

## University of Groningen

### Political education

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## Propositions

Accompanying the dissertation

### **Political Education: the science of democratic citizenship education in the Netherlands and the United States (1920-2020)**

**P.D van Rees**

1. Once the debate about democratic citizenship education moves beyond good intentions and abstract ideas, it becomes a site for political, scholarly and educational contestation.
2. More than the specific content of the currently dominant framework for democratic citizenship education, it is the *structure* of democratic citizenship as a scientifically defined, prescribed and monitored educational goal that requires critical attention.
3. The American and Dutch educational sciences form an interrelated stage for the struggle between different views on democracy and education, rather than a neutral point of reference.
4. In science, policy and practice of democratic citizenship education, form and content cannot be separated.
5. The variety of scientifically backed curricula for democratic citizenship developed at the experimental schools of Teachers College during the Interbellum shows the feasibility of democratic pluralism in the science and practice of citizenship education.
6. In order to retain a place in education at all from the 1990s onward, education for democratic citizenship had to take the form of measurable individual competences in both the Netherlands and the United States.
7. The scientific debate on democratic citizenship education is determined by the rise and fall of research traditions, not by the results of individual research projects.
8. Dutch progressive educators avoided the critique of indoctrination by structurally framing undesirable personal and political orientations as deviations from a healthy development, instead of genuine political options.
9. Textbooks, curricula and educational theories mirror the society in which they are produced more than that they shape this society: educational aspirations are first of all *symptoms*, and to a lesser degree *causes* of societal change.
10. The reduction of teachers to mere executioners of educational policy poses a threat to the pedagogical relation and hinders the development of critical autonomy in pupils.
11. In education, politics and life, we need more *fröhliche Wissenschaft*.