons we have chosen Philip A. Woods's (2005) theory on democratic leadership as a tool for discussing leadership aspects of the data, as this theory specifically focuses on democratic leadership practices in education. Also, to support the discussion of democratic school leadership we have include some theory by Jorunn Møller (2007), Alma Harris (2004) and Max A. Hope (2012).

3.1. Models of democracy

Defining democracy is no easy task. As Woods suggests, "the very idea of what comprises democracy is contested" (Woods, 2005, p. xv). This seems to be in line with how Moos (2004) summed up the International Congress on School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) in 2002: "Everyone who contributed to, or participated in, the ICSEI conference agreed that democracy was important, but brought to that idea varying interpretations, not only in a theoretical sense but also in a practical sense" (Moos, 2004, p. 8). To give a brief overview of the main types of democratic theory, we have turned to Woods (2005) and his four models of democracy, based on Stokes's outline (Stokes, 2002, in Woods, 2005), which highlights distinctive principles for each model. All four models have two characteristics in common: political equality and liberty.

The first model is called liberal minimalism and has as its main purpose "[protecting] the individual citizen from arbitrary rule and oppression from other citizens" (Woods, 2005, p. 4). This model involves minimal participation and promotes the liberty of the individual to

pursue personal interests. Here the focus is on both the formal equality of political rights and the procedures for choosing governments. According to Woods (2005), the key word in minimal liberalism is "protection", and the focus is on "self-interest" (Woods, 2005, p. 6). Woods further contends that given the minimal focus on democratic activity and the emphasis on self-interest, liberal minimalism has the potential to evolve into a consumer democracy. Instead of participating in politics, people participate as consumers and impact society through their purchases (Woods, 2005). In this model leadership is restricted to a small minority, which articulates and represents the society's interests.

The second model, civic republicanism, has to do with citizens' sense of belonging (Woods, 2005). It emphasizes citizen participation in both civic and political life and in promoting the common good. This model prioritizes the public good over personal interests and views engaging in political debates and other community activities as part of a citizen's civic duty; civic republicanism connects leadership with political participation and dialogue (Woods, 2005).

Model number three is that of deliberative democracy, which emphasizes dialogue. It recognizes the diverse and complex societies of today and sees deliberation with others as the way to find solutions that will serve the common good (Woods, 2005). Deliberative democracy enhances the quality and use of reasoned dialogue and is, according to Woods (2005), a regulative ideal towards which a society can strive. This model of democracy seeks to manage difference and conflict. Leadership within deliberative democracy implies including all participants in deliberative activity, respecting diversity, and acting to oppose inequalities (Woods, 2005).

The final model is developmental democracy, where realizing human potential is the main goal. Democratic participation has a positive impact on personal development and enhances the individual's human capacities (Woods, 2005). It envisions a democratization of civil society, in which all can take part and people are morally obliged to work together towards social justice, which enables citizens to reach their human potential. The essence of developmental democracy has to do with "who we are as social human beings, continually engaging in creative social actions, influenced by and influencing others" (Woods, 2005, p. 17). The key phrases for this model are "human potential" and "essential human interests".

This brief presentation of democracy models provides a frame of reference for our discussion of democracy in education. The next section presents the main theoretical perspective that will underpin our analysis of the data on strengths and weaknesses of democracy in education in English and Norwegian schools.

3.2. A democratic perspective on education and schools

Our main theoretical frame of reference for analysing and discussing the interview data is Michael Fielding and Peter Moss's perspectives on education and schools as presented in their book *Radical Education and the Common School* (2011). Fielding and Moss's theory proved appropriate for the analysis of our data as it provides a full range of democracy-based concepts constituting an appropriate toolbox for exploring to what extent findings in our data have democratic qualities.

Fielding and Moss criticize the English educational system and how education and schools have developed over the last decades, a period during which social developments have been influenced by neoliberal and neoconservative political and economic ideology. They contend that in this climate education has become big business and the educational mission is reduced to a project of technical practice, in which the goal is to find the most effective means to achieve predetermined ends (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Furthermore, they claim that many aspects of today's public school system and educational discourse are out of step with new understandings of knowledge and learning. As a result the system is unfit to deal with environmental challenges and insufficient for promoting and sustaining a flourishing, just, democratic society. The current educational project is full of "gaps and contradictions (…) making it no longer (if it ever was) fit for purpose" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 25).

They propose an alternative model: a *common school* better able to be a player in nurturing and developing a democratic society and in fostering democratic citizens. The *radical education* they promote would be better suited to the challenges ahead and enable citizens not only to survive but to flourish. As the term "radical" is ambiguous and contentious, they take care in defining what they mean: "radicalism as transcendence, radicalism as a set of aspirations that stretch beyond the reach of innovation to imagine and enact a future that rests on very different assumptions and values to those which define the basis and the boundaries of the current system" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 40). Radicalism understood in this way seeks to "transcend existing frameworks and to advocate a new line of thought and action (…)

[to] help bring about a quite different way of being in the world" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 40). Fielding and Moss define radical education in terms of a set of values, ethics, concepts, and images. Its lofty goals include creating a participatory democracy – a person-centred learning community – in which schools are public meeting places, collaborative workshops, and centres of education in its broadest sense (EBS) where "the ethics of care and encounter" are practised (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 44).

The following subsections present Fielding and Moss's main theoretical ideas for radical education and the common school.

3.2.1. The concepts of education, knowledge, and learning

What is education for? What is its purpose, its vision? These questions must be asked about education because "they are the most critical political and ethical questions … [and the answers] form the basis for deciding more specific aims and, hence, deciding issues of practice such as pedagogical and curricular approaches" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 28).

Education today is operating within the wrong frame of reference, Fielding and Moss contend. In the era of "economism" the focus is on economic values and ends. It has led to "a dangerous shift in our very idea of democracy (…) from 'thick' collective forms to 'thin' consumer-driven and individualistic [ones]" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 19). Economism has caused a serious weakening of democracy, and this process is epitomized in the sphere of education (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 19).

> Politics and ethics are drained, leaving economics: Education as an economic commodity, education as a source of private profit, economic performance as education's primary goal. Any idea of education as a public responsibility and site of democratic and ethical practice is replaced by education as a production process, a site of technical practice and a private commodity governed by a means/end logic. (Fielding and Moss, 2011, pp. 23).

Politics and ethics have been drained out of public discourse on education and schools. It has been reduced to a "discussion of the best technical solutions for achieving predetermined and self-evident ends, at the expense of debate about critical questions, purposes, values, understandings or concepts" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 21). However, in a democratic society the nature and purpose of education should be subject to constant, open discussion and

deliberation. Education should be treated not as a closed, prescribed programme, but as a living project whose scope is indeterminate (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Fielding and Moss stress that what is needed is a multidimensional, multivalued, complex concept of education with democracy as its fundamental idea and with individual and collective human flourishment and survival as its ultimate goals. The simplistic means/end logic of management, technology, and production has no place in this concept of education.

Furthermore, Fielding and Moss argue that today's approach to education is out of step with new understandings of knowledge and learning, as formulated by theorists like Biesta and Osberg, Roy and Taguchi (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Knowledge is not, as in the techno-rational approach, a literal reproduction of a pre-existing reality. It is not transferable from one mind to another – from teacher to pupil. Rather, according to Biesta and Osberg (in Fielding and Moss, 2011), communication is ambiguous and mediated without full conservation of intent, and knowledge it is not conservative but essentially inventionalistic (Fielding and Moss, 2011). This has consequences for education: "when we think about schooling, we should not think of it as primarily being about providing children with knowledge of a predetermined world" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 25). John Dewey shared this view that outcomes of learning processes cannot be precisely predicted or determined. He regarded learning as cooperative, education as value-based, and the world as objectively unknowable beyond a degree of uncertainty (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Learning processes are complex, indeterminate, diverse, context-dependent, interdependent, inventionalistic, co-constructive acts of translation and reconstruction. Today, however, learning strategies and curricular goals are often imposed that reduce this complexity (Fielding and Moss, 2011). What is important for learning is "the emergence through relations and connections of new interpretations, new perspectives, new thoughts and how to create space for this creativity and independent thinking" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 27). Within a "paradigm of complexity" learning is about making connections, working with complexity and context, and dealing with interpretation and construction. Education should be both connective and transdisciplinary (Fielding and Moss, 2011). The principle of complexity as it applies to democracy entails moving from the search for rational consensus to a truly democratic culture that recognizes and welcomes an irreducible plurality of perspectives, values and practices (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

3.2.2. The values and ethics of radical education

Participatory democracy is the cardinal value of radical education. Radical education rejects a sharp distinction between process and outcome and accepts democracy and other central values and ethics not only as educational aims but also essentially as ways in which education is carried out: "Democracy (…) must be learnt by doing, so an education for democracy must be inscribed with democracy as a value" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 40). Likewise: "the inculcation of the ethics of care is most likely to come about in an institution that practices that ethic in its everyday life and relationships" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 40). Radical education is "a doer and a producer of values and ethics" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 40).

As democracy is a multidimensional concept, modern societies must be "everyday democracies" with participatory democracy present in many ways. Democratic values and practices must permeate society and shape dimensions of formal politics as well as informal dimensions of everyday life (Fielding and Moss, 2011). To be able to act as both doers and producers of democracy, schools must be sites of everyday democracy: "educational sites of democratic living – i.e. democratic learning communities" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 42):

> A radical education built on the value of democracy and a multidimensional understanding of democracy expresses itself in a variety of ways: in the way educational politics and policymaking is conducted; in the governance of schools and decision-making large and small; in processes of learning and concepts of knowledge adopted; in ways of evaluation; in everyday practices and relationships. (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 42).

Democracy is also "a way of thinking, being and acting, of relating and living together" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 42). It embodies a relational ethics that should pervade everyday life. In schools practicing radical education, students become members of a democratic learning community practicing a mode of associated living embedded in the culture and social relationships. Learning by doing, they practice democratic fellowship and relational ways of being (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Radical education has four other interconnected and interdependent cardinal values that contribute to the quality of democracy: social and political justice, solidarity, plurality, and experimentation (Fielding and Moss, 2011). In a just society, people have broadly equal access to material and social means needed for good lives, the key idea being egalitarianism.

Political justice is a principle of both political equality and collective empowerment: people should be empowered to contribute to the collective control of the conditions and decisions affecting their common fate. Solidarity is commitment to mutual support and collective action on matters of shared interest. Plurality "acknowledges the irreducible multiplicity, democracy and experimentation of such diversity" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 44). Experimentation means a willingness or desire "to invent, to think differently, to imagine and try out different ways of doing things", to go beyond what already exists (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Ethics is another corner-stone of radical education. Two concepts are particularly important: *an ethics of care* and *an ethics of an encounter*. The idea of an ethics of care involves acts of caring and a general habit of mind in the life of individuals and communities. Care includes relational qualities like attentiveness, responsibility, responsiveness (Fielding and Moss, 2011). An ethics of an encounter means unconditional respect for "the absolute alterity of the Other, the Other's absolute otherness or singularity" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 44). We should abstain from attempts to understand *the Other* through categorization, and we should avoid using our preconceived mental frameworks to make *the Other* into *the Same*. These ethical positions have implications for education as they represent a challenge to pedagogues in their own encounters with Otherness. Both ethics challenge society to develop responsible and "non-grasping" relationships with others (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

3.2.3. Education in its broadest sense (EBS)

The pedagogy of radical education is called *education in its broadest sense* (EBS). EBS is heavily inspired by social pedagogy. A key concept of social pedagogy is upbringing, which captures the holistic, integrative concerns at the core of its approach. A pedagogue practising EBS enters a relationship with the child as a whole person and is concerned with fostering and supporting the child's overall development through learning, care, health, and general well-being. EBS – or social pedagogy – is concerned with developing a child's abilities to interact constructively and effectively with its surroundings and to flourish, thus benefitting society as a whole (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Four principles underpin social pedagogy: well-being, holistic learning, relationships, and empowerment. Social pedagogical practice that ensures children's well-being, that is relationship-centred and sees them as part of a whole, and that promotes children's rights and dignity can empower them to meaningful participation in decisions affecting their lives (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

> EBS (…) takes a broad view of the scope of intentional learning, going beyond the cognitive or academic to encompass the social, aesthetic, ethical, cultural, emotional and physical domains. Such learning is understood to be inextricably linked to care, health and other conditions needed to live a good life and for a democratic community to flourish: learning contributes to these conditions and these conditions enable learning. (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 47).

EBS postulates that "learning is not the transmission of pre-formed information, but a process of co-construction of meaning in relationship with others" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 47). As a consequence, EBS applies "a pedagogy of relationships, listening and invention", emphasizing connectedness and openness to the new and unexpected (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

3.2.4. Images of the child, the teacher, and the school

To elaborate upon their concept of radical education further, Fielding and Moss (2011) describe three images, or social constructions, of key actors and institutions – the child, the teacher, and the school. The image of "the rich child" captures the idea of a child who is born with great potential that can be expressed in a many ways or "languages". It is an active learner seeking meaning, but also a co-creator of knowledge, identity, culture, and values. The child can live, learn, listen, and communicate with others but is also an individual who needs and wants those connections. The child has a place in society and is a citizen whose rights must be respected and supported (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Likewise, the image of the teacher is that of "a rich educator" with great potential – an active co-constructive learner and reflective practitioner. The teacher is seen as "multilingual" – mastering several modes of human expression – and a critical thinker, researcher, and experimenter. All in all, the teacher is a democratic professional.

Finally, Fielding and Moss's image of the school encompasses a public institution with the responsibility of functioning as a forum or space where all citizens can meet and collaborate on projects of common interest and benefit. It is both a "person-centred learning community" and a "place of democratic fellowship" (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Table 1 displays these two school images, contrasted with three others with different orientations towards the functional/personal distinction.

Schools as **Impersonal** Organisations	Schools as **Affective** Communities	Schools as **High Performance** Learning Organisations	Schools as **Person-Centred** Learning Communities	Schools as agents of **Democratic Fellowship**
The Functional marginalises the Personal	*The Personal marginalises the Functional*	*The Personal is used for the sake of the Functional*	*The Functional is used for the sake of the Personal*	*The Political expresses and supports the Personal*
Mechanistic Organisation	Affective Community	Learning Organisation	Learning Community	Democratic Fellowship
Efficient	Restorative	Effective	Existentially and instrumentally vibrant	Democratic living and learning

Table 1 Fielding and Moss's five images of the school (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

The "impersonal" school regards the personal as largely irrelevant to (and perhaps even at cross-purposes with) its core purpose. A mechanistic organization, the impersonal school emphasizes role relations, efficiency, and procedures. The "affective community" is at the opposite end of a personal-functional scale. Its concern with students' individual personal needs results in too little time and attention devoted to the functional arrangements needed to support learning (Fielding and Moss, 2011). The three other school images in Table 1 are the most relevant to Fielding and Moss's discussion of radical education. All three have a commitment to student achievement but differ significantly in their approaches to realizing that achievement. For the high performance organization, the significance of students and teachers is derivative and depends mostly on their contribution, usually via high-stakes testing, to the school's public performance. In this sense, Fielding and Moss argue, high-performance schools are totalitarian. Relationships are important but serve instrumental purposes: "Social and, indeed, personal relationships are reduced to social capital – 'having relationships' moves subtly towards 'doing relationships' – towards relationship management" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, pp. 54–55). In the "person-centred learning community" functional arrangements and interactions are committed to wider human purposes. Wide-ranging formal and informal arrangements amongst staff and students ensure many voices are heard and engaged. In person-centred schools pastoral and academic arrangements relate to each other synergistically, and the functional is expressive of the personal. Forms of engagement and decision-making in such schools are participatory rather

than hierarchical, and curricula are integrative and co-constructed. Pastoral and academic interests become intertwined, and the distinctions between them lose significance. In the school as "democratic fellowship", the person-centred learning community extends its commitment to EBS in an explicitly democratic form. Both the functional and the political serve and are expressive of the personal (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Fielding and Moss's image of the common school is hybrid and complex: "Rather than the school as business or the school as high-performance organisation, we have a composite image that emphasises the school as public space, a place of encounter for citizens, as a collective workshop and as a community" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 57).

3.2.5. Indicators of radical education

Fielding and Moss outline a series of features or aspects of democratic practice that inform the kind of common school whose cause they promote. The following are their ten key indicators of radical democratic education.

A proclaimed democratic vitality. The school will wish to foreground its "interdependent commitments to (a) education as the most important rationale for schooling, and (b) democracy as both the end and the means – the purpose and the practice – of education." (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 73) Deep or "high-energy" democracy should be both the school's starting point and the central educational goal. The school's staff should exemplify and proclaim to their internal and external communities this commitment to democracy (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Radical structures and spaces. The school is mindful of its "positional restlessness" – a libertarian and egalitarian insistence on the openness of opportunity, on the need to unsettle patterns and dispositions of presumption and to open up wider vistas of possibility for all in the school community. The school pursues many organizational articulations of participatory democracy, while insisting on a permanent and proper provisionality. This includes a permanent unease with hierarchy and a desire to create transparent structures that encourage ways of working that transcend boundaries and invite new combinations and possibilities. Interpersonal and architectural spaces that encourage a variety of forms of formal and informal engagement with people can open up new possibilities (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Radical roles. The school encourages "role defiance" and "role jumbling" – the fluidity, diversity, and exploration of roles amongst staff and between staff and students. Fielding and Moss suggest a role typology (Fielding and Moss, 2011). As activity on the teacher level and team/department level is not part of this study, the list below – adapted from Fielding and Moss (2011, pp. 75) – primarily focuses on role characteristics applicable to the school level.

- *Students as data sources*: Staff utilize information about student progress and well-being.
- *Students as active respondents*: Staff invite student dialogue and discussion to deepen learning/professional decisions. Staff listen to students' experiences in lessons or active student contributions to teaching and learning development. Students serve on staff appointment panels.
- *Students as co-enquirers*: Staff take a leading role with high-profile, active student support. The egalitarian nature of student and teacher involvement and partnership are great but not absolute.
- *Students as knowledge creators*: Students take a leading role with active staff support. Deepening and extending the co-enquiry role, students may exercise leadership or take initiative in an egalitarian partnership.
- *Students as joint authors*: Students and staff decide on a joint course of action, creating a genuinely shared, fully collaborative partnership between them.

Radical relationships. The radical roles described in the list above are related to this indicator of radical education. Radical relationships imply that relations between students and between staff and students are less bounded and exploratory in nature. "Restless encounters" and "radical roles" are key concepts for understanding these radical relationships, which differ from those normally observed in schools. People "re-see" each other as persons rather than as role occupants and undergo a relational re-centring of the educational process and a dialogic approach to student voices – a *pedagogy of listening*. Key elements to this dialogic approach are genuine openness and a willingness to be surprised and to welcome the unanticipated.

Personal and communal narrative. This indicator is important both personally and communally because narrative learning connects with the making of meaning, which is a core process in education that fulfils the need for recognition and significance.

Education is first and finally about how we learn to live good lives together, lives that enable us individually and collectively to survive and flourish. Without some means of recreating a constant link to those profound matters of purpose, education becomes impossible and we have to make do with the thin and dispiriting substitutes of competitive schooling. (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 80).

Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Four imperatives lie at the heart of radical education's approach to the formal and informal curriculum. First, to focus on the purpose of education, organize the curriculum around that which is necessary for a sustainable, flourishing, and democratic way of life. Second, equip people with the desire and capacity to critically interrogate what is given and co-construct a knowledge that assists in leading good lives together. Third, although knowledge must transcend the local, let knowledge start with the cultures, concerns, and hopes of the school's local community. Fourth, allow assessment at national and local levels to be flexible and responsive to the particularities of context, with significant professional involvement of teachers in the assessment, moderation and examination process. (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Insistent affirmation of possibility. This indicator involves a belief in the power of ordinary men and women to create new and better ways of being. It implies keeping options open, resisting closure and traditional expectations, exhibiting generosity, and assuming the best rather than the worst of young people. (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Engaging the local. An expansive reciprocity between the school and its local community is of fundamental importance. Radical education views education as a lifelong process, with the school as a site of community renewal and responsibility, and the community and the school are seen as reciprocal resources for learning. "They need each other more fully and more insistently if they are to thrive" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 83). Engaging and involving parents in various ways is one important aspect of this particular indicator.

Accountability as shared responsibility. Democratic schools need new forms of accountability and responsibility. Accountability should be "morally and politically situated, not just technical and procedurally 'delivered'" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 84). The collective learning approach known as "participatory didactics" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 85) can cause relationships to change over time; students and adults see each other in new ways and develop a greater sense of shared responsibility and community. Pedagogical documentation

is an important tool of participatory didactics because it facilitates dialogue with any stakeholders – it makes learning visible and subject to deliberation through procedures and processes that can be communicated and shared with everyone (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Regional, national, and global solidarities. This tenth and last indicator is concerned with how to ensure that schools attempting to practice radical education co-operate to secure their further development and expansion of radical education (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

In this section we have presented the essence of Michael Fielding and Peter Moss's concept of radical education. This concept is integrally related to their concept of *the common school*, which is presented in the next section. Both concepts are central to the analysis and discussion of the interview data.

3.2.6. The democratic common school

The ten traits outlined above can be used to indicate to the external observer the extent which a given school is practising radical education. Fielding and Moss refer to a school that practises radical education as a *common school*. They conceive of the common school as a site for participatory democracy – for democratic practice. The strong emphasis on democratic practice and participation make their theory relevant to our study. In their discussion of this model they describe how such a school might be organized and structured to achieve its ends – how it might be staffed, how admission might be determined, how it might relate to other schools and the local community, what forms of school governance it should use, how the school should relate to political structures, and what impact it might have on equality and parental choice.

Several defining features of a common school practising democratic radical education are already mentioned earlier in this chapter. It is a public institution, a public space, a place of encounter, a collaborative workshop, a person-centred learning community, a place of democratic educational fellowship – a school practising its commitment to democracy in various ways. As was the case for the term "radical", Fielding and Moss take care to clarifying that they use the term "common school" to denote a "comprehensive school". In England today this term is used for a type of school quite different from Fielding and Moss's school. They therefore use the word "common" to distinguish this kind of school from existing comprehensive secondary schools, which are usually large-scale institutions for a limited age range of children (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

A common school is comprehensive in the sense that it is age integrated and for everyone in its catchment area; it has an open admission policy for all local children. The common school is comprehensive also in the sense that it is "the only public institution to which nearly everyone is affiliated for a sustained period during part of their lives" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 89). It is the most ubiquitous and cohering democratic institution and place of encounter in an increasingly fragmented world. Fielding and Moss contend that this key role is under threat from the privatization of education that has been going on over the last decades; the school is made into a private business selling education as a commodity to parents, who become consumers (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

To facilitate radical education and be conducive to democratic practice a common school should be small in scale. This makes it easier to retain and support an environment that provides a sense of belonging and community for students while building relationships, enabling them to practise the ethics of care and an encounter, and personalizing learning. In a small setting staff can get to know each pupil as an individual. An average English secondary school has 1000 or more students, which is quite large compared to Nordic schools. Fielding and Moss indicate that a human-scale school has about 250–500 pupils. They refer to research evidence showing the benefits of small schools over large ones, like fewer drop-outs and expulsions and fewer alienated students (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

Large schools can offer a range of subjects. Small-scale common schools operate with a different "depth over coverage" approach. Human Scale Education's (HSE) key practices listed in its manifesto illustrate what is meant by this: small teams of educators working with a limited number of learners; a thematic, cross-disciplinary and holistic curriculum; a flexible timetable providing small-group teaching and individual learning; inquiry-based, experimental pedagogy; assessment involving dialogue and negotiation using methods like portfolios and exhibitions; students taking part in the organization of the school and its learning arrangements (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

The common school emphasizes teamwork. Multidisciplinary teams of educators – pedagogues, teachers and others – work together to practise EBS and to achieve depth over coverage. The presence of "atelieristas" in the teams – educators with a background in visual arts or other aesthetic "languages" – opens up a greater freedom of human expression, no longer limited to just reading and writing (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Organized in this team-oriented way, a "small-scale school can offer a wider range of knowledges and expertise: it

can be a multi-lingual, resource-rich environment for all ages of children" (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 102).

The distinction made above between "teacher" and "pedagogue" is worth noting. In the English tradition a teacher is more of an expert in formal educational contexts or disciplines while a pedagogue is an expert on informal learning and aesthetic disciplines such as art and drama. The pedagogue often has a particular strength in relationships (Fielding and Moss, 2011). In the Norwegian context a teacher and a pedagogue is in principle the same, since pedagogy is an integral part of formal teacher training. However, in everyday language an educator without formal teacher training is usually also referred to as a teacher.

The democratic common school is a school of different learning and community-based projects. The common school is thus a multipurpose institution, practising EBS and acting as a social resource for the community (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

> So our common school is a place for all members of its local community, but is not simply a renaissance of the large, subject-based and narrow age-ranged comprehensive school. It is a comprehensive school, but re-conceptualised. It is age-integrated, it is relatively small in scale, it is a "multi-purpose" or multi-project public institution, and has a multidisciplinary workforce that emphasises team work. (Fielding and Moss, 2011, p. 107).

In this section we have presented a theoretical model for democratic education and a set of operational indicators for revealing to what extent elements of democratic education are present in a given school environment. Central concepts of this model – concepts we use in the discussion of our interview data – are participatory democracy, values and ethics, and the holistic educational concept education in its broadest sense (EBS).

The next section presents selected theory on leadership which proved to be appropriate for the interpretation of findings in the data on what promotes and hinders democratic leadership practices in schools.

3.3. Democratic leadership

This section presents theory on leadership particularly concerned with democratic leadership in education. Democratic schools need to be democratically led, which is why leadership in

schools is of interest to this research project. Moreover, theory on democratic leadership is needed for the interpretation of data on leadership.

According to Hope (2012), there is no single model for democratic leadership however there are common features within schools that use a democratic approach. On the basis of the data analysis we found leadership theory by Philip A. Woods (2005) as well as research on school leadership practices by Jorunn Møller (2007), Alma Harris (2004) and Max A. Hope (2012) to be appropriate for the discussion of our findings.

Philip A. Woods (2005) advocates the importance of democratic leadership in schools and places democratic leadership within the framework of a developmental conception of democratic practice, identified by four rationalities – the ethical, the decisional, the discursive, and the therapeutic.
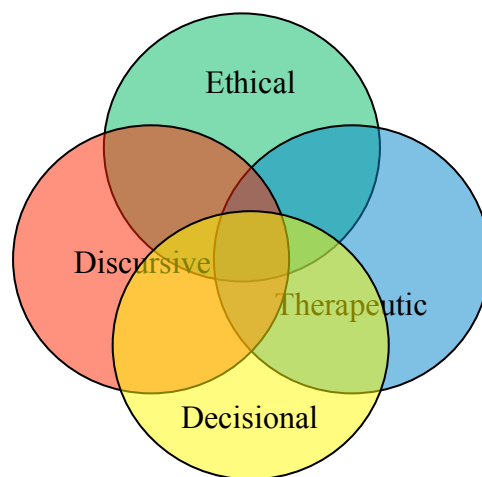
Figure 1 Rationalities of a developmental conception of democratic practice (Woods, 2005, p. 12).

Ethical rationality is concerned with engaging stakeholders in all kinds of communities to constantly debate and prioritize values that serve the common good. Discursive rationality is at the core of what an active democracy is since it is about participating actively in debates and dialogues. It is, Woods says, the "distribution of voice" (Woods, 2005, p. 15). Decisional rationality is about the right to participate in decision-making and enabling people to do so. It is a "dispersal of leadership" (Woods, 2005, p. 14); a genuine sharing of power that goes beyond merely being consulted. Finally, there is therapeutic rationality, which is concerned with the positive feelings of being involved in the creation of social coherence through participation and shared leadership. According to Woods (2005), democratic leadership aims to create an environment in which people:

- are encouraged and supported in aspiring to truths about the world, including the highest values (ethical rationality).

- practice this ethical rationality and look for ways of superseding difference through dialogue (discursive rationality).

- are active contributors to the creation of the institutions, culture, and relationships they inhabit (decisional rationality).

- are empowered by the institutional, cultural, and social structures of the organization (therapeutic rationality).

"Democratic leadership promotes respect for diversity and acts to reduce cultural and material inequalities (social justice). These components of social justice are, accordingly, symbolically linked with democracy" (Woods, 2005, p. xvi). Woods contends that democratic leadership should be an integral part of education, as schools educate the new generations of democratic citizens on which a democratic society depends. "Otherwise the ideal and the experience of education are at odds with each other" (Woods, 2005, p. 32).

In contrast to other concepts of leadership, democratic leadership cannot be added to a list of management techniques that will cause "improvement" Woods contends (original quotation marks). Rather, democratic leadership has "intrinsic worth" and "is integral to society and, in consequence, is intimately bound with education" (Woods, 2005, p. 32). Since the concept of distributed leadership is well known and much used in education – indeed is considered by Ofsted to be not "one way but *the* way of leading educational organisations" (Hope, 2012, p. 298) – Woods has compared these ways of leading, to clarify the differences as he sees them.

Though distributed and democratic leadership share a perspective on leadership as emergent and dispersed, democratic leadership does so in a richer context, according to Woods. He describes distributed leadership as activity theory, whereas democratic leadership has intellectual roots and is analytical and normative (Woods, 2005). Another distinctive difference is that distributed leadership tends to be associated with a functional approach to human capacities. It values expertise and the development of people and their potential that can contribute to organizational goals (Woods, 2005). In other words, it includes people in leadership based on their expertise, skills, and motivation. Democratic leadership goes further, and works for the integration of human capacities and inclusion based on human status and not expertise: everyone should participate actively in democratic practice.

Distributed leadership also focuses more on teacher leadership than including other stakeholders within the school community, such as non-teaching staff, students, and parents.

In the school context there are many constraints for school leaders including the focus on performance targets and market orientation, according to Woods (2005). Though distributed leadership is neutral on issues such as private versus public ownership, markets or democratic control, Woods contends "it lends itself to being uncritically harnessed for the pursuit of goals and values" (Woods, 2005, p. 44). This conflicts with the humanist values of education, according to Woods. Furthermore, distributed leadership is not necessarily non-hierarchical: "Although leadership may be distributed, it does not necessarily imply an absence of direction and constraint cascading down a hierarchy" (Woods, 2005, p. 43).

As mentioned at the outset of this section, there is no single theoretical model on democratic leadership however considerable disagreement over how to define and provide democratic leadership, Møller (2004) points out. As a result, schools become sites of cultural and political struggle (Møller, 2004). Møller also indicates that there might be a risk, within recent reform initiatives in Scandinavia as well as in other countries, of redefining and reconfiguring the concept of democratic leadership in economic terms rather than as a social process. There is considerable pressure towards the market solution for educational provision and leadership. Her main point, with consequences for defining and framing democratic leadership, is that "education's responsibilities are primarily to the democracy of *citizens* rather than to the democracy of *consumers*" (Møller, 2004, p. 162, original italics).

Møller (2004) discusses what a worthwhile and valuable education based on democratic principles should look like and what the consequences are for leadership in schools. According to Møller, John Dewey's (1937) writing about "the lived democracy" and his vision of a Great Community has had significant influence on the theorizing about the relationship between society and education. Dewey wrote:

> What the argument for democracy implies is that the best way to produce initiative and constructive power is to exercise it. Power, as well as interest, comes by use and practice (…) The delicate and difficult task of developing character and good judgement in the young needs every stimulus and inspiration possible (…) I think, that unless democratic habits and thought and action are part of the fibre of a people, political democracy is insecure. It cannot stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by

the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships. (Dewey, 1937, in Møller, 2004, pp. 345).

This means that in order to teach students a democratic way of life in schools, certain conditions must be in place so that students have the opportunity to learn what that way of life means and how it might be led (Møller, 2004). Therefore the curriculum must emphasize the importance of giving students democratic experiences. Secondly, it implies establishing democratic structures and processes by which life in the school is carried out (Møller, 2004). In other words, the best way to teach and learn democracy is to practise it, according to Dewey. With regard to democratic leadership, Møller (2004) claims that this presupposes that the same kind of democratic habits, thoughts, and actions we want students to develop have to characterize the relationships between teachers and school principals.

In this section we presented a theoretical framework appropriate for interpreting findings on leadership practises in the interview data. To further broaden the perspective on leadership, the following section presents results from three research studies on leadership in schools.

3.4. Research on school leadership in England and Norway

Before presenting a research project conducted by Møller et al. (2007), we will give a brief overview of the educational context in Norway. The Norwegian school system consists of ten years of compulsory primary and lower secondary education and three years of optional upper secondary school. The three optional years are encouraged and available by right to every student, regardless of academic track. It should also be noted that students in Norway have the legal right to a voice in school governance through student councils and the governing bodies of their schools. About 95 % of the cohort goes to public schools. There has been an increase in private schools over the last years (especially upper secondary schools); however, these schools only educate 7 % of the cohort. In compulsory school only 3 % attend private schools (Videregående opplæring og annen videregående utdanning, 2013).

The Core Curriculum underscores that teachers function as role models for their students and also as a community of colleagues working with parents, other professionals, and the authorities (Møller et al., 2007). The international testing regimes such as PISA resulted in government pressure on teachers and principals to improve results. This led to "a clear tension

between the market orientation and the long valued ideals of a democratic school including democratic leadership practises" (Møller et al., 2007, p. 73).

In the new climate of New Public Management and accountability as a system for quality control in schools, Møller et al. (2007) conducted a research study involving twelve schools considered successfully led, where their aim was to identify "the qualities and the characteristics of successful leadership practice within the Norwegian elementary and secondary school system" (Møller et al., 2007, p. 71). One striking finding was the clear "power with" leadership orientation rather than the "power over" or "power through" approach. Leadership in the selected schools almost entirely took the form of team efforts where the head teachers and their deputies walked in and out of each other's offices, discussing matters or sharing ideas, and also having formal meetings at least twice a week (Møller et al., 2007). Learning was the focal point of the schools' philosophy as well as their practice, and the schools underlined the importance of the social learning environment to attain both academic and social goals. Thus the teacher-student relationship was characterized by mutual respect, involving the students in both planning and decisions about the criteria for evaluation in lower and secondary schools (Møller et al., 2007). Mutual trust among students, between students and teachers, and between teachers and leaders was also highlighted by the teachers, who stated that trust and respect among the stakeholders within the schools "were at the core of what they thought should count as a successful school" (Møller et al., 2007, p. 82). Mutual trust requires "faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems" (Beane and Apple, 1999, in Møller, 2004, p. 152). In addition, their study showed that both teachers and principals had a strong emotional commitment to their work. Finally, Møller et al. (2007) found that leadership teams working hard to fulfil a mission based on democratic values managed to deal with tensions and problems within the schools.

Møller's research study (2007) focused on leadership in schools that were successfully led. Harris (2004), on the other hand, has presented a research study from a quite different angle in her report on schools that have faced difficulties. Titled Democratic Leadership for School Improvement and commissioned by the National College of School Improvement, which was designated by the Department for Education and Skills in England (Harris, 2004), this research investigated leadership within a group of ten "schools facing challenging circumstances" (SFCC) located within a range of socioeconomic and cultural situations that

were demonstrating improvement (Harris, 2004). The study revealed "a complex but compelling picture of leadership in SFCC" (Harris, 2004, p. 168). The head teachers all had at the core of their leadership approaches the goal of empowering students, staff, and parents. Though they had at critical times chosen autocratic leadership approaches, they saw such approaches as unlikely to lead to sustained school improvement. The study demonstrated the efficacy of leadership that was democratic and "centrally concerned with giving others the responsibility to lead" (Harris, 2004, p. 168).

Based on a case study of the small independent Sands School in South Devon Max A. Hope (Hope, 2012) explores leadership theory and argues that this particular school provides a perfect example of what democratic leadership is. She makes a point of distinguishing democratic leadership from distributed leadership, using Woods (2005) as a theoretical frame of reference. Sands School, which during the research period had between 60 and 70 students, is run by students and staff as equal members of a school community and has no head teacher. There is a weekly School Meeting, chaired by a student who is appointed at the start of each meeting, where all key decisions are taken – "including those regarding curriculum, the recruitment of staff, disciplinary issues and everyday organisational matters, such as ensuring the building is clean and tidy" (Hope, 2012, p. 295). Decisions are made by consensus if possible and otherwise by majority vote. There is also a student council, consisting of students only. The school was praised by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) as a school providing "good quality of education with some outstanding features" in their report from 2010 (in Hope, 2012). It is worth noting here that distributed leadership is not only accepted by Ofsted but Ofsted's preferred way of leading schools (Hope, 2012). According to Woods (2005), democratic leadership is grounded on values, and these values distinguish democratic leadership from the widely employed distributed leadership. Woods (2005) points out that distributed leadership is not necessarily democratic since it does not in itself stem from democratic values. It is popular because it is effective, meaning that it corresponds with improved educational outcomes (Hope, 2012).

According to Hope (2012), there are common leadership features within schools that use a democratic approach. First, such schools tend to be non-hierarchical. Second, they have what Woods (2005, p. 89) refers to as "free space" – spaces where students, teachers, and school leaders can interact informally. In democratic schools, structures and processes are developed

to include staff and all students. This means that students can be leaders and staff can be followers, since in a community of equals, there is room for role jumbling (Hope, 2012).

This chapter has presented radical education and the common school – a theoretical framework for democratic education – and an accompanying set of operational indicators designed to reveal to what extent elements of radical education are present in a school environment. Concepts from this framework are used in the discussion chapter to identify to what extent our findings promote or hinder democratic practises in schools. The most central concepts are participatory democracy, values and ethics, and the holistic educational concept of EBS. Next we presented the scholarly background on leadership and pointed out that there is no single model of democratic leadership however common features can be identified. Leadership perspectives from several authoritative researchers were presented to show that empowerment of students and staff; giving others the responsibility to lead; and levelling traditional hierarchies, are some of these common features. Furthermore, distinctions were drawn between distributed leadership and democratic leadership to clarify that distributed leadership does not take into account democracy as a core value and thus is not necessarily a democratic way of leading.

4. Method

In this chapter we describe our methodological approach. First we present our research design and how the schools and their school leaders were selected. Then we describe our analysis strategy, and finally we look at reliability and validity.

4.1. Research design

This study applies a qualitative comparative research method in the form of in-depth interviews with a selection of English and Norwegian secondary school leaders. We used a semi-structured interview guide, which enabled us to focus on the respondents' perceptions of the themes and topics we wanted to explore with them (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2012). This approach allowed the atmosphere of the interviews to be open to unexpected answers as well as follow-up questions and in-depth probing. Furthermore, as the cultural contexts of the schools are different within and between the two countries, a semi-structured guide allows for differences in contexts to be taken into account.

We collected our data by performing in-depth interviews using the semi-structured interview guide. We used the same guide in both countries and designed it to fit the context of both countries. However, since the contexts are rather different, the guide contains three questions pertaining to points of interest in the Norwegian context. These three features are the Core Curriculum, the main objects clause in the Education Act, and the new optional subject in lower secondary school called "Democracy in Practice".

For practical reasons the interviews in both countries were partly pair interviews and partly single interviews. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. A pair interview opens the opportunity for a dialogue not just between interviewer and interviewee, but also between the interviewees. Such dialogues have the potential advantage of becoming more interactive; however, interviewing in pairs can lead respondents to be influenced by each other unconsciously and to therefore at times give similar answers. In an interview with a single respondent that person is not influenced by the presence of another respondent, but this arrangement also has its drawbacks, depending on the interviewee and the topic in question. In the upcoming section on validity we give an argument for why our approach in this respect was well founded.

Our group of respondents in England did not include head teachers as our contact in England advised us that it would be easier to find respondents who were in other school leadership positions and more likely to have time for interviews. The English respondents included one deputy head, one vice principal, and one deputy principal as well as a qualified Citizenship teacher in charge of Citizenship, a humanities teacher who was also in charge of Citizenship, and finally a maths teacher who used to be on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) before his school was reorganized and academized. Three of the interviewees in Norway were head teachers, two were deputy heads, one was an assistant head, and one was a student counsellor. Being Norwegians made it easier for us to find interviewees and make appointments in Norway. Table 2 below pairs respondents with their schools and shows which were pair interviews and which were single ones.

Schools, respondents	Type of school	Context	Size
HILLSIDE E1 Male, Maths teacher Former SLT member	Year 7-11 Academy	Rural	600 students
EVERGREEN E2 Female, Humanities teacher In charge of Citizenship Education	Year 7-13 Academy	Town	1400 students
ST. MARTIN'S E3 Female, Deputy head teacher E4 Female, Citizenship teacher In charge of Citizenship Education	Year 7-13 Secondary School	Town	1020 students
RIVERBANK E5 Female, Deputy Principal	Year 7-13 Academy	Rural	2100 students
GREENFIELD E6 Male, Vice principal	Year 7-13	Town	1160 students
HUMLEGAARDEN N1 Female, Head teacher N2 Male, Deputy Head Teacher	Year 8-10 Lower Secondary	Suburban	160 students
BAKKEGRENDA N3 Male, Head teacher N4 Male, Student counsellor	Year 8-10 Lower Secondary	Suburban	350 students
ANKER N5 Male, Deputy head teacher	Year 8-10 Lower Secondary	City	500 students
KNATTEN N6 Female, Head teacher N7 Female, Assistant head teacher	Year 8-10 Lower Secondary	Suburban	460 students

Table 2 Profile of schools and respondents within the English and Norwegian samples.

4.2. Selection of schools

The five English schools we visited are all situated in South East England. Most of them are considerably bigger than the Norwegian schools. The smallest had approximately 500 students, is situated in the countryside, and had predominantly middle- to lower-class white students, according to our respondent. Evergreen school had approximately 1400 students, predominantly white working-class children. It was divided into four colleges as four smaller schools within the school (SWS), each college with its own identity. According to our respondent, they still managed to keep an overarching whole-school identity. Saint Matthew's is a faith-based school, so they had a lot of feeder schools, and as a result of that, its students were from very diverse backgrounds. The ethnic mix was not very wide; however, there were a number of Polish and Filipino students. All in all there were about a thousand students at the school. Riverbank, the fourth school, was huge and had about 2100 students. It had a "mini school" structure within the whole school structure, with approximately 390 students and a head of school for each "mini school". It was predominately white working class, with students with non-English ethnic backgrounds making up only about 2–3 % of the cohort. There was, however, a growing Polish community in the area. Some of the areas the students came from were described as socio-economically deprived. The last school was Greenfield, a middle- and upper-class school which had approximately a thousand students, predominantly white with usually educated parents, many of whom had degrees. Their growing minority ranks primarily consisted of black students and second-generation British from Asia.

Our Norwegian respondents all worked in lower secondary schools – years 8 to 10 – in different parts of the Oslo area. There are considerable demographic and socio-economic differences in this area, and our selection of schools reflects that. Humlegaarden is situated in a fairly well-to-do area and was also rather small even by Norwegian standards, with approximately 160 students with two classes in years 8, 9, and 10. This school was predominantly white with only a small percentage of non-ethnically Norwegian students – about 2–3 %. Bakkegrenda had approximately 350 students and is situated in an area which to some degree is socio-economically deprived, and about 70 % of the students came from non-Norwegian ethnic backgrounds. Two of their three feeder schools had children from predominantly low-income families, whereas in the third school most of the children were from families with higher levels of education. Anker School had approximately 450 students and is located in an area where there are considerable socio-economic differences. The percentage of students with non-Norwegian ethnic backgrounds was about 60. Finally,

Knatten School had about 460 students, of whom 20 percent had non-Norwegian ethnic backgrounds, most of them second-generation Norwegians.

4.3. Analysis strategy

The Norwegian interviews were conducted in the Oslo area in April and May 2013, whereas the English interviews were carried out in South East England in late June. We introduced codes for each interviewee to make sure that we at all times knew who had said what. Each Norwegian respondent was provided with an N as well as a number corresponding to the order of interviews, the respondent N1 being the first interviewee in Norway and N7 our last. Similarly, E1 was our first English respondent and E6 our last. We transcribed the interviews successively, sharing the interviews evenly between us and always consulting each other. Both of us listened through all of the recordings repeatedly and reviewed each other's transcripts to ensure accuracy. Both of us were present during the interviews and therefore had first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the interviews. This made it easier to transcribe and analyse the data.

Having finished the transcripts, we read through our data to decide how to categorize them for the purpose of answering our research question. According to Maxwell (2013), research questions normally evolve in the course of a data analysis. This was the case with us. Here are the categories we finally decided on after having worked our way through the transcripts.

1. How Citizenship Education is carried out

2. School leaders' views on citizenship education

3. Schools as arenas for democratic practices

4. Leadership practices

5. School leaders' views on leadership and democracy in education

Categories 1 and 2 are connected to the first research sub-question, category 2 contains data relevant to the second sub-question, and categories 4 and 5 deal with data concerning the third sub-question. In the next two subsections we discuss reliability and validity issues connected to our research design, described above.

4.4. Reliability

According to Grønmo the reliability of a qualitative research design depends on actual facts in the empirical data in question and not on how the researchers perceive the data. In addition, the data must have been collected systematically in accordance with the research design (Grønmo, 2004). Our semi-structured interview guide meets these criteria.

Each interview was carried out with both of us as interviewers. Our first interviews in both England and Norway revealed that our interview guide worked well, so we continued using it unabridged throughout the whole research project. All the interviews were taped so that we would have the opportunity to listen multiple times. Repeated listening ensured that we had transcribed the answers correctly and that we could catch laughter and other changes in mood and tone, which provided additional contextual information for more reliable interpretation of the data.

The reliability of qualitative data also depends on the credibility of respondents (Grønmo, 2004). We came in contact with all of the English school leaders we interviewed as a result of our initial contact with an English Senior Lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University. The Norwegian respondents – all of them experienced school leaders – were either known to us by reputation or recommended to us by authorized school leaders. Thus we can, with relative certainty, attribute a high degree of credibility to all of our respondents. We needed respondents who possessed the necessary experience and position to provide us with qualified views and insights, and these conditions clearly prevailed in the case of our chosen interviewees.

4.5. Validity

Validity has to do with how relevant the empirical data are for our research question. Maxwell states that the selection of research method depends not only on the research questions, but also on the actual research situation and what will work most effectively to elicit the needed data (Maxwell, 2013). We determined that in-depth interviews with a selected set of relevant respondents could give us the data needed to answer our research question. According to Maxwell, "your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your *interview* questions are what you ask people to gain that understanding" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 101). Furthermore, the development of good interview questions requires creativity and insight rather than a mechanical conversion of the research questions into an interview guide

(Maxwell, 2013). We made an effort to develop our interview guide in accordance with these guidelines and also decided to make it semi-structured because in a semi-structured interview situation there is room for assessing what lines of questioning will serve the purpose most effectively. Maxwell (2013) connects an approach along these lines to improved validity, as does Larsen (2007), who states that the flexibility of a semi-structured interview, in which questions can be modified and adapted to circumstances, contributes to improved validity.

Conducting all the interviews as a team strengthened the validity of the data we gathered since we both could pick up points of interest we had not quite foreseen when designing the interview guide. Working together also helped us to ensure coverage of every point of interest in each of the interviews.

Being able to meet every respondent face to face also strengthened the validity of the data we collected. The fact that we actually travelled to England to meet our English respondents at their schools is likely to have caused them to take their roles as interviewees more seriously than they might have in an interview over the Internet.

In England we performed one pair interview and four single interviews. In Norway we carried out one single interview and three pair interviews. Having conducted both single and pair interviews made their contexts slightly different. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), interviews are sensitive to qualitative differences in context. It is perhaps easier to agree with someone than to disagree in the context of a pair interview. Also, respondents interviewed together with fellow school leaders might have hesitated to air criticisms. Another issue is that in a pair interview one respondent may dominate verbally over the other; however, this did not appear to occur in any of our interviews. On the other hand, a pair interview might also strengthen the validity of the data since the dialogue could lead to reflection upon the concept of democracy in education that otherwise would not have happened (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Based on the quality of the data, we contend that the use of both single and pair interviews had no significant impact on the information obtained. Interviewing as a team allowed us to take care to reduce potential differences in the interpersonal contexts of all of the interviews: when it came to the general atmosphere and methods used to probe for information, having the two of us conducting the interviews allowed us to focus on creating the most similar and constant conditions possible across all of the interviews. Of course, it is impossible to

eliminate the interviewer's influence upon the data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, in Maxwell, 2013). Nevertheless, our approach reduced the reactivity factor that is a normal part of any interview (Maxwell, 2013). Moreover, all interviews took place in settings where the interviewees were not pressed for time and therefore had sufficient opportunity to reflect. This also gave us as interviewers time to reflect and to rephrase questions and formulate follow-up questions to clarify and get more in-depth information. All interviews lasted between one and two hours. This length contributed to the quality of the data and thus strengthened validity.

Our selection of respondents is slightly asymmetrical between the two countries. Having several head teachers among our Norwegian respondents and none among the English respondents could influence the relevance and thus the validity of the data. According to Kvale and Brinkmann, one of the features of interview-based knowledge is that it is pragmatic (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In other words, the knowledge obtained from interviews should be useful and relevant, as was the case with our study. The respondents' answers to our questions provided the material we needed to answer our research question, so from that perspective the interview's face validity was adequate (Grønmo, 2004).

The fact that the authors of this thesis are Norwegian (i.e. citizens of one of the two countries in question) might have consequences for the data's validity in that it could result in a researcher bias (Maxwell, 2013). We are more familiar with the Norwegian educational context than the English context, and preconceptions we might have about aspects of our research might colour both the research process and the research outcome. Our awareness of this potential bias helps us to work at reducing its effects.

4.6. Ethics

Before we contacted the school leaders, our research was authorized by Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). All respondents were sent a formal request, where they received the outlines of the project and were also given the opportunity to pull out at any time. We also spoke on the phone and exchanged emails.

Our respondents have been guaranteed anonymity, which is why the data omits the real names and locations of the schools. The data only specify that all of the Norwegian schools are located in the Oslo area and all the English schools are in South East England. We identify the gender of our respondents as this adds relevant informational value to the interpretation of the

data without compromising anonymity. To increase transparency with our respondents, we gave them the opportunity to read through the transcripts. Only two of them elected to do so, and none of them had comments to make or asked us to excise any part of the interviews we had recorded.

In this chapter we have described our methodological approach in terms of the research design and selection of schools and respondents. We have also discussed aspects of reliability, validity, and ethics. Furthermore, we presented our analysis strategy and the data categorizations resulting from our working through the interview data. The next chapter is the Analysis chapter, in which we present the results of our categorizations of the interview data. These data are in turn subject to discussion in light of the theoretical framework we use in the Discussion chapter.

5. Analysis – presentation of data

In this chapter we present the results of our data analysis – the contents of the data categories introduced in the Method chapter – for the purpose of answering our research question, *What promotes and what hinders democracy in education in selected secondary schools?*

In order to answer the research question we introduced three sub-questions together with the main research question in chapter one. As explained in the Method chapter, in light of these sub-questions we decided to systematize our interview data into five categories. These categories connect to the research sub-questions in the following way: Data to answer the first sub-question are presented in sections 5.1 (How citizenship education is carried out) and 5.2 (School leaders' views on citizenship education). Data regarding sub-question number 2 are presented in section 5.3 (Leadership practices), whereas sections 5.4 (Schools as arenas for democratic practices) and 5.5 (School leaders' views on leadership and democracy in education) present data for the third sub-question. At the end of each section is a summary of the findings from that particular category. In the following Discussion chapter we then discuss these findings and how they contribute to answering the research questions in light of our theoretical framework on democratic education and democratic leadership.

5.1. How citizenship education is carried out

In this section we describe the citizenship practices in the two countries. First we look at how the English schools in our study organized their citizenship education and whether they preferred citizenship embedded or as a subject in and of itself. Then we look at how the Norwegian schools work to develop democratic skills and democratic thinking, and we present the views of our Norwegian respondents on how citizenship is organized in Norway.

5.1.1. English citizenship education practices

> Citizenship education in Britain is incredibly patchy. Depending on what school you go to and what you actually see is depending on the calibre of the teaching staff who's delivering the programmes. It will vary massively from one school to another. (E6).

As this quote from the vice principal at Greenfield indicates, the schools we visited turned out to have different approaches as to how Citizenship Education was delivered. Because

Evergreen school was a city technology college at the time when the government introduced Citizenship as a compulsory subject, they did not have to stick to the government's outline and indeed chose not to do so. Instead the subject was introduced as part of their PSHE programme: "So it became PSHCRE sort of, so we put Citizenship and Religious Education in there as well. And it really has kind of stayed that way", E2 – a Humanities teacher responsible for PSHE – explained. Though some schools have Citizenship running with the qualification as a GCSE or an A-level, this school had never done that: "Largely I think [this is] because we haven't got room on the time table and we haven't got specialist teachers. So it didn't really make much sense to run it without a specialist" (E2). The school had also organized PSHE into two blocks of a fortnight at the beginning of the year and a fortnight at the end, where certain timetables would be collapsed, so the students would not be in their usual lessons. There would be activities, and sometimes they would invite in people from the local community. The local MP had come in to talk about his work, and the students were given the opportunity to ask questions. They had also had people from the Holocaust Memorial Trust to come and talk to the students. In addition to the PSHE programme, there was a qualification called Equality and Diversity in year 11.

E1, who used to be on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Hillside, did not know whether Citizenship Education was still a factor, as it used to be, within the Humanities department. Citizenship used to be a separate subject; however, to his knowledge, this was no longer the case since things had changed with the new management system, and Citizenship became part of their PSHE: "At the moment we do PSHE, which is personal, social and health education, and that features in our tutor period, and so we do our PSHE in there" (E1).

Saint Matthew's did have a specialist teacher, but Citizenship was an add-on subject rather than a discrete, hour-long taught session, so every member of staff taught a little bit of the subject within the framework of PSHCE. They had vertical tutoring one hour a fortnight, which would be a different time every fortnight – the first Monday in period one, the next in period two. She would then provide teachers with a PowerPoint on a topic along with four or five different activities from which they could choose. However, this material was not always used. "Often do I then hear *Oh, we didn't do that, we did this instead*" (E4). Our respondent had been coordinating Citizenship in her school for two years and had now decided to change things. For the coming academic year they had decided to go back into year groups for this one-hour session and year-long planning, so they had decided to have two terms of

Citizenship within the PSHCE programme. There was also a lot of active citizenship going on in the school through fund-raising and projects; however, our respondent thought these projects tended to operate in isolation: "What tends to be lacking is the discrete elements within the classroom as a taught idea of Citizenship. I think that if you ask the students about Citizenship, they would go *Oh, we don't do that, no, we don't have citizenship lessons*" (E4). She also pointed out that staff at their school were slightly nervous about Citizenship as they perceived it as a liberal kind of concept that was brought into school, and they didn't do "that discussion thing" (E4). "There is still that idea that *Oh no, I'm not trained to do this*" (E4).

Riverbank had their Citizenship Education programme removed completely, the reason being the need for more focus on literacy and numeracy. Four years ago, our respondent E5 and the heads of the other SWS colleges within her school put together a PSHE Citizenship Curriculum for the one discrete hour of Citizenship Education a week, sticking to the key stage three statutory guidelines. It was planned over the six terms with every content covered, so staff were trained to deliver it, and specialists came in to do sexual health training. The programme was also supplemented by numerous enrichment activities, and even the school improvement partner said it was an outstanding programme at the time. "Then, when the new principal took over that very much changed and he removed that hour completely" (E5). Now they only have the form tutor period in the morning where there might be snippets of Citizenship and RE in addition to Citizenship at key stage four. As our respondent put it: "But that's it now, really... isn't exam subject so..." The current situation for Citizenship Education is that they have adopted the model of four drop-down days, which she did not find as effective and which often did not happen.

Greenfield had separate Citizenship lessons and a specialist teacher who taught most of the Citizenship classes. There was also an RE teacher who taught it, which meant that all classes throughout all of the year groups had it. In addition to the separate Citizenship lesson, the sixth form had a PSHE programme where external speakers were invited in. The day before our interview there had been a PSHE lesson for the sixth formers in the hall where a gentleman from a local charity did an entire session on drug awareness, having a very frank discussion with all of the sixth formers "to the point that he threw all the staff out because he wanted them to speak openly without us there, which was a very nice idea" (E6). The programme varied from year to year and also depending on which year group we talked about. Our respondent was pleased with their programme and the fact that they actually taught

Citizenship: "You don't get many schools nowadays which actually deliver a separate Citizenship lesson, and most of them have actually scrapped it completely" (E6).

Although some of our respondents said they would prefer Citizenship as a separate subject and others would prefer it as embedded, their view on the delivery of Citizenship did not really vary as much as one would think. Those in favour of Citizenship as a separate subject very much underlined that there should also be elements of Citizenship in all the other subjects as well. One reason for wanting a separate subject was that there would always be elements that needed to be taught specifically (e.g. the radicalization of young people – what the extreme right is, and what it means to be right-wing). These are issues that are not necessarily addressed in other subjects. Another concern was the lack of political awareness among both adults and students and the danger of students just adopting their parents' way of thinking instead of thinking for themselves. A third element that suggested a reason for having citizenship as a separate subject was the desire to push back against resistance from some of the school's leaders and faculty who did not view it as worthy of having time in the curriculum: "And you hear it as well within the school and when we're in meetings: *Can't you do Citizenship somewhere else? And: It's stopping my teaching of A-level,* or whatever" (E3). These views were shared with our respondent from Riverbank: "I think it has cross-curricular applications into every subject, just like numeracy and literacy, but personally I think it should be a subject of its own. But it would have to be delivered very well" (E5).

Respondent E2 preferred to have Citizenship embedded in all subjects; however, she was quite clear that it had to be led: "I think if there was a willingness to incorporate it across all subjects, I think that would be far better. But I do think for it to be done properly, I think that really has to be something that's embedded and led. I think it needs to be well led" (E2). The ideal for our respondent would be for Citizenship to be a compulsory part of every subject, well led, monitored and evaluated "since it is important in all aspects of life" (E2).

E6 regarded citizenship as very important and would prefer it to be embedded throughout the school.

> I would like to see in a school the idea that Citizenship is throughout the school. That actually it is in everything we do. That we teach about the outside world, we teach about politics, we teach about spiritual guidance and moral codes, that it should be

embedded in absolutely everything. And I don't even mean in the classrooms – I mean externally, in the corridors, after school, clubs, everything like that. (E6).

However, being realistic about the possibilities of embedding citizenship in a school environment, he was of the opinion that having it as a separate subject was necessary.

5.1.2. Norwegian citizenship education practices

Norway does not have Citizenship Education as a separate subject. It is embedded in various subject curricula, mostly within Social Studies. Developing democratic skills and democratic thinking is in line with the Core Curriculum, and the practice needed to obtain democratic skills is supposed to take place within the parameters of all subjects taught and all schools activities.

Indeed, these democratic skills are reflected in the stated purpose of study and competence aims for the following subjects: Norwegian, English, Religion, Philosophies of Life, and Ethics (RLE) (Udir, 2013). For English, part of the purpose of study is to develop communicative language skills and cultural insights: "Thus, language and cultural competence promote the general education perspective and strengthen democratic involvement and co-citizenship[1]". In RLE, one of the competency aims is as follows: "Discuss and elaborate on ethical choices and current themes in local and global society, social and ecological responsibility, technological challenges, peace work and democracy" (Udir, 2013).

In their extra-curricular activities, several of the Norwegian schools were engaged in promoting democracy and democratic thinking. For instance, Bakkegrenda participated in the MOT – courage – programme, which has a holistic approach focused on seeing in others the whole person. MOT has as its goal developing social competence by demonstrating that individuals share the responsibility for creating safe communities. It uses three mantras: courage to live, courage to care, and courage to say no. The school used these mantras in all possible contexts. Knatten did not participate in any extra-curricular programme at the time of our visit but considered student mediation as something they would like to do. The student mediation programme aims to develop a good school environment for all, offers an opportunity to clarify values connected to conflict and one's view of humanity, and provides

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[1] Here Udir has translated the Norwegian word *medborgerskap* into *co-citizenship*. The standard translation is *citizenship*.

various tools for developing good relations between teachers, students, and parents. Anker used the occasion of Norwegian Constitution Day and the children's parade as a starting point to promote democratic participation and democratic understanding. Many of their students have experienced what it is like to live in a non-democratic country but struggle to grasp what democracy is, so it was rewarding to prepare for these events by working with students on concepts such as core democratic values and inclusiveness versus exclusion.

The head teacher at Knatten (N6) was quite happy about the Norwegian approach to Citizenship Education:

> I think it works well the way it is, within Social Studies. Also, I am very pleased that we have managed to keep the subject Religion, Philosophies of Life, and Ethics (RLE).... I think it's a frame that works, so no, instinctively I would say that we do not need citizenship as a separate subject. (N6).

The deputy head teacher at Anker felt that citizenship education – like ICT – had become integrated into all the subject curricula to a larger extent than it was from the start.

> Then one might ask: Is it good enough? If we don't focus directly on democracy, if we don't focus directly and only make it an embedded part of everything – there could be a risk of people not being conscious of what we have an obligation to work with. – Lack of consciousness. Still, whether it helps being more conscious – I don't know (...) The Core Curriculum permeates everything we do, however no one is really conscious of it anymore. (N5).

To some degree the head teacher N3 from Bakkegrenda shared the same view: "My impression is that the Core Curriculum is not really thought about, to put it mildly." He also claimed to remember only parts of the Core Curriculum. However, when last reading through it, he found that many of its thoughts, ideas, and perspectives correspond to what it means to be a good teacher: to contribute to improved learning and encourage student participation. In addition, he was also concerned about the student-led, one-hour student council slot being removed from the curriculum for year 8 and year 9 since, as he saw it, opportunities for student participation had been reduced to make time for the new optional subjects. As a result, the student council slot was only included in the curriculum for year 10. This meant that it would now be more up to the individual teacher or form tutor to decide how much time to use on student council work. This work can range from the student council representative's

update on council work to situations in which, as N3 phrased it, "*We need to discuss this and that with the class.*" N3 illustrated the kinds of deliberations teachers now had to confront: "So there you are, having a Maths test coming up in three days: *Do you have to?*"

This same issue was also of concern to the head teacher at Knatten, who considered it a shame that the student-led student council slot had disappeared because of the stronger academic focus in schools. "So then to lose the systematic opening on the time table where you would work with class environment, understanding democracy and student participation in practice is indeed a challenge for us, however we will manage. It is still very sad to see that hour slot disappear" (N6).

As an attempt to make lower secondary school less theoretical, optional subjects were implemented in August 2012, including "Democracy in Practice". When we asked our respondents to comment on the optional subjects in general and Democracy in Practice specifically, this is how the head teacher N3 at Bakkegrenda responded: "I was about to say, shouldn't democracy… – Is that a subject like any other where you can say 'Now I'll work with democracy' – shouldn't it be a part of the whole package, the total school experience? – That's how I think" (N3).

As for the optional subject Democracy in Practice, it seems that most school leaders and teachers agree with the head teacher at Bakkegrenda – it does not seem to make sense to offer democracy in practice as an optional subject when democracy is supposed to permeate all that is done in the schools. It is worth noting that, according to Dæhlen and Eriksen (2015), only 545 – or 0,005 percent – of Norwegian lower secondary students have chosen Democracy in Practice as their optional subject.

5.1.2.1.   Summary

One major finding on Citizenship Education practices in England was that the way it was implemented and practised varied a lot among the schools. Few schools had Citizenship as a discrete hour on the timetable and many schools had allegedly scrapped it. How to teach this subject seemed to be just as patchy as E6 contended. Only one of the schools taught Citizenship as a separate subject, whereas the others had Citizenship as part of their PSHE in one way or the other.

The vast majority of Norwegian schools are public, and even private schools must follow the KPR, so all schools have citizenship embedded in various curricula. The Norwegian

respondents were quite happy about this way of organizing citizenship and did not see the need for a separate subject. Their negative views on the new optional subject Democracy in Practice illustrate this attitude. They were, however, concerned about the student council slot having been removed from years 8 and 9. This change made it more of a challenge to embed citizenship and secure student participation. Several respondents contended that the Core Curriculum – with its overarching perspectives of embedding democracy – was not thought about any more, since most teachers and school leaders had their focus on academic results.

In this section we have explored how Citizenship Education was organized in the English and Norwegian schools and how the respondents perceived this organizing. In the next section we explore the extent to which the schools were arenas for democratic practice.

5.2. School leaders' views on citizenship education

All respondents in both England and Norway regarded citizenship education as very important. The next two subsections present the details of their views.

5.2.1. English views on citizenship education

E5 at Riverbank opined that Citizenship would enable students to make more informed choices in life. As she saw it, whether or not that happened would very much depend on the school ethos and whether the head teacher valued the subject as a contribution to children's education: "For me, personally, it is all about the educating of the whole child, completely, about them having an awareness of themselves, beyond themselves" (E5). One of the other English respondents offered the opinion that because Citizenship did not have a high enough profile in the school, the subject mostly engaged younger students. By the time students reached year 11 – "well, they're too cool to do that sort of thing" (E1).

The English school leaders also described England as a country more or less "switched off" (E2) from politics. Therefore, the role of schools in engaging students in socio-political issues was important, and Citizenship was crucial to that process. "I think that they need that extra something to ignite some sort of political awareness because I feel that that has been lost somewhere – to address the issues that we have with racism, extremists" (E4). E2 expressed her concern this way: "I think adults are switched off from politics, and until the politicians and until the media address it, I think it is going to be very hard to persuade children of its importance. But I do think it is incredibly important" (E2).

Another reason why Citizenship Education was considered important had to do with the economic gaps between social groups in England. E6 contended that Citizenship is important for their students from middle- to upper-class backgrounds with educated parents but absolutely vital for students with working-class parents. He stressed the importance for schools with students from socio-economically deprived areas and backgrounds to teach citizenship and how a democratic society works through democratic practice.

"If they're not learning about diversity, if they're not learning about religion, if they're not learning about culture, government, if they're not instilled with aspiration within the school environment, they are not getting that at home" (E6). The difference is not about intelligence, he contended, it is about social environment and parental engagement. He was also concerned about students being worried only about their own local environment and not seeing the bigger picture:

> If they do not learn that education and learning and acceptance of other cultures and everything to do with the bigger picture is important, they become very, very insular. Education is not just about learning subjects, it's learning about the world as a whole. So yeah, I believe it's very important, incredibly important (E6).

5.2.2. Norwegian views on citizenship education

The Norwegian respondents placed just as much importance on citizenship as the English did. The head teacher at Humlegaarden, who used to teach Social Studies before becoming a head, felt that making the students aware of their role in a democratic society is essential. Her starting point was the question, "What does it mean to be part of society and have a voice?" (N1). Making students aware of both their rights and duties was central to all respondents. They believed that becoming an active citizen was not something that would just happen. Therefore, it was important to highlight that participating meant being able to make an impact.

Deputy head N5 mentioned the ICCS report from 2009 (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study by IEA – International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement), which showed that Norwegian students were at the forefront in understanding democracy. To maintain such an understanding was, according to our respondent, vital in their school, where approximately half the student body struggled with reading and writing issues in addition to economic deprivation: "Having said that, just like other skills it needs to

be practised. If not it will disappear and especially in a school like ours. With the challenges we face every day, it is even more important to focus on democracy and what democracy implicates" (N5).

Practice was a key word for other respondents as well. N3 said: "Of course! I mean, what is democracy? Co-determination! It is about learning what co-determination and democracy is, and that means you need to practise!" He underscored the formal rights of children and youths in the Norwegian school system were there for a reason – the reason being to be educated in learning through experiencing co-determination and democratic processes. Respondent N6 pointed out the need for citizenship education, including the importance of knowledge about how democracy has developed as a concept: "I think we need both citizenship education and to learn about how our conception of democracy has changed over the years. I think this is absolutely crucial for being able to enjoy a sound democracy in the future" (N6).

Like E6 at Greenfield, N5 at Anker pointed to socio-economic differences in their school populations as a factor in the need for citizenship education. N1 contended that students need to learn what it means to have a voice and thus get the opportunity to become active citizens. Learning about democracy through practice was imperative for all the Norwegian school leaders, and for students to learn democracy in practice.

5.2.2.1.　　Summary
All English respondents believed Citizenship Education to be important. Most meant that Citizenship should be taught, and taught well, and would like to see it embedded in other subjects and areas of school life. At the same time they wanted it to be a subject of its own to allow for a focus on issues that receive too little emphasis but are important for democratic awareness. Citizenship was described as generally not valued among students, teachers, and school leaders and partly regarded as more or less pointless, and by some even as a topic implying political bias in education. None of our respondents, however, shared these views.

The Norwegian respondents also considered citizenship as essential. They emphasized the importance of making students aware of their rights and duties and enabling them to become active citizens. They believed that becoming an active citizen was not something that would just happen. All agreed that just like other skills, democracy needs to be learnt in practice in order for students to maintain a profound understanding of what democracy is about. The Norwegian respondents were concerned about the removal of the student council slot. In their

view this made it difficult for students to get the time needed to discuss issues and thought it might diminish student participation. All Norwegian respondents were aware of the existence and the principles of the Core Curriculum but did not relate to it in daily school life as they considered it such an integral part of school life. The coexistence of two apparently incompatible approaches in the Core Curriculum and the KPR did not trouble them.

5.3. Schools as arenas for democratic practices

In this section we present our data on how the selected schools function as places for democratic learning through practice. The respondents were asked about forms of student participation in their schools. In the subsections below we therefore present data on student voice, learning environment, personal relations, and the inclusion of students' own life experiences in school life inside or outside the classroom.

5.3.1. Student voice in England and Norway

The English schools had student councils, but views varied as to how active student participation was and what influence students actually had on school life and development. At Evergreen, each of the four colleges had a student council. E2's impression was that some of these had more of a role than others: "I think there's a much stronger student voice in some of them than in others" (E2). The SLT of some colleges were more proactive and would take issues to the students and ask for opinions and feedback like "how would you like sports day to be run?" (E2). Other colleges would wait for students to come up with issues, for instance matters involving the school cafeteria. At E2's college, the student council met with senior management regularly, and student representatives were also used to speak to visitors. Each college had a head boy and a head girl from post-16, with a team of post-16s to work with them. In issues to do with the whole academy, the head boys and girls served as representatives. These representatives were not elected solely by their peers, but staff would nominate and interview them. Between years 7 and 11, representatives were student-elected.

Deputy head E3, at Saint Matthew's, reported that she sometimes felt they had a student council because it was an Ofsted preference. "It's ticking a box – and Ofsted wants to see that" (E3). However, in her opinion students were listened to within the school: "There's quite a lot of student voice, there's quite a lot of asking the students how they feel about certain things at different levels and different ages" (E3). The school had an ongoing, student-voice-

related action research project with the sixth formers to find out about their opinions and feelings on things like learning and creativity.

Students at Riverbank could participate in democratic processes through their student parliament. But like E3, the deputy principal E5 said allowing the existence of the parliament was like ticking a box: "We do it, but it doesn't involve a lot of students" (E5). The students were given the forum to have their say, but she was not convinced that students thought they had a real voice. "I would want it to be more powerful" (E5). Students at Riverbank could also express opinions and have a say by speaking to their form tutors and to the pastoral managers, who E5 said played an important role in the school. "Children go to them if they've got something that's worrying them, or a burning desire they want sorted out. The pastoral manager would relay to the head of school who would then deal with it" (E5). E1 at Hillside also emphasized that his school had a strong pastoral network of three to four pastoral managers to deal with students' personal issues and needs.

"There are lots of little opportunities", E6 said about student participation in democratic processes at Greenfield. The week of our visit they had run an art competition, with students doing an online vote on the school's VLE. Many lessons would include details on democracy and how it works. The SLT would ask for feedback from their student body. The school council, made up of representatives from each form group, would meet and tell the SLT what they wanted and didn't want. The council at the moment was involved in changing the people who managed the canteen system. "On Monday the canteens are coming in to feed them, so they get to taste all the food. (…) They will have a vote and decide which one of these canteen companies they actually want to go with" (E6). When he was interviewed for his position at Greenfield, he was also interviewed by the school council: "They sat there and they questioned me and their opinion was taken into account when I was appointed. So there is that system – there is a democracy there. It does work, and we do listen to them" (E6). Whether the students themselves would agree, he was not sure.

The head boy at Greenfield met with the head teacher every week to go through the concerns of the student body. The sixth form, according to E6, had a good voice representing them within the school and acting as a conduit for materials, information, and opinions between the students and the SLT. "So we do have democratic processes within the school, embedded within the school" (E6).

The schools in the Norwegian sample all have student councils, as required by law. Views differed, however, on how active student participation was and how much influence students had on school life and development. Respondents generally answered in the affirmative when asked whether student representatives believe they have a voice. The deputy head at Anker answered, "They feel they are very much listened to – even more so than is actually the case" (N5). In a meeting with Local Council officials, Anker students had stated, "We're an active student council that has a say in the school. SLT and teachers listen to us when we speak, and our proposals for what we think is right for the school are acted on" (N5). The head teacher at Humlegaarden told a similar story about their student council leader. N7 at Knatten thought the students felt their influence varied depending on the issues. Some respondents admitted that pseudo-democracy is a risk and also sometimes a reality when it comes to student influence, especially when issues are complex or student demands unrealistic. N6 said: "but when we take them seriously and give them a good explanation for why this or that is not possible, then they understand there are good reasons for not granting them their wish. Then they accept it" (N6). N5 admitted: "Council meetings tend to be a pseudo-forum. We get to listen to them – but we are not able to take their opinions into consideration as much as we would like. However, on student well-being their impact is more significant" (N5).

What issues and activities were the student councils engaged in? At Humlegaarden, aspects of their project for better formative assessment were discussed with the student council, partly based on the results of the compulsory Pupil Survey. Student representatives used to take part in presentations of this project, for example in meetings with local authorities. On such occasions respondents said the students were not afraid to give their opinions and were also eager to emphasize their friendly school environment. The student council had also been consulted before implementing new school rules, and representatives discussed the rules with their form groups to give feedback. "Obviously, this is very difficult for them, to give well founded counterarguments against rules. But I found it impossible to do it the other way around, to let them suggest rules. That would have been too democratic" (N1). She stressed students' right to have a say, but within limits. N2 also admitted that such processes could easily become pseudo-democratic. He praised their student council for being active among fellow students in creating a good school environment, but he added that the council's ability to execute ideas was limited.

The student council at Anker was concerned with student well-being and the school's reputation: "They just carried out a well-being survey they made themselves. They offer breakfast every Monday at school. They do anti-bullying campaigning and visit form groups to talk about Anker's reputation. We had some trouble here earlier with gangs creating fear" (N5).

The leadership at Anker wanted students to take part in all situations where issues like school environment were on the agenda. "Then we make a request to the student council and they pick the right persons to attend" (N5). Student leaders used to contribute at parental meetings, telling parents what it's like to be a student at Anker: "You're safe at Anker", or "You can do well at Anker if you want". They were also invited to some staff meetings to give feedback. "Then the students are really brave, telling the teachers what they do well and not so well" (N5). The council also took part in developing an anti-bullying programme and in the follow-up on a new system for improved classroom conduct to monitor whether staff practised it fairly and equally. "Which of course they didn't. … As a result of feedback from the student council we've had to train staff better" (N5).

The council at Bakkegrenda was quite proactive on some issues. They worked against bullying and for inclusion, for example suggesting that they do something nice for the rising year 8 students. "They like to raise issues like that, and are also concerned with unfair treatment and lack of influence with teachers" (N4). Furthermore, the council had been consulted on the school's work to improve attendance and reduce late arrivals, but not on shaping policy. "We don't categorically exclude them – of course we want them to give their views. But at the same time they may not have a sufficient general understanding, because they are very much on the individual level" (N4). He added that the student leaders had noticed that the measures to reduce late arrivals had proven effective and claimed the student leaders were quite satisfied with the situation now. When Bakkegrenda developed their new strategic plan, the students had wanted to be able to evaluate teachers. The SLT seemingly had tried to bypass this matter by suggesting: "Perhaps there is something more to it than teacher evaluation, perhaps it's a feeling that you don't have a sufficient say?" (N3). The students had agreed to this, so consequently the school's strategic plan now had an item for the development of a plan for student participation.

The assistant head at Knatten would have liked to see a more active council "on issues of importance" (N7). She felt the council currently raised few issues. But they were concerned

with fair assessment, and made suggestions for and took part in organizing school events and the national day celebrations. N7 described the student leaders as very conscientious at taking notes from meetings and taking issues back for discussion with their peers.

Regarding student involvement in general, N3 and N4 underlined the importance of good dialogue. "I am sure there are variations among schools as to the quality of dialogue, probably more so among individual teachers. The worst thing you can do is not to listen to the students at all, not take them seriously" (N4). N3 added: "This year, within our classroom leadership project, we have discussed with staff quite a lot how to establish good relations" (N3). N7 had lived abroad for a period as a child, and based on her school experience there she said: "I think students here have a much better opportunity to have their say. (…) When I went to school in another country, it was more 'this is the way it is'" (N7).

Norwegian subject competency aims require student involvement in assessment. N1 and N2 at Humlegaarden believed this involvement to be vital. "This gives students a stronger voice in their own learning. I'm convinced it affects their perception of their place and role in the school" (N2).

Although student councils are not mandatory in England, all schools in the English sample had student councils, though some respondents claimed that this seemed to be the case only because Ofsted – the Office for Standards in Education – likes to see these councils. In general, council work did not involve a lot of students; however, leaderships would ask the student council for feedback as a stakeholder group. Respondents were unsure as to whether students felt they had a voice. In big schools with SWS colleges, some colleges were said to be more proactive than others when it came to asking for student opinions and feedback. Other ways students could let their voices be heard in school were through dialogue with pastoral managers and form tutors. English students seemed to have more influence on sports days, on who would win the art competition or run the cafeteria, and on how they felt about learning rather than having more direct influence on aspects like learning environment and assessment. Influence seemed to be more pronounced for post-16s.

5.3.1.1.   Summary
In the English schools, student council work did not involve a lot of students, and the councils had varying influence. The English councils were asked for feedback and listened to on matters like student well-being and the school environment. They apparently had less

influence on matters concerning the learning environment, and student councils seemed to exist because "Ofsted likes to see that" (E3). The extent of student council activities and influence varied from one school to the other. The respondents believed the students themselves felt they had limited influence and added that in challenging circumstances, schools could not really afford to focus on student voice. Some ventured to say that their schools perhaps gave students too few opportunities to voice their opinions and have a say. These respondents expressed a wish for a more powerful student voice in their schools.

All the Norwegian schools had student councils, as is required. According to the respondents, the students themselves claimed they were listened to and were influential – more so than was the case. Pseudo-democracy was admittedly a risk and sometimes a reality; however, respondents emphasized the importance of taking the students seriously. Influence varied and students were consulted on issues but had no direct involvement in shaping policy. They seemed to have more influence on well-being and what goes on in the classroom and also more dialogue with staff and school leadership than their English counterparts. Furthermore, there appeared to be more dialogue in the Norwegian schools due to informal interpersonal relations, partly as a result of head teachers being visible and accessible.

5.3.2.   Personal relations and the learning environment in England and Norway

The English leaders described student-teacher relations in their schools in positive terms. However, they seemed to agree that relations are very much dependent on the individual teacher. At Evergreen students were not afraid to interact with staff. They were happy to bang on doors and talk to teachers: "In some schools they are all shut out and let in at a certain time and pushed out. That doesn't happen here" (E2). Students were happy to spend time in the school. E2 had the impression that students felt comfortable there. "Generally, I think the kids are happy, and they are happy to talk to anybody. In fact, you can't shut them up" (E2). A high turnover of staff in this academy was in E2's opinion a hindrance to good relations.

E2 said that students, at least in her college, could discuss with teachers aspects of how they were being taught. She practised "negotiated modular teaching cycles" – in which the first lesson and the layout of a six-week subject module are negotiated with the students, to give them influence. "So we negotiate. I mean, I still get done exactly what I want to, but they feel that they have had a say in it." (E2). She believed this practice had become embedded in the structure of her college – "That's what's encouraged. I can't say I believe it always happens"

(E2). Students also reviewed lessons and tasks by responding to the prompts *What went well?* *– It would be better if…* The academy had annual questionnaires going out to students and parents about their views on the curriculum, instruction, and "the whole range of things. So there is a voice there. Whether or not I can honestly say their views will be listened to and acted upon… whether it would change the overall policy I doubt. I'm being honest." (E2).

At Saint Matthew's, E3 and E4 described teacher-student relations as *positively good, excellent, quite personal, open, very caring*. Walking around at lunchtime, you would find "there are lots of classrooms with groups of children in them and maybe a member of staff sitting having lunch and the children being there" (E3). The staff football team would play against the sixth formers, or students visited Deputy Head E3 in her office to talk, sitting on the floor. "There are quite a lot of things going on, and I think that partly, it's the faith bit" (E3). They believed relations at Saint Matthew's to be very good compared to other schools they had knowledge of. E4 had her own children in the school. Her son had moved there from a local grammar school where it "was ordinary to feel slightly uncomfortable in the presence of teachers, to feel undervalued. (…) That was his day-to-day for years. So when he came here, he was blown away by the sort of more open relationships that people have" (E4).

There was negotiation on teaching methods in the classrooms. E3 offered an example from her A-level group. "At the beginning they said *no, we want you just to talk to us, just lecture us and we will write notes, give me hand-outs and I will highlight.* And then I did an evaluation with them, and they said *no we want more active learning*" (E3). Generally, students could influence teaching through evaluations. "There's lots of evaluations, which is part of a democratic process" (E4).

Deputy Principal E5 at Riverbank said the quality of relations depended on the individual teacher. Some teachers were very rewarding, enriching, and empowering, whereas for others relations with students were very challenging.

> Again, it depends on how well you interact with those children. Again, I think it has to do with where our staff are at. So for example, if they are not very good at differentiating their lessons, if they're not very good at seeing that child as an individual and meeting their need and altering their lesson plan to meet that child's needs, then I think they have a slightly tougher time to the teacher that does. Or the teacher pays his interest in the corridor and says: *how was (…) on Saturday*? Or *I saw*

you in the local paper, or all those sorts of things that would get that child to buy into you...You just got to pay an interest in them, really. (E5).

Riverbank students could have a dialogue with teachers on how they were being taught: "With some teachers they could. Yet again, it depends on that particular child or where they [the teachers] are at" (E5). She found a teacher's ability for emotional involvement to be an important factor in dealing with behavioural problems or special needs. The school had an ongoing cross-curricular action research project, involving newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and training teachers, in which students were explicitly asked for feedback on trial lessons. Other more routine ways of feeding back from stakeholder groups were an annual ICT-based student survey, a parental survey, and a staff survey.

E5 characterized the learning environment at Riverbank as passive: "A lot of passive teaching, passivity in learning. We're trying to change that now, in terms of making children more actively involved and more critically thinking and more open minded" (E5). She thought more focus on meeting students where they are could make them more actively involved in their own learning. When asked what could make students more democratically involved in school life, E5 thought they should be provided with more opportunities.

At Greenfield, E6 characterized their school environment as very open and accepting with no real adversity and students all socializing together. "You won't get sections of students who feel isolated within the school. People are very caring, they are very supportive. And usually when people come to our school that's what they pick out, how polite and how involving the students are" (E6). As an example of the accepting atmosphere, he related that that year an openly gay boy was voted in as house captain by his house of 200 students. He would not say there was no bullying or racism: "There is. Of course there is" (E6). The school did lots of work, like assemblies on relevant topics, to try and break down those social barriers. "But they do still exist. They always will exist. Students tend to group within their cultures" (E6).

E6, too, thought that student-teacher relations very much depended on the individual teacher and the individual student. Overall he described relations as very good:

> Our students are very respectful, incredibly respectful. They are very polite. The teaching body instils that in them. The students therefore have a good relationship with the vast majority of their teachers. And of course the teachers are very committed. They are committed to the extracurricular activities. They're committed to what's

happening in their classroom. Overall our teaching body is very passionate about their subject area. So therefore they instil that passion in the students as well. (E6).

When asked to describe student-teacher relations in democratic terms, this was his response:

Again – it is a dictatorship. The teacher is in charge. The students are not in charge. They can make suggestions. They can ask questions. They can appeal to the teacher's better nature. And generally speaking that will work. But the classroom environment is run by the teacher, very much so. So from a democratic point of view, yes, there's a hierarchical [structure]. (E6).

E6 himself tried to practise an open-door policy towards staff and students. Students would come in to get advice, to offer their opinions, or to ask permission to initiate activities such as charity work during school time: *"I want to do this, or I want to raise money for this. Can I run this kind of thing? Can I do this as part of my curriculum*? And they do come to us and they say that. And when they are not happy, they will complain. And they should do it. They should"* (E6).

When it came to direct interaction and dialogue with tutors about classroom instruction, students' opportunities to exercise influence would depend on the issue in question. If lessons were inappropriate, this would quickly be brought to E6's attention and the SLT would have a number of ways of dealing with that, such as dialogue with the teacher, with the students, or with both. Dialogue in general would partly depend on the individual teacher:

For instance students can actually deal with the teacher, go up to him and say: I don't understand. If it's a good teacher they'll be able to have that dialogue and the teacher will accept it. And a lot of our teacher staff also do self-evaluations. So they will get the students to actually evaluate how they think the lessons have gone. (E6).

Recently some students had complained about their maths lessons. E6 entered a dialogue with the teacher and the students, separately and together, and went through what they were going to do. "In fact, we drew up a contract between the students and the teacher, setting down the guidelines of exactly what the teacher said he would do and what the students in turn would do with them. And then I'm now monitoring that" (E6).

When asked about teacher-student relations, the level of student discipline and respect for staff was what English respondents tended to comment on to begin with. Respectful, polite,

very nice, compliant, were words used to characterize student behaviour. Some respondents emphasized the presence of an atmosphere of mutual respect and most teachers' willingness and ability to listen to the students' points of view and engage with them in open conversations on matters they wanted to talk about.

No English respondents reported any major disciplinary problems or conflicts within their schools. Pastoral networks in the schools were said to play an important role in conflict prevention and venting of personal or interpersonal issues. At Evergreen, depending on the nature of the issue, they would get students to sit down and talk about whatever the problem was. A physical conflict would usually result in the expulsion of the students responsible. Greenfield had a tiered system for disciplinary reactions, similar to most schools, E6 said, with sanctions ranging from the classroom teacher dealing with an issue initially to permanent expulsion. There was very little conflict within the school, so the system was not used a lot. Riverside did a lot of proactive work to prevent conflicts: "So say for example they've been involved in bullying or they've been involved in a fight. Then we'd do some sort of proactive workshop with them to explore why that happened" (E5).

The English schools, generally being quite big, claimed to have few behavioural problems that could be linked to size. However, all respondents viewed school size as a limiting factor for developing good interpersonal relations. Earlier E5 had worked in a school of about 600 children: "We knew every child, we knew every child well. There was nowhere for them to slip through the gaps." (E5). Riverbank, on the other hand, had 2100 students:

> In an institution like this, that one-to-one is lost a little bit. I think it is easier for a child to be missed, to not work with them on perhaps that closer degree as you would do in a smaller institution. So I think there's something to be said about that. It says something about the optimum size of a secondary school, doesn't it? (E5).

The head teacher N3 at Bakkegrenda claimed that student-teacher relations were very much dependent on the individual teacher. He described some teachers as very dialogue-oriented, asking students for feedback regularly. A minority was said to be a bit fearful of dialogue. N3 also pointed out that a functioning student-teacher relation requires the teacher's ability to listen well and give adequate responses, like praise or reprimand depending on the situation. In connection with the school leadership's project on improved classroom leadership, they discussed with teachers struggling in the classroom, to try to resolve relational issues. Student

leaders quite often raised relational issues students had with teachers in student council meetings. The last years this school had worked to increase attendance and lower the late arrivals rate, which had contributed to a better learning environment.

At Anker, N5 described student-teacher relations and the learning environment as quite good. He thought this school was better at building relations and a good learning environment than others he had worked in. Here, he said, they tried to look "behind and beyond" the student: "When a student behaves in an interesting way we try to look into why the student behaves like this. How can I establish a positive relation to this student?" (N5). He contended that in form groups with issues the cause was often problems with student-teacher relations. Typically, the teacher had entered into a conflict of some kind and had failed to resolve it through dialogue. "We expect our teachers to work to improve student performance. For some this could mean to attend class more regularly, rather than improving a subject grade. To facilitate such individual development, it is vital to work to establish positive relations" (N5).

At Knatten, their student survey showed the majority of students felt they had good relations with their teachers and thought the teachers wanted the best for them. "But ... some teachers seem to think this is not as important as it actually is. Some seem to think that '*students don't have to have a relation to me to work with the subject – we should have a subject focus*'. So there are different views on this" (N6).

The respondents also agreed that having good personal relations is a prerequisite for a good learning environment and that school size is a major contributor to the opportunity for and quality of relations. The Norwegian schools were "small size", and respondents referred to this as positive for relations. A moderate number of students, they contended, made it easier for staff to get to know students well, and for students to get to know each other. "The social environment is small and transparent, everybody knows everybody. Students socialize across year groups and things like that" (N1). All schools used the national annual Student Survey as a tool in their work with relations and learning environment. Bakkegrenda also took part in the MOT – courage – programme for developing social skills. "The social dimension is emphasised in Norway (…) we see to it that everybody is ok and is taken seriously" (N4).

No Norwegian schools reported any major disciplinary problems or conflicts among students. As in the English schools, there were very few group- or gang-related problems, and there was little violence or bullying. This was sometimes to the respondents' surprise, considering

the heterogeneous composition of their student cohorts. One school had had some problems with gangs in the past. Schools with high percentages of students with non-Norwegian backgrounds saw little or no evidence of disciplinary problems that could be directly related to this. Some schools had early intervention and zero tolerance policies against bullying, violence, racism, or other undesirable behaviours. At Anker, they tried to monitor what was going on among the young to be ready for early action. At Humlegaarden, staff was also said to be very observant, "to be able to intervene on a low threshold because at that stage dialogue is much easier" (N2). Parents were involved if the school deemed it necessary. Some schools attributed the low levels of student conflict to their efforts at creating a good learning environment. For example at Humlegaarden, each staff member was in a development group of some kind, such as one for the learning environment.

5.3.2.1.   Summary

When asked about student-teacher relations, the English respondents initially focused on student behaviour and described students as being respectful and polite. They described the school environment as open and accepting and the people as caring and supportive. Also, they emphasized the need for mutual respect and the importance of dialogue. Students were not afraid to go and talk to teachers and some respondents described an open-door policy towards students and staff. Students could discuss and sometimes negotiate with teachers over how they were being taught. Teachers who demonstrated an interest in their students and the will to engage in open conversation were said to be more likely to succeed in establishing good relations. The classroom environment was described as very much run by the teacher. Some respondents also described how the leadership actively intervened to improve dialogue and resolve teacher-student issues. Large schools with high staff turnovers faced more difficulty in developing good teacher-student relations than small schools did.

When asked about relations, the Norwegian leaders initially talked about student-teacher relations in terms of the need for teachers to listen and to try to understand their students. They agreed that positive personal relations are vital for the learning environment. The school leaders themselves tried to be visible and accessible to students and staff as they were very much aware of the importance of dialogue and emphasized the need for mutual respect. Several respondents emphasized that teachers should look behind and beyond students with issues to try and understand their behaviour. Some of the schools took part in programmes aimed at promoting self-esteem and a good school environment. The schools had few

disciplinary problems, and this was partly attributed to their moderate size: the respondents agreed that having a small- or moderate-size school facilitates good relations.

5.3.3. Inclusion of students' life experiences in England and Norway

E5 at Riverbank was born and raised in the area and emphasized that this was her community and that she worked there largely because she felt connected to it. Like E1 she indicated that some teachers would say they did not want to work with children from their own communities, but she did not share this sentiment: "You can relate to them because you can say to them: I saw you here or I saw your there. And how was that? Did you enjoy? – All that sort of things, really" (E5).

At Evergreen they ran the PRIDE programme (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Discipline and Excellence) during tutor time. So when the topic was respect, students would be encouraged to think of a time when they had not shown respect to somebody else. "How could I've dealt with it differently, what were the consequences and how can I build on that in the future? It's that kind of programme" (E2). This school had many extra-curricular opportunities for the students to express themselves. "Whether it is art, music, PE – there's lots and lots of opportunities there" (E2).

Inclusion of students' life experiences in the teaching at Greenfield primarily depended on the subject. E6 taught music, and he encouraged students to bring in their experiences. "In fact, we almost insist on it, that they actually use those" (E6). Students were encouraged to show their skills both outside of school and in the classroom. A lot of that would be done outside the classroom, next to curricular work. "So we have dance groups, (…) we have drama groups. We put on school plays. We have musical concerts two or three times every term. We have groups performing musically all the time" (E6). Students could bring in their experiences and backgrounds when doing charity work, and were encouraged to do this type of work. Quite often students also did assemblies, based on a topic area in their experience:

> So yeah, we encourage them to bring whatever experience they have outside, whatever culture they have outside. So for instance we're doing quite a bit of work in a couple of weeks' time on Ramadan, and we're asking our Muslim students to run workshops, before other students, on what Ramadan actually is. (E6).

A school of many nationalities and religions, Bakkegrenda attempted to include students' life experiences in religious studies in particular. Sometimes they tried to make use of qualities or strengths the students had to complement ordinary lessons, or they tapped into other life experiences, such as the fact that some students had parents who were refugees. N3 did not think they were any better than other schools at this kind of student involvement but imagined this to be a bit easier for them due to the great diversity of their student cohort.

Through organized classroom visits ("*skolevandring*"), N5 at Anker observed students' experiences being used quite often and, in his view, in a good way. "Of course it could be better, but it is through this that we can create the good discussions" (N5). This was about relations, he added. To succeed in building relations in school, it is necessary to take the students' experiences seriously. When asked in what circumstances staff typically included student experiences, he said:

> I'd rather say in what circumstances do we not do this? I cannot see a single area in this school where students' life experiences should not be taken into account. For instance when discussing rich and poor or drug abuse, it is a reality here, not just something that happens far away. (N5).

He pointed out religious issues as particularly important for teachers to focus on and spend time on with the students. "Democracy and equal rights are very important values in Norwegian society. But how are these practised?" (N5). In his view teachers needed to facilitate open debates on this, and he used the example of wearing hijab. "Norwegians regard this as anti-equal rights. If you ask girls here, they may view it differently. It is important to let them come forward with their views, even if these don't match what we have decided are the correct answers" (N5).

At Knatten they were not very concerned with the inclusion of students' life experiences. "It depends on the subject and on the teacher. There is no particular focus on this." (N7). They admitted that "we're not a school that makes a lot out of having a multi-cultural and multi-religious student body. (…) We don't make use of it to any big extent" (N6).

5.3.3.1.   Summary

When talking about the inclusion of life experiences, English respondents focused on extra-curricular activities like art, music, and PE – activities perhaps primarily going on outside the classroom. There were also examples of life experiences being included in the subjects taught,

and these experiences would generally depend on the subject. Most English respondents did not express any specific opinions on the importance of including life experiences in lessons. One English respondent mentioned the use of student life experiences in the context of the school's PRIDE programme. Another respondent mentioned Ramadan workshops run by Muslim students for their peers.

Like the English respondents, most Norwegian interviewees did not explicitly emphasize the importance of including students' life experiences in the school context. When talking about life experiences, they focused on the role of these during lessons, especially Religion, Philosophies of Life, and Ethics (RLE). Teachers were also said to make use of life experiences to complement other lessons. One respondent emphasized the importance of including life experiences as a way of creating good interpersonal relations and discussions. One school admittedly did not pay much attention to this particular aspect of school life.

5.4. Leadership practices

Respondents from both countries told us about how they attempted to practise an open-door leadership policy for students and staff. There were differences, however, as to what open-door policy actually implied. The next subsections present our data on leadership practices.

5.4.1. English leadership practices

E6 at Greenfield had this to say: "Generally speaking my door will be open at all times. And the teaching body, I hope – I do think this is true – feel very happy to come in and discuss things with you, put forward concerns, suggestions and ideas" (E6). Students would come in to get advice, offer their opinions, or ask for permission on various matters. The principal had a two-hour slot after school for teachers to come and speak to her. E3, the deputy head at St. Matthew's, practised a similar policy: "This office is lovely because it's a very public office. There are children walking past and they will wave, the door open. Sometimes I'll get 6th formers in and they will be sitting on the floor, you know. It's really nice" (E3).

A year earlier Greenfield had become an academy. E6 explained that the fact that they were now also a business gave much more of a business feel to the way the SLT ran the school. They were now accountable not just for the teaching, but also for the budgets, the buildings, the grounds, and the upkeep. The leadership no longer acted only as school leaders, but also as business executives in some respects. Regarding interactions with staff, E6 said the

leadership used to consult staff before any changes, especially major ones. This year they had changed the way they monitored students, and staff had been consulted. "But to be honest, how much are we consulting them? Because of course we've already built the programme, we've already built the idea that we are actually doing. So – not really consulting them" (E6). This academic year the school had scrapped their International Baccalaureate (IB) programme due to lack of funding:

> I consulted when I had a change of IB into A-levels. So we moved away from the IB. But again, how much did their opinion really matter? It was good to get their opinion and in fact they were happy with the decision we made. But if the decision went the other way, their opinion would be taken into account, but it certainly wouldn't have been the driving force behind it. (E6).

E6 stressed that one reason behind this kind of leadership practice is pressure from external agents on senior leadership. He thought English schools by necessity had to be this way nowadays, because "a head teacher is very vulnerable. Our head of Ofsted believes that the head teacher is the be all and end all of the school. They are the leadership, and if the school is failing it's the head's fault. If the school is successful, it's the head's fault" (E6). On the other hand, he said, "If we dictate everything our staff members would never go with us. I think there is a fine balance between staff members believing that the SLT of the school is doing what's best for the students. If they believe that, then the staff will go with it" (E6).

Leadership interactions with staff at Greenfield took place within a rather hierarchical chain of command, according to E6. He saw a tendency with for SLT to be isolated from staff. "I would say that actually SLT and staff are very isolated from each other. I don't know if it's a deliberate thing. I don't think it's a good thing. And I try not to be" (E6). He tried to avoid this by being visible in the corridors, by being accessible in his office to staff and students through an open-door policy, and by socializing with staff. At his previous school, the SLT had isolated themselves completely from staff, which he found to be "very detrimental, because of course it became a barrier. It became an us-and-them scenario and that's what you want to get away from" (E6). The SLT was aware of this fact and had recently decided to try to work on it. A couple of months earlier they had told staff they wanted to establish a well-being group "to move away from that" (E6). As part of a leadership-initiated effort, this group organized various social events to improve general well-being of staff and improve staff-SLT and intra-staff relations.

At Hillside the leadership had consulted teachers before introducing a new marking policy. The head teacher asked all staff for opinions on the proposed policy, and staff gave feedback through their departments. "I wouldn't use the word democracy, but yes – consultation, I suppose" (E1). Student representatives had not been consulted: "Students will be told how things are going to change, so they won't be in the dark" (E1).

E2 was in charge of Citizenship at Evergreen. She was of the opinion that staff had little influence: "In terms of teaching staff being democratic about what we do, I would say we have very little say" (E2). She characterized the leadership practised in this school – a big school with four SWS colleges – as top-down and questioned whether SLT members had any real influence: "I think as a school we're very much top led. And also where you've got the four colleges, it's that leadership that gives it those identities. So there is discussion, but I'm not sure that it results in any real influence in leadership" (E2). As already mentioned, she used "negotiated modular teaching cycles" in her teaching. This was an example of an SLT initiative meant to strengthen student influence and dialogue. "The chief executive put that idea forward a few years ago, and I've just continued with it. So that is a management sort of led approach" (E2).

E4 was in charge of Citizenship at Saint Matthew's and interacted with two heads of department in her work, E3 being one. "Both always said: Just do things. Someone will tell you to stop eventually – or they won't. But that's how you get things done here in this school. It's to do things till people tell you to stop doing rather than by negotiation or …" (E4). "It takes too long", E3 added. Their present head teacher had been there for three years and had the same kind of leadership approach: "He likes people to do things. He would prefer you just to go ahead and organize something rather than go to a committee and all that sort of thing. The previous head was not like that at all. Everything had to be his idea" (E3). The new head they perceived as more democratic, to a certain extent: "Because of the nature of education you can't be completely democratic. You might want to be, but you have to go with the system in the country, which is against it" (E3). She also pointed to a lack of time as one reason behind the "just do it" aspect of her leadership practice.

At Riverbank, the deputy principal E5 described some of their leadership practices in connection with how a citizenship programme they used to run had been scrapped one year earlier. She had been in charge of development and implementation of the programme. When a new head teacher took office, he stopped it overnight: "There was no democracy. The

principal came in and just said: that's not in the timetable any more, it's gone" (E5). She described the leadership the current head exercised as generally top-down: "Even though we have a distributed leadership model, it's not distributed, if that makes sense. The decision is made and we enforce the decision" (E5). She connected this type of leadership partly to school size: "Communication in this institution I'd say is one of the most difficult things, because it is such a large institution." She attributed differences in leadership practices primarily to differences in educational philosophies within the SLT. The level of participation, dialogue, and negotiation in decision-making processes depended on who among the SLT was managing what. Middle leadership meetings tended to be more democratic.

As to her own leadership practices, E5 said she had done a lot of work to try to empower people. As an example she pointed to how she and another SLT member had led the development of a new framework for departmental observations and reviews: "It was all negotiated with the middle leaders (…) we'd look at various different formats and how would this work, and how often would you want to be inspected, and so on. And that was all negotiated with them and they bought into it, to be fair" (E5). She found that a leader's ability to lead democratically depends both on the individual leader and on external factors:

> Very different styles of leadership, I think, impact on the level of democracy that is within each school. I think it is also the context of the school. Perhaps in different circumstances schools are able to be a little bit more democratic than those that are in more challenging circumstances and are constantly under the Ofsted eye. (E5).

5.4.2. Norwegian leadership practices

Like some English respondents, some Norwegians explicitly described their open-door policies with students and staff. At Bakkegrenda, N4 said about the head N3: "With respect to democracy, as leadership (…) your door is always open. It is almost always possible for staff and students to come to you and talk. It is a totally different strategy than with the previous head". N3 commented: "Sometimes students come here with tears in their eyes and ask: Can the teacher do such and such? Then it is very satisfying to be able to tell them yes or no and give them a good explanation" (N3). Their policy extended beyond "open doors" to a strategy of visibility: the SLT tried to be visible among students and not hide away in offices. "Among other things, the other SLT-members and I are often outside in the morning, observing and talking to students who arrive late. We are out and about a lot" (N3). The deputy head N5 at

Anker believed he spent ninety percent of his time out of his office, for example in the reception area, to make himself more accessible to students and staff. The SLT did frequent inspections about the school and wore yellow vests with job titles to be identifiable to students and people in the neighbourhood. "Visible adults contribute to a better learning environment and less bullying. That is why the SLT wear these vests practically at all times" (N5).

In compliance with Local Council regulations, schools in the Norwegian sample practised lesson observations from time to time, with subsequent follow-ups with teachers: "We are out looking, trying to get a picture of what's going on in the classrooms and how the individual teacher functions in the classroom. (...) It is totally different from say fifteen years ago, the way we now follow up on teachers" (N3). He characterized this management mechanism as useful to them as leaders, but he also recognized that staff did not necessarily unanimously and unconditionally embrace it. In connection with the leadership's work on teachers as classroom leaders at Bakkegrenda, they had discussions with teachers who were struggling, to try and resolve their relational issues. At Knatten, N6 related that they were about to initiate a project for improved relations – practical advice to teachers on how to actually achieve this.

The head at Humlegaarden described her approach to her role as development- and involvement-oriented. When she had started six years earlier, she had initiated a project for improved assessment practices, a teamwork-oriented project to try and anchor the process and the outcome with staff. She believed that outcomes tended to be long-lasting and deeper rooted if staff members did most of the developmental work themselves. She described her role in leading staff and students as consisting of "pulling or pushing or assigning tasks" (N1). N3 at Bakkegrenda articulated a similar approach. They were currently focusing on improved teacher classroom leadership and did this through dialogue with staff on how to practise good leadership. Bakkegrenda also focused on improvement of academic results to comply with Local Council instructions on this, and the SLT discussed the matter with staff to create an understanding of its importance. "You cannot achieve results in the classroom unless the teacher is motivated. So how do you motivate?" (N3). He contended that knowledge workers are motivated by economic incentives only to a limited extent: "It's more about creating harmonic, optimised working conditions and providing teachers with some tools which enable them to survive in the classroom" (N3). He was satisfied with the way his school had managed to improve discipline and reduce late arrivals during his four years in office: "We

did this through focusing on it together with staff. We discussed all the way down to: Where are you when the bell rings? Are you in the staff room or on your way to class?" (N3).

The head at Knatten talked about seeing the student as a whole person: "Teachers' primary focus often is their own subject areas. But we should not forget to think across and beyond subjects – to see the creative side of the students and all of that. This is to a great extent a leadership responsibility to keep focusing on" (N6). They had an ongoing project led by the school's social and health workers, to take care of the pastoral side of things.

Anker had a socio-economically heterogeneous cohort. Some students came from wealthy backgrounds, whereas others were children of poor, traumatized refugees from war zones. N5 said the SLT tried to maintain a constant focus on how to deal with this on all levels to minimize negative consequences through extensive dialogue with and within the staff.

N7 at Knatten had been assistant head for less than a year. She expressed having an exploratory approach to her new role and found it stimulating to discover how much more manoeuvring space or leeway she would have as a member of SLT, compared to in her previous role as a staff member, to influence the everyday life and development of a school.

5.4.2.1. Summary

Some English respondents practised open-door policies with staff and students who could come in to talk and discuss. Some claimed the SLT tended to be somewhat isolated from staff. The leadership often consulted staff, especially on major changes. Consultations apparently took place after the leadership had shaped new policy and not so much during the process. Leadership practices were described as distributed and top-down. With regard to leadership styles, the respondents claimed they were often told what to do and they in turn told others what to do. In their estimation this behaviour was partly due to a lack of time, a restrictive curriculum, and the school's size. Some admitted that their leadership practices to some extent conflicted with how they would like to lead. Several respondents argued that leadership in education in England could not be completely democratic because of "the nature of education" (E3), pointing to external factors like Ofsted and the DfE. One respondent told about how the ongoing academization of schools gave more of a business feel to the way the leadership ran the school and the leadership no longer acted only as school leaders, but also as business executives in some respects.

The Norwegian respondents also described their leaderships as having open-door policies with staff and students. Some said it was almost always possible for staff and students to go and talk to the head teacher. Respondents described how the leadership spent a substantial amount of their time out of their offices to be visible adults in the school environment. Leadership practices were described as team- and dialogue-oriented as well as structurally rather flat. Some respondents regarded the leadership practices in their schools as a reflection of the generally flat organizational structures in Norwegian society. According to one respondent, democratic ways of thinking and acting are so deeply rooted in society, schools included, that they receive little thought. He argued that teachers and school leaders act democratically but do so almost instinctively. Another saw no conflict for leaders between acting democratically and deciding how things should be. Lastly, N5 contended that school leaders' focus should be to help students become active citizens, but schools were still a long way away from achieving this goal.

Despite the fact that the educational contexts in England and Norway are different, there were many similarities in how the respondents from both countries viewed democracy in education, and the next section presents our findings on this aspect.

5.4.3. English views on democracy in education

"I think from the lowest to the highest it's built on fear of saying the wrong thing or doing the wrong thing because at the very heart of it, it is a system that is not only not democratic, it is bordering on corrupt. That is how I feel" (E4). This was the response to whether there were any constraints of a political nature preventing school leaders from promoting democracy, pointing to the Ofsted system, and how failing schools would come back as academies and sacked head teachers as Ofsted inspectors. Ofsted was quite often put forward as a reason for the undemocratic nature of English schools. According to E4, head teachers wanting to lead in a more democratic way could not do so because of "the nature of education". Her assistant head teacher agreed: "I also think because of Ofsted, and because of the way education over here is so politicised, it can't be completely democratic because we are directed so much by – at the moment – Michael Gove – and what he wants" (E3). (At the time of our interviews, M. Gove was the Secretary of Education.)

When asked to what extent democracy had been debated among teachers or within the leadership team, the assistant head teacher at Saint Matthew's (E3) could not remember it

ever being discussed in any leadership team meeting. She would also at times be told just to decide herself when presenting suggestions she would like to put to the staff. Telling a group of adults what to do instead of discussing it with them was something she was not comfortable with: "The very least I'd like to give them is a chance to give me their opinions. But sometimes it doesn't work that way, which conflicts a lot with how I'm being taught to lead through the master's degree" (E3). Our respondent had taught under sixteen different Secretaries of Education and contended that each one came in wanting to change things and seeing the position as a political stepping stone for something greater. "Not because maybe they know that much about what's going on, and I certainly don't think the current fellow does, but he's there to make his mark" (E3).

Like E4, the vice principal at Greenfield (E6) described the English school system as a dictatorship and claimed that it had to be, given the circumstances. The head teacher in a school is vulnerable: if the school is failing, it is the head's fault; if the school is successful, the head gets credit; and when the school is failing the head teacher gets sacked. He then told about a school not far from Greenfield, which had run a mock Ofsted two weeks earlier and invited the Ofsted inspectors to come in and have a look. He claimed it really was an outstanding school; however, the inspectors said that that was no longer the case. The day after the head teacher lost the job. "And if a bad Ofsted actually happens like that, that's exactly what happens to the head teacher in today's society, which means that it has to be a dictatorship" (E6).

Our respondent in charge of PSHCRE at Evergreen, agreed that the system was not democratic: "We are directed by the Government, and then the Government gives power to the heads, and the heads tell us teachers what to do, and we tell the children what to do. No, I don't think there's an awful lot of democracy there, really, at all" (E2). She also indicated that the leadership team had little influence on how things were carried out in her school: "They discuss, but whether or not they have any real sort of power to influence, I'm not sure. I think as a school we're very much top led."

The curriculum was another factor that several respondents regarded as one of the constraints of a political nature that prevent school leaders from promoting democracy in schools. E1 was concerned about what he described as the cluttered timetable with little room for citizenship. According to E6, the curriculum is massively restrictive because the students have to get

certain grades at a certain time. They have to reach a benchmark, and if they do not, the school is deemed unsuccessful.

> And then we tell our students in the comprehensive schools (…) we tell them that actually you must get 5 A to Cs. (...) But actually when they walk into secondary schools, every statistic we look at, every target, tells us that they're never going to get a C. So we're telling these students from day one: you're a failure, because you don't meet our academic factory. And actually it is a factory. (…) You must learn this at this point, and if you don't you've failed. And the failure is based on your grades. It doesn't matter if you're an outstanding musician or you're a fantastic singer. If you haven't got a C in maths, then no-one cares. (E6).

E6 contended that the education policy in Britain does not look at the child at all. It looks at academic rigour. "It's absolutely nothing to do with the pastoral care of the student. We don't get funded for pastoral care" (E6). In addition there are the constant political moves, the ever-changing face of education in Britain:

> I don't think I'm overstating the point when I say that actually my daily life at the moment, as head of curriculum, involves watching Michael Gove and see what he's going to say next. The face of education is ever changing at the moment at a ridiculous pace. – Completely unpredictable. I can't help but think that actually our entire education policy is based on Michael Gove trying to actually be Prime Minister. (E6).

Having worked in three schools, E5 had experienced that different styles of leadership have different impacts on the level of democracy within the schools. As she put it, all schools would like to aspire to consulting with staff at every level and doing everything in a democratic way, but in her experience, this did not always happen. As she saw it, staff was too busy with the attainment agenda to have time for democratic practices. "Perhaps in different circumstances schools are able to be a little bit more democratic than those that are in more challenging circumstances and constantly under the Ofsted eye." (E5). Schools that struggle to get the results required are under pressure; however, this is also the case for outstanding schools, according to our respondent, since they want to maintain their outstanding level.

These pressures affected the student voice, in this respondent's opinion. Even though the students had a student council, it had less power than she would have liked: "It's almost like we're ticking a box" (E5). It was not a priority in their school at the moment because, as she

put it, "that's almost like an additional thing. It's almost like when we're good and outstanding then we can do that". E3 viewed it the same way – the student voice was like ticking a box because Ofsted liked to see that. Still, she said, "within the schools themselves students might be listened to, and I think there is an element of that here, but as a nation I don't think we have a democratic education" (E3).

As for teaching staff being democratic about what they do, most of our English respondents contended they had very little say. As a profession, teachers do not feel as if they are listened to. One even claimed the system is against democracy. If that is true, this response to whether the school system in England is democratic is a case in point: "I must say you are the first person in the last nineteen years of teaching who has ever entertained the concept of democracy in education" (E1).

5.4.4. Norwegian views on democracy in education

According to N4 at Bakkegrenda, the democratic way of thinking is so deeply rooted in Norwegian society, including in its schools, that those involved in education rarely think about what they do and how they do it as specifically democratic. They simply do it in a way that feels right: "To think democratically is deeply rooted in our minds" (N4). The head N3 contended that this feeling stems from the fact that the school system is fundamentally democratic and has all the formal elements to frame it – the pupil council, the school environment committee, the formalized meetings between the leadership team and the unions (MBU), the parents' working committee, and the school board at each school. Furthermore, schools are committed to the overarching goals articulated in the main objects clause in the Education Act. N4 also voiced the opinion that the flat organizational structure within Norwegian society was a factor that led students to feel comfortable around the school leaders, including the head teacher. "The door is always open, so there are always opportunities for teachers and students to talk to the head, whether it's about contributing or letting off steam" (N4). Both leaders were, however, concerned about the student council slot having been removed from years 8 and 9, because that could lead to a weakened student voice. In their experience, this had so far not been an issue since they considered the student-teacher dialogue to be very good in their school.

The deputy head N2 pointed to the objects clause in the Education Act as well as the Core Curriculum in general and the assessment guidelines in the KPR, agreeing that the Norwegian

school system is definitely democratic. The fact that legislation and guidelines have been formed by governments of diverse political perspectives from 1994 up until now was worth noting: "You cannot say it is conservative politics or socialist politics. This is a cross-political consensus: this is how the Norwegian school should be. We can of course discuss school meals and such; however, the essence is definitely democratically founded" (N2). For a school to be democratic, it is fundamental that a democratic way of thinking takes hold among the leadership team as well as the teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure a good dialogue when making decisions, according to N1. In her experience, open dialogue led to reduced conflict and disagreement. Furthermore, schools had to be democratic because the students needed to learn about democratic rules and how democracy works in practice, through participating in the democratic process.

> That does not mean that everybody should have a say at all times; however, it means that you learn about the democratic institutions and how they work. The fact that the pupil council agree on a matter does not necessarily mean that they get their way; however, they can discuss things with me and tell me what they want from me, and, as I say, they have their say just like staff and parents. (N1).

According to N1, there is no conflict between acting democratically and deciding how things should be: "No, I don't think so, though the students might disagree on that. However someone must decide; that's just how it is" (N1). They also worked systematically to include all the students: "But this is about how you view students because this is about respect for the individual human being and their place within the community. To get people to work in collaboration despite their differences – that is, for me – that is democracy" (N1).

N5 contended that even though the Norwegian school system is more democratic than most, there is still work to be done. "We have very good intentions about being democratic, but in a democracy the majority must be active citizens, and I feel we still have a long way to go." As he saw it, basic knowledge is the key to create active citizens who are able to participate in a democracy, and the fact that 50 percent of their students were not able to read or write well enough to do so, worried him. "These are the ones who will be part of the Norwegian future, and if we don't equip them with the tools required, they will not become active citizens, which in the long term could be a threat to democracy" (N5). He was also very clear about what he perceived to be his main focus as a school leader: "Our reason for being here is to

make every student in our school capable of taking part in the Norwegian society and develop it further. As school leaders, this must be our focus" (N5).

According to our respondents, there are no constraints in the curriculum that hinder the promotion of democracy in education because of the overarching principles in the Education Act and the Core Curriculum. Furthermore, one of the respondents contended that there are even more opportunities than restrictions. Although the competency goals must be met, the teachers are free to decide which aims to focus on and how much work to put into each one of them. Some did, however, find a lack of time to be a threat.

All the Norwegian respondents had a learning-centred approach to their work. "I am concerned with the learning environment in addition to the results. One objective does not rule out the other" (N6). This was also a focal point for N5:

> A democracy will not work if there is too much noise in the classroom. A democracy will not work if the students perceive their learning environment as insecure. A democracy will not work if the students do not understand or if they cannot read or write well enough to be able to acquire new knowledge. (N5).

N5 also contended that it was vital that the students who are receiving the instruction are listened to instead of just being told what is best for them. N1 agreed, pointing out that like teachers, students show more commitment to working towards improving their learning environment when they are part of the process and have their say.

5.4.5. The ideal school according to the respondents

We asked our respondents about their image of the "ideal school" – what improvements they saw as desirable or what limitations they would like to eliminate to make the school better. Norwegian respondents were also presented with the objects clause of the Education Act, which expresses ideal objectives and purposes for education. We asked the respondents to reflect on these.

"The ideal school would be where everyone wants to turn up" (E1). To him this implied a more free choice of subjects or "modules" (as he called it) for students and the opportunity for students to build their own curricula based on individual interests and preferences.

"An ideal school…I suppose one with no limitations, really. It would be a small, community based school, with a range of people, children, all getting along…No constraints at all – that

would be lovely, wouldn't it?" (E2). Timetabling was a major issue in her opinion. Students are constrained by timetables that fail to give them sufficient options to do the things they want to do. She thought students were also constrained by the expertise of the staff. To her the ideal school was one of "limitless opportunities for the students" (E2).

"Hmm…I just think happy and successful children and happy and successful staff – everybody" (E3). Her response to a follow-up question on how to achieve this:

> I think more dialogue. It's missing really. – Knowing the individuals as well. … It's listening and knowing the individuals, who you are teaching and who you work with. And that might mean knowing more about their personal life and what makes them tick as well as their professional side. But it's also having time to do that. (E3).

E4 would take what they had at "the bottom" of her school and "tweak the top":

> Not remove – just tweak, and I would like a top layer that's more visible and more interactive with students – I would! This idea about going out and [playing] football isn't a bad idea, and it's not often you see that happening. – And much more supportive, not just paying lip service to it, but deeper, much more caring and supportive. (E4).

"For me it would probably be a school of a smaller model, without a doubt… with staff that don't turn over. One that has a balanced curriculum and that wants to educate the whole child. For me it's not just the attainment game as such, you know" (E5). For her, the core values of school were essential, and for the school to be clear about its vision and what is wanted from staff – what the non-negotiables and priorities are. She referred to her previous school, a smaller one that had been running for forty years:

> If you asked me to say *This is the way we do things around here* I could articulate that easily. Here I can't do that, because it's a continuum of change, constant shifting strands. So I couldn't identify what I thought were the core values here. I don't know whether that's because it's built up over time, or whether that has come from the leadership. I think ultimately the leadership plays a role in it. It's got to. (E5).

E6 said schools should have goals and aspirations for their students and have more freedom in how they get students there. He and his wife used to have Swedish students come and stay with them as they went to the local college for four months:

Their school let them do it and it didn't impinge on their studies. And we at the moment struggle to afford to give students a day to do that kind of thing, because their curriculum is so tight, so jam-packed. I would love the freedom to build a curriculum which is suitable for our students. That actually they get to do what they can when they can. (…) I'd love to be able to cater the education to the student, rather than actually having a one-size-fits-all. (E6).

In his opinion schools do things the wrong way around: "We teach the students that it's about the task, it's about the end result (…) It's not actually as it's supposed to about the learning. I'd want to turn that around. I'd want to make it more in the idea that actually you're here to learn and this is about the learning environment" (E6). He ventured that more freedom for schools to build their own curricula would make a difference in this respect.

N1 and N2 considered the staff's perceptions of students – of the child – to be very important in school. They both also underlined that teachers and leaders should have a clear understanding of what society's school vision and mission (as expressed in the objects clause) actually are. They found student teachers and NQTs to be rather ignorant of these things and contended that teacher training played a part in it. "They don't really know what they actually get paid to do" (N2). N1 commented with a smile: "We want to take over teacher training – reform it".

At Bakkegrenda the student counsellor N4 wished the school had a more flexible timetable:

But I don't know how to achieve that. Time is very limited, and to do cross-curricular activities or try to bridge the gap between the school and working life demands a lot from staff, from students, and from the local community. It's a lot of work. But obviously, it's important to give students a better understanding of society. (N4).

N3 found it difficult to recruit good teachers to his school and wanted more good teachers and lower turnover. Otherwise, he did not complain: "I feel things are working quite well. I don't have any immediate wishes.… It's popular to say you want more funding, right? It's like a mantra. But we try to operate with the funding we have" (N3).

With regard to the objects clause, to N4's mind the formation – or bildung – of students and their ability to contribute to the community was more important than education in itself.

If I can provide students with some tools that help them become good [people] and feel good about that, I think it's a success even if their academic performance is not so

good. If someone gets involved in criminal activities or [is not a good person], you have to work with them. (N4).

N3 did not find any real dissonance between the objects clause and current national policies of the KPR that focus more on academic results: "The objectives are quite compatible with principles for improving academic performance" (N3). N5 remarked about the Clause: "This is the whole reason why I work here – the vision for the school, to see the whole person. It may sound pompous, but this is what we're trying to achieve – to make people function in society, take part in society and develop society. This is the key to why we are here" (N5).

5.4.5.1.   Summary

The English respondents all contended that the English education system is not democratic. Some described it as a "dictatorship," and one argued that the system is bordering on corrupt, pointing to Ofsted in general and how sacked heads from failing schools could come back as Ofsted inspectors. Most of the English leaders believed that "the nature of education" (E3) prevented schools from being democratic. By "nature of education" they referred to a hierarchical chain of command from the Secretary for Education down to the individual child in the classroom, in addition to Ofsted regulations and inspections. A restrictive curriculum, as well as lack of time to accomplish all they had to do, was also cited as a factor that kept schools from engaging in democratic practices. Several respondents complained about the unpredictability of the system – the ever-changing directions on an almost day-to-day basis coming from the DfE – and claimed that too much of their time was spent on watching what the Secretary for Education was going to say next. One respondent claimed that English education policy was not concerned with the child as such but only looked at academic rigour.

Leadership approaches in English schools were described as top-down. It was claimed that head teachers did not have much choice but to lead this way because of the system in general and Ofsted floor standards in particular, which require students to get certain grades at a certain time. Failing to meet these standards after an Ofsted inspection could result in the head teacher being sacked overnight, thus making heads very vulnerable. Though most respondents expressed a wish to lead more democratically, they felt they were not in a position to do so. One has to go with the system of the country, which is against a democratic approach, one respondent claimed.

The Norwegian respondents all contended that the Norwegian education system is democratic. They described the system as "definitely democratic", "fundamentally democratic", or "more democratic than most" and considered thinking and acting democratically as "deeply rooted" in both the school system and Norwegian society as a whole. They did not see any constraints of a political or curricular nature against working more democratically in schools, and some argued that there were more opportunities than restrictions. One respondent also claimed that in spite of many good intentions, the schools still had a long way to go in the area of enabling all students to become active citizens. One respondent stated that a consensus exists – across the political spectrum – about how the Norwegian educational system should be. Some interviewees argued that schools must be democratic to enable students to learn about democracy in practice, and for schools to be democratic, a democratic way of thinking had to be implemented in their leadership teams as well.

6. Discussion

In the introductory chapter we emphasized the importance of education for maintaining and developing democracy, and with that in mind we set out to explore how schools actually work with democracy in education in practice.

This chapter completes the purpose of this thesis, which is to identify phenomena within schools and in the context of schools that promote or hinder the realization of democracy in education. Findings presented in the analysis chapter are compared and discussed within and across the two selected countries in light of the chosen theory in the theory chapter.

In order to answer the research question – *What promotes and what hinders democracy in education in selected secondary schools?* – we introduced three sub-questions:

- How is citizenship education carried out, and how is it viewed by school leaders?

- How do the schools function as arenas for democratic practices in terms of student voice, personal relations and the learning environment, and the inclusion of students' life experiences – and how are these aspects of school life viewed by school leaders?

- How do school leadership practices affect democracy in the schools, and what are the views of school leaders on school leadership and democracy in education?

Each sub-question connects to the five data categories introduced in the Analysis chapter as described at the beginning of that chapter. This Discussion chapter consists of four sections. The first three are connected to each of the three research sub-questions, whereas the fourth section concludes with some remarks on the main research question.

6.1. Practices of and views on citizenship education

In this section we use our theoretical framework to compare and discuss the findings on citizenship education practices in the selected schools and how citizenship education is viewed.

Upon comparing our findings on citizenship education practices in England and Norway, the differences in practical approaches to citizenship in the two countries were very clear. English respondents described views on citizenship education in the English context that ranged from

considering it essential to placing little value upon it. These varied perceptions of the subject's importance are reflected in the "patchy" way it is organized and delivered in individual schools. The fact that each school determines its own approach to teaching citizenship makes English schools very different from the Norwegian educational context, where citizenship is embedded in the national statutory curricula.

The respondents' own views on citizenship education further underlined the differences between the two national contexts. All respondents from both countries agreed that citizenship is very important, but the reasoning behind their views tended to differ. The English respondents argued that citizenship was needed to address issues such as racism and extremism and also to raise and ignite political awareness and to promote critical thinking. The Norwegian respondents generally claimed that citizenship education was needed to secure and develop democracy and to allow young people to learn what it means to be part of society and have a voice.

The findings on citizenship education practices for England seem to be in accordance with Arthur and Wright's (2001) description of how the subject was taught and valued around the turn of the millennium. In 2012 Leighton called for the need for a change in how citizenship is taught because the current methods did not seem to work as intended and resulted in a limited understanding of democracy. Data from the 2009 ICCS study (Nelson, Wade and Kerr, 2010) – in which English students performed below average on several parameters, and in particular on questions regarding civic principles such as equity, freedom and social cohesion – suggest he has a point. As for the English respondents' views on Citizenship as a school subject, they seem to be in accord with Leighton's call for a more radical approach to dealing with the challenges of political apathy and intolerance (Leighton, 2012). Furthermore, the wish of some English respondents for a more embedded approach to citizenship education corresponds with Fielding and Moss's (2011) call for a more cross-curricular approach to education in general, as expressed in one of their indicators for radical education – *curriculum, pedagogy and assessment*.

In the Norwegian context democracy is one of the founding principles of the Education Act (1998), as its objects clause states. Furthermore, the Core Curriculum (1994) states that education must promote democracy; it also elaborates on the intended implications of this principle for education. All of the Norwegian respondents were aware of the existence and the principles of the Core Curriculum but rarely used, discussed, or referred to it because they

found its basic ideas to be so thoroughly integrated in school life that no one was really conscious of the Core Curriculum anymore. The fact that the Norwegian legal framework proclaims democracy as a fundamental value implies that the Norwegian citizenship education approach scores quite high on Fielding and Moss's (2011) first indicator of radical education – *proclaimed democratic vitality*. The English Education Act (2011), on the other hand, does not refer to democracy as a means or an end for education. Consequently, England scores lower on the same indicator. In terms of the *vision of the school* (Fielding and Moss, 2011), the Norwegian model expresses a democratic vision through the Core Curriculum and the objects clause in the Education Act. We have been unable to establish the extent to which the English education system has formulated a national vision of what role democracy is intended to play in it. English schools usually have their own mission statements expressing the given school's vision. According to Osler and Starkey (2005), mission statements are generally oriented towards the individual learner and equality of opportunity rather than democratic values.

Some Norwegian respondents were of the opinion that embedding citizenship education across the curriculum runs the risk of keeping it out of peoples' minds. Educators who are no longer conscious of the embedded presence of the citizenship concept in the Core Curriculum, may not feel an obligation to work with it. Furthermore, the Knowledge Promotion Reform (KPR) has increased the focus on basic skills and academic results in comparison to previous national curricula, and this could contribute to the fact that Core Curriculum's overarching democratic values have become less "visible" to the respondents. These two factors both imply a potentially less *proclaimed democratic vitality* in the Norwegian context. As Stray has noted (2010) government documents leading up to the KPR do not focus on work with democracy and citizenship.

The fact that all respondents from both countries considered citizenship an important aspect of education that, and according to most respondents should be embedded in the curriculum and school life implies that their views are in accord with at least two of Fielding and Moss's (2011) indicators. First, the *radical structures and spaces* indicator describes the need for the school to pursue and provide many opportunities for participatory democracy. Second, the *curriculum, pedagogy and assessment* indicator is concerned with equipping people with the desire and capacity to think critically. Providing students with an abundance of opportunities for participation encourages critical thinking. In the Norwegian context, the respondents'

views are in accordance with the Core Curriculum philosophy, whereas the views of the English respondents contrast with what they describe as the general English attitude towards citizenship education.

Several Norwegian respondents expressed concerns about the removal of the weekly student council slot from years 8 and 9. This reduction in time for student voice could affect the way several of Fielding and Moss's (2011) indicators for radical education might apply to their schools. First, this change does not support a *proclaimed democratic vitality* – democracy becomes less visible as both the end and the means of schooling. Second, it could imply a diminished *insistent affirmation of possibility* through less openness of opportunity. Third, it may affect the quality and extent of *radical roles* – less student involvement and opportunity for an equal sharing of power and responsibility. Furthermore, reducing student input may affect the image of *the rich child*, and the quality of the school as a place of encounter and as a place of democratic fellowship (Fielding and Moss, 2011). It also exemplifies Stray's findings (2010) of reduced ambitions for working with democracy and citizenship in Norwegian schools.

There were differences in how the respondents argued for the importance of citizenship education. The English respondents talked about addressing political apathy, whereas the Norwegians focused on the need to learn what it means to have a voice and thus become active citizens. Both ways of reasoning have relevance for the cardinal value of radical education *social and political justice*, the key idea of which is egalitarianism (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

6.1.1. Answer to research sub-question one

What observations in the data on citizenship education practices and views can be said to promote or hinder the realization of democracy in education?

One prominent promoting factor in the citizenship education context seems to be that the legal system and curricula have an explicit focus on democracy. Furthermore, an embedded approach to citizenship seems to be more productive when it comes to enabling students to learn democracy in practice. Learning democracy in practice appears to be an important promoting factor in itself. Positive attitudes of individual school leaders and teachers, like the

attitudes demonstrated by our respondents, also contribute to providing the focus necessary to work constructively with democracy in schools.

On the other hand, in the English context general attitudes towards Citizenship were described as rather negative or sceptical. These attitudes were counterproductive to the promotion of democracy. Furthermore, a coordinated national approach to how citizenship education should be carried out seems more supportive to the promotion of democracy in education than an approach in which schools on a more individual basis decide how to prioritize and carry out citizenship education. An embedded approach to citizenship seems in itself to be a positive contributor to democracy in schools. However, adopting such an approach without also being conscious of it could over time perhaps imply a reduced focus on and weakening of democracy education. Furthermore, it is difficult to measure the results of citizenship education, and for that reason it is challenging to maintain a commitment to the subject in an educational environment that looks primarily at academic rigour and favours traditional subjects that are more easily tested.

6.2. Practices of and views on schools as democratic arenas

This section uses our theoretical framework for a comparison and discussion of findings related to schools as arenas for democratic practices. The section is divided into the same three subsections as is the corresponding section on schools as democratic arenas in the analysis chapter – student voice, personal relations and the learning environment, and inclusion of students' life experiences.

6.2.1. Student voice

One reason for the apparent difference between the two countries regarding the importance and influence of school councils could be that they are not mandatory in English schools, unlike in Norway, where school councils have been required by law since 1964. Furthermore, the school council concept is rather new in England, as most of the councils have been established since the 2003 Every Child Matters (ECM) government initiative (Bennett, 2012). Also, the focus on democracy as both an educational means and an end is different in the two countries. The English Education Act (2011) does not mention democracy, whereas the Norwegian Education Act (1998) explicitly does so in its objects clause. Moreover, the difference in the degree of student influence we see in the data could be attributed to at least

three phenomena. First, Norwegian school leaders expressed that they had a dialogue-oriented approach to student voice. Second, as many respondents claimed, a small or moderate school size facilitates interpersonal relations, and the schools in the Norwegian sample are in general considerably smaller than the English schools. Third, informal interpersonal relations contribute to a strengthened dialogue.

Despite the apparent differences in the extent and impact of student voice in the schools in the two countries, the English and Norwegian respondents all seemed to regard student voice as important. However, English respondents found restrictions and pressure exerted by external agents like Ofsted to be a hindrance to increased student participation. In the Norwegian context, respondents saw no obstacles of a political nature to more student democracy, except for their concerns about the removal of the student council slot.

Student voice is a central element of Fielding and Moss's (2011) concepts of radical education and the common school. Their *radical relationships* indicator involves a dialogic approach to student voice – a pedagogy of listening. Data from both countries show evidence of a pedagogy of listening with respect to student voice. However, the extent of the dialogue seems more pronounced in the Norwegian schools because, among other things, the students allegedly said they were listened to and felt they had an impact on school life. Dialogue is an important component of participatory democracy (Fielding and Moss, 2011) – important for the common school to function as a collaborative workshop. The schools in both countries show evidence of a functioning student voice; however, both countries seem to have a clear potential for improvement, particularly the English schools, partly because student councils have a shorter history in England than in Norway.

6.2.2.   Personal relations and the learning environment

Our interview data initially appeared to suggest a distinction between the two countries judging from the way the respondents talked about student-teacher relations within their schools. After further probing, answers concerning interpersonal relations did not differ as much as they had seemed to upon first impression. Still, there did appear to be a difference in the Norwegian versus English school environments that we believe could be partly attributable to the Norwegian Core Curriculum and the heavy influence in the Norwegian teacher education tradition of social pedagogy, which is both person-centred and holistic. Holistic, dialogue-oriented thinking is also reflected in the responses of some of the English

interviewees, who talked about seeing the whole child and expressed their belief that those teachers who were willing to listen and engage in open conversations with students would have better relations with them. School size varied considerably within the overall school sample. All schools in both countries had few disciplinary problems, and any such problems they did have were allegedly not directly connected to school size. What could be linked to moderate school size, respondents from both countries argued, were the opportunities for members of the school community to develop good personal relations.

The quality of relationships between the members of the school community is a vital factor that is conducive to participatory democracy (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Central elements of Fielding and Moss's (2011) *radical relationships* indicator are "the ethics of care and encounter" as well as "a pedagogy of listening", and all schools in both countries seem to score quite well on this indicator as they show evidence of both ethics of care and a pedagogy of listening.

Social pedagogy and holistic thinking are the essence of Fielding and Moss's (2011) education-in-its-broadest-sense (EBS). As mentioned already, Norwegian teachers and school leaders are brought up in a holistic tradition and thus score high when queried about EBS and aspects of the common school concept. English school leaders do not have the same social pedagogy training background. Nevertheless, several of them presented holistic arguments very similar to those of the Norwegians.

As respondents from both countries agree, a common school should be small in scale to provide better opportunity for staff to get to know every child (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Hence the Norwegian schools, which are considerably smaller than the English, are closer in this respect to the common school concept. The respondents in the biggest English schools said high turnover of staff was a hindrance to developing good relations. This view further indicates that the respondents felt that school size is a factor in interpersonal relations in the school environment. According to Fielding and Moss (2011), small schools are more conducive to democratic practice.

Several respondents from both countries claimed that the quality of student-teacher relations is very much dependent on the individual teacher and his or her willingness and ability to engage in open conversations with students. This teacher leadership practice is in accordance with *discursive rationality*, one of the rationalities of the developmental conception of

democratic leadership practice (Woods, 2005). According to Woods, discursive rationality suggests looking for ways of superseding difference through dialogue. Judging from the data from our interviews, this concept appeared to inform teacher leadership practices in both countries.

6.2.3. Inclusion of students' life experiences

All respondents were asked the same question – how students' life experiences are included in school life, both inside and outside the classroom, our intention being to learn how this was done within school hours. Data indicate a general difference in the English and Norwegian responses. While English respondents focused on activities outside the classroom, the Norwegians talked about what went on in lessons in the classroom during school hours. Reasons behind the apparently different perceptions of our question could be due to educational cultural differences – like the fact that Norwegian educators are trained in a holistic tradition and are used to the concept of the whole rich child – as well as differences in the ways extra-curricular activities and other elements of the education systems are organized.

Holistic thinking is integral to EBS and participatory democracy and involves seeing the whole child. For educators to see the whole child, all aspects of a child's life experiences must be taken into account in school. According to Fielding and Moss and their indicators of radical education, *personal and communal narrative* is important because it connects with the making of meaning (2011). Making life outside school relevant to life in school adds to the making of meaning. Narrative learning is mindful of the need for recognition and significance (Fielding and Moss, 2011), and the data from both countries contain examples of how the schools take students' need for recognition and significance seriously.

Inclusion of students' life experiences in school is relevant to a number of aspects of the concepts of radical education and participatory democracy. It exemplifies the application of EBS – educating the whole rich child – and the realization of the ethics of an encounter. It is also about not making the Other into the Same and a willingness to be open to the new and unexpected (Fielding and Moss, 2011). One respondent offered an example of such openness. He emphasized the importance of letting Muslim girls wearing hijab come forward with their views on this even if they do not match the general opinion of what is the politically correct, mainstream answer, as most Norwegians perceive the use of hijab to be anti-women's rights. The use of students' life experiences in a school means that the image of this school has traits

of a person-centred learning community – where the functional is used for the sake of the personal (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

The data concerning what goes on in classrooms could be interpreted as an indication that the English schools use life experiences to a lesser extent within regular lessons than the Norwegian schools do. In the Norwegian context, the respondents' focus on classroom activities is at least partly a reflection of a holistic tradition on the national level that is based on the goals expressed in the objects clause and in the Core Curriculum. Thus the Norwegian schools in the study more or less automatically score quite well on practicing EBS.

One reason why English schools seem to use life experiences to a lesser degree could also be connected to educational culture. As one respondent claimed, in English education there is a bit of a concern about political bias in what is presented in the classroom – teachers are reluctant to engage in open discussions out of fear of not being sufficiently neutral. Another reason could be a lack of time, which all English respondents claimed was a problem, due to the necessity of chasing the Ofsted floor standards. Fielding and Moss (2011) describe English education as a project of technical practice to find effective means to achieve predetermined ends, and the prevailing concept of knowledge as a literal reproduction of a pre-existing reality (Fielding and Moss, 2011). If this is the case, a consequence could be that there is less space in the English classroom for being open to the unexpected – not to be confined by customary expectation and engage in open dialogue – as expressed in the indicator *insistent affirmation of possibility* (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

6.2.4. Answer to research sub-question two

What observations in the data on schools as arenas for democratic practices – student voice, personal relations and the learning environment, and inclusion of students' life experiences – can be said to promote or hinder the realization of democracy in education?

Factors said to promote student voice are above all the quality of dialogue. Teachers and school leaders need to take students and student representatives seriously. It is important that they listen and make student voice and student council activities a priority. This includes allowing enough time for students to participate. Schools in which such requirements are not fully met will not have a well-functioning student voice.

When it comes to interpersonal relations and the learning environment, dialogue again appears to be a decisive factor. The quality of such dialogue is heavily dependent on the individual teacher and his or her ability to engage in open conversations with students and show an interest in them. Furthermore, the quality of such dialogue depends on the teacher's or school leader's ability to see the whole child. Also, informal interpersonal relations add to the quality of the dialogue. On the negative side, a high turnover of staff and big schools represent hindrances to the development of good interpersonal relations.

Making students' life experiences an integral part of planned lessons is a way for teachers to promote this dimension of participatory democracy. Another way to promote this democratic aspect is for teachers and school leaders pay an interest in the student as an individual both in lessons and elsewhere in the school environment. Academic rigour and fear of bias in lessons represent challenges for educators to live up to such objectives.

6.3. Practices of and views on school leadership and democracy in education

In this section we use our theoretical framework to compare and discuss our findings on leadership practices in the selected schools. We look at how the respondents view leadership practices, leadership approaches, and general conditions for leadership and democracy in education.

The data indicate fairly different approaches to leadership in the two countries. The typical English approach was said to be hierarchical, or top-down, whereas teamwork and a more flat organizational structure seemed to characterize the Norwegian context. Despite this seemingly general difference, several respondents from both countries reported that they practised an open-door policy towards staff and students. However, the nature of this policy differed. In England, open door mostly seemed to imply the opportunity for staff and students to come in to talk or discuss and raise all kinds of issues. Open door in the Norwegian context also meant that leadership members, including the head teacher, often left their offices to circulate among students and staff. Such leadership behaviour is also to some extent visible in the English data. However, there is little indication of the extent to which head teachers were available to students and staff – beyond the example of one respondent, who reported that his head had a two-hour weekly slot for staff to come and speak. The data suggest that English head teachers are perhaps not particularly available to staff and students.

Another apparent difference between the two countries was the character of dialogue between leadership and staff. In the English schools, the leadership often consulted staff to get feedback on issues and changes to be made. Consultations apparently tended to take place after the leadership had shaped new policy and not so much during the process, which led to staff generally having limited influence on policy- and decision-making. However, the English data reveal a mixed picture, as there are examples of changes taking place without any consultation as well as changes fully negotiated with staff. In the Norwegian context dialogue seemed to imply discussion-oriented teamwork processes between staff and leadership. One objective for such an approach would be to anchor the implementation of new guidelines with staff to give changes a more lasting effect. Other examples of dialogue were discussions with staff on how to practise good classroom leadership and how to improve academic results.

Just as the leadership interactions with students and staff appeared to differ somewhat along national lines, so too interactions within the leadership teams themselves seemed to differ slightly. Some English respondents reported that they were told by the head teacher just to get things done, and how decisions were made by them or other SLT members and then enforced. The reason for such leadership practice was said to be a lack of time to discuss before making and executing decisions. Furthermore, the nature of leadership interactions with staff was described as dependent upon who among the leadership was managing what. These data indicate a lesser degree of teamwork within the English leadership teams than the dialogue-oriented approach visible in the data for Norway.

One English respondent pointed out that a leader's ability to lead democratically depends both on the individual leader and on external factors. In the English context several respondents were concerned about various constraints on democratic leadership practices. The constraints were connected to floor targets and Ofsted inspections, school size and the school's socio-political context.

Data from both countries show evidence of open-door leadership practices, which have positive relevance for democratic leadership in relation to Woods's (2005) four rationalities of a developmental conception of democratic leadership practice. First, practices engaging stakeholders in dialogue and debate in search of the common good are in accordance with *ethical leadership* (Woods, 2005). Also, enabling stakeholders to participate actively in dialogue is about the distribution of voice and thus about *discursive rationality* (Woods,

2005). Third, an open door policy does not in itself secure the right to participate in decision-making, but it opens up the possibility for stakeholders to do so and thus is conducive to *decisional rationality* (Woods, 2005). Fourth, if an open door policy actually results in stakeholders being listened to and empowered to participate, it may have a positive effect on *therapeutic rationality* (Woods, 2005). Moreover, an open-door policy represents a tool for school leaders to work with the realization of radical roles and radical relationships, which imply more fluid and diverse roles and less bounded relationships between stakeholder groups (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Data seem to indicate that the Norwegian leaders did this to a greater extent, being more out of their offices to be visible and accessible to students and staff. Also, such leadership practice could be characterized as more intrinsic, more integral to the school community, and thus more in line with democratic leadership (Woods, 2005) and participatory democracy (Fielding and Moss, 2011).

As in the above discussion of open doors, the character of the dialogue between leadership and staff can be explored through Woods's (2005) four rationalities. In the English context dialogue seemed to take on the general characteristics of leadership merely consulting staff. In terms of Woods's rationalities this implies less engagement of stakeholders and less dialogue and participation in decision-making, which in turn could weaken *therapeutic rationality* (Woods, 2005). There could be several reasons for a limited degree of staff involvement in the English context (for instance school size, as a big school was said to make communication and dialogue more challenging). Several respondents from both countries pointed to school size as an important general factor in creating relations. In this respect, the views of the respondents coincide with Fielding and Moss (2011), who define their common school as small in size. Another reason for the limited staff involvement in English schools could be their lack of time and heavy workload, which respondents linked to external factors like chasing floor targets, Ofsted inspections, and DfE requirements. Furthermore, limited staff involvement in developmental processes and decision-making could be partly attributed to hierarchy since, according to Hope (2012), schools able to practise democratic leadership tend to be less hierarchical. In the Norwegian context, the organizational structure of schools appeared less hierarchical than in their English counterparts. The schools were moderate size, and the degree of staff involvement seemed to be more pronounced.

The English data about leadership members being told to just do things indicate there were distributed leadership (Woods, 2005) as well as limited dialogue and limited teamwork within

the leadership team. Furthermore, as decisions were said to be simply taken and then enforced, the distributed approach was also hierarchical. As Woods (2005) points out, the distribution of leadership is a necessary but not sufficient condition for democratic leadership. Other characteristics of democratic leadership are a minimal hierarchical structure (Hope, 2012), extensive dialogue, teamwork, and empowerment of stakeholders (Møller et al., 2007). By these standards the English data indicate a moderate presence of democratic leadership qualities. In the Norwegian context, team-oriented work within the leadership teams seemed to be a predominant approach as there was a clear emphasis on dialogue. This approach has the features of a "power with" leadership approach and also a "power through" approach (Møller et al., 2007), as the organizational structure was not entirely flat. The data for the English schools seem to indicate less "power with" and more "power through" and "power over" (Møller et al., 2007).

A "power over" approach was evident at Riverside when the new head scrapped their Citizenship programme overnight. This incident is the clearest example in the data of hierarchical leadership, with lack of dialogue and lack of participation in decision-making processes. This action by the head at Riverside clearly contradicts principles of democratic leadership (Woods, 2005) and of participatory democracy (Fielding and Moss, 2011). The clearest example of the opposite kind of leadership is the very direct dialogue the head at Bakkegrenda said he had with students spontaneously coming in with tears in their eyes asking "can the teacher do such and such?" (E3). This head's response as reported exemplifies ethics of an encounter and ethics of care; furthermore, it demonstrates qualities of radical roles and radical relationships (Fielding and Moss, 2011). It also shows the presence of "free spaces" for informal interaction between members of the school community (Woods, 2005). Finally, it demonstrates qualities of democratic leadership, which is described as having intrinsic worth and being integral to school society (Woods, 2005).

The English curriculum was said to be massively rigid and restrictive and therefore a hindrance to more democratic practices in schools. To the Norwegians, the curriculum was not said to represent a problem in this respect, and not even the apparently incompatible approaches in the Core Curriculum and the KPR – communitarian versus neo-liberal management by objectives – worried them. Whereas the Core Curriculum adopts a holistic approach to education, English educational policy was characterized as concerned with academic rigour only and not looking at the whole child.

To respondents in both countries, a lack of time was another reason why they did not focus more on democratic processes and democratic aspects in school life. Documentation requirements and the focus on academic results occupied a substantial amount of time for the English leaders, which was also the case for the Norwegians respondents, albeit apparently to a lesser degree.

When it came to how the respondents perceived their respective national education systems, a notable finding was that all English respondents characterized their education system as not democratic, whereas all the Norwegians claimed their system was democratic. The English leaders contended that there was a hierarchical organizational structure in schools and that sudden and unpredictable political changes prevented them from being more democratic. Some expressed a wish to lead more democratically but felt that the system was against it. The Norwegians, on the other hand, did not experience abrupt political changes. They described a more flat, informal and teamwork-oriented organizational school structure and did not really see any constraints of a political nature which prevented them from working with democracy and working more democratically. In fact, they claimed to have more leeway for democratic practices than they actually used.

The four rationalities of democratic leadership (Woods, 2005), supported by additional theory, might contribute to an understanding of why the respondents perceive their education systems the way they did. In the following, we explore the data in light of the first three rationalities for both countries, and then sum up using the fourth rationality.

With regard to ethical rationality (Woods, 2005), the English system struggles to live up to this. As Fielding and Moss (2011) contend, in the English education system dimensions of values and ethics are suppressed. Furthermore, according to Osler and Starkey (2005), the mission statements of English schools generally do not emphasize democratic values. Discursive rationality implies the distribution of voice (Woods, 2005); however, the English schools were organized hierarchically, which is in opposition to a genuine distribution of voice. Also, with regard to radical roles (Fielding and Moss, 2011), a hierarchical structure limits active participation as the fluidity, diversity, and exploration of radical roles amongst leadership, staff, and students is compromised. Dispersal of leadership, active contribution, and a genuine sharing of power are the essence of decisional rationality (Woods, 2005). In the English context, data indicate how the leadership for the most part consulted staff on issues;

however, dispersal of leadership involves a genuine sharing of power and not just being consulted (Woods, 2005). According to Woods (2005), democratic leadership and a strictly hierarchical organizational structure are incompatible, whereas distributed leadership can co-exist with a hierarchy. This describes the situation that is apparent in some of the English data. The core of ethical rationality is to debate and prioritize values in search of the common good (Woods, 2005).

In the Norwegian context the organizational structure of the schools were described as rather flat, and teamwork- and dialogue-oriented. Thus the presence of dialogue and debate was more apparent than in the English data. Furthermore, humanistic values and communitarian principles – factors building ethical rationality – are explicitly expressed in the Core Curriculum and the objects clause. As for discursive rationality, the Norwegian data to some extent reveal teamwork processes and are dialogue-oriented and involve leadership styles which contribute to a distribution of voice (Woods, 2005). Also, the apparently dialogic and less hierarchical aspects of Norwegian leadership models tend to promote radical roles (Fielding and Moss, 2011) and thus facilitate more active participation. In the Norwegian data there is more evidence of staff involvement (and not just consultation) in developmental processes and decision-making than in the English data. Such an approach strengthens decisional rationality, as more members of the school community become potential contributors to the creation of institutions, culture, and relationships (Woods, 2005).

The accumulated effect of factors pointed out above in connection with ethical, discursive, and decisional rationality has relevance to the fourth of Woods's (2005) rationalities, which is therapeutic rationality. This rationality is concerned with positive feelings of being involved in the creation of social coherence through participation and shared leadership and also with being empowered by the institutional, cultural, and social structures of the organization (Woods, 2005). In the Norwegian context, one would think the aspects pointed out above could make a contribution to a positive feeling among individuals of being involved as well as being listened to and empowered to make an impact. In the English context, the aspects discussed above seem to be gravitating towards a feeling of a democratic deficit.

The individuals participating in this study demonstrate in their responses attitudes in accord with democracy as a vital value in education. In the English schools the educators feel hampered by the system and the hierarchies in school and society. They mostly see

democratic practices that occur in spite of the system, because of the attitudes of teachers and school officials. The Norwegian educators consider their society and schools quite democratic and see no great hindrances to teaching democratic values and practices. They even manage to impart these values in their work with low income and diverse populations. Thus the individual educator, and the attitudes and actions of the individual, is of great importance to the promotions of democracy in practice. Even though the educational system may more or less hinder democratic practices, the individual can contribute substantially to its democratic and human qualities.

6.3.1. Answer to research sub-question three

What observations in the data contributed to promoting or hindering democratic leadership practices in the selected schools and democracy in education?

Practising an open-door leadership policy towards staff and students was one prominent contributing factor to a democratic leadership style. A non-hierarchical leadership structure and dialogue, including teamwork-oriented processes between leadership and staff as well as within the leadership team itself, appeared to facilitate participatory democratic practices. The quality of the dialogue was a decisive factor, both in the positive and negative sense. Inclusive involvement, informality, and the extent of dialogue were all factors in promoting democratic practices. Insufficient dialogue, hierarchy, and as a "power over" or "just do it" leadership style were on the negative side and appeared to inhibit democracy in schools. Lack of time was another major factor said to be influencing leadership styles negatively.

Leadership styles and general conditions for democratic practices in the English schools depended considerably on both the individual leader and external factors. Unpredictable, constraining external framework conditions and pressure on academic performance instigated by educational authorities contributed on the negative side. The curricula in the two countries were perceived differently. In the English context rigid and restrictive curricula and the focus on academic rigour left little leeway for teachers and for school leaders. In the Norwegian context school leaders also to some extent felt the focus on academic rigour but did not feel inhibited by the curricula when it came to initiating democratic practices in schools. Leeway given in the curricula was allegedly greater than what was generally utilized to promote democratic practices in the schools.

School size was unanimously highlighted by respondents from both countries as a major contributor – either in the positive or negative sense, depending on size. Small schools were clearly preferred for the purposes of realizing the ideal of school as an arena for democratic practices and democratic leadership.

6.4. Concluding remarks

In the three preceding sections we have used our theoretical framework to discuss findings in the interview data related to the three sub-questions stated in the introductory chapter. The answers to the three research sub-questions put together constitute our answer to the research question – what promotes and what hinders democracy in education in selected secondary schools? In the following we attach some remarks to prominent aspects of the research question answers, tied to the purpose and scope of the study as formulated in chapter one.

As pointed out in the introduction, democracy is not a static, given entity but rather a complex and continuous process and the realization of its ideals cannot be taken for granted. Consequently, citizenship education and a continuous proclaimed focus on democracy in education as such is vital. In the Norwegian context, there has been more of an explicit focus on democracy in the national legal and curricular frameworks than in the English context, which could perhaps at least partly explain some of the differences we observe in our data.

Dialogue emanates from the data as a vital factor working to either strengthen or weaken democratic practices, depending on the quality of dialogue, in all the areas that our study explored. Unlike legal and curricular national frameworks, the quality of dialogue is an aspect of democracy in education that all the stakeholders in a school community have the opportunity to influence directly. Open door policies, non-hierarchical structures, informality of relations are all distinctive features of a school environment in which there is a high quality dialogue. Thus, to promote participatory democracy and make it a more intrinsic part of school life, these represent key areas for educators to work with.

As was the case for dialogue, time and a heavy workload emerge from the findings as general reasons educators have for not focusing on promoting democratic practices. How educators use their time is to a considerable extent regulated by the curricula and schools usually have limited leeway to influence timetabling. However, the use of time in schools is also a question of educators making priorities. Given the vital importance of citizenship education and for

students to learn democracy through practice, one might ask whether the "lack of time"-answer in our data to some extent hides a lack of willingness – even a lack of consciousness – to give this part of education the necessary focus. On the other hand, these responses probably also partly reflect that democracy in education perhaps is not given sufficient priority by educational authorities.

In the Norwegian context one may ask what will be the future development of the relative importance and influence of the Core Curriculum versus the KPR. As was evident from the data, the Norwegian respondents did not pay much attention to the Core Curriculum, which is where the democratic values primarily are expressed. In the English context the education system does not appear particularly democratic, and to change it for the better in this respect will take time if they wish to do so. As for Norway, it will also probably take time before seeing the real long term effects on the level of democracy in schools after the introduction of the KPR.

In both national contexts there are challenges when it comes to the promotion of participatory democracy in schools. A continuous proclaimed focus on democracy to empower students "to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society", as stated in the CoE charter (2010, p. 7), does not happen by itself. To uphold strong democracies, education's continuous act of midwifery in the spirit of John Dewey, is crucial.

6.4.1. Possible further studies

Our project did not include interviews with English head teachers, and so it would be interesting to learn how they perceive their situation and the possibilities for executing democratic leadership in English schools. Another possible study in the English context could be to explore the role of Ofsted in a democracy perspective. The role of the Core Curriculum in schools today could be a topic of particular interest in the Norwegian context.

Dialogue emerged from the study as one vital feature of democratic practices in schools, thus it could be of considerable interest to explore the nature of dialogue in schools in greater detail. We envisage that an in-depth case study perhaps involving one school in each of the two countries, and involving all stakeholder groups in each school community, could be an appropriate approach to exploring defining features of a quality dialogue that contributes to the promotion of participatory democracy in education.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ENGLAND AND NORWAY (semi-structured)

INTRODUCTION

- Could you tell us a little about yourself/yourselves and your work at your school?
- What do you find most rewarding and what are the challenges?

> LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

COHORT – ETHNICITY, ECONOMY

- How is the ethnic and socio-economic mix of students at your school? (figures)
  - To what extent do you observe a correlation between ethnicity and socio-economic status?
- Inter-ethnic contact - How are the relations among the different ethnic or socio-economic groups?
  - Have there been any conflicts to speak of?
  - Students - one big, happy family?
- What are your (leadership) strategies to reduce or avoid conflicts among students?

> LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION and DEMOCRACY

- What do you think of citizenship education – in general and as a separate subject?
- How is citizenship taught in your school?
- How would you say citizenship education is embedded in other subject curricula?
- How does the school work to promote students' critical thinking?
- What is your personal conception of citizenship?
  - Is citizenship education necessary/needed? – Why (not)?
- How would you describe English/Norwegian schools in terms of being democratic?
  - Are English/Norwegian schools democratic? – Why (not)/how?
- To what extent is democracy a topic that is being debated
  - Among teachers?
  - Among school leaders?
- NORWAY: What is your opinion of the new optional subject "Democracy in Practice"?

> LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

THE SCHOOL AS AN ARENA FOR DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES
STUDENT VOICE, PERSONAL RELATIONS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT,
INCLUSION OF LIFE EXPERIENCES

- What are the opportunities for students to participate in democratic processes at your school?
    - In what bodies are they represented?
    - Do they have a say?
- In what ways are students given the opportunity to respond to how they are being taught?
    - Feedback? Dialogue with teacher?
- How does your school attempt to include the students' own life experiences, inside and outside the classroom?
- An objective in teaching democratic citizenship is to give students social skills to allow them to participate in a democratic community.
  How do you work to implement this in your school?
- How would you describe the student–teacher relations at your school?
- How do parents participate in school life?
- What can be done to make students more involved?

LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

LEADERSHIP and GOVERNMENT/AUTHORITIES

- How do the school leaders at your school work to promote democracy and democracy education in the school?
    - How do they work with
        - Staff?
        - Students?
        - Parents?
        - Local community?
- Do you have any leadership strategies connected to democracy?
- Are there any constraints of political nature that prevent school leaders from doing things that can promote democracy and democracy education in schools?

LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

DIVERSITY and INCLUSION/EXCLUSION
- How do you work with diversity and inclusion at your school?

LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

CONCLUSION
- NORWAY: (Interviewee is shown the text of the objects clause of the Education Act.) What is your opinion of this paragraph? What aspects of it do you consider important?
- NORWAY: What is your view of the importance and impact of the Core Curriculum?
- What is your vision of the ideal school?
- Is there anything you would like to add? (Open summary)
- Would you be interested in a follow-up interview? (E.g. on Skype?)
- Would you want to read the interview transcript?
    - Can correct factual errors, but not alter content

LET THE INTERVIEWEE TALK and FOCUS ON FOLLOW-UP

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

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Vår dato: 07.05.2013   Vår ref:34149 / 3 / SSA   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 09.04.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

34149	*Democratic Citizenship Education in England and Norway*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Eyvind Elstad*
Student	*Helle Kristin Gulestøl*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.
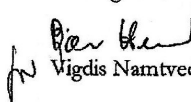
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.
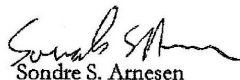
Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Sondre S. Arnesen

Sondre S. Arnesen tlf: 55 58 25 83
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Helle Kristin Gulestøl, Maries gate 7C, 0368 OSLO

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal det innhentes muntlig og skriftlig samtykke basert på muntlig og skriftlig informasjon om prosjektet og behandling av personopplysninger. Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet tilfredsstillende utformet, så fremt følgende endres:

- fjerne setningen "undersøkelsen er anonym" (da det vil registeres personopplysninger i prosjektet)
- legg til dato for prosjektslutt og anonymisering

Prosjektet skal avsluttes 31.12.13 og innsamlede opplysninger skal da anonymiseres og lydopptak slettes. Anonymisering innebærer at direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger som navn/koblingsnøkkel slettes, og at indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger (sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. yrke, alder, kjønn) fjernes eller grovkategoriseres slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i materialet.

OPPFØLGING AV ENDRINGSMELDING

Vi viser til endringsmelding mottatt 24.06.2014 for prosjekt:

Prosjektnr: 34149. Democratic Citizenship Education in England and Norway

Personvernombudet har registrert 31.12.2014 som ny dato for prosjektslutt og anonymisering. Merk at ved en eventuell ytterligere forlengelse av prosjektperioden må det påregnes å informere utvalget.

Vi legger til grunn at prosjektopplegget for øvrig er uendret. Du vil motta en ny statushenvendelse ved prosjektslutt.

Ta gjerne kontakt dersom du har spørsmål.
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Vennlig hilsen / Best regards

Lene Chr. M. Brandt
Rådgiver / Adviser

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
(Norwegian Social Science Data Services)

Personvernombud for forskning
(Data Protection Official for Research)

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www.nsd.uib.no/personvern