

Deliberative children in democracy

Classrooms, schools and streets

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Abstract

The central topic of this thesis is children's participation in democracy. The thesis problematises the pervasive understanding of children conceptualised as "future" citizens, and redefines children's democratic potential from the perspective of deliberative democracy.

The thesis shows that the existing literature on children's democratic participation relies on a narrow conception of an adult-initiated and forum-based participation and pays only a limited attention to children's participation happening outside the forum. This thesis offers a critical expansion of this view by focusing on children's deliberative activities in various other spaces including classrooms, schools, and streets. Although these spaces have generally been considered as non-deliberative or non-participatory spaces, the recent innovations taking place in these spaces (e.g. new deliberative curriculum, new form of teenage protests) invite us to re-evaluate their democratic potential. The thesis offers one such evaluation by using interpretive research methods and the "deliberative systems" framework. It explores the ways in which children engage in deliberative activities in classrooms, schools, and streets.

Empirically, the thesis draws on a variety of case studies from Japan, including the cases of classroom deliberation (Philosophy for Children) as practiced in two private schools in Japan, various activities of deliberation taking place in and beyond schools (The Future Talk, Ari to Pla), and the contemporary case of teenage protests (T-ns SOWL). By mapping and analysing children's different activities in these spaces, the thesis reveals the crucial role children play in facilitating inclusion in public space, triggering deliberation across society, and creating a democratic community in their lives. On the basis of the in-depth analysis of various case studies, the thesis suggests redefining and understanding children as deliberators in deliberative systems. The thesis concludes by providing empirically-grounded normative insights and recommendations about how

deliberative democracy, children's democratic participation, and democratic education can and should be designed and practiced in contemporary societies.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| CoI | Community of Inquiry |
| MEXT | Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology |
| NRA | National Rifle Association |
| P4C | Philosophy for Children |
| SEALDs | Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy - s |
| TFT | The Future Talk |
| T-ns SOWL | Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Funds |

Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, we have been witnessing a significant growth in children's democratic participation throughout the world. Traditionally, it was often claimed that children are "neither seen nor heard" in democracy (Cohen, 2005). Following the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, however, a number of states as well as international and local organisations have initiated and conducted innovative participatory practices, such as youth parliaments or child congresses (Bulling et al., 2013; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). Also, as represented by Roger Harts' (1992; 1997) influential work on children's participation in community development and environmental care, children have gained opportunities to work with adult citizens (see also, Lansdown, 2001).

Children are now increasingly recognised as part of the democratic scene – but are they heard? In recent years, various scholars and practitioners working in the field of children's participation have raised a similar question. Some have concluded that existing participatory practices usually fail to take children seriously; they tend to have a top-down character as a result of being initiated, organised, and facilitated by adult citizens (Thomas, 2007). Others have problematised the tokenistic nature of children's political participation, arguing that it restricts children's democratic agency in a way that expects them to perform as "small adults" rather than as children themselves (Badham, 2004; Begg, 2004). As a result, as Hayward (2012: 134 – emphasis added) has rightly noted, the existing practices of children's participation have tended to "privilege the adult listeners, who then produce well-meaning documents and audio-visual materials drawing on children's opinions to legitimate *adult* decision making."

In addition, the pervasive conceptualisation of children as “future citizens” has prevented their voice from being heard effectively in participatory forum. This conceptualisation is based on the assumption that children lack the capacity, knowledge and experience required for meaningful democratic participation (Crittenden, 2002). Accordingly, children’s participatory forums are then expected to “educate” children so that they can fit into the adults’ world, rather than mobilising their democratic agency to change or challenge the adults’ world (Dekleva & Zorga, 2004).

Moreover, in the existing literature, the participatory practices of children are usually underpinned by narrow understandings of “participation” and “democracy,” defined as practices which are designed to inform formal decision-making processes (e.g. Bulling et al., 2013). Even Roger Hart’s (1992: 3) classical and influential concept of democratic participation defines participation as “*the process of sharing decisions* which affect one’s life and the life of the community in which one lives” Seen in this light, if children’s participatory practices did not produce any substantial impact on decision-making, they have not received much scholarly attention. This view often results in masking the democratic purpose and potential of participatory practices other than discrete forums, the aim of which is not always to have an influence over formal decision-making in democracies.

Taken together, the conventional approaches to children’s participation fail fully to capture children’s democratic agency. They disregard the fact that an increasing number of children have started to engage in *alternative* democratic practices outside well-established forums. Children participate in democracy in both private and public spaces, including their homes, classrooms, schools, streets, playgrounds, parks, or online forums and use play, dance, singing, silence, or social media to express their concerns and interests (Kallio & Häkli, 2011). These

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“mundane” spaces and practices can promote novel chains of interaction between children and society (e.g. public debate forums, social movements), thereby creating avenues through which they can be involved in and contribute to democratic processes – as exemplified by the Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai’s humanitarian activism, which began with everyday conversations with her father at home and through online blogging of her everyday life experience in Pakistan. As long as we cling to the conventional image of children’s participation in the form of youth parliaments or similar forum-based participation, we risk dismissing the democratic role and contribution of other forms of participation in contemporary societies.

In the light of these views, this thesis seeks to rethink and respond to the question of how we should understand the complex relationship between children, participation, and democracy. In doing so, it focuses on the recent growth of children’s alternative democratic participation in classrooms, schools, and streets. Although these spaces have conventionally been understood as peripheral spaces marked off from democratic participation in the real world, recent innovative practices (e.g. new deliberative curricula, new forms of social movement) transform these spaces into participatory spaces, inviting us to consider their democratic credentials.

To consider whether and how children’s participation in these spaces is “democratic,” this thesis draws on the theory of *deliberative democracy*, in particular its systemic variant (Dryzek, 2010). Broadly speaking, deliberative democracy is a normative democratic theory that is grounded in the idea that communicative interactions among those affected by the issue in question ought to be the core of democratic legitimacy (Dryzek, 2000). Deliberation involves a process of reason-exchange that induces reflection and listening. Even if children are normally unable to play a powerful role in the representative institutions, electoral processes, or legal systems, deliberative democracy suggests appreciating their democratic agency and

contributions by drawing attention to their communicative activities. Seen through the lens of deliberative democracy, this thesis unpacks how classrooms, schools, and streets enable children to engage with politically salient issues, to express their opinions, to use their communicative capacities and to change the social and political environments surrounding them. With the theory of deliberative democracy in mind, the thesis redefines the democratic potential of children's participation.

Clarifying key concepts: Children, children's participation

Before outlining the research undertaken for this thesis in detail, in what follows I will first define what *children* and *children's participation* mean, not only because these terms are the key concepts in this thesis, but also because their meanings are often contested.

Children

Children are “familiar to us and yet strange” (Alanen, 1988: 56). Despite the fact that we are or were all children at a certain stage of our life (Kittay, 1999), the meaning of “children” is still contested because it is understood from various perspectives. These include, for example, a “geographical” perspective focusing on children's spatially constructed identities (Blundell, 2016); a “sociological and cultural” perspective that understands children as socially and culturally constructed (Alanen, 1988; Kjörholt, 2007); or an “educational and psychological” perspective that situates children in the process of growing (Crittenden, 2002). As Prout and James (2015: 22) rightly note, “different discursive practices produce different childhoods.”

A critical review of the literature in social science with political theory and pedagogy reveals three dominant and interrelated discourses of “children” (based on age, physical and social status, and developmental stage) constituting the dominant image and understanding of children

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in these research fields. My aim here is not to suggest a universal explanation of “children,” but to sketch and explain the one on which this thesis focuses.

The *age-discourse* is typically found in Article 1 of UNCRC. It defines children as “every human being below the age of eighteen years.” The age-based definition is useful in that it encapsulates related concepts (e.g. infants, kids, juveniles, teenagers, and young people) and provides a broader framework to understand who can be defined as children. This definition can be found in varying areas ranging from a censorship of X-rated content to schooling, juvenile law and entitlement to voting.

Since the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who investigated the way of “moulding” a vulnerable child into an ideal man, there has also been the *status-discourse* of children, which emphasises children’s biological and physical immaturity and the needs of intimate, affective, and economic care from others, namely parents (Kittay, 1999). At the same time, great attention is also paid to children’s social status (Jans, 2004). Prout and James (2015) contend that children are “social agents” who are able to form their view and make a decision about their own life, although they are not likely to be seen as “political” agents because of their lack of accessibility and entitlement to election and representative democracy.

There is also what Anne Kjørholt (2007: 30) calls the *development-discourse* that paints the image of “children as vulnerable, immature and in need of education.” It questions the capacity and agency of children in democracy, emphasising their immaturity, and therefore justifies the crucial role of education for their development (Crittenden, 2002). In other words, what this discourse requires is a preparation for children’s future participation. The assumption here is that, if children fail to prepare for the future, they cannot exert their influence and agency. This

tendency is observed, for instance, in the response of a state government representative in Australia in the context of the local community planning debate. He said: “I am a bit sceptical of young people being involved in this [community planning]...What life experiences did they bring?” (Grant-Smith & Edwards, 2011: 8).

These three interrelated discourses have received plenty of criticism from scholars (Jans, 2004; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010), and some of them, especially the development-discourse, shall also be challenged throughout this thesis. Having said that, there is also the fact that these discourses have constructed the dominant image and understanding of children. Based on these three discourses, this thesis defines “children” as follows: *Children* are individuals aged from 5–6 to 17–18 who normally have limited access to the official political process (e.g. voting) because of the dominant image of children as too young, immature, and in need of education.¹

Children’s participation

When scholars talk about children’s democratic participation, they tend to pay attention mainly to the forum-based understanding of participatory practices. In this view, a selected number of children attend a well-designed forum as representatives of other children. According to Gerison Lansdown (2010), this type of participation can be categorised in two parts. On the one hand, there is a “consultative participation” where “adult seek children’s views in order to build

¹ This thesis focuses mainly on teenagers’ involvement in democracy, but it basically uses the term “children” rather than “teenagers” because some of the democratic engagements shown in this thesis began before they reached their teenage years. If the situation and context demand, the term “children,” “teenagers,” and “students” are used interchangeably: yet, again, these terms are used within the scope of this definition. Also, this definition explicitly excluded early childhood from childhood because, as we shall see later, the empirical research of this thesis focuses mainly on individuals aged between 10 and 16. As already mentioned, the purpose of this sub-section is not to provide a universal account of “children,” but to clarify the one on which this thesis focuses on.

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knowledge and understanding of their lives and experiences” (Lansdown, 2010: 20) Adult citizens who engage in city planning, policy-making, health, or community service invite children as “experts” on their own lives and hear their stories, experiences, and views about the issue in question. In this participation, children’s voices are heard, but they are usually unable to exert an influence on decision-making processes (e.g. Jamieson & Mũkom, 2010).

On the other hand, there is also “collaborative” participation, which focuses on “a greater degree of partnership between adults and children, with the opportunity for active engagement at any stage of a decision, initiative, project or service” (Lansdown, 2010: 20). Unlike consultative participation, collaborative participation in principle places a greater emphasis on the cooperation between adults and children in a decision-making process. Drawing on worldwide collaborative community-making projects, Roger Hart (1997) proposes an influential concept called the “ladder of participation,” which situates the collaborative decision-making processes of both children and adults at the heart of children’s participation. This sort of participation can typically be found in the form of child congresses or youth parliaments (e.g. Bulling et al., 2013; Lansdown, 2001).

Existing research and practice inspired by Article 12 of UNCRC (respect for the views of the child) usually focus on such a representative model of participation (e.g. Invernizzi & Williams, 2007; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). These practices can be considered as innovative in a sense that they enable children to appear and act in public spaces and to act as agents of democracy (Hart, 1997). However, as this thesis shows, there are still various important shortcomings associated with these conventional, or representative and forum-based, practices of participation.

First and foremost, as Lansdown (2010) acknowledges, such traditional models of children's participation tends to be an adult-led practice. As such, they tend to privilege adults' power and influence over children's agency (Thomas, 2007). In adult-led forums, children are often unable to enjoy an opportunity to exercise their full capacities (e.g. imagination, creativity) and their "childness." Instead, only the selected children are required to talk as if they are "small adults." They are asked to follow the time schedule developed by adults and talk about the issues and agenda proposed by adults (Badham, 2004; Begg, 2004). Criticising the UNCRC Day of General Discussion in 2006 (which was designed as consultative participation), Judith Ennew (2007) notes that in this event three adults were given 45 minutes to speak whereas four children had to share only 15 minutes. She concludes, "during the Day of Discussion, children were not treated as equal participants" (p. 73). Even though the day was organised under the banner of "children's democratic participation," it ended up reinforcing the existing asymmetrical relationship between adults and children in the public space, worsening children's powerlessness and vulnerability.

In addition to the problem of adult domination, the traditional models of children's participation tend to focus merely on participation taking place in discrete forums, and pay only limited, if any, attention to children's out-of-forum participation (Malone & Hartung, 2010). While Ruth Sinclair rightly noted more than a decade ago "the challenge for the next decade will be how to move beyond one-off and isolated consultations" (Sinclair, 2004: 116), this challenge remains intact today.

These limitations in traditional understanding and practice of children's democratic participation motivated me to focus on *alternative* forms of children's participation, outside structured forms, and investigate their democratic potential. For example, with a new

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curriculum innovation movement, an increasing number of children can have the opportunity in classrooms and schools to talk about controversial political issues that affect their lives (e.g. Hess, 2009). In addition, as observed in the involvement of teenagers in recent protests (e.g. Occupy movements or March for Our Lives movements), the design of social movements today allows children and young people to act as active agents of democracy. Furthermore, in recent years we also observe an increasing volume of research on children's and teenagers' participation in online spaces, boosted through their use of Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube (Highfield, 2016; Livingstone, 2009).

In this thesis, I define these activities as alternative forms of participation for the following two main reasons. Firstly, children's alternative forms of democratic participation can be considered as child-led practices. While the conventional collaborative or consultative forms of participation are mostly adult-led, children in alternative participation are allowed to design, initiate, and organise their own participatory practice with few adult interventions. Secondly, children's alternative democratic participation does not always require representative institutions, youth parliaments, formal education in democracy, and so forth. Instead, such alternative democratic participation occurs in venues that are less official than youth parliaments or child congresses; these include classrooms, parks, streets, or online spaces (Kallio & Häkli, 2011).

This research: Children in deliberative systems

Based on the above considerations, this thesis aims to unpack the democratic potential of children's alternative forms of participation. While there is a growth of alternative forms of

children's democratic participation, research in this field is still undeveloped. Hence, this thesis sets two research questions:

What is democratic about children's alternative forms of participation?

How do children's alternative forms of participation contribute to democracy?

In responding to these questions, the thesis employs four strategies. Firstly, it focuses on children's democratic participation in three different crucial yet often neglected spaces: *classrooms, schools, and streets*.² Secondly, to understand the democratic potential of children's participation in these spaces, this thesis adopts and builds upon the theoretical framework of *deliberative democracy*, in particular its systemic variant (deliberative systems). Thirdly, in empirically approaching children's participation in these spaces in terms of deliberative systems, this thesis employs an *interpretive approach* as its research methodology. Fourthly, this thesis draws on *case studies from Japan*. This section details the justification for the first two theoretical strategies. The third and fourth empirical strategies are explained in the subsequent sections.

Classrooms, schools, and streets

This thesis focuses on classrooms, schools, and streets, which are not often regarded as spaces of children's democratic participation.³ In the existing literature, both classrooms and schools

² This thesis treats classrooms and schools differently. Schools are spatially and functionally wider than classroom. The former encompasses classrooms, playgrounds, extracurricular activities, student committees, and so forth. Also, while the classroom consists of a relatively small number of individuals (several teachers and some students), children can have many more relationships with others in their school (e.g. school principal, other teachers, older/younger students, parents, people outside the school). This claim is empirically supported in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

³ To be fair, some educational researchers have already discussed children's participation in schools. However, their attention has mostly been to student elections or representative committees because, as Reichert (2016: 3) puts it, such practices are seen

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are seen rather as pedagogical spaces, the purpose of which is to prepare children for their future political participation (Crittenden, 2002; Gutmann, 1999). In both spaces, children are normally subject to socialisation rather than that of participation (Biesta, 2011). Similarly, schools are conceptualised as spaces of pre-democracy and not as democratic spaces *per se*. More importantly, some may even argue that both classrooms and schools are even anti-democratic because of their structural features. Echoed by Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich's "critical pedagogy" tradition, some scholars have problematised the anti-democratic nature of classrooms and schools in modern societies (Macrine, 2009). By their account, there is an asymmetrical and hierarchical power relationship between adults and students, examination-centred teaching inspired by the neoliberal philosophy, and one-sided knowledge transfer, all of which deprive students of their imagination and creativity.

Similar to schools, there has also, until recently, been a limited research on the relationship between children, streets and democracy, because streets are rarely seen as spaces for children's participation.⁴ Streets have no sheltered areas, no institutional design, and no decision-making

as "among the best predictors of adult political engagement." Yet, this thesis does not attach a special value to these conventional practices because such practices are different from "children's alternative forms of participation" conceptualised above – conventional practices risk enhancing the pervasive assumption about children as future citizens. More simply, they risk encountering the pitfall of tokenistic practice. Even if both student election and representative committees are practised under the banner of "student-centric" activity, they are normally controlled under the supervision of teachers. Hence, children in this practice can have "very little control over the subject or style of communication and little chance to develop an opinion" (Chou et al. 2017: 60).

⁴ In the real world, there have been many cases of children and young people's participation on the streets, such as Occupy movements across the globe (e.g. the U.S., U.K, India), youth LGBT movements, the anti-Trump movements in the U.S. and U.K. Unfortunately, though, there are very few scholarly investigations about their participation. Or, even when scholars mention the presence of children in social movements, children are generally conceptualised just as "symbol" of the movement rather than effective participants (see, Rogers 2015). Among several exceptions, see Hayward (2012) and White (1990).

moment: as such, they are opposite of the conventional participatory practices of children. Although one of the UNICEF's annual reports is a special issue about children's participation (UNICEF, 2003), it pays only limited attention to children's protesting activities on the streets. While this report showcases various forum-based participatory practices of children, protection tends to trump participation when it comes to the presence and activity of children on the streets. In addition, even in the influential writings in *Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation* (Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010), there is no chapter on children on the street (or children as activists).

This thesis acknowledges these conventional views on classrooms, schools and streets, and the aim is not to glorify the democratic potential of these spaces uncritically. As elaborated below, what makes these spaces particularly appealing is a number of key theoretical and practical developments taking place in recent years and inviting us to reconsider their role in a democracy. Firstly, the new curriculum innovations implemented in recent years seek to break down the traditional negative image and function of classrooms and schools. In these educational contexts, there are some practical applications of deliberative theory to the classroom discussion (e.g. Hess, 2009; Hess & McAvoy, 2014). The practice of *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) described in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 is in line with this movement (Gregory et al., 2016). Originally pioneered by Matthew Lipman (2003), P4C is a dialogue practice where children talk about open-ended philosophical, ethical, and political questions generated from their everyday experience. The collaborative inquiry of children about their common questions allows them to politicise and challenge taken-for-granted social norms and discourses (e.g. school rules, meaning of education), which in turn creates a sort of counter-public in and beyond their classroom and schools (Kizel, 2016). Although it is difficult for classrooms, and schools *alone*

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to enable children's deliberative participation, such innovations in curriculum studies can potentially open up a new avenue for participation and thus help to transform the nature of classrooms and schools from educational spaces to participatory spaces.

Secondly, as demonstrated by various scholars, schools today are increasingly embedded within the broader social and institutional networks, compared to the schools of several decades ago (e.g. Senge, 2013). Today, schools are more connected with other institutions (e.g. media, local governments, business companies) and agents (e.g. parents, politicians) of democracy. Even if a *classroom* alone fails to promote children's democratic participation in and beyond school, *schools'* existing connections with other institutions and agents expand the opportunities available to children to engage in democracy across society. For example, the fieldwork undertaken for this thesis and documented in Chapter 3 unpacks how schools without any deliberative curriculum in the classroom can still function as *mediating spaces* that bridge children's everyday experiences with the wider society (e.g. in the form of teenagers' deliberative enclave and/or social movements).

Thirdly, as observed in the recent March for Our Lives movement in the US in 2018, the movement calling for a tighter gun control policy, an increasing number of children are getting involved in social movements in contemporary society. Just like classrooms and schools, streets are, too, neither purely private nor public spaces in a strict sense: streets are rather located at the intersection between private and public spaces (White, 1990). By weaving the everyday activities in the private space with the claim-making in the public space, streets offer certain democratic power and freedom for children which is perhaps not found in many other institutional contexts.

Overall, the activities taking places in classrooms, schools, and streets can offer new insights into how children's alternative democratic participation happens, and how it enables children to act as agents of democracy (rather than as future citizens).

Theoretical framework: Deliberative democracy and deliberative systems

As outlined above, one of the key questions of this thesis is “what is democratic about children's alternative form of participation?” “Democracy” has many variations; for instance, Gagnon et al. (2014: 144–151) identify over 500 types of adjective describing democracy, ranging from liberal to African, cosmopolitan, electoral, participatory, elite, e-democracy, radical, and so forth. If we see children's alternative forms of participation in terms of election-based democracy then it is hard to appreciate its value, because this understanding of democracy may automatically exclude children for not being eligible to vote. Instead, this thesis suggests viewing children's participation from the perspective of deliberative democracy that focuses on “voice rather than vote” (Chambers, 2003).

Deliberative democracy offers one of the key frameworks to understand and assess the democratic quality of contemporary politics. Ideally, deliberative democracy emphasises the significance of the process of authentic deliberation by which people have “to be truthful in what one says, to respect the arguments of others, to give good reasons for one's own arguments, and to be open to changing one's position by the force of the better argument” (Steiner, 2012: 3). In addition, deliberation should ideally be inclusive in the sense that everyone who would be affected by the deliberation and decision must have equal opportunities to voice and to be heard (Young, 2000). By promoting authentic and inclusive communicative interactions, deliberation is expected to be consequential in having an influence on public decision-making (Dryzek, 2010).

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This thesis focuses mainly on the idea of the *deliberative system*, which is currently receiving great attention from deliberative theorists and practitioners (see Elstub, Ercan & Mendonça, 2018; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014). The core idea associated with deliberative systems is that deliberation involves authentic, inclusive and consequential communications, yet these communications do not need to “be sought for the same people in the same place at the same time” (Ercan, Hendriks, & Dryzek, 2018: 10). By this account, deliberation can be understood as a broader public communication happening in differentiated but linked spaces. Each deliberative space does not need to serve as “the best possible single deliberative forum” (Mansbridge et al., 2012: 1) where all deliberative ideals (e.g. reason-exchange, reflective preference change, inclusion, decision-making) are realised at once. Instead, a deliberative system consists of a division of labour among different locations of communications. As Mansbridge et al. (2012: 3) note, a “system” means “a set of distinguishable, differentiated, but to some degree interdependent parts, often with distributed functions and a division of labour, connected in such a way as to form a complex whole.”

In light of this view, deliberation can take place not only in official empowered spaces (e.g. legislature) or well-designed mini-publics, but also in other public spaces (e.g. café, bar, library, social media, street) or even in private space (e.g. family, friends, and workplace) (see Dryzek, 2010; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014; Rollo, 2017; Tamura, 2014).⁵ Even if each space is not capable of embodying all deliberative ideals, it can work to compensate for the weaknesses of other spaces, thereby achieving deliberative ideals at a system level. As Mansbridge et al. (2012: 3) put it, “a single part, which in itself may have low or even negative deliberative quality

⁵ This thesis uses the terms “space” “site” and “venue” interchangeably.

with respect to one of several deliberative ideals, may nevertheless make an important contribution to an overall deliberative system.”

Given these characteristics, the deliberative systems approach offers a new avenue for capturing the role and contribution of children in democracy. As I elaborate further in Chapter 1, there are at least three important benefits to employing a deliberative systems approach to understand children’s participation in democracy.

The deliberative systems approach first and foremost does not demand that children engage in all processes of deliberation. Even if children are normally unable to take part in public decision-making processes, this fact does not imply that children have no role to play in deliberative democracy. The systemic approach suggests considering children’s democratic potential with respect to the functions of their activities in a broader system. Consider children’s engagement in social movements, for example. Social movements are usually regarded as non-deliberative activities (Young, 2001). However, they may help to take up previously unnoticed voices and create a counter-discourse. Social movements potentially have a deliberative capacity to transmit voices from private and public to empowered spaces in deliberative systems, thereby promoting the quality of inclusiveness of the system (see also, Rollo, 2017).

Secondly, the deliberative systems approach does not demand that children act as ideal deliberators. This is because deliberators in deliberative systems do not always need to be authentic speakers. While deliberation involves expression, reflection and listening, children do not need to carry out all of these communicative functions within a single activity. In addition, even non-verbal communication, such as gestures, performances, or silences, can be interpreted as children’s reflective reasoning contributing to deliberative systems (see, Dobson,

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2012; Young 2000). As is further discussed in Chapter 4, for example, Japanese teenage protestors' symbolic challenge (by using music and wearing school uniform) is non-deliberative in the sense that both music and school uniform *per se* are rarely considered as part of authentic reasoning. Yet these activities can still become a meaningful part of deliberative systems when they can signal and speak to different audiences, thereby facilitating further deliberation and inclusion in the public space.

Finally, the deliberative systems approach provides multiple interpretations about spaces where children's deliberative activity takes place. In addition to the well-established deliberative forums, such as deliberative mini-publics (Fishkin, 2009), the deliberative systems allow us to focus on other spaces, ranging from legislatures to both virtual and physical public spaces (e.g. NGOs, cafés, libraries, universities, online spaces) or even private space (e.g. home) (see Stevenson & Dryzek 2014; Tamura, 2014). Even if classrooms, schools, and streets are traditionally regarded as non-deliberative spaces, a different interpretation is possible when we situate these spaces in a macro scale of deliberative democracy. As discussed in the next section and in Chapter 3, for example, when we consider schools in relation to other deliberative venues, they can be recognised as a mediating space within deliberative systems. Schools serve as a mediating space by bridging children's everyday deliberative activities with their deliberative engagements in public spaces.

Overall, the deliberative systems approach offers a powerful umbrella framework that can encapsulate various forms of children's participation. Children's alternative democratic participation *per se* does not always constitute a full deliberative democracy; nor does children's alternative democratic participation immediately lead to a radical political change. Nonetheless, the deliberative systems approach allows room to take into account children's

alternative democratic participation. Figure 1 below is a visual sketch of the place of children's alternative form of participation in deliberative systems, as conceptualised in this thesis,

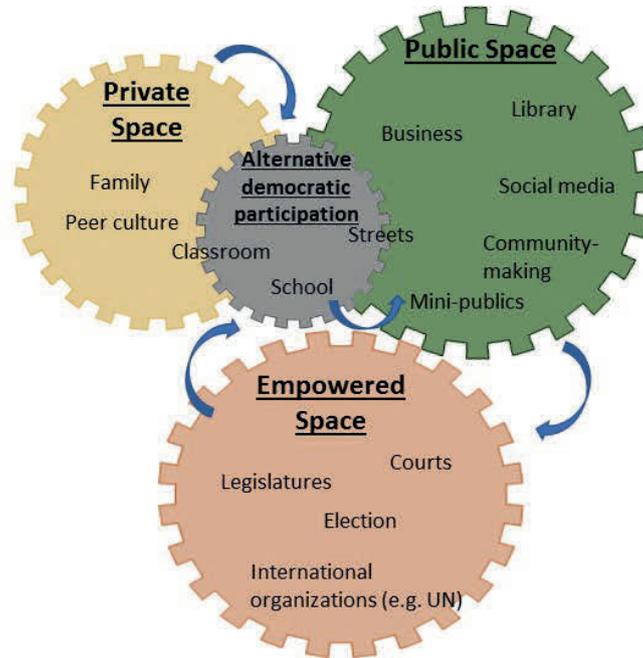


Figure 1. The place of children's democratic participation in deliberative systems

As Figure 1 illustrates, there are various spaces where children can potentially act as agents of deliberative democracy. When it comes to classrooms, schools, and streets, they are located at the intersection between public space and private space (see also Senge, 2013; White, 1990). Deliberation happening in these spaces does not have a substantive and immediate influence on empowered space. Yet these spaces form a bridge between children's activities in private spaces and wider public spaces. Sometimes, deliberation in classrooms, schools, and streets can bring new perspectives into public deliberation; or sometimes these spaces can facilitate children's practical application of their everyday practice to their civic engagements in public spaces. By doing so, children's alternative democratic participation can contribute to vitalise the overall quality of the deliberative systems.

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Having said that, deliberative systems do not encompass everything. As Parkinson (2012: 166) rightly notes, if everything is deliberation, “then deliberation means nothing any more, and contributes nothing to our understanding of democracy.” Deliberative systems are more than just a patchwork of different practices: each practice needs to embody or at least induce the process of expression (e.g. justification, reason giving), reflection or listening (see also Ercan, Hendriks, & Dryzek 2018).

Moreover, each practice needs to be connected in a way that concerns about the democratic process within a whole system; or, deliberative systems should be what Mansbridge et al. (2012) call deliberative *democratic* systems. According to Mansbridge and her colleagues, what makes deliberative systems democratic depends on a realisation of their “democratic function” (or what Dryzek (2010) calls inclusiveness), which refers to a moral principle that ideally demands us not to exclude “any citizens from the process without strong justification that could be reasonably accepted by all citizens including the excluded” (Mansbridge et al., 2012: 8). Even if children’s specific activity provokes further deliberation across the system, it may not be appreciated positively if it is conducted in ways that harm others or deprive the marginalised of an opportunity to be heard. Of course, what counts as democratic is contextually determined, because one activity that is regarded as anti-democratic action from the perspective of authority can be understood as reasonable claim-making from the perspective of lay citizens (e.g. Rollo, 2017). This perspective implies that even disruptive or non-deliberative activities can play a democratic role in deliberative systems when situated in a specific context. This is why this thesis employs the interpretive approach as a core methodology, because it helps us unpack the contextually-situated meaning of deliberation in classrooms, schools, and streets.

Methodology and research methods

The key questions of this thesis are investigated empirically by employing an interpretive approach. This approach seeks to understand the meaning underlying an intention, action, object or phenomenon through a deep interaction between the researcher and research subjects (Ercan, Hendriks, & Boswell, 2017). The core idea of this approach is that knowledge, meanings of actions, and experiences are embedded within a broader historical, social and cultural context, which can be approached through an in-depth interaction and observation involving research subjects' lived experiences and/or texts written about or by them (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

Since an interpretive approach focuses on a specific context where data on people's lived experience are generated, its core mission is to offer a rich insight into *understanding* the phenomenon (Marsh, Ercan, & Furlong, 2018). This does not mean that an interpretive approach cannot offer broader lessons or implications contributing to a richer theorisation of the issue in question. Rather, this is an approach that enriches both theoretical and empirical insights by establishing an iterative and recursive interaction between theory and data and facilitating an abductive inquiry (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). An interpretive researcher brings themselves into a contextual, contingent, ambiguous and uncertain research field. Then, a researcher gains data through a deep interaction with the research subjects. By facilitating a communication between theory and data, a researcher is able to gain a new perspective on the field, to modify theory, and therefore to suggest insights into how to understand the issue.

The case study described in this thesis employs an interpretive approach, allowing us to recognise the presence of children as deliberators, not as future citizens. The interpretive study of meaning in context helps us to examine and approach the contextualised roles and potential

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of specific spaces in deliberative systems. Venues of deliberation in deliberative systems are not always given (Ercan, Hendriks, & Boswell, 2017). In light of deliberative systems, a venue that is traditionally regarded as non-deliberative (e.g. classrooms, schools, and streets) can potentially become a constituent part of a deliberative system. While these spaces do not embody deliberative ideals on a micro-scale, they can potentially vitalise the macro-scale quality of deliberation in deliberative systems in a specific context. Hence, the interpretive approach and the deliberative systems study fit together well, because this approach allows us to examine the contextualised roles and meanings of a specific space from multiple angles.

Furthermore, the interpretive approach enables us to acknowledge multiple meanings of the “consequence” of children’s deliberative practices in deliberative systems. As Nicole Curato (2015) rightly puts it, deliberative contributions in deliberative systems may include not only formal impacts (e.g. making public policy) but also informal ones, such as “changing cultural practices, social learning or generating mutual trust among previously hostile parties” (Curato, 2015: 105). One notable example is Bora Kanra’s (2012) research on deliberation in divided societies. By analysing agonistic interactions between Islamic and secular discourses in Turkey, he empirically unpacks the importance of a social learning phase in the small-scale deliberation as it deepens participants’ understanding about how to live together more productively in a divided society. As Kanra’s study implies, even seemingly “less effective” consequences of deliberation (e.g. social learning without decision-making moments) can be greatly evaluated when situated in a specific context (e.g. divided society). Since the interpretive approach focuses on such contextuality, it helps us to understand different consequences that children bring about.

Based on this methodological backdrop, this research employs three research methods: interviews, participatory observations, and archival research. The first two are ethnographically-inspired methods used in my fieldwork in Japan. From September to December in 2016, I undertook fieldwork in three junior high and high schools in Tokyo and Saitama prefecture to observe students' deliberative activities in the classroom and public spaces and to conduct interviews with them. Data were also gained from informal conversations with the teachers, students, and school principals, and through making field notes. I then analysed the specific deliberative function and potential of classrooms and schools as detailed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Additionally, I carried out archival research to deepen my understanding of Japanese teenagers' engagement in the anti-security legislation movements in 2015. Between April in 2017 and February in 2018, I have regularly visited the National Library of Australia, Asia Section (Canberra) and the National Diet Library of Japan (Tokyo) to collect key documents entailing information about issues on the new security legislation advanced by the Japanese government and teenagers' anti-government protests in Japan (e.g. newspapers, police white books). The collected documents are analysed by means of qualitative content analysis, which is an interpretation of the content of textual data through a systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns. This research and the specific steps involved in the data analysis are further explained in Chapter 4.

Cases in Japan

To conceptualise the role and meaning of children's alternative democratic participation in deliberative democracy, this thesis focuses on the examples of children's deliberative activities in the classroom (Philosophy for Children), in and beyond schools (The Future Talk, Ari to

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Pla), and on the streets, as exemplified by the case of teenage protests (T-ns SOWL). These practices are used as illustrative case studies for the purpose of developing empirically-driven understanding of children's participation in deliberative democracy.

Sceptics may think that focusing on the case of Japan is not wise, because Japanese children are usually considered as not active or enthusiastic when it comes to participation in democracy (e.g. Furuichi, 2011). As is the case with the worldwide trend, Japanese children and young people are often understood as individuals who lack capacity and interest in democracy. For example, the Japanese government's official letter "On high school students' political literacy and participation" issued in 1968 argued that children and young people's political participation was "undesirable" by pointing out their "irrational" nature. Even when there was a legal revision to lower the voting age from 20 to 18 in 2016, around 50 per cent of young people did not vote, which confirmed the scepticism about children's lack of interest in democracy.

Nevertheless, what is often missed by these sceptics is the fact that there are also democratic innovations in Japanese classrooms, schools, and streets, which make the case of Japan worth examining in the context of this thesis. Firstly, Japanese schools have been introducing an increasingly deliberative form of teaching into their official school curriculum. This is in order to adapt to the forthcoming revision of the national curriculum that emphasises the significance of children's active, reciprocal, and communicative interactions (called "active learning"). The practice of Philosophy for Children (P4C) shown in Chapters 2 and 3 is in line with this trend. P4C is a dialogue-based inquiry in the classroom, where children discuss open-ended questions generated from their everyday lives. With the financial and intellectual input of some

universities, academic associations, and non-profit organisations,⁶ some private and public schools have begun to conduct experimental studies about P4C in the school curriculum (see, Kono et al. 2016). Although Japanese schools have historically valued the significance of cramming, the introduction of the deliberative curriculum can potentially break up this tradition and open up an avenue for more and more children to experience deliberation in classrooms and schools.

Against this backdrop, I conducted participatory observations and interviews at two of the leading P4C schools in Japan. From 2013 to 2015, I was involved in the practice of P4C in these schools as a facilitator. This enabled me to identify cases in which students actively seek to apply their deliberative experiences in the classroom to their out-of-school activities. For example, some students who actively engaged in P4C in the classroom organised Ari to Pla, a monthly deliberative group in the public space. This group is a child-led deliberative enclave where only children can determine the rules of deliberation, set the agenda, and facilitate dialogue, which can potentially reverse the traditional asymmetrical relationship between children and adults in the public space in Japan.

During the fieldwork, I also discovered that some students engage in deliberative activities in public spaces without any experience of deliberation in the classroom. Since schools are functionally and spatially bigger than classrooms, schools provide alternative ways in which students deliberate across society without relying solely on classroom deliberation. As we shall see in Chapter 3, these schools offer different avenues for students to engage in deliberative

⁶ To date, the following three associations and organisations are actively supporting P4C in classrooms across Japan: ArdaCoda (<http://ardacoda.com>), p4c in Japan (<http://p4c-japan.com>), and Tetsugaku Practice Renrakukai (<http://philosophicalpractice.jp>).

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activities both within and beyond school. For example, one student with no experience of classroom deliberation such as P4C made effective use of the networking provided by schools in order to organise a deliberative forum in the University of Tokyo called The Future Talk. This is a collaborative deliberative group where both adult citizens and children talk about controversial political issues in Japan (e.g. humanitarian support in the post-disaster context).

The presence of new forms of protest allows Japanese children to engage in democracy more easily and actively. During the fieldwork, some students whom I interviewed introduced me to other students who actively engaged in a teenage protest called T-ns SOWL (Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law). T-ns SOWL is the teenager-centric anti-government activist group challenging the new security legislation advanced by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Liberal Democratic Party). The deliberative potential of T-ns SOWL is further elaborated in Chapter 4.

Bringing all these activities together, the thesis focuses on Philosophy for Children, Ari to Pla, The Future Talk, and T-ns SOWL and examines their deliberative potential in deliberative systems. These case studies suggest that an increasing number of Japanese children and young people have a chance to participate in democratic activities in classrooms, schools, and streets. Of course, these trends are not observable only in Japan. For example, both P4C and new forms of teenage protest were originally developed in other countries, and we can find myriad cases of them across the globe.⁷ A close investigation of the cases in the context of Japan can also

⁷ See Gregory et al. (2016) for the history of P4C across the globe. See St John's (2012) explanation of various cases of "festive" protests ("protestival" in his term) in many countries.

provide broader implications and advance our understanding of the roles and contributions of children in deliberative democracy.

Chapter outline

This thesis is developed as a “thesis with publication.” It consists of five independent yet interrelated published works, and three chapters (Chapter 1, Chapter 3, Chapter 5) have already been published as journal articles. The core questions stand at the heart of this thesis are: “what is democratic about children’s’ alternative forms of participation?” And “how do children’s alternative forms of participation contribute to democracy?”

The thesis responds to these questions from a perspective of deliberative democracy and through a close examination of classroom deliberation (Philosophy for Children), deliberative activities in and beyond schools (The Future Talk and Ari to Pla), and teenage protests (T-ns SOWL). In doing so, each chapter explores the following sub-questions:

- Can children deliberate? (Chapter 1)
- What are the key characteristics of deliberation in the classroom in a contemporary society? (Chapter 2)
- How does school enable children’s deliberation in deliberative systems? (Chapter 3)
- What is democratic about contemporary teenage protests in the context of deliberative systems? (Chapter 4)
- How can the interpretive research approach help to capture children’s lived experiences? (Chapter 5)

These questions are answered in five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1. Agenda-setting

Before examining each case, this thesis seeks to situate children in democracy, because their role in democracy has long been dismissed in democracy and political studies. The first chapter, entitled “*Deliberators, not future citizens: Children in democracy*” (published in the *Journal of Public Deliberation*), is the agenda-setting article aimed at theorising children’s democratic agency in deliberative democracy. This chapter problematises the existing approaches to children underpinned by the idea of either “socialisation” or “remediation.” These approaches reinforce the scepticism about children’s capacity, knowledge, experience, and interest in democracy. Drawing on deliberative democracy theory, and especially on the deliberative systems framework, this chapter reconsiders the capacities and potential contributions of children in democracy. With the deliberative systems framework in mind, this chapter redefines the notion of “actors” (who are deliberators?), “spaces” (where does deliberation take place?), and “impacts” (what kinds of democratic contribution does deliberation make?) in deliberative democracy. The chapter then provides four general cases in which children can potentially act as deliberators – that is, children in empowered space, public space, everyday space, and in the process of transmission.

Chapter 2. Classrooms

The second chapter, entitled “*Classroom deliberation as a catalyst for children’s participation: The case of Philosophy for Children,*” seeks to unpack the key features and meanings of classroom deliberation in contemporary society. While an increasing number of scholars and practitioners have attempted to apply deliberative theory to classroom discussion, existing practice does not capture the democratic dynamics of classroom deliberation in its entirety. This is because not all classroom deliberation can be designed and practised in a way that

conceptualises children as deliberators. For example, existing practices and theories of classroom deliberation tend to focus on a so-called “simulation” model of deliberation (Levine, 2018) where children are required to perform as participants in “future” or “fictional” public deliberation. Due to the future-oriented feature of simulated deliberation, such practice inhibits the conceptualisation of children as deliberators: it rather seeks to strengthen the view of children as future citizens.

To develop the view of children as deliberators, this chapter draws on the practice of Philosophy for Children (P4C) as a non-simulated model of classroom deliberation. It outlines the key characteristics of P4C and classroom deliberation as enablers of children’s present deliberative engagements. A close examination of the fieldwork data shows that P4C can facilitate two different forms of children’s participation. On the one hand, there is a *pedagogical* participation that promotes children’s creation of a moral community in the classroom and results in the generation of mutual-understanding across difference. On the other hand, the study also shows *social* participation happening outside the classroom and schools, where children engage in grassroots form of social change activities. Based on these insights, this chapter suggests conceptualising the classroom not as a space for simulated public deliberation but as a *catalyst* for children’s democratic participation. This chapter also outlines some practical implications about the way in which classrooms can become more meaningful catalysts, emphasising the significant role of children’s own questioning and the networking capacity of schools.

Chapter 3. Schools

The third chapter, entitled “*Enabling children’s deliberation in deliberative systems: Schools as a mediating space*,” explores how schools work in a deliberative system. In doing so, it challenges the view of those deliberative democrats who view the deliberative role of schools

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only in educational/pedagogical terms. By adopting the deliberative systems framework, this chapter examines three different cases of children's deliberative engagements inspired by their school experiences. The first case is Ari to Pla, the student-led monthly deliberative group in the public space. The second case is The Future Talk (*TFT*), the dialogue forum organised by one junior high school student. The third case is T-ns SOWL (Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law), a teenager activist group established in 2015.

These different cases show us that schools can contribute to deliberative systems by mediating between children's everyday experiences and democratic engagements in the broader public space through a deliberative curriculum, networking, and plurality. On the basis of these findings, this chapter suggests re-defining schools in democracy as mediating spaces.

Chapter 4. Streets

The fourth chapter, entitled "*Teenage protests and deliberative systems: The case of T-ns SOWL*," considers the deliberative potential of contemporary teenage protests. While deliberative systems scholars have gradually recognised the deliberative contributions of protests (e.g. Mendonça & Ercan, 2015), to date teenage protests have received no attention from the perspective of deliberative democracy. This is not only because the presence of teenagers in deliberative democracy has long been neglected, but also because the protesting activities of teenagers are hard to explain in deliberative terms. On many occasions, teenage protestors engage in non-deliberative, ambiguous, and personalised activities (e.g. dancing, tattooing, singing, silencing) without any straightforward relationship with the issue in question. This chapter then asks: what is democratic and deliberative about contemporary teenage protests?

Drawing on the case of T-ns SOWL, a teenage-led anti-government activist group in Japan, in 2015–2017, this chapter examines multiple communicative strategies used in this group. A close examination of the relevant documents shows that even if T-ns SOWL *per se* does not usually use deliberative activities that neatly fit into an authentic form of deliberation, their communicative strategies contribute to public deliberation in three important ways. Firstly, teenagers' ambiguous form of communicative activities (e.g. wearing school uniform, using various genres of music, telling personal stories) can signal and speak to different audiences, thereby allowing them to interpret teenagers' activities differently. As a result, T-ns SOWL helps wider publics to re-define and re-frame the issue at stake. Secondly, T-ns SOWL facilitates inclusion within movements. It does so by allowing teenagers to employ teenage-friendly means of activity and offering different pathways for participation in the movement (e.g. online and offline). Thirdly, T-ns SOWL facilitates macro-scale inclusion in public spaces by making teenagers' voices heard by broader audiences (e.g. newspapers, politicians, Twitter followers). Taken together, this chapter concludes the significant role of non-deliberative practices implemented by teenagers in wider deliberative systems.

Chapter 5. Methodological and ethical reflections about interviewing children

Chapter five, “*Using the community of inquiry for interviewing children: Theory and practice*” (published in *The International Journal of Social Research Methodology*), reflects on the methodological and ethical challenges of interviewing children, as reported in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. In particular, this chapter attempts to address the ethical problems associated with power imbalances between a researcher and children during an interview process. This chapter provides insights to alleviate the imbalance by developing an alternative interview method, applying the pragmatist's idea of *the community of inquiry* (CoI) to a group interview with

children. This method allows children to speak reflectively, freely and safely by facilitating them to act not only as interviewee but also as interviewer. Drawing on one experimental case, this chapter shows (a) how CoI enables the researcher to approach children's lived experiences in a way that makes them examine their experience in a reflective manner; and, in parallel (b) how CoI mitigates the risks of power imbalances between the researcher and children.

Significance of this thesis

Each chapter provides novel insights into the way in which children act as deliberators rather than as future citizens. Overall, the thesis makes a significant contribution to the following four research fields: children's participation, deliberative democracy, democratic education, and interpretive research.

Firstly, the thesis advances our understanding of *children's participation*. Children's participation has long been understood, designed, and practised as an adult-initiated and forum-based model of participation, as observed, for instance, in consultative or collaborative youth parliaments (Bulling et al., 2013). Yet, this thesis demonstrates that there are various alternatives of participation outside such forums. Drawing on the cases of children's deliberative activities in classrooms, schools, and streets, this thesis shows when and how these spaces can be considered as a meaningful part of wider deliberative systems.

Secondly, the research undertaken in this thesis offers significant insights into the study of *deliberative democracy*. This thesis cautions deliberative democrats not to dismiss or underestimate children's deliberative potential. It counteracts the dominant assumption that children lack deliberative capacities by demonstrating that there are many spaces where children can act as deliberators and vitalise public deliberation. In addition, the children's

experiences described in this thesis offer insight into the way in which the inclusion of the marginalised individuals in deliberative systems can be facilitated more effectively.

Thirdly, this thesis contributes to the scholarly debates on the meaning of *democratic education*.⁸ While democratic education (including a “simulated” model of deliberation) is often regarded as preparation for future democratic participation, this thesis criticises this assumption for inhibiting the conception of children as deliberators. When we accept this conceptualisation, democratic education ought to be the practice that situates children’s present knowledge, capacities, interests, and experiences at the heart of the learning process, rather than just simulating future or fictional deliberation. To consider how such democratic education may look in practice, the thesis draws on the lessons gained from the practice of P4C (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). The case of P4C shows that children’s deliberation can be fostered when classroom deliberation allows room for children to examine and contest their everyday controversial questions. This experience enables children to challenge their taken-for-granted values and norms in their everyday lives and increases their motivation to be involved in further deliberative activities outside the classroom and school.

Finally, in ensuring the trustworthiness of the data reported in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, based on the insights gained in the fieldwork centring around children, this thesis develops a new interview method in the context of *interpretive research*. As a way of minimising power imbalances between adults and children during an interview, this thesis suggests using the

⁸ This thesis uses the term “democratic education” rather than “civic education,” even if the latter is used more frequently than the former. As Hess (2009: 14) notes, while civic education suggests “fitting into society,” democratic education highlights “dynamic and contested dimensions inherent in a democracy.” In principle, democratic education values children’s experience of democracy (e.g. deliberation, contestation, cooperation), while civic education focuses on the content of democracy (e.g. how to vote, what citizenship is) (Biesta 2011).

pragmatist's practice of the "community of inquiry" as an interview method. This practice helps to generate a well-examined lived experience of children and minimise the power imbalance between adults and children. By demonstrating how CoI as an interview method works in practice, this thesis introduces a new repertoire of an interpretive interview method into the repertoire of interpretive research.

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Chapter 1. Agenda-setting

Deliberators, not future citizens: Children in democracy⁹

Chapter outline

This paper is a “manifesto” for incorporating children into deliberative democracy. Although the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) emphasises children’s right to participation in the process of democracy, their activities and voices still do not receive the attention they merit. There exists a widespread scepticism reinforced by notions of socialisation and remediation about children’s capacities, knowledge, experiences, and interests in democracy, and this leads to a conceptualisation of children as “future citizens.” Drawing on the recent scholarship on deliberative democracy, particularly the deliberative system framework, this article reconsiders the capacities and actual contributions of children in democracy and suggests reconceptualising children as “deliberators.” The perspective of deliberative system in particular helps us to notice the agency and deliberative capacity of children not only in “empowered” decision-making spaces but also in the context of previously unnoticed various democratic activities.

⁹ This chapter was examined through the blind peer review process and published in *Journal of Public Deliberation* (Vol 13, Article 1). Retrieved from: <https://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol13/iss1/art1/>. This chapter uses the original article without any change except for some spelling editions (e.g. from American to British English) for the formatting consistency of this thesis.

Introduction

Children¹⁰ are “neither seen nor heard.” This is an often-used phrase when childhood scholars discuss the relationship between children and democracy (e.g. Cohen, 2005). It points out the largely ignored places and roles of children in both theory and practice of democracy. Yet, during the past several decades, we also observe a gradual improvement of recognition of children, partly as a result of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, which enabled a number of scholars and practitioners to re-evaluate a variety of children’s participatory activities throughout the world (e.g. Lansdown, 2001; Invernizzi & Williams, 2008; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). These studies invite us to reconsider the role of children in democracy.

However, the serious issue today is that children are “seen *but* not heard” rather than “*neither* seen nor heard.” Despite empirical evidence of children’s crucial democratic role in society, there still exists scepticism about their capacities, such as communication skills, which prevents scholars from taking children’s voices seriously. Furthermore, some scholars fail to take into consideration earnestly children’s various and unique ways of democratic involvement. For example, although non-participation could be interpreted as a “reasonable” political strategy for children to resist adult-centred politics (O’Toole, 2003), it is usually seen merely as evidence of their apathy or rudeness (e.g. Crick Report, 1998). The ignorance of children’s

¹⁰ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children as those who are under 18 years old. On the basis of this definition, this article will focus mainly on those who are at the period of compulsory education (e.g. aged 6-7 to 15-18) intended to distinguish children from infants. The definition of children is still controversial, and so far there have been many efforts to define and redefine the term. See also, Allison & Alan (2010).

present capacities, knowledge, and/or experiences is often grounded in the current mainstream conceptualisation of children – children as *future citizens*.

The aim of this article is to counteract this understanding of children and to contend that it is possible to reconceptualise them and their democratic agency in contemporary societies. In particular, drawing on insights gained from various contexts, this article sets a theoretical agenda for “children as effective agents of democracy.” In doing so, this article engages with several key questions: Why are children often seen as “incapable”? Is a reconceptualisation of children as effective democratic agents possible? What theoretical framework/s can effectively appreciate their activities in democratic process? In responding to these questions, this article situates children in the context of deliberative democracy, particularly within the idea of the *deliberative system*. Although no deliberative democrats consider the case of children thus far, the systemic understanding of deliberative democracy framework adopted in this article enables a better interpretation and evaluation of children’s activities. This framework draws our attention to expanded notions of (a) actors of deliberation (deliberators), (b) spaces of deliberation, and (c) impacts of deliberation. Drawing on recent discussions of deliberative systems and using that as a theoretical framework, this article unpacks children’s various democratic engagements as “deliberators” (not future citizens).

The opening section overviews some of the dominant arguments (namely, socialisation and remediation) that underpin the conceptualisation of “children as future citizens,” then the next section problematises these arguments. In so doing, it contends that children’s unique capacities can contribute to the democratisation of society in a different way from adults and that they already play a powerful role in democratic processes. In reconceptualising children as “effective

agents of democracy,” the following sections argue that deliberative democracy, especially a systemic understanding of it, can provide a better theoretical framework for appreciating children’s democratic agency in more defensible ways than the existing framework suggested especially by citizenship studies (“children as citizens” framework). The final section outlines some possible contributions of children as deliberators from the deliberative system’s point of view.

Children as “Future Citizens”

Even after the United Nations adopted UNCRC in 1989, a strong scepticism about children’s capacities, knowledge, experiences, and activities is still pervasive. Thomas Christiano’s viewpoint serves as a useful starting point because it summarises the dominant approaches to children in democracy:

Children are not capable of elaborating or reflecting on moral principles; they adopt moral ideas from their parents not out of a sense of conviction but out of a desire to please and a sense of trust in their parents. For the same reasons, children do not have a developed sense of their own interests. As a consequence of these points, children are not likely to have elaborated or reflected on ideas of justice and whatever ideas they do express are not likely to reflect their interests. (Christiano, 2001, p. 207)

This view reflects two types of mainstream understanding of children in democracy. One is that children do not have appropriate capacities required for democracy. It sees children as “incapable” beings on the ground that they lack capacities of reflection, and/or judgment. Another is that children lack awareness of interests. In this regard, they are described as those

who “do not understand what is at issue in debates about justice and decisions” (Christiano, 2001, p. 207). Thus far, these arguments have been developed and bolstered by two education-related notions. The former perspective (children as incapable) has been suggested by scholars of *socialisation*, while the latter (children as lacking interests and trust) has triggered the discussion of *remediation*. As I explain further below, both ideas entail a strong future orientation, leading to the conceptualisation of “children as future citizens.”

The central idea behind socialisation, particularly political socialisation, is to expect children to prepare to conform to the future democratic society. More specifically, it refers to “the process of how individuals find their place within a political community by acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes with respect to the political system” (Abendschön, 2014, p. 1). On this account, children are often treated as if they are in a state of *tabula rasa* from this perspective (cf. Moss & Petrie, 2002). Scholars adopting this approach place a special emphasis on the term *preparation* (cf. Kahne et al., 2000) so that children’s “emptiness” can be filled up. This line of argument tends to identify skills or virtues that children should acquire within the preparatory process, such as virtues required for liberal democracy (e.g., Gutmann, 1999); autonomy (e.g., Callan, 1997); or rational communication skills (e.g., Reich, 2007). These skills or virtues are seen as an “entrance ticket” to be involved in democracy, which can disqualify children because they are regarded as those who do not have this ticket at present. Several decades ago, Alanen (1988, p. 56) sought to challenge this approach and argued that “the child remains negatively defined...the child is depicted as pre-social, potentially social, in the process of becoming social – essentially undergoing socialisation.” This challenge still persists today.

The second line of argument about the role of children in democracy centres around a notion of “remediation,” which problematises children’s negative attitude toward democracy and then seeks to improve this attitude in order to revitalise democracy. This argument is originally based on the discontent with low levels of interest and trust that children in general have for today’s politics and democracy. Drawing on the low level of interest in political participation across the globe, especially voting, for example, the report from the International Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 1999, p. 9) describes this negative tendency as “weakening of democracy.” The “remediation” argument thus emphasises the need for a citizenship education so that these negative tendencies can be remedied, and thereby democracy can be revived. This is also mentioned in the final report of the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in the UK, known as the Crick Report. According to its diagnosis, there are “worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life...these could well diminish the hoped-for benefits both of constitutional reform and of the changing nature of the welfare state” (Crick Report, 1998, p. 8). It suggests that this situation “should and could be *remedied*” (Crick Report, 1998, p. 16) by citizenship education in a way that encourages children to respect and to be interested in democracy. As Biesta (2011, p. 12) puts it, there is an idea that “an alleged crisis in democracy can be adequately addressed by (re)educating individuals by making them [children and young people] “ready” for democratic citizenship through education.” Although the Crick Report focuses mostly on issues in the UK context, O’Toole’s (2003) study shows that the same concerns, to date, can be found in other countries too.

Both socialisation and remediation arguments illuminate children’s lack of capacity and the insufficiency of their present agency from different angles. According to Biesta (2011), these

sorts of arguments are widely shared, especially in the context of contemporary citizenship education. Yet, it should be noted that these viewpoints have also been found in the real world beyond education. For example, the image of children's "incapacity" underpinned by socialisation can strengthen adults' disrespect toward children. This tendency is depicted in a statement made by a state government representative in Queensland, Australia: "I am a bit sceptical of young people being involved in this [community planning] ... What life experiences did they bring?" (Grant-Smith & Edwards, 2011, p. 8). Likewise, remediation can be utilised as a tool for justification of adults' paternalistic restriction of children's political engagements. The official advice letter published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan in 1968, for instance, allowed public schools to prohibit or restrict their students' (aged 15 to 18) political engagement in out-of-school settings such as protesting on the grounds of their insufficient interest in politics. Instead of getting children involved in politics, this letter insists that their insufficiency should be first remedied through a "proper" educational program.¹¹ Despite their contextual differences, these examples imply that children can and should be disregarded in "real world" politics, as a result of socialisation- and remediation-focused viewpoints.

Surely, socialisation and remediation are important points that need to be taken into account in the context of education. Nevertheless, children under these perspectives are often seen through the logic of "what they cannot" rather than "what they can" (Alanen, 1988). Even if some civic education projects allow children to engage in "*tomorrow's* problem ... to develop relevant

¹¹ MEXT. (1969, October, 31). On the political literacy and political activity in Japanese high schools [written in Japanese]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/118/shiryo/attach/1363604.htm

This document was finally revised in 2015 in response to the lowering of voting age (from 20 to 18) in Japan.

attitudes, knowledge, and skills” (Kahne et al, 2000, p. 319, emphasis added), their activities still remain enclosed only in a preparatory process for future society. As John Dewey (2004, p. 59) noticed, this sort of future orientation can “sacrifice children’s present potential,” and reinforce a conceptualisation of children as *future citizens* (or Doek’s (2008) term “children as citizens of tomorrow”). In this conceptualisation, their present potential or condition can be implicitly dismissed as being frivolous because they are not regarded as full-fledged members of society until the socialisation process finishes. Likewise, since their apathy and lack of interest are seen as something that would run the risk of undermining future democracy (Crick Report, 1998; see also, IDEA, 1999), children are expected to wait until they get interested in democracy to improve or maintain the quality of democracy (cf. Biesta, 2011).

Rethinking Children’s Potential Capacities and Contributions to Democracy

So far I have noted that the conceptualisation of “children as future citizens” underpinned by socialisation and remediation reflects today’s mainstream understanding of children in democracy (for similar arguments, see also, Doek, 2008; Biesta, 2011). I contend that this conceptualisation is insufficient as it misrecognises or even downplays children’s potential contributions to democracy. To substantiate this argument, in what follows I consider several problems stemming from socialisation and remediation approaches.

A problem of socialisation is that it assumes children do not have the capacities required for democracy. Anne (2007, p. 30) indicates that when socialisation-oriented scholars approach children, their perspectives are often grounded in what she calls “developmental discourses,” which place children in a middle stage of development and produce “images of children as

vulnerable, immature, and in need of education and socialisation if they are to develop into fully competent citizens.” In this light, even though this might not be the explicit intent of scholars, adults are regarded as template (Lister, 2008), fixed standard (Dewey, 2004) or state of completion (Moss & Petrie, 2002). This viewpoint sees adults as those who have sufficient capacities to be profoundly involved in democracy and to exert their influence effectively on democratic processes, whereas children are labelled as “less competent” on the grounds that they fall short of this “standard.”

Yet, this perspective tends to romanticise existing conditions of adults in the real world because, just as children are less capable than adult citizens, adults might also be more or less capable in actual democratic processes. According to Fishkin (2009), for instance, adult citizens usually have lower levels of knowledge or opinions on current political issues than scholars expect; they are vulnerable to manipulation because they receive information uncritically; they hesitate or even refuse to discuss issues with others who have different opinions. These facts raise the following question: Is it relevant to regard adults as “ideal models” when considering the role of children in democracy?

This, however, is *not* to suggest that adult citizens do not have capacities demanded for democracy at all. Rather, Stoker (2006) argues that a well-functioning democracy puts value on people’s different skills, perspectives, and experiences for realising and vitalising democracy, even if each contributing individual does not qualify as an “ideal” citizen. He calls this idea “politics for amateurs.” As such, “politics for amateurs” shifts the focus from the need to create “perfect” citizens to the overall design of democracy. If a well-functioning democracy should be open to the contribution of those who are not always fully capable citizens, as Stoker

notes, there is no reason for postponing children's participation in democracy under the guise of "lack of capacities." Similar to adults who utilise their different capacities in democratic processes, children, in the context of "politics for amateurs," can potentially contribute to democracy, as well, by making use of their unique capacities in a different way from adults.

One of their unique capacities stems from what Dewey calls "immaturity." Contrary to the general understanding of immaturity as emptiness or lacking, Dewey (2004, p. 46) defines it as "a positive force or ability – the power to grow." Since children are immature physically as well as socially, they inevitably utilise their available possibilities to survive by learning from others, employing their sense of wonder or imagination, or challenging anything without fear of failure.

In the context of democracy, children's immaturity has multiple functions. First of all, immaturity enables them to question and challenge norms or taken-for-granted perspectives in the adult world. Since children are immature, everything in their world can be subject to their sense of wonder and curiosity, which encourages them to question, to inquire keenly, and to exercise imagination. Given this, several scholars describe children as "philosophers (e.g., Matthews, 1994; Gopnik, 2009). Their philosopher-like activities (most notably their questions such as "why?" "what is the meaning?" or contestations such as "why should I?") can potentially cast critical eyes toward cultural traditions or dominant discourses in society that most adults tend to accept uncritically, thereby helping adults deepen their understanding of social issues in a reflective way.

For example, in southern Malawi, there was a tradition that young girls were sent to a traditional "initiation camp" (called *kusasa fumbi*) that instructed them how to sexually please a man under

the guise of “cleansing childhood dust” and “preparation for adulthood,” and some children got pregnant in this camp. When Memory Banda, currently a young activist in Malawi, turned 11 years old, she resisted by refusing to go to this camp and began questioning this tradition as she could not understand why she should go there and please a man. Instead of going to this camp, she organised a female community with several social activists and initiated resistance as a leader of this group. Her efforts encouraged many women and finally resulted in the outlawing of child marriage in her country. As this story illustrates, children’s why-based interrogations can contribute to changing adult minds, posing important questions of their taken-for-granted cultural traditions or discriminative social norms.

Second, children’s voices, activities, or even their existence itself can trigger broader sympathy and cooperation. Think about the following questions: Why do Malala Yousafzai’s activities and voice strike many people’s hearts more effectively than other victims of the Taliban? Why did the photo of a Syrian child refugee who was washed ashore in Turkey foster controversy on a refugee issue all over the world, though there are a lot of photos of the catastrophic condition of Syrian refugees?¹² Why does children’s pain often pull our heartstrings directly, as Gopnik (2009) indicates? My, and Dewey’s (2004, p. 46), answer is that children have a “power to enlist the cooperative attention of others.” Compared to adults in general, children are so immature that they cannot survive alone. This fact gives them an ability to elicit adult’s sympathetic care and responses – Dewey calls this ability “social capacity.” Due to this ability, children’s voices or activities can impact society effectively in ways that call for attention and sympathy from people who previously were not concerned about issues under discussion. By

¹² It finally became the top trending picture on Twitter’s hashtag (*#KiyiyaVuranInsanlik* (humanity washed ashore) in September 2015.

referring to the case of the children's peace-making movement in Columbia, for example, Cameron (2000) reports "the voices of children against violence can be an inspiration for adults ... their power seems to lie not just in the eloquence of their words, but *in the fact that they are said by children*" (p. 44, emphasis added).

These arguments help counteract the claims put forward by socialisation scholars. Of course, children may be less competent than adults from a developmental psychological point of view, and socialisation can play a role in empowering children. However, what I emphasise here is that it is not the only perspective when thinking about the relationship between children and democracy. Children can have unique capacities and use them for democracy in a different way than adults do. This is what socialisation scholarship often fails to recognise.

When it comes to the problem of remediation, it runs the risk of disregarding the powerful role that children *already* play in democracy in various spaces and ways. Children's present democratic actions can actually be found in multiple levels. In the formal level, for example, Lansdown (2010, p. 20) classifies their activities as consultative participation; collaborative participation; child-led participation. In addition, their democratic activities can also be found in everyday settings to revitalise their public life from the grassroots. As several childhood scholars already demonstrate (e.g. Kallio & Häkli, 2011a; Wood, 2014), children usually belong to variety of social spaces such as family, peer cultures, voluntary associations, or media, and these spaces often entail different types of political issues (e.g. poverty, discrimination, inequality). While these political issues risk discouraging children from participating in democracy, the process of negotiation and contestation for dealing with these political issues in

their everyday life can also be a booster to get them involved in the process of democracy at a grassroots level (see Yousafzai with Lamb, 2013).

Moreover, some activities that are understood as “meaningless” or “lazy” from adults’ point of view could be interpreted as “reasonable” strategies for children to become involved in democracy. Jungkunz (2012) illustrates this happening through a story of a silent female student at school. During the class, this student says nothing to teachers or her classmates. When a teacher calls upon her several times, she keeps silent. Although her silence and non-participation in classroom activities seems odd, her engagement of silence turns out to be her protest against the harassment of her LGBT classmates. Jungkunz (2012, pp. 127-128) remarks, “her silence acts as a valuable protest and teaching lesson, as it exposes how the absence of a given voice really matters, thereby demonstrating how much we stand to lose due to exclusionary practices.” As this story illustrates, even seemingly “meaningless” activity could turn out to play a significant role in democracy when seen from different angles. Kallio and Häkli (2011b) call this sort of children’s activity “the voiceless politics.” The point here is that, as opposed to what proponents of the remediation suggest, children’s seemingly “apathetic” or “distrustful” (e.g. Crick Report, 1998) behaviours could be their “active” democratic engagement (see also, O’Toole (2003) in his case of non-participation as “active” political response).

Overall, the conceptualisation of “children as future citizens” underpinned either by socialisation or remediation arguments fails to capture the unique capacities children have and the ways in which children already contribute to the realisation of democracy. The arguments that emphasise “children as future citizens” is just to oversimplify, or even downplay, children’s

unique capacities and their actual democratic role. Insofar as children are situated in the future society rather than the present one, it would be next to impossible for their activities and voices to be taken into consideration seriously.

From (Future) Citizens to Deliberators in the Deliberative System

In order to move away from the conceptualisation of “children as future citizens” and to appreciate adequately children’s present capacities and various contributions to today’s democracy, we need to consider an alternative framework. What sort of theoretical framework is effective? One alternative framework is suggested by what scholars (e.g., Austin, 2010; Fowler, 2014; Jans, 2004) call “children as *citizens*.” This framework has increasingly been discussed, especially after the adoption of UNCRC, and it is now widely utilised, especially in the study of children’s citizenship (e.g., Invernizzi & Williams, 2008). This framework attempts to acknowledge the equality (not equation) of citizenship between adults and children, arguing the significance of incorporating children into the process of decision-making or problem-solving on topics regarding not only children’s affairs but also others affecting the present and future societies (Liebel, 2008).

It is certainly true that the “children as citizens” framework enables us to capture more effectively the role of children in democracy. Yet, it still remains insufficient for fully understanding children’s unique capacities and their present involvement in democracy due to, as shall be discussed below, its narrow understanding of “actors,” “spaces,” and “impacts” regarding children’s democratic engagement. Instead, in order to overcome these limitations, I suggest considering a broader understanding of children in democracy, reconceptualising their role from the perspective of *deliberative democracy*. This perspective acknowledges the

strength of “children as citizens” framework discussed above and goes beyond it in several important ways.

Deliberative democracy currently stands at the core of contemporary democratic theory and practice. Broadly speaking, it is a normative theory of democratic legitimacy and inclusion, placing a special emphasis on a variety of communicative activities (e.g. reason-giving, storytelling, listening, rhetoric) that induce some sort of reflection (Dryzek, 2000). Deliberative democracy emphasises the need for effective justification of positions, reciprocal understanding across difference, the inclusion of those who were previously ignored or marginalised, and reflective thinking. These activities are promoted through communicative processes without “coercive, deceptive, and strategic use of language” (Ercan & Dryzek, 2015, p. 241). Deliberative democracy, in principle, values the inclusion of those who are marginalised as a result of challenging conditions (e.g. incapacity, poverty) by offering various opportunities for their voices to be heard. As such, it offers a promising starting point to understand and appreciate the role of children in democracy.

In recent years, deliberative democrats have come gradually to pay special attention to the idea of the *deliberative system* (Dryzek, 2010; Mansbridge, 1999; Mansbridge et al., 2012) as a new theoretical framework. In its core, the deliberative system is seen as the ensemble of multiple communicative activities and their interactions occurring across different places and time. According to Mansbridge et al. (2012, p. 4), “system” here means “a set of distinguishable, differentiated, but to some degree interdependent parts, often with distributed functions and a division of labour, connected in such a way as to form a complex whole.” Instead of seeing deliberation as a one-off communicative activity occurring in an isolated deliberative forum, a

deliberative system “requires some functional division of labour so that some parts do work that others cannot do as well.”

In what follows, I explain why the deliberative system offers a more effective framework for reconceptualising children by comparing it with a “children as citizens” framework. In doing so, I pay particular attention to the way the deliberative system approach expands the notions of “actors,” “spaces,” and “impacts” of democratic activity

Actors

In recognising children as “citizens,” one major strategy is to include them in the decision-making and problem-solving processes with adults (or under the supervision of adults). A number of projects have been designed for this purpose in the form of, for example, child congress, community planning, consultative forum, or child-led youth parliament (Lansdown, 2001, 2011; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2011). However, focusing intensively on these projects sometimes narrows the potential contribution of children. This is because this framework can recognise children as citizens only when they are recruited by adults to participate in the specific democratic activities and to engage actively with the selected and substantive issues (Kallio, 2012). Such projects and the underlying “children as citizens” framework appreciate only limited and/or exceptional children’s involvement in democracy. As such, they fail to recognise the potential role of the “outsiders” of the specific democratic forum, who may be involved in democracy in a different way.

One benefit of the deliberative system’s viewpoint, by contrast, is that it can acknowledge these “outsiders” as effective agents of democracy by focusing on how they contribute to and enhance

the overall quality of the deliberative system. In other words, the deliberative system allows room for incorporating and taking into account children's unique involvement in democracy, even if their individual activity does not always have a real influence on official policy actions. Protesting is one such example. Protesting itself may not have a direct influence on decision-making in the official discourse or solve a public problem immediately. Yet, children's protests have the potential to vitalise deliberations as a systemic whole in ways, for example, that trigger adults' public deliberation, bring previously unnoticed children's voices to the wider public, or alter the preferences of adults who represent children (e.g., Kallio & Häkli, 2011b).¹³ Surely, as the "children as citizens" line of argument insists, participating in particular deliberative forums such as child congress or youth parliament is one of the crucial ways for children to act as agents of democracy. However, what the deliberative system emphasises is that this is not the only way that children can be recognised as democratic agents.

Spaces

The "children as citizens" perspective is often grounded in the single-forum-based understanding of children's democratic engagement. Attention is generally paid to their performances in a specific forum (child congress, youth parliament, civil society, non-governmental public debate, etc.), and criteria to appreciate their democratic engagement are, therefore, based on the way in which they perform actively within the confine of the individual

¹³ This, of course, does not mean that every activity is seen as a part of the deliberative system. As Mansbridge et al. (2012, p. 19) note, "without criteria to evaluate when non-deliberative, weakly deliberative, or even anti-deliberative behaviour nevertheless enhances the deliberative system, one risks falling into the blind spot of old style functionalism." Hence, advocates of a deliberative system are seeking to establish criteria to evaluate various deliberations in the deliberative system. See, for example, Dryzek (2010).

forum (Malone & Hartung, 2010). As Sinclair (2004, p.116) puts it, the challenge of this sort of understanding is “how to move beyond one-off or isolated consultations.”

The deliberative system framework makes this possible by emphasising the need for considering a variety of social spaces and their interrelationship as potential components of the deliberative system. Mansbridge et al. (2012, p. 2) note that the deliberative system “expands the scale of analysis beyond the individual site and allows us to think about deliberations that develop among and between the sites over time.” One beneficial point of this perspective is that it enables us to appreciate children’s various democratic actions beyond the wall of particular forums in terms of a broader deliberative system.

For instance, one particularly crucial activity that enables the deliberative system to occur is “transmission” (Dryzek, 2010). It refers to the activities that make a linkage and transmit a discourse between one component of the deliberative system and another. Lyons’s (2015) empirical findings show that Internet memes shared via hashtag and hyperlink on Twitter or Facebook makes transmission possible, provoking viewers’ emotional and reflective reactions and trigger their political talk across offline as well as online spaces. Although Internet memes *per se* are not deliberative, Lyons (2015, p. 8) indicates that they represent a communicative action that can vitalise public deliberation in ways that “allow for new species of linkage in the deliberative system.” This study does not explicitly mention the case of children, but it is also applicable in the case of children. This is because, as Hess and McAvoy (2015) discuss, Internet forums, especially social media, hosts various new and crucial means for children to represent their everyday lives and political experiences to broader publics (see also, Block & Buckingham (2007)).

Chapter 1 Deliberators, not Future Citizens

Another significant aspect of the deliberative system is that it values children's everyday practices as a part of the system. While the majority of children do not usually enjoy the opportunity to participate in an official democratic forum (Wall, 2011), they carry out various activities in their everyday settings (e.g. family, friend groups) as democratic agents. The efficacy of everyday settings in the deliberative system has already been acknowledged by Mansbridge (2007, p. 267). who wrote that "when many individuals engage in everyday talk, update their earlier ideas, and coordinate on a new, temporarily settled conviction, the society itself may be said to have "decided" and a new "authoritative allocation of values" is born." This view provides useful insight into reevaluating the significance of children's everyday democratic engagement, even when such engagement occurs beyond the confines of a specific democratic forum.

Impacts

One of the contributions of "children as citizens" scholarship is that it has demonstrated that children can play a powerful role in decision-making and problem-solving by exerting their active citizenship when given appropriate opportunities (Austin, 2010). In 1999, for example, more than 600 children from more than 100 countries gathered in Hawaii to participate in The Millennium Young People's Congress supported by the United Nations. In this congress, children discussed and assessed issues for their future (e.g. education, peace-building, HIV/AIDS); shared experiences; and determined strategies for the globalised world. As a part of the outcome of the five-day discussion, they decided to establish Be The Change. This is a child-led sustainable development action program, aimed at providing funding for small-sized community improvement projects in developing countries or areas that contribute to the

sustainable development all over the world, such as a water supply project in Tanzania (Lansdown, 2001).

While this outcome indeed represents a tremendous impact of children's democratic engagement, proponents of a "children as citizens" approach tend to focus on and overemphasise this sort of "explicit" impact when evaluating children's contributions to democracy. As such, they risk underestimating the role and contribution of more "nuanced" but crucial impacts of children's democratic actions (Kallio & Häkli, 2011b; Kallio, 2012). The merit of the deliberative system framework here is that it can assess impacts of a children's series of democratic engagements, including both clear-cut impacts and more nuanced ones, by seeing them from various angles. From the deliberative system perspective, as Mansbridge et al. (2012, p. 3) indicate, "a single part, which in itself may have low or even negative deliberative quality with respect to one of several deliberative ideals, may nevertheless make an important contribution to an overall deliberative system." As such, even when children's deliberation is seen as "less influential," the deliberative system approach could provide alternative pathways for interpretation and appreciation of these activities.

For example, as noted before, children's protest activity, underpinned by their unique capacities, does not have a direct influence on official policy actions. Nor is it always deliberative. But, as discussed, children's immaturity-based actions can still cause adults to question their taken-for-granted views and inspire sympathetic or cooperative responses by appealing to their heartstrings directly (e.g. Yousafzai with Lamb, 2013). This may occasionally produce other important "impacts," such as achieving mutual understanding among those who have been hostile to each other or bringing previously ignored voices to the fore.

Overall, the strength of the deliberative system framework and its capacity to conceptualise children as *deliberators* lie in its broader understandings of (a) actors (deliberators), (b) spaces of children's democratic engagements, and (c) impacts of children's activities. In making these points, however, I do not suggest that "children as citizens" and "children as deliberators" frameworks are mutually exclusive. I appreciate both arguments because of their common focus, which seeks to move away from the conceptualisation of children as "future citizens." Yet, for the reasons discussed above, a "children as deliberators" framework enables a better appreciation and more effective interpretation of children's various democratic engagements than a "children as citizens" framework.

Children as Deliberators in the Deliberative System

What I have discussed so far is twofold: children already play a role as agents in democracy by utilising their unique capacities, and the deliberative system framework offers a promising starting point to understand and appreciate children's various democratic engagements. To support these arguments in more detail, the final section will discuss how children can potentially act as deliberators in the real world, viewing their varied involvement in democracy through the lens of the deliberative system.

Children as Deliberators in/over the Empowered Space

As the discussion of "children as citizens" illustrates, children can play a powerful and influential role in decision-making or problem-solving in the empowered space where "collective decisions and so exercising some kind of public authority" are produced (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014, p. 28). There exists ample evidence that shows children can generate some

sort of public authority in the local governance or law reform process when given the appropriate opportunities (e.g. Lansdown, 2001; Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010). After UNCRC in 1989, in particular, a number of deliberative practices in empowered spaces have been conducted worldwide, such as Children's Parliament in India (1998); *Dikwankwetla* (children in action) in South Africa (2003-2007); and Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) in Nepal. From the deliberative systems perspective, these sorts of children's deliberations are valuable in themselves as tools for children's empowerment, but they are also appreciated in terms of the deliberative system as a whole because they can potentially exert a real influence on other parts of the system, such as triggering adults' deliberation in the public space or in the official policy making process.

Children as Deliberators in/over the Public Space

It is true that not all children can have an equal opportunity to get involved in deliberation in the empowered space. Regardless of this fact, the deliberative system framework can appreciate children's activities in the public space as influential and beneficial components of the system as a whole. Compared to the empowered space, public space is a relatively freer and broader communication-based space with few legal restrictions (Dryzek, 2010). The public space is important for children because it can have the potential to bridge children's everyday life and broader society (e.g., Moss & Petrie, 2002). Some children participate in deliberation in the public space in ways that join particular adult-initiated civil society (e.g., Anne, 2008), and some children act as deliberators in the public space by participating in child-led participatory projects (Austin, 2010; Lansdown, 2010). Even if some public spaces are still difficult for children to access and to exert their influence, they can act as deliberators in the public space

because they have their own or child-led semi-public space – what Moss and Petrie (2002, p. 106) call “children’s space.” It is a space that “can encompass a wide range of out-of-home settings where groups of children and young people come together.” These may include youth clubs, churches, playgrounds, community centres, peer culture, and so forth. In these spaces, as Moss and Petrie (2002) note, “children are understood as fellow citizens with rights, participating members of the social groups in which they find themselves, agents of their own lives but also interdependent with others, co-constructors of knowledge, identity and culture” (p. 106).

Activism can be considered as another example of “children as deliberators” in the public space. Children’s activism is often triggered by youth generation (aged 18 to 25) influences. In Japan, for instance, since the establishment of an antigovernment student activist group (SEALDs: Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy) in 2013, a large number of young people, particularly university students, have been conducting protests against the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets and the Japanese prime minister’s (Shinzo Abe) self-defence bill. SEALDs organises a lot of demonstrations and protest activities in many places in Japan.

¹⁴ At that time, inspired significantly by SEALDs’s activities, some teenagers, especially high school students (aged 15-18), established a teenager-centred anti-government protest organisation (T-ns SOWL: Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law)¹⁵ and continued their protest activity against the Japanese government. Aside from protesting, they frequently organised

¹⁴ On August 30, 2015, for example, the estimated number of participants in SEALDs’s protest was 30,000. See, Julian, R., (2015, September 9). A look at Japan’s anti-government protests. DW (Deutsche Welle), Retrieved from <http://www.dw.com/en/a-look-at-japans-anti-governmentprotests/a-18693387>

¹⁵ Details on their ongoing activities can be found at their official website (<http://teenssowl.iimdo.com>)

teenager-only deliberative meetings (called SESS10N). Utilising Twitter and Facebook (e.g., #*Seifukudemo* (demonstration with school uniform)) as their main tool for transmission of their collective voice, slogan, or discourse generated from these meetings, they became a powerful activist group by mobilising demonstration and deliberation of those who view and respond to their posts and hashtag. This sort of children's activism inspired by youth activity can be found across the world (e.g., Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan).

Sceptics might reject notions of activism as deliberative because it often rejects democratic deliberation and instead employs strategic use of language when appealing to the broader public (Medearis, 2005). They might also argue that activism is anti-deliberative because of the lack of representation in forums, potential government manipulation and the absence of actual consequences (cf. Mendonça & Ercan, 2015). Nevertheless, as Young (2001, p. 680) rightly argued, activism empowers relatively powerless citizens (e.g. children) in ways that “continue to criticise processes of public deliberation from the outside.” Engagement in activism enables those who do not have access to the empowered space. It provides them with the opportunity to protest against illegitimate deliberative process, to call public attention to inequalities, and to offer remedies. Activism itself can oppose the idea of deliberation: however, the deliberative system approach allows room for incorporating activism as a legitimate democratic activity supporting the idea of systemic inclusion by giving voice to “voiceless” or previously “ignored” social agents. Hence, children's activism like T-ns SOWL can potentially be interpreted in terms of communicative activities that may undermine deliberation at a micro level but not at a system level because activism led by marginalised groups is “sometimes necessary to generate counter-hegemonic ideas” (Mansbridge et al., 2012, p. 7) to improve the democratic quality of formal deliberations.

Children as Everyday Activists

Children can also act as deliberators even in their everyday settings in the form of “everyday activists.” According to Mansbridge (1999, p. 217), everyday activism occurs “when a nonactivist takes an action in order to change others’ actions or beliefs on an issue that the public ought to discuss.” As Kallio and Häkli (2011a) argue, children often struggle with “politics” in their everyday settings because these settings often entail major political and social issues such as economic inequality, war, or discrimination. Everyday activism usually centres on nondeliberative and strategic actions such as protest, negotiation, and persuasion to deal with these issues in a way that changes others’ minds or behaviour. Yet, they can nevertheless produce “deliberative” outcomes when seen through the systemic perspective because they can evoke people’s reflective internal deliberation. As mentioned before, this is because children’s unique capacities of questioning adults’ taken-for-granted perspectives and of fostering sympathetic activity of others could potentially play a valid role in democracy. Using these capacities, everyday activists make their voices audible and visible in society.

Although little attention has been given by childhood scholars to children’s everyday activism both empirically and theoretically, it is possible to observe the way in which children act as everyday activists through a film titled *Entre les Murs* (English title: *The Class*) directed by Cantet Laurent (2008). This movie is based on an autobiographical novel of experiences of Bégaudeau, a French teacher in a high school where various non-French speaking students attend. At the beginning of this movie, Bégaudeau frequently gets angry with his students because of their rebellious attitudes and apathy toward learning French grammar. On the other hand, students also feel dissatisfied with Bégaudeau’s attitude because they are forced to learn

only white-centric French language culture, and thus some of them rebel against him. For example, when Bégaudeau writes, “Bill eats a flavoured food,” African female students protest by asking: “Why do you always use only white people’s names such as Bill?” Bégaudeau takes an oppressive attitude toward his students at the beginning of the first semester. Yet, through communicating with them and coping with their protests, he gradually realises students’ political background on the immigration issue in France and the reason why they resist European cultures. In consequence, he alters his authoritative way of teaching and attitude toward them.

Everyday protesting and complaining of children are not always qualified as “deliberative” actions, and adults often think this sort of children’s activity is “annoying.” Yet, it would be possible to interpret the everyday activism as one possibly effective strategy to get children involved in the deliberative system. As the movie discussed above illustrates, children’s everyday activism enables them to organise some sort of counter-public within the classroom by challenging and questioning Bégaudeau’s taken-for-granted perspective. Consequently, this enables them to democratise their school life in a way that provokes Bégaudeau’s internal reflection and deliberation about the multicultural conditions in French society. The deliberative system perspective acknowledges this sort of children’s action as it helps to foster mutual understanding among previously hostile groups. The mutual understanding generated from commutative actions is what Mansbridge et al (2012, p. 11) call the “ethical” function of the deliberative system aiming to foster prospects for deliberation across difference.

Children as Agents of Transmission

In addition to such social spaces where children can be recognised as deliberators, children can also serve as the agents of transmission. As briefly discussed above, social media, like Twitter, Facebook, or blogs can transmit discourses across both online and offline spaces, whereby a new link within deliberative system can be produced (Lyons, 2015). Such Internet-based media also makes transmission possible by promoting people's "discursive participation." According to Jacobs et al. (2009, p. 3), discursive participation refers to "the process of citizens talking, discussing, and deliberating with each other on public issues that affect the communities in which they live." It includes, for example one-on-one conversations, Internet communications, participation in more collective conversations, and so forth (see, Jacobs et al., 2009, p. 35).

Before becoming famous, for instance, Malala Yousafzai talked with her friends and father about political issues in their village almost every day (*one-to-one talking about public issues*), which motivated them to resist their dominant culture in Pakistan. This experience also triggered her to act as a BBC blogger (her pen name was *Gul Makai*). Building upon her daily conversations with her father and her classmates, she continuously expressed her opinion and feelings about the significance of education for everyone; terrible political conditions in her village; the terror of war; and Islamic culture (*Internet communication*). Her blogs received a great deal of attention both domestically and globally, which promoted people's political talk all over the world (*promoting participation in more collective conversations*). Her transmitted opinions via Internet-based media finally evoked broader public deliberations of human right, women's right to schooling, and peacemaking. She described it as: "we are learning how to struggle. And we were learning how powerful we are when we speak" (Yousafzai with Lamb,

2011, p. 131). As such, combining her daily interaction with the broad reach of the Internet, discourse produced in her everyday talk and BBC blog called for attention, sympathy, and deliberation from people who previously were not concerned about issues in Pakistan, and thereby created new linkages between her and the wider public space all over the world. Although her blog draws on her daily deliberations on various topics, this blog itself may not be “deliberative.” Yet, the deliberative system approach reveals the deliberative potential of the blog provided that it induces reflection and promotes broader discursive participation and public deliberation across the world.

In these ways, children do play an influential role as effective agents in the deliberative system. This article classifies these democratic roles of children for descriptive purposes. This classification helps us to appreciate various contributions of children in the deliberative system, although not each and every activity qualifies as deliberative in itself. Also, these democratic activities are often intertwined with each other. For example, in the case of T-ns SOWL in Japan, their use of Twitter and Facebook makes children act as activists (by expressing critical messages about Japanese government) as well as agents of transmission (by creating new linkages between their activities and broader public, using hashtag (e.g. *#Seifukudemo* (demonstration with school uniform))). In light of the deliberative system approach, even those activities and performances previously regarded as “less influential” or “non-deliberative” activities and performances (on the ground of their limited impacts) could be interpreted and reevaluated as pivotal components in democratic society. When seen through the deliberative systems point of view, therefore, children are no mere “future citizens,” but serve already as actual deliberators.

Conclusion

This article is a sort of manifesto that seeks to incorporate children into democracy by moving away from today's dominant understanding of "children as future citizens." It problematises particularly two dominant education-related approaches to children (socialisation and remediation) for reinforcing the idea of "children as future citizens" and ignoring the actual and unique contribution children already make to democracy. In order to emancipate children from the image of "future citizens," this article employs insights gained from deliberative democracy, particularly a systemic understanding of it. The deliberative system approach enables us to reconceptualise children as effective agents in democratic society – or as deliberators. By using the deliberative system as the theoretical framework, this article considers various examples of children's democratic activities in the real world and suggests classifying these activities in four types – children as deliberators in/over the empowered space and the public space, children as everyday activists, and children as agents of transmission. Even if this does *not* mean that every activity of children can be worth calling deliberation, this article suggests it is possible to re-evaluate and re-interpret the existing democratic activities of children as important components of contemporary democracies.

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Chapter 2. Classrooms

Classroom deliberation as a catalyst for children's participation:

The case of Philosophy for Children^{16 17}

Chapter outline

In recent years, the 'deliberative turn' of democratic theory is travelling to the classroom. Scholars and practitioners design classroom deliberation in a way that enables children to experience deliberation. In many cases, however, classroom deliberation is used merely for 'simulating' public deliberation where students perform as participants of fictional public deliberation. Such practice focuses on children's 'future' deliberation, which may risk dismissing children's 'present' agency. To consider how classroom deliberation can be structured around children's present agency, this chapter draws on the author's fieldwork on non-simulated forms of classroom deliberation, Philosophy for Children (P4C). The study shows that classroom deliberation in the context of P4C can function as a 'catalyst' for children's different forms (pedagogical and social) of participation across society. While this chapter pays attention to the practice of P4C, it informs some broader implications about how we design classroom deliberation as a well-functioning catalyst rather than merely a simulation of public deliberation.

¹⁶ This chapter was presented at the ICPIIC (International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children) biennial conference (30 May 2017, Madrid), which was the refereed conference paper. The paper (single author) is currently under review in *Pedagogy, Culture, and Society* (current status: minor revision).

¹⁷ The empirical research reported in this chapter was undertaken in accordance with the University of Canberra's Human Research Ethics guideline. The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee 29 September 2016 (Project No: HREC 16-179)

Introduction

After the ‘deliberative turn’ (Dryzek, 2000) of democratic theory in the 1990s, there has been a myriad of practical applications of deliberative theory to classroom discussion. There have been various innovative practices focusing on a process in which children learn deliberation by experiencing it. As one of the mainstream practices, there is so-called ‘simulated’ classroom deliberation (Levine 2018). It aims to transform classrooms into a future or fictional public space where children deliberate controversial political issues in their society by performing as adult citizens or politicians (e.g. Hess, 2009).

Such simulated deliberation in the classroom contributes to advancing our understanding of the way in which children’s socialisation is possible in the context of deliberative democracy (e.g., Beck, 2012; Davis, Gray, & Stephens, 1998; Laguardia & Pearl, 2009; Luskin et al., 2007). However, it does not capture the democratic dynamics of classroom deliberation in its entirety. Due to its ‘simulation’ feature, this line of practice tends to situate children into *future* democracy, thereby dismissing children’s role, experience, and contribution to *present* deliberative democracy.

To understand the different model of classroom deliberation, the author conducted fieldwork in Japan about the practice of Philosophy for Children (P4C) as a non-simulation form of dialogue practice in the classroom. Through a close examination of the data gained from participatory observation and interviews show that one of the important features of non-simulated classroom deliberation in the context of P4C is that it promotes two types of children’s participation in the classroom and beyond. On the one hand, there is *pedagogical* participation that enables children’s moral solidarity anchored by mutual-respect. On the other hand, classroom deliberation also fosters children’s *social* participation that is a practical application of their

classroom experiences to wider society. Based on the findings, this article suggests viewing classroom deliberation as a 'catalyst' for children's participation.

In the first section, this article overviews a recent growth of classroom deliberation and indicates the limitation of the simulation form of classroom deliberation. Then, the second section draws on the case of P4C in Japan, focusing on the author's fieldwork project. Based on the fieldwork data, the third section shows that classroom deliberation in the context of P4C serves as a 'catalyst' for children's different form of democratic participation: pedagogical and social participation. The fourth section offers broader implications for designing classroom deliberation to serve as a meaningful catalyst.

Practising deliberation in the classroom: An overview

Among democratic education scholars, there is a widespread agreement on the importance of cultivating deliberative skills, virtues, and attitudes for a sustainable deliberative democratic society. For example, Gutmann (1999, p. xii; see also, Crittenden, [2002]; Soder, [2001]) argues: 'deliberative democracy underscores the importance of publicly supported education that develops the capacity to deliberate among all children as future free and equal citizens'. However, this line of theory and practice of democratic education was likely to be reduced to 'socialisation'. According to Biesta (2011), the primary focus of socialisation in democratic education is a preparatory process where children are expected to acquire necessary deliberative skills and virtues for future democracy. While socialisation itself is an important process of children's learning, it would risk marginalising children by conceptualising them as 'future' citizens whose 'present' capacities, knowledge, and experiences tend to be neglected (Nishiyama, 2017a).

In recent years, however, there is a gradual shift from ‘learning about deliberation’ to ‘involvement in deliberative democracy’. As Parker (2001, p. 9) rightly summarises this new trend, what is important is to get children involved ‘in actual activity of democratic politics rather than [...] preparing them for it’. Echoed by such ‘learning by doing’ trend, some democratic education scholars contend that classroom deliberation should be promoted through practice of deliberation (e.g., Davis, Gray & Stephens, 1998; Laguardia & Pearl, 2009; Soder, 2001). They believe that experiencing deliberation in the classroom is the best way for children to understand how to deliberate (Campbell, 2008; Hess, 2009; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Lee & Bhavini, 2005).

To date, a variety of deliberative practices in the classroom has been conducted, emphasising the importance of children’s experience of deliberation. For example, there is a practice of Deliberative Polling in the classroom that applies adult citizens’ deliberative practice, known as ‘deliberative mini-publics’, to classroom deliberation (Latimer & Hempson 2012; Luskin et al., 2007). Deliberative Polling is a combination of an opinion poll and public deliberation. In Deliberative Polling, randomly selected citizens provided with balanced documents deliberate together. Before and after their deliberation, they are asked the same questions so that the researcher can identify what sort of effects (e.g., preference shifts, increased knowledge about the issue in question, further political participation, etc.) result from the deliberation. The study conducted by Luskin et al. (2007) is an attempt to apply this Deliberative Polling to high school settings, asking how deliberation in the classroom can affect an increase of their knowledge about trade policy and foreign policy, willingness to participate in a public activity, an increase of trust in government, and a tolerance of difference.

However, such deliberative practice in the classroom has gradually been questioned by some scholars. One of the reasons is that existing study and practice of classroom deliberation tend to focus on how to *simulate* public deliberation. Drawing on recent cases of classroom deliberation, Levine (2018, p. 3 – emphasis added) indicates that there is a number of ‘simulated’ form of classroom deliberation where ‘students can *pretend* to deliberate about a hypothetical decision’ or ‘they can either play themselves or role-play someone else’. In this simulated form of classroom deliberation, students talk about controversial political questions (e.g., immigration law, abortion) by performing as if they are participants of *future* or *fictional* public deliberation. Such simulated model of classroom deliberation itself is important in promoting children's deliberative socialisation. However, this line of practice does not capture the democratic dynamics of classroom deliberation in its entirety because such future-oriented practice tends to dismiss children's roles, capacity, and experience in *present* deliberative democracy. Even if, as mentioned above, a recent wave of classroom deliberation is derived from the problematisation of the concept of children as future citizens (Parker, 2001), simulated classroom deliberation would rather reinforce this concept.

Ways forward: Philosophy for Children in Japan

If classroom deliberation aims to emancipate children from the conceptualisation of ‘future citizens’ by enabling their deliberative engagements, how should and can classroom deliberation be designed in a way that situates children's present agency at the core of deliberation? What will happen if children engage in non-simulated form of classroom deliberation? What are the key characteristics of non-simulated classroom deliberation?

In responding to these questions, this section draws on the author's ethnographical fieldwork about the case of Philosophy for Children (P4C) conducted at two schools in Japan (see also, Nishiyama, 2017b). This research focuses on the deliberative potential of P4C because, as we shall see below in more detail, this practice is structured around children's present experiences and knowledge by encouraging children to deliberate for dealing with their present questions generated from their own lives and experiences. Note that, however, this article does *not* aim to idealise P4C as a perfect model of non-simulated classroom deliberation, but to examine P4C as a starting point to advance our understanding of classroom deliberation. This section begins by outlining what P4C is and why this practice is worthy of investigation. Then, the author's fieldwork and methodology are described. After that, how P4C enables children's different forms of participation is explained.

Philosophy for Children

P4C is known as one of the worldwide practices of dialogue in the classroom (Fisher, 2008; Lipman, 2003). In P4C, students engage in open-ended inquiry about a shared concern. The inquiry is based on philosophical, ethical, or political questions generated from students' own experiences (e.g., Should we stop eating animals?). Students sit in a circle with their teacher as a facilitator and then propose questions. After sharing their suggested questions, they engage in a philosophical inquiry about a particular question or questions. The philosophical inquiry consists of supplying reasons, assisting each other in drawing inferences from unsupported opinions and from what has been said, and seeking to identify one another's assumptions (Lipman, 2003).

The existing literature on P4C discusses that the core of P4C is its ability to help students acquire a variety of thinking skills, called the 3Cs – critical (e.g., giving and seeking reasons,

judging with criteria, questioning, challenging given assumptions), creative (e.g., valuing and initiating the search for new ideas, hypotheses, viewpoints, and solutions), and caring (e.g., respect for others and their opinions, expressing empathy, listening) (Fisher, 2008; Lipman, 2003; Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980) (see also, Topping & Trickey [2007] as a physiological debate on the 3Cs in P4C). In achieving the 3Cs, P4C is anchored by the idea of a *community of inquiry*. The *community* here means a moral solidarity created by students' joint inquiry and collaborative problem solving on a shared concern. Within this community, students are asked to think critically and reflect on different perspectives and values with respect and care (caring thinking), while considering new solutions to the question (creating thinking).

The community of inquiry is not just a tool for strengthening students' solidarity, because it also functions to educate students about the process of *inquiry* so that they can use and develop their critical thinking. For Socrates, philosophy is a journey of uncertainty. In the same vein, the philosophical inquiry in P4C 'involves successive iterations of resolving a problem, where every resolution becomes the sources of a new problem to be resolved' (Golding, 2009, p. 245).

P4C is a non-simulative classroom deliberation because students can harness opportunities of classroom deliberation for the practical and pragmatic purpose. By facilitating children's community-making and collaborative dialogue, P4C enables students to deal with controversial questions open-ended generated from their own lives, rather than just to simulate fictional questions provided by teachers or textbooks.

To get a clearer understanding of P4C, it is also valuable to explain what P4C is *not*. P4C is not what Galston (1991, p. 242) calls 'philosophical education', which aims to uncover 'Truth'.

Instead, students are expected to move their dialogue forward by engaging in iterative process of problem-identification and problem solving. P4C places an emphasis on the process within which students continue thinking and deliberating together, even if the question remains unresolved. P4C is also not a dialogue aimed at producing a clear consensus (Fisher, 2008). P4C values diversity of opinions, perspectives, beliefs, and identities existing within the classroom, and therefore, it does not force students to try to integrate diverse views into one position. Finally, P4C is not a practice aimed at determining a winner and a loser. Since philosophical questions have no single answers, everyone is seen as ‘ignorant’, to use Socrates’s expression. P4C instead places special emphasis on the process of inquiry itself, which is a process to help students deepen and develop ‘initial feelings, wonder, curiosity, dissatisfaction that could engender a more complex relation to the world’ (Kohan, 2014, p. 51).

Fieldwork

Since the late 1990s, P4C has been practised in Japan in order to overcome a traditional top-down form of an educational and teaching system by placing a process of thinking and talking rather than knowledge cramming at the core of education (Kono et al., 2017). To date, P4C has been practised in some public and private schools. Among them, Kaichi Junior High and Senior High School and Kaichi Nihonbashi Gakuen Junior High School are two famous schools where P4C has been introduced as official curriculum. Both are private schools managed by the Kaichi group.

From September to December in 2016 (50 days in total), I conducted fieldwork at these two schools. This study does not aim to research a representative sample of P4C schools in Japan but focuses on a theoretical sample aimed at unpacking whether and how P4C as non-simulated classroom deliberation works. To this end, the fieldwork was designed based on ‘interpretive

research' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). The aim of interpretive research is to illuminate how the meanings of P4C ascribed to students' lived experiences are constructed in a particular context. To this end, as Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012, p. 48) argue, interpretive researchers are expected to 'describe their research contexts in sufficiently *thick* ways that readers of their work can assess the relevance of the research to their own settings.'

The fieldwork consisted of (a) a participatory observation of students' deliberative practices in and beyond the classroom (39 practices with 397 students) recorded through field notes and on the IC recorder, (b) in-depth interviews (maximum 60 minutes) with four teachers who were responsible for P4C curriculum in their schools and 20 students who engaged in a P4C-inspired deliberative activity outside their school, and (c) informal and impromptu conversation with students and teachers recorded via field notes for familiarising myself with the field settings and students' experiences that were not told during the interview.

The data were analysed through the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis started with transcribing the recorded data gained from participant observations and the interview. Then I grouped and transcribed them based on a broad coding framework focusing on 'P4C in the classroom' and 'P4C beyond the classroom'. These two coding frameworks helped to identify some sub-themes (e.g., classroom dialogue, types of questions inquired, experience of school festival, out-of-school activities) that finally generated two key themes – one is *pedagogical* participation and another is *social* participation. With these two key themes, I re-reviewed data gained from field notes, participant observations, and interviews to investigate how these two types of participation can be related and reconciled.

P4C in the classroom

For students, P4C worked as a practice that allowed them to politicise and examine their everyday experiences. Table 1¹⁸ below shows examples of questions proposed by students in the P4C classes and generated from their own experiences. It should be noted here that even questions that on the surface seems to be purely philosophical were generated from students' everyday lives and shared concerns. Let us look at one question in more detail for example.

On December 2, students (aged 13-14) in Kaichi Nihonbashi Gakuen engaged in philosophical inquiry, discussing the topic 'What is a rational person?' They selected this topic, because one teacher in this school frequently says, 'That's an irrational behaviour!'. However, students do not understand the exact meaning of '(ir)rational'. At the beginning of the dialogue, they shared experiences in which this teacher said, 'irrational behaviour' (e.g., wearing a school uniform in an untidy manner). Then, they pointed out this teacher's arbitrary use of 'rational', indicating that, when the teacher used this term, the purpose was simply to admonish the students for not following the school rules. The following excerpt from the dialogue shows students' criticism of this teacher's view.

Student 2: But if we decide not to do a bad thing just because teachers and rules scold me for the misbehaving, it seems to me that it is not a 'rational' behaviour. Right?

¹⁸ These questions were verbatim from the students. Also, in Table 1, I categorise the students' questions as 'philosophical/ethical', 'everyday', and 'social'. This is a strategical classification in a sense that my intention is to enable readers to understand that students proposed various types of questions grounded in their own experiences. Of course, questions in different categories can be overlapped. For example, the question of 'why do we love others?' is not only a student's everyday question but also one of the traditional philosophical questions since Socrates.

Chapter 2 Classroom Deliberation as a Catalyst for Children's Participation

| Philosophical / Ethical | Everyday | Social |
|---|--|--|
| What is a generous? | How can we foster good communication with others? | Why is there prejudice against homosexual love? |
| What will happen after death? | How can I have a good communication with others whom I hate? | Why is teenager's sex often not allowed? |
| What is clever? | Do we really need to go to the school? | Is money everything? |
| Is freedom always good? | What is the difference between 12 and 13 years old? | Why does our society value money? |
| Why are we bothered by fear of death? | Why do we love others? | Why are women disadvantaged in the Japanese society? |
| Is there destiny? | Is schooling necessary? | Is peace a feasible idea? |
| Can robots have minds? | Why does bullying happen? | Why don't politicians work hard? |
| Are humans greater than animals? | Are mixed-race people bad? (suggested by a mixed-race student) | On hate speech |
| Why do we often imagine the life after death? | Why is the sexual and erotic talk prohibited in our school? | Why do people betray others? |
| What is a true friend? | What is the difference between hate and love? | |
| What is the meaning of arts? | Why do people love a hierarchical relationship? | |
| If there is no difference between human and animals, why can eating animals be justified? | Can we bring a computer game to schools if it is educationally valuable? | |
| What is joy? | Do teachers always do the right thing? | |

Note: In total, 19 classrooms at 2 schools (From September to December in 2016)

Table 1. Questions proposed by students in the P4C classrooms

Student 2: But if we decide not to do a bad thing just because teachers and rules scold me for the misbehaving, it seems to me that it is not a 'rational' behaviour. Right?

Student 8: So... then... how about considering rationality as the ability to judge whether things are good or bad regardless what is required by external rules?

Teacher: I see... To understand what is good and bad through thinking deeply for oneself seems like rational behaviour. What do you think about that?

Student 9: The definition is so broad.

Student 2: If that is the case that it is rational behaviour to think deeply, why does the teacher think that even wearing a school uniform in an untidy manner is the irrational behaviour?

Student 5: I think because it is an instinctive behaviour. I think the opposite of instincts is rationality. If rationality is not behaving instinctively, deep thinking is essential for rational behaviour.

Student 8: Hmm... if rational behaviour is always thinking deeply, does it mean that we are irrational when we don't have enough time to think? Is there any relationship between rational behaviour and time?

Student 2: Also, if a rational behaviour is thinking deeply, what about people who wear a school uniform slovenly as a result of their deep thinking? Are they rational? But if they do it as a result of their deep thinking, can we call it a rational behaviour?

When Student 8 suggested the new definition of rationality as 'a judgement of good versus bad', other students began to take this idea into consideration. By proposing examples and

questioning each other, they attempted to construct the perspective on rationality from various angles. Although this dialogue did not provide any single answer to the question of 'what is a rational person?', it created a space for students to interpret and challenge various understandings of rationality. In an interview after this dialogue, one student in this classroom appreciated this dialogue as follows:

The dialogue was productive. We could agree to disagree. To make a consensus on what we cannot understand is one of the important goals of philosophical dialogue, doesn't it? (Student 1, boy)

By allowing the consensus that there is no firm consensus, he accepts and respects different perspectives existing in his classroom. Through such recognition of diversity, the above statement of this student shows how students' in this classroom constructed a moral community where each member recognizes the presence of different others and accepts it (Cam, 1998).

More importantly, this dialogue hints at thinking about what Lipman (2003) refers to as 'caring thinking', which is a thinking skill conditioned by respect for others and their opinions, expressing empathy, and listening. According to the teacher and some students I interviewed, for example, Student 8 was so shy that she usually did not speak in the classroom. Yet, she actively engaged in this dialogue – she engaged in dialogue a total of six times – by suggesting a new dimension of 'rationality' and questioning the opinions of others. As the above excerpt from the dialogue illustrates, her suggestion was considered seriously by other students. For Student 8, the dialogue provided her an opportunity to be incorporated into the classroom community without any interruption. As mentioned earlier, critical, creative and caring thinking (3Cs) are important components in transforming their classroom into a community of inquiry

P4C beyond the classroom

In Kaichi Combined Junior High and High School, some students who actively engage in P4C in their classroom asked their teacher whether they could organise a philosophical dialogue event at their school festival by inviting adults and other students in order to talk about their questions beyond the confines of the classroom. Unfortunately, though, the students felt frustrated by the dialogue event, because, according to *all* the student participants I interviewed, the adult participants did not listen to students' opinion sincerely. Rather, adult participants forced their values, beliefs, and opinions onto the students, and/or dominated the discussion, thereby preventing the students from having adequate opportunities to express their own views. In response, the students organized a teenager-centred dialogue group they called 'Ari to Pla' (named after Aristotle and Plato – *to* means 'and' in Japanese) outside their school. Ari to Pla is designed to provide teenagers with an opportunity to engage in philosophical inquiry every month.

According to one female student, Ari to Pla offers a good space for thinking because:

Compared to the lecture in my classroom, I can concentrate on dialogue because there is no adult like a teacher who makes me rush when I consider my opinion. Thus, I can enjoy the time of keeping on thinking deeply and slowly (Student 3, girl).

Yet, it recently allowed adults to participate *only when* they are ready to listen to students' opinions. One student in Ari to Pla defined the expected model of adult participants, for example:

People who offer opinions after taking our opinion into consideration are welcome. They need to treat us as equal even if we are just children. [...] Even if adults have a

say, they should respect our opinion at first so that we enjoy dialogue together (Student 19, boy).

Since the students felt excluded during the school-run deliberative event, they established Ari to Pla to resist adult-centric ways of deliberation and participation. Such resistance has two important meanings in democracy. First, Ari to Pla's resistance against adult-centric discourses introduced a new model of student-initiated deliberative practice into public space. As Thomas (2007) rightly note, the public spaces available for children tend to be places where children are required to fit into particular models of deliberation and behaviour decided by adults. In contrast, Ari to Pla offers a place in which students formulate the rules governing deliberation, determine the topics to discuss, and decide who is allowed to join. In this sense, Ari to Pla reverses existing asymmetrical relationship between adults and students (or children) in the public space. Unlike existing children's public space, adults are required to follow students' rules. By doing so, every participant in Ari to Pla can be deemed as having an equal opinion and perspective should be respected.

Second, Ari to Pla can function as a protected deliberative enclave that provides traditionally disempowered individuals with venues to engage in deliberation protected from external intervention. Conventional theories of deliberative democracy tend to criticize such isolated deliberative groups consisting of participants who share similar backgrounds and perspectives (Sunstein, 2000). However, deliberative democrats argue that deliberative enclaves can contribute to democracy by empowering marginalized people to speak, to be listened to, and to encounter others who share similar experiences, which can prompt further deliberative engagement (Mansbridge, 1994). In a similar vein, Ari to Pla offers a sort of deliberative enclave where students can engage in child-led social change in a grassroots manner without

fear of external intervention by adults. Even if this group cannot lead to any direct influence over official decision-making, this new child-led public space underpinned by the protected deliberation can contribute to deliberations across society by bringing new forms of deliberation and its agents (students) into public space.

Classroom deliberation as a catalyst for children’s pedagogical and social deliberation

The above stories on children’s deliberation offers two different yet interrelated key themes on classroom deliberation. On one hand, students’ philosophical inquiry can be conceptualized as *pedagogical* participation (see also, Makaiau, 2016; Samuelsson & Bøyum, 2015). The concept of ‘pedagogy’ used in this participation was initially derived from Deweyan’s idea of democratic education. For Dewey (2016), democracy is first and foremost a form of moral life – or a way to live together in a complex society. The presence of democracy in this understanding matters across all spheres of society, including in the classroom, rather than only within the confines of public space. Dewey (1990, 44) thus defines the classroom as ‘an embryonic community life...that will reflect the life of the larger society’ where students encounter various perspectives, values, and beliefs. Through deliberation about their moral disagreements and conflicts emerging from diversity in the classroom, it is expected that students from varying backgrounds and with varying beliefs will be able to create a moral community in their classroom.

P4C, as practised in Japan, can be consistent with Deweyan’s idea of pedagogy. As we have seen, a philosophical inquiry in P4C as practiced in Japan encouraged students to question and challenge taken-for-granted social, political, and philosophical/ethical values. It allowed students to act as democratic agents in their everyday lives in a way that allows them to think

together about their common concerns, creates 'counter-publics' (Kelly, 2003) in the classroom that challenge to conventional discourses and norms, and thereby governs their own lives. Through these experiences, students recognised the presence of different others and took their opinion into account seriously, as exemplified by the interview with the boy described above who recognised the value of 'consensus about dissensus'.

It should be noted that these kinds of challenges facilitated by P4C are not just an antagonistic form of opinion-exchange. As existing research indicates (e.g., Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980), providing reasons is essential when criticising the issue in question: otherwise, the process may create deep divisions among participants. In particular, these reasoned criticisms are beneficial in meeting the aims of pedagogical deliberation, because they can help establish and strengthen cooperative relationships between students and teachers. For example, the teacher who participated in the above dialogue reflected on the dialogue as follows:

I find the dialogue on 'being rational' pretty interesting. When listening to reasons of students seriously, even seemingly quibbling opinion turns out to be a reasonable opinion grounded in their beliefs and values. This experience requires me to stop understanding the opinions of students. It also tells me that students can have a lot of knowledge and can think deeply and reasonably (Teacher 1, Male)

Such students' reason-based resistance in the classroom could alter adults' (e.g., teachers') attitudes towards students in such a way that they have the opportunity to listen to each other's reasoning on the issue. By exchanging reasons and listening to each other, students and teachers could create conditions for mutual-understanding, which is considered a critical and reflective practice of care (Lipman, 2003). These challenges, fostered by P4C, were also found in other

classrooms. For example, there was a classroom where students asked, ‘If there is no difference between human and animals, why can eating animals be justified?’, which challenged the dominant animal/human dichotomy existing in Japanese society. Furthermore, in other classrooms, students questioned traditional gender inequality in Japanese society, asking, ‘Why are women disadvantaged in Japanese society?’ These cases support Kizel’s (2016) arguments that P4C has the potential to promote students’ grassroots activism in their classroom, which can further induce others to reflect on the issue.

As many deliberative education scholars expect, such *in-classroom* effect of classroom deliberation can be found in many practices other than P4C. But, what is it about *out-of-classroom*? The above story also generates another meaning of classroom deliberation.

As we have seen, P4C as practised in Japan allowed students to use the knowledge and experiences gained from classroom experience for the sake of further out-of-classroom deliberative activities (e.g., school festival, Ari to Pla). By applying their classroom and school experiences, students organised a public space where their voices are seriously and respectfully considered, which facilitates the inclusion of children who are normally marginalised in public space. Just as students create a counter-public in the classroom, they also establish a counter-enclave in public space in order for them to enjoy critical thinking and dialogue by challenging taken-for-granted norms created by adults.¹⁹

¹⁹ Similar results can also be found in Shuker and Bacharach’s (2016, p. 77) case study of children’s philosophical street arts. Shuker and Bacharach argue that philosophical inquiry ‘helps students learn how they might extend, apply and imagine philosophical ideas within their broader social community; it helps students vitalize and imagine the ways that their in-school learning can be translated into a larger, more expansive community of inquiry that breaks down the school walls.’

Viewed in this light, it is possible to conceptualise different meaning of P4C as *social* participation. Social participation fosters children's practical application of their classroom experiences to practices happening across society beyond the classroom. Social participation does not place special emphasis on making substantive influence over a public decision-making process. Yet, it is 'social' practice, as it encourages children to deal with their everyday politics and engage in a grassroots form of social change. For example, some students in the above case experienced adults' manipulative and paternalistic intervention, which motivated them to deal with such child/adult imbalances existing in Japanese society in a way that organised child-led P4C enclaves. Social participation promoted through classroom deliberation enables children to deal with such 'small p politics' (Haug, 2017) by harnessing their classroom experiences.

These two different forms of participation promoted by P4C can offer different role of classroom deliberation, a *catalyst* for children's participation inside and beyond the classroom. Instead of regarding children as individuals at in the process of socialisation, classroom deliberation as a catalyst for participation places children's deliberative capacities and experiences at the core of the practice. In other words, while classroom deliberation as socialisation conceptualises children as just future citizens or citizens-in-waiting, classroom deliberation as a catalyst treats them as deliberative agents of their own lives and of society.

Designing non-simulated classroom deliberation

While the above discussion is grounded in the findings gained only from the practice of P4C, the case study informs some broader implications for advancing our practical understanding of classroom deliberation. In particular, P4C sheds some lights on how we (re)design deliberation in the classroom that does not rely on simulation of fictional or future deliberation.

The first factor is *the children's own question* as a heart of classroom deliberation. As Table 1 illustrates, the students' shared and politicized questions are largely focused upon their personal and local questions generated from their own experiences. This is consistent with existing research that demonstrates that young people's concepts of 'politics' often emerge from their familiar settings (e.g., home, peer culture, schools, social media), based on their experiences rather than on abstract or formal politics (or 'capital P' politics) (Haug, 2017). This is not to say that students' classroom deliberation about predetermined 'Political' questions is meaningless. Existing research has shown that deliberating on Political questions can increase students' political knowledge and enhance their readiness to participate in formal politics (Hess, 2009; Luskin et al., 2007). However, what the case study reveals is that, unless political questions are proposed by students and grounded in their lived experiences, classroom deliberation can, at best, strengthen and reproduce the traditional asymmetrical relationship between teachers as question givers and students as receivers. Even if students can effectively engage in deliberation about the *teacher's* question, this may risk decreasing their motivation to continue deliberating beyond their classroom, because this is not *their* questions but *someone's* question. One student emphasised the significance of deliberation about her own question:

I want to talk about everyday question, say, 'why my mom nags me about the smallest things' rather than an overly philosophical question, say 'why religion matters'. I have no religion but I experience such behaviour from my mom. And I'm always wondering why she does this so. So I prefer experience-based questions because I can say my opinion (Student 4, girl).

Rather than forcing students to deliberate over predetermined questions offered by someone other than students, classroom deliberation promoted by P4C allows students themselves to politicise, examine and deliberate their own questions. Since children are allowed to deliberate their concerns, this can motivate them to engage actively in deliberation beyond the confines of the classroom, as exemplified by the case of Ari to Pla.

To sustain and make effective use of their motivation for deliberation, classroom deliberation as a catalyst requires *networking* provided by schools. As Senge (2012) points out, schools are the institutions embedded within rich networks with other social agents, such as teachers, family, community, business, university, media, and government. Senge then argues that such networks can broaden the scope of students' learning beyond that which is traditionally enclosed within a classroom. The networking of schools can offer concrete pathways that facilitate students' out-of-school activities.

Indeed, one important reason why P4C was able to successfully prompt students' further deliberative engagements in Ari to Pla is by virtue of the schools' rich networks: (a) the school offered students various networks with other institutions or individuals, such as school festivals, (b) student-teacher relationships, and (c) connections with out-of-school public space where Ari to Pla takes place – all of which are otherwise difficult for students alone to access. When schools offer connections with various networks, they promote students' substantive out-of-school participation. In other words, even if there is well-designed democratic education, such practice *alone* may not guarantee that social participation is realised.

Conclusion

Democratic education scholars have sought to consider the way of enabling children to experience deliberation in their classroom. Yet, their practice risks strengthening the concept of children as ‘future’ citizens if it is designed based on simulation of fictional or future public deliberation. This article has investigated key characteristics of classroom deliberation that does not rely on the simulated model of deliberation. A close examination of the case of P4C in Japan has shown the following three findings. Firstly, the practice of P4C informs what non-simulated model of deliberation looks like. Secondly, non-simulated deliberation in the classroom needs to situate children’s own question generated from their present experiences and lives at the core of deliberation. In addition, children can harness the opportunity to make effective use of their experience of classroom deliberation if their school can provide them with varying networking. Thirdly, when classroom deliberation is designed in such a manner, it serves as a catalyst for promoting children’s pedagogical and social participation across society. Taken together, this article shows different model of classroom deliberation that allows children to make use of their present deliberative agency.

Beyond the field of democratic education, this article also contributes to advancing our understanding of ‘children’s participation’. Thus far, when people talk about children’s participation, their attention is likely on children’s democratic engagements in a relatively well-established forum, such as youth parliament (Thomas, 2007). Against this backdrop, this article adds new insight into the existing study, arguing that even a *classroom*, which has long been recognised as an educational space, not as a participatory space, can serve as a space where they deliberate to deal with their own ‘politics’ and where their further deliberation beyond the

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classroom can be promoted. Put simply, the classroom is one of the key spaces for many children to deliberate and participate as agents of democracy.

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Chapter 3. Schools

Enabling children's deliberation in deliberative systems: Schools as a mediating space^{20 21}

Chapter outline

In recent years, there has been a growing scholarly interest in conceptualising schools beyond their educational functions, as sites and agents of democracy. Yet this interest is often underpinned by a narrow conception of democracy, focusing solely on schools' public and social aspects. To capture the democratic potential of schools more fully, this article suggests adopting a deliberative systems approach, which conceptualises democracy as differentiated yet linked sites of democratic communications and views schools as one such site. Using this approach as a broader framework and drawing on the fieldwork conducted in two Japanese schools, this article identifies the condition under which schools can become a meaningful part of deliberative systems. It reveals that schools contribute to deliberative systems when they serve as a bridge between children's everyday practices and deliberative actions in the public space. In light of the findings, this article suggests conceptualising schools as a 'mediating space.'

²⁰ This chapter was examined through the blind peer review process and published in *Journal of Youth Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2018.1514104>

²¹ The empirical research reported in this chapter was undertaken in accordance with the University of Canberra's Human Research Ethics guideline. The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee 29 September 2016 (Project No: HREC 16-179).

Introduction

Democracy scholars have traditionally understood the role of schools in democracy as educational institutions that emphasise the process of knowledge transfer and preparations for children's future democratic engagement (e.g. Crittenden 2002; Gutmann 1999). Yet, recent research has gradually revealed other democratic potential of schools. Such studies have argued that schools can assume a role as public space where students with different backgrounds come together and deal with their disagreements or contestations about dominant discourses or controversial issues (e.g. gender inequality, poverty) (Flanagan 2013; Kelly 2003). Alternatively, other studies have argued that schools serve as social space that has a diversity of human and institutional connections in wider society (Black 2008; Senge 2013). Although these scholars identified the democratic aspects of schools differently, their evaluations tend to rely on a limited conception of democracy, focusing solely on a single aspect of the relationship between schools and democracy. This paper challenges the limited understanding of democracy in these existing treatments and suggests an alternative framework of evaluating schools' contribution to democracy by drawing on the insights from *deliberative* democracy.

Deliberative democracy is a notion of democracy understood by communicative interactions inducing justification and reflection. Ideally, deliberation is expected to promote people's justification, listening, reflection, inclusion of the voices of the previously marginalised, and democratic decision-making (Dryzek 2010). However, this is not to say that all these deliberative ideals are to be achieved by a single forum. A recent theoretical update of deliberative theory, called *deliberative systems* (Mansbridge et al. 2012), suggests that these deliberative goals can be achieved not within the single forum but across the wider networks of deliberation comprising of the differentiated yet interrelated micro-deliberations happening

across different venues. When seen from this angle, schools' democratic role can be appreciated with respect to their different contributions to the deliberative ideals. Thereby, a deliberative systems approach enables us to understand and appreciate multiple democratic aspects of schools from the wider concept of democracy.

Having said that, this article does *not* claim that every school contributes to deliberative systems in the same manner. As critical pedagogy scholars often indicate, across the globe many schools feature hierarchical structures and relationships and thus stand in opposition to the core ideas of deliberation and democracy (e.g. Macrine 2012). In advancing our understanding of schools in deliberative systems, this article asks: What are the conditions under which schools can encourage children's deliberation, and become a meaningful part of deliberative systems?

In responding to this question, this article draws on a fieldwork project conducted in Japanese schools in 2016. During the fieldwork, the author observed three different forms of student-led deliberative practices inspired by students' experiences in their school: (a) *Ari to Pla*: the student-led monthly dialogue group in public space, (b) *The Future Talk (TFT)*: the deliberative forum organised and initiated by one student, and (c) *T-ns SOWL*: the teenager-led activist group. Based on the data gained from in-depth interviews and participatory observations, the author conducted the thematic analysis. The analysis shows three key findings. Firstly, schools can serve as what this article refers to a *mediating space* whose function in deliberative systems is to bridge children's experiences in different components of the systems (e.g. private space, public space). Secondly, for schools to serve as a mediating space, there are three key mediating factors (*deliberative curriculum, networking, and plurality*). Thirdly, since schools are spatially and conceptually bigger than classrooms, even a school with poor educational quality or lacking

any deliberative curriculum can contribute to the realisation of deliberation at the system level when other mediating factors compensate for the school's educational weaknesses.

This article begins by outlining previous studies' multiple conceptualisations of schools in democracy and then indicates their limitation. Next, it introduces the idea of using deliberative systems to approach the complex role of schools in democracy. The subsequent section draws on the fieldwork data to reveal how schools empirically contribute to deliberative systems. Based on the findings, the last section suggests a re-conceptualisation of schools as a mediating space.

This article focuses on school students (especially those aged 12 to 17), and thus the term 'children' and 'students' are used interchangeably.

The Roles of Schools in Democracy

Schools are traditionally viewed as educational institutions that are expected to have an impact on how children are socialised, so that they can internalise necessary democratic values, skills, and attitudes (Gutmann 1999). Scholars envision that well-designed school education allows children to 'have knowledge and judgment sufficient to make informed decisions and the thoughtfulness or critical-thinking skills' (Crittenden 2002, 112). It is widely expected that school education can enhance the quality of democracy in a significant way (Latimer and Hempson 2012). For example, future civic forums may benefit greatly when children internalise specific democratic value. To date, much empirical research develops this claim, focusing on varieties of the civic education curriculum as it creates a space where children can learn and experience democracy in the classroom (e.g. Hess 2009; Latimer and Hempson 2012; McDevitt and Kiouisis 2004).

However, some scholars are sceptical about understanding schools only in terms of their educational character because such a view tends to dismiss other democratic potential of schools. For example, some scholars conceptualise schools as 'public' space. Schools as public space serve as a space where children with different socioeconomic backgrounds and ideologies come together, which can generate their disagreements and contestations about controversial questions in their lives (e.g., gender inequality, discrimination) (Hess 2009). This situation enables children to engage in a 'political' process where they challenge dominant discourses (Kelly 2003) or to 'question, contest, and reinterpret dominant narratives and, in the process, build the foundations of social change' (Flanagan 2013, 22).

Furthermore, other scholars describe schools as social spaces by taking into account 'social' condition in which schools are embedded. As Senge (2012) notes, schools are embedded within a web of a variety social as well as institutional settings, which includes, according to Black (2008), formal/informal, fixed/fluid, extensive/intimate, and short-/long-term relationships (e.g. government, local communities, businesses, families, universities, and the media). If such diverse relations with broader society are used effectively by children, they may be able to make effective use of their school experiences for their out-of-school activities (Hayward 2012; Senge 2012).

It should be made clear that this article does not claim that schools as public and social spaces are more important than schools as educational institutions. However, this article presents the idea that these different aspects of schools unpacked by the recent scholarship tend to use a different and limited concept of democracy. This situation requires us to reconsider the existing approach to schools in democracy in more flexible way. Against the backdrop, this article

suggests focusing on a *deliberative* approach to schools as it hints at rethinking the viewing of multiple aspects of schools in more flexible way.

Situating Schools in Deliberative Systems

Deliberative democracy is current standing upon the core of contemporary democratic theory, which situates citizens' communication at the heart of democratic legitimacy. Deliberation is ideally expected to realise three interrelated goals: promoting reflective process of justification and listening, inclusion of diverse voices, and democratic decision-making (Dryzek 2010). If schools are approached in the deliberative terms, their democratic roles and contributions are understood with respect to these three goals. However, this does not imply schools should achieve these three goals at once. Mansbridge et al. (2012, 1) contend that, in the real world, there is no 'the best possible single deliberative forum' that achieves all deliberative goals.

Against this backdrop, recent scholarship of deliberative democracy shifts their attention toward macro-scale deliberation, called *deliberative systems* (Dryzek 2010; Mansbridge et al. 2012; Stevenson and Dryzek 2014). Its core claim is that the three goals of deliberative democracy do not all need to be achieved simultaneously within a single forum. Rather, its primary concern is how these goals are achieved at a systemic level. According to Mansbridge et al. (2014, 4), the term 'system' here means 'a set of distinguishable, differentiated, but to some degree independent parts, often distributed functions and a division of labour connected in such a way to form a complex whole.' Deliberative systems scholars ask how the functional division of labour among micro deliberations occurring across different venues (e.g. civil society, social movements, or Internet-based deliberation) works together and then fulfils the goals of deliberative democracy at a large scale (Dryzek 2010). Hence, instead of restricting venues for deliberation within the confines of a single forum, deliberative systems allow us to

notice the deliberative capacities not only of officially empowered spaces but also of public spaces and even of private spaces (Conover and Searing 2005; Mansbridge 1999).

In deliberative systems, even seemingly 'low-quality' deliberative acts (e.g. protests) can still serve important functions in broader deliberative systems insofar as they contribute to vitalise systems (Mansbridge et al. 2012). However, we must avoid the pitfall of collapsing everything into deliberative systems. Each deliberative practice should be evaluated with respect to its contribution to other micro-deliberations as well as to macro-scale systems. To this end, the following four functions are often mentioned as criteria to evaluate micro-deliberation in deliberative systems (see, Mansbridge et al. 2012, 11-12).

The first function is the *epistemic* function for achieving authentic and consequential deliberation by promoting citizens' reason-exchange, justification, reflection, listening, and thereby democratic decision-making. The second is the *ethical* function whose primary goal is to promote mutual-understanding across difference in order to create a foundation for the authentic deliberation in a divided society. The third is the *democratic* function, which contributes to inclusiveness of deliberation by taking into account multiple concerns, interests, and voices. To support the above three functions, the *systemic* function is also important. Deliberative systems are not merely patchworks of isolated deliberative practices; rather, they must situate a systemic conjunction at the core so that insufficiencies of each part can be remedied at a systemic level. Hence, inducers of such interaction between different parts of the system should be counted as important components of deliberative systems (Dryzek 2010). It should be noted again that all these functions do not need to be achieved at once. The primary concern of deliberative systems is how these functions are realised through the conjunction of a variety of deliberations across society.

The systemic approach allows us to evaluate schools with respect to their epistemic, inclusive, democratic, or systemic contributions to other deliberative parts and wider systems. In other words, the deliberative system approach illuminates different aspects of schools (e.g. educational, public, social) with respect to their different contributions. For example, Hayward's (2012) empirical research on community schools in New Zealand offers insights into how these schools provide students with opportunities to deliberate about environmental concerns they experience (e.g. water and air pollution, the impacts of a large earthquake in Christchurch) and thereby to develop their political awareness, elaborate their opinions, and motivate their further environmental engagements outside their schools. In this context, these schools serve as a sort of public space that can enhance the 'democratic' quality of deliberative systems where children bring various political concerns into their schools, deliberate on common questions that ought to be discussed in a wider public, and promote further civic engagement. Moreover, these schools can also serve as social spaces (Senge 2012), contributing to vitalise the 'systemic' function of deliberative systems in ways that bridge children's micro-experiences of deliberation and other out-of-school deliberative actions.

In situating schools in deliberative systems, however, we need to elaborate their relationship more in detail because the above theorisation does not ensure that deliberative systems can positively be applied to all school settings. Some critical pedagogy scholars argue that indoctrination anchored by the hierarchical relationship between students and teachers is still dominant in the majority of schools across the globe, and this educational paradigm is opposed to both democracy and deliberation (Kelly 2003; Macrine 2012). Even if the deliberative systems approach can potentially highlight the multiple roles of schools in democracy, this does not mean that schools can always function in a productive manner. Hence, what is important is

to investigate the following questions: What are the conditions under which schools can encourage children's deliberation, and become a meaningful part of deliberative systems? In responding to this question, this article draws on empirical cases informed by the author's fieldwork conducted with Japanese school students (aged 12-17).

Japanese Children's Deliberation in and beyond Schools

Data collection and method

The fieldwork was conducted at two different schools. The School 1 is a large-scale combined junior high and high school (private school). As is often found in many private schools in Japan, School 1 has two different types of classrooms that have different educational aims. On the one hand, there is the 'advanced' classroom that places various student-led activities at the heart of the school curriculum. The advanced classroom is one of the rare classrooms in the context of Japanese education because this classroom introduced a deliberative curriculum (Philosophy for Children: P4C) as its official curriculum. This situation guided the author to pay attention to this school. At that time, there were quite a few schools in Japan that introduced the P4C curriculum, which meant there were only a few Japanese students who could experience deliberative curriculum. The first case, *Ari to Pla* was emerged from the practice of P4C in the advanced classroom. *Ari to Pla* is a student-led monthly deliberative group happening out-of-school settings, which was organised and managed by students in the advanced classroom.

On the other hand, School 1 has a 'general' classroom that values a traditional way of teaching and knowledge-transfer. Although this type of classroom did not introduce any deliberative curriculum such as P4C, this study focused on one deliberative event in public space (*TFT: The Future Talk*) organised by one student in the general classroom.

The third case was informed by several students in School 2. During the fieldwork in School 1, the author got information about School 2 and its students in a snowballing manner. This article selected and focused on these students as the third case because their experiences provide different insight into the role of schools in deliberative systems. School 2 that is a middle-scale private high school had neither any deliberative curriculum nor democratic activity. Despite such non-deliberative condition, as we shall see later, this school enabled several students to participate in *T-ns SOWL* (Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law), the teenager-centric anti-government activist group.

The fieldwork was undertaken from September to December 2016 in Japan. The fieldwork consisted of two parts. During the first part, the author spent 49 days (weekdays) in total in School 1 in order to observe students' deliberative activities in the classroom (P4C) and to select students for interviews. I observed 39 practices in the classroom with 397 students. Activities were recorded with the IC recorder and hand-written field notes. Similar to other interpretive qualitative fieldwork projects (e.g. Hendriks 2007), the field notes were used to remember and record the author's observations. Based on the observation and discussion with teachers who were familiar with students' activities, 21 students who actively engaged in P4C and Ari to Pla were invited to an interview. The 19 students (Student A-S) who finally agreed to the interview were officially invited. Prior to the interview, participants were informed of the aims of this research and had the opportunity to ask questions in relation to it. During the second part of the fieldwork, the author spent 20 days in and outside of schools in order to observe students' other deliberative activities, such as Ari to Pla, TFT and T-ns SOWL. The author conducted interviews with organiser of TFT (Student T) and members of T-ns SOWL (Student U-X).

The in-depth interviews with students lasted around 40-50 minutes per student, which was mostly conducted at their school. The interview process was recorded by the audio recorder and the hand-written field notes. The interview consisted of two key topics: 'students' self-understanding of their deliberative engagements in and/or beyond their schools' and 'students' self-understanding of the contribution of schools to their activities.' However, as usual for qualitative research entailing in-depth interviews, the interview structures were flexible, aiming to help students offer insights related to the topic in question (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). To ensure familiarity with the research settings and students' experiences that were not discussed during the interviews, the author also hand-recorded information gained from informal conversations with some students and conducted formal interviews with 4 teachers who knew of their students' deliberative engagements. In accordance with the research ethics guidelines, all information that may identify individuals (e.g. name of school and interviewee) was omitted to ensure anonymity.

The data was analysed in following manner. First, the recorded interview data were transcribed to ensure familiarity with the data and, more importantly, to prepare for the next analysis step. Second, the transcript was analysed based on the insights gained from the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) that helps us to understand specific patterns of students' stories about the relationship between their deliberative experiences and their schools. The analysis consists of three phases: open-coding, second coding, and theme identification and naming. In the first phase, initial list of descriptive open-coding was made, which was about 'most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon' (ibid, 88). The open-coding was started with a focus on a broad theme, 'enablers of deliberation.' This refers to students' experiences in and/or beyond schools that

encouraged them to engage in their present deliberative activities. In the second phase, different codes were grouped to identify sub-themes. In the third phase, when the group of these sub-themes mirrored a key point about the role of schools in deliberative systems, they were grouped again to identify the key theme. As explained in this article, three key themes emerged as a result of the analysis process (deliberative curriculum, networking, plurality). The field notes were referred to validate the coherence and relevance of the generated themes.

Both fieldwork and data analysis were interpretive (Hendriks 2007; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). As such they sought to describe the research contexts in ‘sufficiently *thick* ways’ (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, 48, emphasis added) to enable a rich understanding of the phenomenon at hand. The purpose of the fieldwork was to identify the contextualised views and experiences of students in two schools, rather than to exhaustively explain the broad spread of experiences of a representative sample of the school-aged population.

Due to the interpretive character of this research, it focused intensively on School 1 and School 2 on the ground that there were students who engaged in deliberative activities in or beyond their school. This is so, because, again, the purpose of this research is to reveal the contextualised role of schools in enabling students’ deliberation, rather than to research a representative sample of Japanese students and schools. Moreover, this research did not pay a special attention to gender or social capital difference, which may potentially affect the quality of their deliberation. Identifying all enablers of deliberation is not so straightforward because of the fact that students’ deliberation is underpinned by various factors that include not only gender or social capital differences but also the experiences of deliberation in their everyday contexts such as family, streets, or after school curriculum. To identify what makes children

deliberate, research informed by the quantitative method is needed, although this is beyond the scope of this article.

In what follows, this article outlines the experiences of students' deliberative engagements in Ari to Pla, TFT, and T-ns SOWL respectively in a descriptive manner. As Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012) indicate, the thick and descriptive explanation of the field context is the key to ensure trustworthiness and transparency.

Case 1: Ari To Pla

Beginning in 2012, the advanced classrooms in School 1 introduced the P4C curriculum. P4C is a designed classroom deliberation where students talk about their common ethical, political, or philosophical questions generated from their everyday experiences. In P4C, students sit in a circle in the classroom with a teacher as a facilitator and engage in a collaborative inquiry. P4C is deliberative because it encourages them to engage in authentic deliberation with friends who have different perspectives and opinions, by supplying reasons, assisting each other in drawing inferences from unsupported opinions and from what has been said, and helping them to identify one another's assumptions (Lipman 2003). P4C then allows students to challenge dominant or taken-for-granted discourses and social norms. This experience can, according to Kizel (2016, 510), 'develop a sense of social, political and economic activism in their members, serving as a space in which the great questions of life can be addressed.'

One day, P4C teachers suggested to some students (Students G-O) who engaged actively in the classroom dialogue that they could hold a dialogue event in their school festival. Some adults (e.g. parents and local community members) and other students were invited to think and talk together about students' questions. However, this event did not work well, according to

students. They experienced an encounter with adult participants who were not ready to listen to students' voices. Many adults forced their beliefs and opinions onto the children, or talked nonstop about their own stories, thereby preventing children from having opportunities to express their views. During the interview, some students complained about these adults:

Student I: I think it can't be helped that adults have fixed beliefs and opinions. But what I want them to do is just to listen to our voices. We understand their claims, but we would also like to alter their attitudes toward something that can listen to our opinion (15-year-old, girl).

Student O: As I predicted, adults had a fixed image of children. It made them underestimate our opinion (15-year-old, boy).

Student G (15-year-old, girl) also expressed her outright displeasure about the adults. But she also had a strong desire to continue philosophical dialogue with her friends. She then asked her teacher to prepare an out-of-school space so that she could organise a monthly deliberation group called *Ari To Pla* (named after Aristotle and Plato – 'To' means 'and' in Japanese). In *Ari To Pla*, participants deliberate about their common concerns by using the P4C method they experienced. According to Student G, the unique characteristic of *Ari To Pla* was that in principle only teenagers are allowed to join it in order to avoid adult's paternalistic manipulation and intervention. The following statement describes her intention to initiate the group:

Student G: I think adults tend to have a lot more experiences than us, and for better or worse these experiences make them refuse to change their ideas and accept new opinions. So they often dominate the dialogue by speaking about their fixed beliefs and opinions.

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But we as students usually do not have so much experience like adults and therefore we can accept various opinions.

But after conducting deliberation in this group several times, she gradually noticed the value of listening to adults' opinions as they can offer different perspectives that children usually do not have. Thus, while Ari To Pla is in principle a teenager-only group, she deliberated with Student L (15-year-old, boy) and finally decided that only adults who are ready to see students as equals and treat them with respect can participate in Ari To Pla. This rule gives student participants a sense of safety during their deliberation. One student participant who came from a different school appreciated Ari To Pla's child-centricity in the following manner:

Student C: Compared to the lecture in my classroom, I can concentrate on dialogue because there is no adult like a teacher or parent who makes me rushed when I consider my opinion. So I can enjoy the time to keep on thinking deeply and slowly (13-year-old, girl).

Students' storytelling reveals two deliberative dynamics of Ari To Pla. While children in public spaces are usually required to follow the rules and norms of the participation defined by adults (Ennew 2007), Ari To Pla reverses such a 'traditional' relationship between adults and children in the public space by requiring *adults* to follow rules and procedures set by children. In this sense, Ari To Pla plays as the following roles: (1) a democratic public space where the asymmetrical relationship between adults and children is mitigated by requiring adults to see children as equals, with respect, and in parallel; (2) a 'deliberative enclave' (Karpowitz et al., 2009) where children as disempowered individuals can have a relatively safe and protected deliberative space away from the influence of adults. Ari To Pla itself is not a group designed

to exert a substantive influence over the official decisions or resolving public problems. However, it can reconstruct a traditional relationship between adults and children in a public space, empower them by offering a relatively free and open communication space where their voices are heard, and then facilitate their inclusion in public space.

Case 2: TFT (The Future Talk)

The story of Student T (13-year-old, boy) in the general classroom in School 1, which did not introduce the P4C curriculum also sheds light on the democratic role of School 1 in a different way. When he was an elementary school student, he was selected as a child interviewer in a non-profit organisation's project. He then visited the Philippines to interview Filipino children who suffered in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. After entering School 1, he still wanted to share his experience with others. However, he did not have any methods and ideas to translate his aspiration into reality. One day, however, he heard by chance about P4C from his friend in the advanced-level classroom. He then became interested in P4C. He said:

Student T: After getting back from the Philippines, I thought about what I can do. But, no answer could be gained when I thought alone about it. That's why I wanted to think with others. If we exchange opinions and discuss over and over, I think it may be possible for us to get a better idea. Then, I got to know P4C and I found it really useful.

Author: Ok, but why P4C?

Student T: Ah, the biggest reason was simply because my friends did it in their class. I then collected information on P4C and participated in Ari To Pla, which was very nice. In P4C, everyone can express their own opinion freely. Sometimes they are sympathetic

to my opinion, and sometimes they value what I say. These experiences help to produce more and more new ideas.

He then asked his teacher to support his project for a deliberative workshop called *TFT (The Future Talk)* where both children and adult citizens talk about controversial political issues in Japan. The teacher then got in touch with a professor at the University of Tokyo Centre for Philosophy (UTCP) to ask for its support for Student T's plan. Student T and UTCP announced the TFT project to the broader public, and they finally held TFT at the University of Tokyo in August 2015, where around 30 participants gathered. In TFT, Student T initially reported what he experienced during his interviews with Filipino children, and participants subsequently deliberated together about questions on global poverty and global cooperation using the P4C method. TFT eventually enabled adult participants to become interested in hearing children's opinions, and Student T was asked to organise another TFT several months later.

Case 3: T-ns SOWL

In March 2011, Student U (16-year-old, girl) experienced first-hand the disastrous tsunami and nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima, Japan. This experience boosted her interest in Japanese politics, including issues such as managing the risks of nuclear power plants, irresponsible politicians, and so forth. However, her school had no curriculum that allowed her to speak about politics, and few of her friends respected her political interests:

Student U: When I said to my friends that I am interested in politics, they often just gave me frosty eyes, which was not what I expected. Then I noticed that talking about politics might spoil the good relationship between us. This made me feel hesitant to talk about it.

Author: What do you mean by ‘talking about political issues may spoil the good relationship’?

Student U: They saw me as strange. This was really serious for me.

A similar concern was reported by other students. For example, Student V (17-year-old, girl) said:

Student V: I didn’t want to talk about politics with my schoolmates [...] I’m proud of my activity, and so I really got hurt when they teased me. They said ‘I think protesting is meaningless! That’s a waste of time!’ I felt alone. No sympathy.

For both girls, School 2 was neither a deliberative nor a democratic space. Yet, at the same time their stories show that such ‘undemocratic’ school conditions paradoxically became an enabler for their out-of-school deliberative commitments. For example, while Student U and Student V were disappointed with their schooling experiences, those experiences motivated them to seek alternative ways to protect and express their political identities. One day, Student U found information about the teenager-initiated activist group called *T-ns SOWL* (Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law), which protested against the issue around the new Security Legislation proposed by the Liberal Democratic Party. Below, Student U explains why she found this group appealing:

Student U: In T-ns, there were even younger students than me who were very familiar with politics. This made me really...really surprised. I was deeply concerned about a situation where young people tend to avoid discussing politics. In reverse, T-ns gave me a safe space and allowed me to talk about politics.

When she described T-ns SOWL as a 'safe space,' the underlying intention was the comparison with her 'unsafe' experience in her school. As an alternative to her school, she found a relatively safe space where she could identify what she called 'political friends,' which were otherwise hard to find in her school. Again, such alternative-seeking was possible *because* her school enabled her to encounter opposing discourses and individuals who had different perspectives on politics.

Schools as a Mediating Space

In the previous section, three different cases of students' deliberative engagements in and beyond schools were described. In what follows, this section discusses how the cases help us to understand the role of schools in deliberative systems and conditions under which schools can become a meaningful part of deliberative systems.

Each school played a specific function (epistemic, ethical, democratic, or systemic) in deliberative systems. In the Ari To Pla case, P4C in the classroom and school festival increased students' motivation to organise Ari To Pla. In the case of TFT, connections provided by the teacher helped Student T to realise his project by bridging his personal experience in interviewing Filipino children and his project of TFT. Also, even the seemingly 'disappointing' and 'undemocratic' conditions in School 2 paradoxically strengthened some students' political interest and enabled their commitment to activism. In such ways, schools enable students to engage in public deliberation that can function *ethically* (by mitigating the existing asymmetrical relationship between children and adults or by creating a space where adults can learn from children's experiences – Ari To Pla, TFT); *democratically* (by informing children's traditionally silenced voices and concerns for the broader public – TFT and T-ns SOWL);

and/or *systemically* (by offering substantive pathways by which children use their school and everyday experiences for their out-of-school activity – Ari To Pla, TFT).

Some deliberative democrats may claim that activism is opposed to the ideals of deliberation (Medearis 2005). However, the deliberative systems approach can appreciate the deliberative dynamics of activism because some forms of activism, though not all, can create a new pathway through which previously ignored voices are heard, thereby boosting further deliberation in the wider society (Stevenson and Dryzek 2014). Together with other activist groups that also resisted against the Security Legislation, for example, T-ns SOWL (and Students U and V) called for further governmental deliberation and pointed out the lack of accountability of the government so that the lawmaking process became more deliberative and democratic.

In this way, schools contribute to enabling children's deliberative activities across deliberative systems by mediating students' micro-level (deliberative) experiences and their deliberative activities in public space. Viewed in this light, schools in deliberative systems can be conceptualised as *a mediating space*. The core function of a mediating space is to provide individuals – especially those who have limited access to the wider public space – with a first step to get them engaged in public actions. The 'mediating space' is a coined term, but similar discussions exist, such as Berger's (1976) 'mediating structures' and Wolbrecht's (2005) 'mediating institutions.' While both concepts were introduced in different contexts, their shared claim is that there is a social space standing 'between the individual in his private space and the large institution of public sphere' (Berger 1976, 401).

The factor by which schools mediate students' experiences and wider society would be varied, according to the case study described in the previous section. In particular, three key themes

identified by the thematic analysis would allow us to consider three mediating factors (deliberative curriculum, networking, and plurality) that enable students’ deliberation across deliberative systems differently. Figure 1 below illustrates how children’s different experiences in and beyond schools (sub-themes: circle) can be summarised as these three mediating factors (key themes: square).

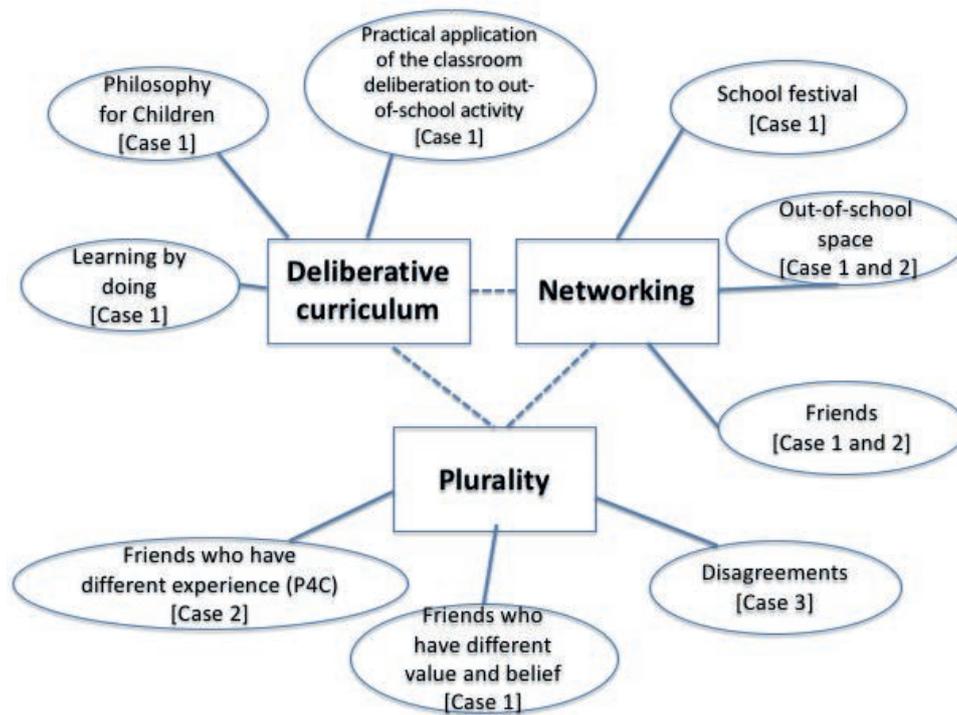


Figure 1. Key themes and sub-themes of schools as a mediating space

The first mediating factor is *deliberative curriculum* underpinned by the schools’ educational characters. The presence and availability of a specific curriculum that is consistent with deliberative ideal enables some students to increase their motivation to be involved in deliberative activities in wider society. The role of deliberative curriculum can be found in the case of Ari To Pla. P4C enabled the students to learn deliberation by experiencing it, thereby enhancing their understanding of how to deliberate with others. By combining deliberative curriculum with other mediating factors (detailed later in this paper), schools can also offer the

students various opportunities for sustaining and developing their deliberative experiences in ways that help their practical application of their classroom deliberation experiences to the other settings (e.g. school festival, Ari To Pla).

In many cases, however, deliberative curriculum *per se* does not have a capacity to enable students' deliberation outside schools because it generally lacks a strong connection with wider society. In facilitating students' deliberation across deliberative systems, schools' *networking* plays a powerful role as the second mediating factor. Schools are normally embedded with wider human as well as institutional networks (Black 2010; Senge 2013), and the networking provided by schools can help students to meet individuals and to use spaces beyond schools. For example, Ari To Pla may not be established without school's provision of human connections (e.g. adults in the school festival) and social connections (e.g. public space for organising Ari To Pla), which are otherwise hard for students alone to utilise. These networks offered students pathways through which they could use their experiences in their school and classrooms for their out-of-school deliberative engagements. Likewise, chains of networks gained from School 1 enabled Student T to organise TFT, which included (1) his friends who experienced P4C in their classroom and let him know about it, (2) Ari To Pla where Student T could learn how to deliberate with others, (3) a teacher who supported Student T's plan of TFT by introducing (4) a professor at the University of Tokyo and (5) UTCP.

Moreover, even if there is the absence of classroom curriculum and networking of schools, schools' *plurality* as the third mediating factor helps students to recognise the presence of others who have different perspectives, beliefs, opinions, and experiences. The above cases show that students encountered various pluralities in a different manner both in their classroom and schools, and this experience cultivated their interests in deliberation. In the P4C classroom, for

example, students exchanged and expressed different views, and this experience enhanced some students' motivation to get involved in further deliberation. In the case of TFT, Student T could get the information about P4C because he had friends who had different experiences of P4C. As such, plurality within schools allows students to have new perspectives and ways of thinking that they did not have previously. However, occasionally plurality produces disagreements among individuals. In the dialogue event that took place at the school festival, for example, students in advanced-level classrooms in School 1 encountered adults who did not take children's voices into consideration seriously. This experience in turn motivated them to organise a relatively safe and protected deliberative enclave where they could engage in open and free deliberation without any anxiety. As a result, Ari To Pla reversed a biased relationship between students and adults in the public space and created a space where voices of students could be heard. Furthermore, School 2 promoted students' encounters with different perspectives and discourses. Although some friends disempowered both Student T and Student U by disregarding their political interests, such conditions paradoxically strengthened their political awareness. They eventually shifted their attention from the confines of their school toward the wider society (e.g. T-ns SOWL).

Schools and Classrooms

It is also noteworthy that these mediating factors are relatively interrelated, yet independent of each other. This means that schools can serve as a mediating space despite lacking some mediating factors. In particular, the stories of students in the cases of TFT and T-ns SOWL show that their schools were not the 'perfect' mediating space. For example, Student T in the case 2 (TFT) could not use deliberative curriculum because his general classroom did not introduce P4C, and therefore he had limited opportunity to learn how to deliberate in the

classroom. However, Student T utilised other mediating factors including ‘plurality’ that enabled him to communicate with friends who had different experiences in their classroom (P4C) and networking provided by his teacher (e.g. public space in the University of Tokyo), thereby overcoming the absence of deliberative curriculum. Likewise, some students in School 2 could not enjoy neither deliberative curriculum nor networking of schools. Nevertheless, the plural situation in which there were many different others who had different values, belief, and frameworks supplied an incentive to get several students involved in public deliberation as teenage activists. As such, despite the absence of specific mediating factors, schools can nevertheless have a potential to serve as a mediating space as long as other mediating factors compensate the weakness. The democratic dynamics of schools in deliberative systems need to be evaluated from multiple angles, asking whether schools can adequately offer other mediating factors such as deliberative curriculum, plurality, and/or networking in response to their students’ specific needs and requirements.

This insight implies the significant difference between *schools* and *classrooms*. Since previous studies tend to explain democratic potential of schools in an educational term, their attention is mostly paid to children’s performances in classroom deliberation (e.g. Latimer and Hempson 2012). Yet, as the cases of TFT and T-ns SOWL illustrate, students can act as deliberators by using other mediating factors of their ‘school’ (e.g. networking), even if there is no opportunity for students to deliberate in the classroom. This implies that even a school, whose educational quality can be evaluated as low with respect to the traditional understanding of ‘schools as educational institutions,’ can nevertheless serve as a mediating space when other mediating factors compensate for the school’s educational weaknesses.

The difference between classrooms and schools in deliberative systems also informs the democratic role of private and public schools. Both School 1 and School 2 discussed in this article are private schools. Generally speaking, private schools are more flexible than public ones in terms of their curriculum selection, and this means that it is easier for the former than the latter to introduce deliberative curriculum, such as P4C. When viewed *only* in terms of deliberative curriculum, private schools may contribute to deliberative systems more effectively than public schools. However, as discussed above, we should not limit the deliberative dynamics of 'schools' only to the confines of the 'classroom.' Even if there is a school, such as School 2, where students cannot experience deliberation in the 'classroom' due to the absence of the deliberative curriculum, such a school has nevertheless the potential to support their deliberation in deliberative systems by using other mediating factors of 'schools.' Likewise, even if many public schools do not usually have deliberative curriculum, we should not dismiss their deliberative potential.

Limitations of Schools as a Mediating Space

There are some limitations of schools as a mediating space. First, schools do not always serve as a mediating space for all students. Although some students are interested in deliberative participation, many more may not be. For example, while the author observed around 400 students' deliberation in the classroom (P4C), the author conducted interviews with only 20 of them because they were the only students who actively engaged in out-of-school deliberative practices, such as Ari To Pla. The mediating potential of schools would therefore be beneficial mostly for those who are already interested in deliberation. For example, Student T in Case 2 made substantial use of mediating factors of his school more effectively than other students, because he had political as well as deliberative experiences and was financially comfortable

enough to visit the Philippines. Hence, even if a school is capable of offering all three mediating factors, it does not promise that all students will act as deliberators in deliberative systems. We should not romanticise the deliberative and democratic potential of schools.

Second, schools have quite limited connectivity with official political forums (e.g. legislatures). Although some scholars (Black 2008; Senge 2012) point out that schools have a degree of connection with official forums, the main agents who can use such connections are teachers and parents rather than children. While the fieldwork revealed various networked pathways connecting children's private and school life with public space, no connection with the officially empowered space could be found. In this sense, although schools are worth counting as components of deliberative systems, it would be quite hard, though not impossible, for them to exert their substantive influence over official public decision-making.

Third, the fieldwork focused intensively on the 'positive' mediating processes of schools. But schools' 'mediating factors' may not always promise a productive consequence for democracy because there could be 'inhibiting factors that aim to disconnect children from the broader deliberative systems. For example, Cairns (1996) indicates that during wartime schools can become an incubator of children's out-of-school commitment to guerrilla or terrorist activities. In identifying whether the mediating factors of schools work in a productive way, it is important to understand the context in which the school is embedded and what sort of inhibiting factors potentially exist in that context.

Conclusion

Instead of relying on a narrow definition of schools as educational institutions, the deliberative systems approach highlights multiple roles of schools, viewing them in relation to their function

and contribution to other micro-deliberative parts and wider deliberative systems. The in-depth fieldwork reveals conditions under which schools can play a part as deliberative system. The data tell us that when schools serve as mediating spaces through deliberative curriculum, networking, and plurality, they enable children's deliberation across different venues in deliberative systems.

Beyond the debates around the role of schools in democracy, the concept of a mediating space can hint at a way of bridging people's deliberative experiences in private and public spaces. Some deliberative systems scholars recognise the capacity of private space to foster inclusive deliberation (e.g. Nishiyama, 2017). As Mansbridge (1999) notes, for example, private space can allow previously disempowered individuals to deliberate about issues that the public ought to discuss, thereby empowering their deliberative agency and motivating them to deliberate beyond their private space. Conover and Searing's (2005, 281) empirical work also shows that everyday talk in private settings 'helps citizens to work out their preferences, try out justifications for them, and develop confidence about performing in the public arena.' Unfortunately, though, these scholars tend to avoid making a case for *how* deliberation in private spaces can be transmitted to deliberative systems at a large scale. Against this backdrop, the concept of mediating space may offer a valuable insight because its primary function is 'mediation' between private and public spaces. It tells us that our society has various spaces that can potentially be identified as mediating spaces (e.g. churches, parks, universities, social media, and companies: cf. Burger [1967]; Wolbrecht [2005]), and designing these spaces in deliberative democracy terms may help to bridge people's micro-deliberative experiences and the wider society.

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Chapter 4. Streets

Teenage protests and deliberative systems

The case of T-ns SOWL²²

Chapter outline

The development of the deliberative systems approach has opened up a new avenue for researchers to re-evaluate the deliberative potential of protests. Yet, since contemporary teenage protestors mostly engage using seemingly non-deliberative protest repertoires (e.g. dancing, chatting on social media, being silent), the democratic potential of their activities can be difficult to explain in deliberative terms. By drawing on the case of the teenager-led anti-government protests in 2015 in Japan, T-ns SOWL, this chapter considers the deliberative potential of teenage protests. A close examination of the case through a content analysis of key documents (e.g. newspapers, social media posts, transcripts of public speeches, and the record of the Diet debates) reveals two deliberative dimensions of teenage protests. Firstly, the deliberative potential of the teenage protests can be found in the ambiguity of expressions used by the protestors to communicate their messages to different audiences, thereby enabling them to redefine and reframe the issue at stake; secondly, such communication induces both micro- and macro-scale inclusion of teenagers.

²² The original version of this chapter was presented at ASAA (Asian Studies Association of Australia) conference (3 July 2018, Sydney) and IPSA (International Political Science Association) conference (23 July 2018, Brisbane). Both manuscripts (single author) are the refereed conference papers. The paper is also currently under review with *Social Movement Studies*.

Introduction

Teenagers participate in protest movements, yet the ways in which they do so are varied. In many historic and contemporary cases (e.g. the civil rights movements in the US in the 1960s), adult protestors have strategically invited children and teenagers in order to use their purity and vulnerability as a symbol of the movement (Williams, 1987). In some cases, children and teenagers have had no choice but to participate in a movement simply because their parents got them involved in it (Rogers, 2005). In recent years, however, we have been witnessing a variety of teenager-led protest movements where teenagers design, initiate, and organise collective actions to challenge authority. Instead of engaging in the traditional forms of contentious actions (e.g. lobbying, sit-ins), teenage protestors use humour, performative activities, or marching. This is exemplified most recently by the case of the student-led anti-gun policy movements in the US in 2018, dubbed March for Our Lives.

Thus far, contemporary teenage protests have received attentions mainly from scholars working in the field of youth studies (Clay, 2012), social movement studies (Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017), or political socialisation studies (Gordon & Taft, 2010). However, much is still unclear when it comes to the relationship between contemporary teenage protests and *deliberative democracy*, even when increasingly deliberative democrats have defined the deliberative potential of protests (e.g. Hendriks, Ercan, & Duss, 2017; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015; Rollo, 2017; Smith, 2016). According to Mansbridge et al. (2012, 9), protests seen from the macro-scale of deliberative democracy can give voice “to a minority opinion long ignored in the public sphere or as bringing more and better important information into the public arena.” Nevertheless, little is known about how *teenage* protests can make such contribution to democracy. One reason for this is that deliberative democrats tend to dismiss the deliberative

potential of children and teenagers, conceptualising them merely as “future” citizens rather than as active agents of democracy (see, Nishiyama, 2017). The other, and more important, reason is that contemporary teenage protestors’ use of communication is hard to explain in deliberative terms. In many cases, the relationship between what teenage protestors express and what they problematise remain unclear. On 19 July 2017, for example, a group of teenage girls dressed in brightly coloured Latinix traditional dress and danced in front of the State Capitol of Texas to protest against a new strict immigration bill, called “State Bill 4,” dubbed the “Show Me Your Papers” bill. While their protest received a worldwide media attention, there was no straightforward relationship between the topic they problematised (State Bill 4) and the way in which they expressed their view (dancing).

How can contemporary teenage protests contribute to deliberative democracy, especially if they generate ambiguity rather than clarity? What is deliberative about these protests? This article seeks to respond to these questions through a case study of T-ns SOWL (Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law) in Japan. T-ns SOWL is the teenager-initiated anti-government protest that happened mainly in Tokyo between 2015 and 2017. Similar to other contemporary teenage protests across the globe, T-ns SOWL used symbolic and yet non-deliberative, ambiguous, inconsistent, and personalised forms of, expression as part of its contentious actions (e.g. using music, wearing school uniform, online-based communication). In this article, the deliberative potential of these activities is analysed through qualitative content analysis of the relevant documents and media content (e.g. newspapers, social media posts, and records of the Diet debates).

The analysis shows that even if T-ns SOWL’s set of expressive activities and performances *per se* is not deliberative, this group can contribute to (a) reframing and redefining the issue at stake

from multiple angles; (b) facilitating inclusion within the movement (or micro-scale inclusion); and (c) facilitating inclusion within the wider deliberative systems (or macro-scale inclusion). Taken together, these aspects reveal the deliberative potential of contemporary teenage protests. Having said that, however, this article also cautions that we should not idealise every communicative expression of teenage protestors in deliberative terms. If teenagers' non-deliberative expressive or performative activities take an anti-deliberative form, they may easily lead to the exclusion or stigmatisation of specific individuals or groups.

This article is divided into seven substantial sections. The first section explains what deliberative democracy and deliberative systems are, and how they recognise the importance of protests in a new way. Yet, this section also indicates that deliberative democrats have not done justice to teenage protests. The second section illustrates the background of T-ns SOWL in Japan as a case study; the research method shall be explained in the third section. The fourth and fifth sections show the different communicative strategies of T-ns SOWL used within the movement and in the public space. The sixth section spells out the deliberative dimensions of T-ns SOWL. The seventh section explains the significant difference between non-deliberative and anti-deliberative expressions in deliberative systems.

Deliberative democracy, protests, and teenagers

The core claim associated with deliberative theory is summarised as voice rather than vote (Chambers, 2003). Instead of conceptualising democratic politics as sets of practices happening only in the Diet and an electoral process, deliberative democracy offers an alternative view on democracy, situating communicative activities inducing the expression of perspective, reflection, and listening at the heart of democratic legitimacy (see Dryzek, 2000).

Traditionally, some deliberative democrats define protests and deliberation as different, or even opposite, practices. For example, Medearis (2005) and Young (2001) define protests as non-deliberative because communications used in protests tend to induce disruption, coercion and pressure which is contrary to deliberation. Nevertheless, some deliberative scholars today have offered a different viewpoint that finds a tight relationship between protests and deliberation. Mansbridge et al. (2012, 1) contend that deliberative democrats need to acknowledge the fact that “no single forum, however ideally constituted, could possess deliberative capacity sufficient to legitimate most of the decisions and policies that democracies adopt.” On the basis of this claim, Mansbridge and colleagues emphasise the significance of re-conceptualising and re-evaluating some democratic activities that are conceived of as non-deliberative activities. On Mansbridge et al.’s account, a single deliberative practice “which in itself may have low or even negative deliberative quality with respect to one of several deliberative ideals, may nevertheless make an important contribution” (2012, 3) to the democratisation of society. Hence, even if protests *per se* are non-deliberative, this fact does not imply that there is no role for protests in deliberative democracy.

Against this backdrop, some deliberative scholars suggest taking a deliberative systems approach (Dryzek, 2010; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014). The core idea of this approach is that deliberation happens across differentiated yet linked sites of democratic communication. Deliberative systems are grounded in a functional division of labour, where “some parts do work that others cannot do” (Mansbridge et al., 2012, 4). Even if one communicative activity is not capable of fulfilling all deliberative ideals perfectly, the deliberative systems approach provides an alternative way of understanding its potential with

respect to its role and contribution to other deliberative activities or to deliberative systems as a whole.

For example, Hendriks, Ercan and Duss (2017) examine Australian environmental activists' use of visuals through the lens of deliberative systems. Generally speaking, visuals have received less attention from deliberative scholars on the ground that these are not speech acts. However, Hendriks and colleagues empirically unpack how visuals in movements can vitalise the overall quality of the system. Their analysis shows that visuals can help activists to define and frame the issue in question, to induce inclusion, to shape their sense of trust and legitimacy, to sustain their solidarity, and to make a complex issue understandable. Taken together, visuals can facilitate public deliberation around the issue in question, even if visuals *per se* are not deliberative. As this case study implies, the deliberative systems approach can offer a powerful framework to re-examine the democratic value of various forms of communicative expression in protests (see also della Porta, 2013).

Despite recent growth in theoretical and empirical investigation of the role of protests in deliberative systems (e.g. Mendonça & Ercan, 2015; Parry, 2017; Rollo, 2016; Smith, 2016), so far only scant attention has been paid to contemporary teenage protests. One reason for this is that many deliberative democrats have thus far dismissed or ignored the capacities and experiences of children and teenagers. Instead of conceptualising them as present deliberators, children and teenagers have long been regarded as “future” citizens (Nishiyama, 2017). It is widely believed that it is too early for children and teenagers to participate in democratic politics. Therefore, what has traditionally been emphasised is “creating” citizens through a democratic education (Callan, 2003).

Against such pervasive assumption, there has been a dramatic growth in teenagers' engagements in protest movements over the past several years. It is in particular argued that the presence and development of new media technologies, such as social media, have helped teenagers to engage in protests by reducing the costs of mobilisation and promoting interaction among teenagers, citizens, and elites (della Porta 2013; Highfield, 2016).

A most typical example of contemporary teenage protests can be found in the Occupy movements in the US, where not only young citizens but also teenagers were mobilised through Facebook and Twitter (Gerbaudo, 2012). Likewise, on 24 March 2018 in Washington D. C., over a thousand high school students who called for a tighter gun control policy started anti-gun protest activities. Using the hashtag #MarchforOurLives, teenagers organised, sustained, and developed the movements, which finally mobilised a large number of citizens and teenagers into the movement.

In 2008, one girl in South Korea held a small lit candle to protest against the governmental policy on U.S. beef imports. She posted her action on social media with a text message that helped to symbolise and publicise her action. Her activities finally assisted in mobilising thousands of non-political teenagers and adult citizens, establishing a big candle protest movement.

In a very hot summer in the UK in 2017, some schoolboys asked their teachers to allow them to wear shorts; yet, the teachers refused their favour because shorts were not the official school uniform. Instead, the school principal jokingly suggested they wear skirts instead of shorts. The next day, some angry boys wore skirts and compelled their school to respond to the no-shorts

policy. Their activities were diffused through both online and offline media, ultimately changing the school policy.

As these cases illustrate, teenagers have increasingly been involved in protests as active agents of democracy. If deliberative democrats find value in the role of protests in deliberative systems, teenage protests are also worth considering from a deliberative angle. As the above cases show, contemporary teenage protests employ a diversity of claim-making activities, including music festival, street art, marching with funny costumes, dancing, or tattooing (see Clay, 2012; Collin, 2013). Normally, these activities may not produce an immediate democratic consequence such as a substantive influence on politicians' decision-making; nor are they always expressed in the form of a speech act. As such, these activities *per se* may easily be evaluated as low-quality deliberation or non-deliberative action considering their lack of rationality or reciprocity. Yet the systemic approach offers a powerful framework that allows us to consider the relationship between these activities and their contribution to other components of deliberative systems.

However, the problem here is that, on the face of it, these sets of performative and expressive activities have nothing to do with deliberation. Teenage protestors use various symbolic actions, yet quite often their meanings are too ambiguous to understand. In many cases, there is no straightforward relationship between what they problematise and what they perform, making it harder to consider the movement's tangible efficacy. Consider the above cases. While protestors in the Occupy movements expressed their anger by using cosplay or music live, it is hard to explain how their performances can directly be connected with the failure of American politics. Despite its capacity to mobilise a large number of people, the candle used in the South Korean anti-government protests itself had no direct relationship with the issue at stake (U.S. beef imports). Also, while the students problematised the no-shorts policy, what they did was

just to wear skirts rather than to express direct criticism towards teachers in the case of the UK. These performative and expressive activities are sometimes conceptualised as “festive” protests (St John, 2008). Yet, due to the difficulty in recognising its tangible efficacy, this line of protesting movement can be regarded simply as “harmless entertainment” (see Bruner, 2005). Thus far, there is a growing body of descriptive research about what contemporary teenage protests look like (e.g. Clay, 2012; Earl, Maher, & Elliott, 2017; Gordon & Taft, 2010). Unfortunately, though, a large part is still unclear when it comes to the questions of how contemporary teenage protests can contribute to deliberative democracy and what is deliberative about their protests. To examine the democratic potential of contemporary teenage protests in deliberative democracy in more detail, in what follows I turn to focus on the case of T-ns SOWL in Japan.

T-ns SOWL in Japan

For a long time, Japanese teenagers have been invisible on the political scene. After the massive anti-government movements in the 1960s, where many teenagers engaged in violent actions, quite a few protest actions were carried out by teenagers; the Japanese government rather issued one official document that described teenagers’ protest commitments as “undesirable” (MEXT, 1969). However, around 50 years later, in 2015, a large number of Japanese teenagers stood up and again challenged the Japanese government (especially, the Liberal Democratic Party). The trigger of this movement was the growth of civic movements against the issue around the new security legislation initiated by the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Under the name of the protection of people from the threat of terrorism, this legislation confirmed and strengthened the Japan-US Security Treaty to enable their collective self-defence against any attacks on both

countries or on either. To this end, the legislation had specific content revising the Self-Defence Forces Act. However, some citizens and scholars interpreted this revision as something that allowed the self-defence force to involve in foreign conflicts and war, potentially violating Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. Despite the citizens' protesting actions, the Prime Minister got the bill passed into law on May 2015 with insufficient accountability. As a result, the angry crowds boosted their protest activities.

One group that played a central role in the protests was SEALDs (Students' Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy), organised by university students. Inspired by SEALDs's protests, teenagers initially joined in the movements as members of SEALDs. Yet, to make the group more open and accessible for teenagers, some high school students organised a teenager-centered protest group, named T-ns SOWL (Teens Stand up to Oppose War Law).

As we shall see, T-ns SOWL utilised various communicative actions as part of its contentious action, anchored in symbolic, performative, personalised, and fun-based activities (e.g. marching). These sets of activities were supported by the use of social media (e.g. Twitter) that helped to strengthen group solidarity and to show their protesting actions. This sort of feature can be found in other contemporary teenage protest movements across the globe. It is observed, for instance, in March for Our Lives where teenagers mobilised a large number of citizens through social media, or in teenage girl protestors in Texas, who employed dancing as part of their protesting activity.

Method

In revealing the democratic potential of T-ns SOWL from a deliberative systems perspective, this research focuses on T-ns SOWL's various communicative activities. To categorise the

different types of communicative and expressive activity used by T-ns SOWL, a suitable analytical framework is offered by the *repertoires of contention* outlined by Alimi (2016). According to Alimi, movement organisers and participants select specific communicative actions and consider the consistency of their selection with the broader purpose of the group. Alimi argues that they generally consider three types of communicative actions during the movement: (a) intra-movement interactions for sustaining the movement and strengthening group solidarity; (b) movement and authority interactions that refer to various claim-making in public spaces; and (c) movement and security forces interactions that ask how the movement deals with what della Porta (2013) calls “protest policing.” Alimi argues that analysing the selected repertoires helps us to interpret and unpack the features and meaning of the group’s actions. Since (c) is beyond the scope of this study, this article focuses only on (a) and (b).

T-ns SOWL is not observable today. Instead, there is a rich stock of electronic and printed documents that report various forms of T-ns SOWL’s repertoires of contention. Among them, this study selects and focuses on the following documents (see, Table 1) on the ground that they informed different aspects of T-ns SOWL’s intra-movement interactions and movement and authority interactions.

| Documents selected | Contents described |
|--|---|
| Major newspapers: 2015–2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yomiuri Shinbun</i> (Middle-Right) • <i>Tokyo Shinbun</i> (Middle-Left) • <i>Asahi Shinbun</i> (Middle-Left) | (b) Movement and authority interaction |
| Public speech: 2015–2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube posts • Twitter posts | (b) Movement and authority interaction |
| Social media posts: 2015–2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter posts | (a) Intra-movement interactions |
| Diet debate: 2015–2017 | (a) Movement and authority interactions |

Table 1. Selected documents, 2015–2017

The analysis is structured as follows. Firstly, the selected documents were grouped on the basis of the analytical framework of “repertoires of contention.” Secondly, when analysing specific documents—namely social media posts (grouped as intra-movement interactions) and public speeches (grouped as movement and authority interactions) —they were coded and interpreted through qualitative content analysis (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Qualitative content analysis focuses on the process of “subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, 1278). The analytical process started by identifying certain words, sentences, and phenomena based on the features of their interactions. For example, when social media posts were categorised as intra-movement interactions in the first stage of analysis, the second stage of analysis focused on the specific contents of the posts, reflecting on how the

group communicated with its members, advocates, and potential participants. Then, the selected contents were grouped and interpreted through the open-coding and creation of categories. After that, the meanings of each categorised contents were interpreted from the perspective of deliberative democracy.

Intra-movement interactions

Irrespective of the form of a social movement (e.g., violent or non-violent), using various in-group communications is an important strategy for the movement organiser to sustain movements in a way that strengthens group solidarity (Alimi, 2016; Tarrow, 2011). Intra-movement interactions play a key role in achieving this task, ranging from face-to-face (e.g. regular meetings, rallies) to indirect interactions (e.g. in-group journal). Various forms of in-group communication tools allow activists and advocates to share recent updates on the group, receive activity information, and learn about the social and political issues that the movement problematises. By doing so, group solidarity among people who live apart from one another is strengthened.

T-ns SOWL's use of Twitter is an important example of intra-movement interaction. In 2018, T-ns SOWL's official Twitter account (@teensSOWL) has 12,032 followers, and 2,457 tweets are trackable. This account is used for expressing group opinions, but also for showing their symbolic challenges on the street and for communicating with demonstration participants, audiences, advocates, other citizens, or even politicians. Chart 1 below shows the top ten

categories of tweets and retweets of T-ns SOWL’s official account between August 2015 and June 2017 (N = 2,457).²³

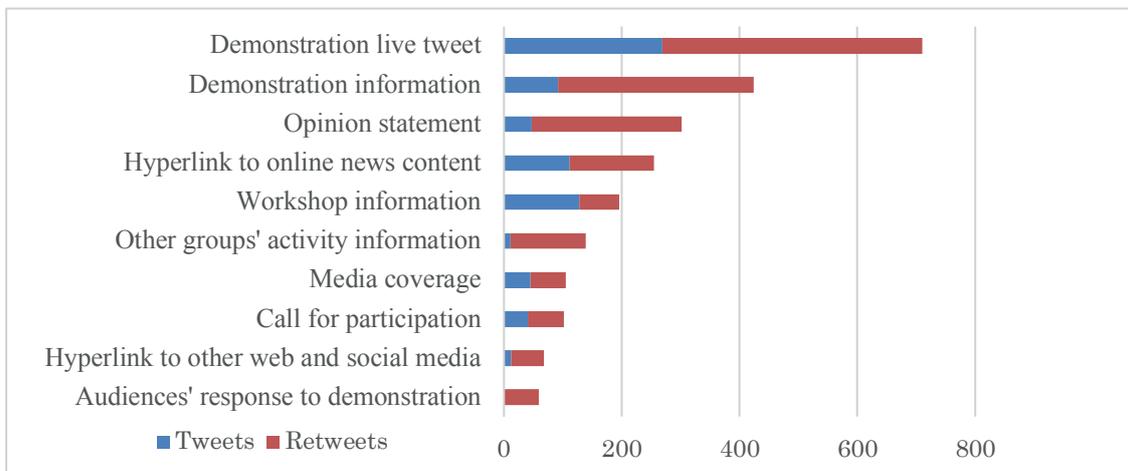


Chart 1. Top 10 contents of tweets and retweets in T-ns SOWL’s official account

As this chart illustrates, “demonstration live tweet” and “demonstration information” account for a substantial proportion of T-ns SOWL’s tweets and retweets. As Highfield (2016, 112) puts it, live (re)tweets and real-time updates of the movement can overcome a geographical distance among people who may have little or nothing in common, and “help to increase feelings of solidarity between those physically protesting and those only active online.” This is so because,

²³ “Demonstration live tweet” includes live tweets, live streaming, photo-sharing, and tweets on the ongoing public speech. “Demonstration information” concerns images of the incoming demonstration flyers, schedule-sharing, and promotion clips about their demonstration. “Opinion statement” concerns T-ns SOWL’s and its members’ opinion statement about the issues around the security legislation. “Hyperlink to online news content” enables followers to jump to online news media mentioning T-ns SOWL’s activities. “Workshop information” offers images of flyers on the incoming learning group or workshops. “Other groups’ activity information” informs about demonstrations or worships planned by other groups (e.g. SEALDs). “Media coverage” provides information about T-ns SOWL’s online media coverage. “Call for participation” is about mobilisation to the movement. “Hyperlink to other web or social media” invites followers to jump to T-ns SOWL’s official web sites or to other activist groups’ official accounts. “Audiences’ response to demonstration” means retweets of impromptu tweets posted by audiences of demonstration audiences.

by (re)tweeting visualised funny, comical, and joyful images of contentious actions on the streets, followers can gain a concrete image of what was/is happening and become interested in the movement.

Even if some followers did not wish to contribute directly to T-ns SOWL's movements via physical participation in the demonstration, T-ns SOWL offered them multiple ways of participation, or "backchannels of protests" (Highfield, 2016: 113), by which they could contribute to protests from the online space. For example, online-based advocates can play a role in diffusing visualised images of the movement or some key information about the group. When some members of T-ns SOWL organised activities other than demonstration, they tweeted "Workshop information" intended to provide followers with useful information about its schedule and real-time updates. Likewise, some members regularly organised the online-based learning group through their own broadcast medium "TnsTube." In 90 of their tweets, they used the hashtag #*KakusanKibou* (please retweet it) to encourage followers to announce T-ns SOWL's activities to wider publics. This means that T-ns SOWL regarded retweets as one of the important parts of its political practice that strengthened the quality of movements and mobilised more and more people into the movement.

Twitter also created a new connection between teenagers, Twitter followers, and wider publics (see also Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). When it comes to "Opinion statements" in the above chart shows that T-ns SWOL's official account engaged in more retweets than tweets. This tendency can potentially create a loosely associated connection of an individual who posts tweets with 12,032 followers who could potentially view the tweet. Through (re)tweeting "Other groups' activity," moreover, T-ns SOWL facilitated followers to act beyond the confines of the single group activity and created a new human relationship. Such use of retweets offered

a platform where “moments of personal communication can now be made visible to new kinds of audiences and publics” (Meikle, 2014, 375).²⁴ Differently put, the opinion and information uptake through retweets played a role as a sort of “megaphone” (Gerbaudo, 2012) by which individuals who have quite a few things in common could indirectly relate and communicate with each other.

Movement and authority interactions

For most protests, movement and authority interactions such as claim-making are a core constituent element (Tarrow, 2011). These include conventional forms of direct political challenge against authorities’ decision-making (e.g. public demonstration, lobbying, litigation, press conference) and what Haenfler et al. (2012) call “lifestyle movements” that use more indirect and everyday forms of challenges to bridge the personal and political (e.g. vegetarianism, rainbow tattooing in the global LGBT movements).

T-ns SOWL employed a set of symbolic demonstration as part of its claim-making in the public space. Among them, marching with various genres of music is an often-used strategy. Members of T-ns SOWL went to the street and clapped and shouted in rhythm to hip-hop or pop music while marching. However, what makes T-ns SOWL’s activity more ambiguous is that it just *used* music while marching; normally, social movement scholars draw on the situation where protestors *sing* a specific song intended to share specific ideological lyrics (see, Collin, 2013).

²⁴ This does not mean that everyone’s tweets were equally valued. Gerbaudo (2012) rightly indicates that Twitter in movements encompasses a selection process, where core members determine which tweets can be retweeted. In this sense, Twitter-based communication is in principle open to everyone, but *de facto* contents and contributors are carefully selected. However, this does not imply that T-ns SOWL’s tweets and retweets always served as an echo chamber. As illustrated in Chart 1, T-ns SOWL retweeted impromptu opinions, feelings, or feedbacks posted by audiences of demonstration (e.g., “Go teenagers!” and “Wow, very colourful demonstration!”).

In contrast, there was no ideological background when it came to T-ns SOWL's music selection because teenagers did not focus on a specific genre or on the lyrics of the music. This is the reason why there was an incoherent diversity in their music selection while marching, which included hip-hop, rock, pop, club, or techno music. Teenagers selected specific music simply because they like it. As T-ns SOWL described themselves, this was about parade and festival, whose keyword was *#TorimaUnite* (just unite, even if there is no reason). What was important for them was not to unite participants by confirming participants' collective or ideological identity, but to encourage them to enjoy protests (see also SEALDs, 2015). Even if there is no firm relationship between teenagers' music selection and the target issue in question, their symbolic use of popular music to which many young people listen enabled more and more young people to feel much closer to the group.

Another key element of the movement and authority interactions of T-ns SOWL was participants' use of school uniform. Prior to their marching, T-ns SOWL encouraged its members to wear their own school uniform while marching. On Twitter, this group used hashtags such as *#Seifukudemo* (school uniform demonstration) or flyers with the image of protestors wearing school uniform (see Figure 1) to encourage other participants to wear their school uniform when marching. Similar to their use of music described above, however, there is no specific link between what they wore and what they problematised. Still, as we see later, their school uniform demonstration was symbolised by different audiences (e.g. newspapers, politicians).



Figure 1. T-ns SOWL’s demonstration flyer (Available at official Twitter account. Last accessed on 09/07/2018)

In addition to the above performances, members of T-ns SOWL conducted public speeches during their demonstration. In their public speech, speakers talked about many topics including the issue around the security legislation, their personal story, or the future of Japan, through different forms of expression. Chart 2 below is created on the basis of the analysis of full versions of transcripts of 23 public speeches, illustrating the way in which speakers expressed their views.

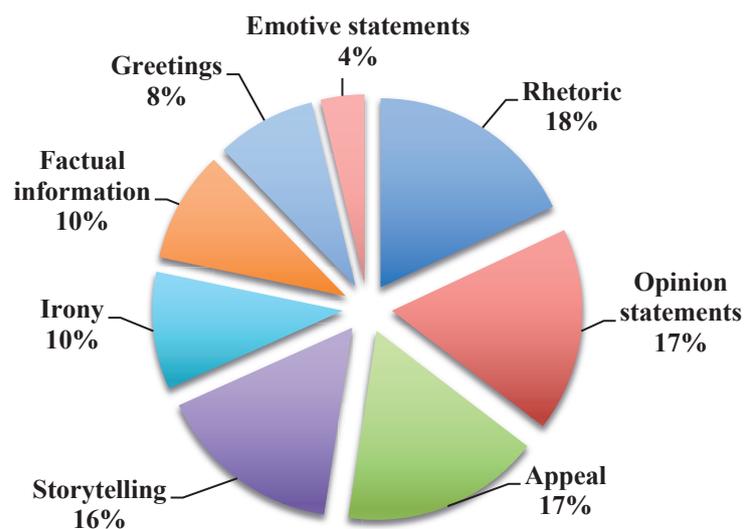


Chart 2. Forms of expression in public speech (N = 189 groups of sentences in 23 speeches)

With rhetoric (e.g. “War Law” to describe the security legislation) and irony (e.g. “We citizens must teach Abe what democracy looks like”), speakers shared their views, knowledge and the group’s slogan with listeners including members, supporters, and broader publics. In many public speeches in the protest movements in general, rhetoric, opinion statements, irony, or emotive statements were frequently used: the role of these communications in public deliberation has already discussed elsewhere (e.g. Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014). When it comes to storytelling, however, it has generally received less attention in the context of social movements studies,²⁵ although, as the above chart illustrates, storytelling is one of the popular ways of expression in sets of T-ns SOWL’s public speeches. For example, one public speech (26 August 2015) began with “I have a friend.” The speaker continued, “My friend wants to be a self-defence officer. Today I stand up and speak here because I don’t want him to go to war.” Her speech then jumped to criticism of the security legislation and the Prime Minister, and her anxiety about the future Japanese society.

Greetings were also used frequently in the speech. At the beginning of speeches, teenagers introduced themselves to the audiences, saying “Hello! My name is...” or “Good afternoon. I’m a bit nervous, but please listen to my speech.” To be sure, greetings *per se* contain neither political meanings nor claims. However, Young (2000, 59–60) contends that greetings are “a communicative political gesture through which participants in democratic discussion recognise other specific groups as included in the discussion.” A greeting announces the speaker’s presence not as an enemy but as a potential interlocutor to strange others, thereby promoting further communication among a speaker, participants, and audiences.

²⁵ See Polletta (1998) as one of the exceptions.

Overall, what these different expression styles practised in T-ns SOWL's movement and authority interactions reveal is that teenage protestors in T-ns SOWL engaged in various non-deliberative practices as part of their protesting activities. Music, school uniforms, and public speeches can be categorised as non-deliberative not only because they are not practised as a mutual and reciprocal communication (but rather as a one-way expression), but also because they are based on the strategic, rhetorical, and symbolic use of language (rather than rational use of language).

Deliberative dimensions of contemporary teenage protests

What follows spells out how the above illustrations of T-ns SOWL's intra-movement interactions and movement and authority interactions advance our understanding of the deliberative potential of contemporary teenage protests in deliberative systems. In particular, this section shows that the above case study informs three deliberative dimensions of T-ns SOWL, which include (a) reframing and redefining the issue at stake; (b) facilitating inclusion of teenagers' voice on the micro-scale; and (c) facilitating inclusion of teenagers' voice on the macro-scale.

Reframing and redefining the issue at stake

On the face of it, T-ns SOWL's use of music, wearing school uniform, or storytelling mentioned above has nothing to do with deliberative democracy because these activities offered only an ambiguous or incoherent message. For example, there was an ambiguous link between the security legislation and the use of music and school uniform. Likewise, storytelling in the public speech tended to lack a coherent story plot and representativeness. Quite often, the story

contained a too personal story plot in which there was a lack of logical coherence, generalisability, and representativeness.²⁶

Nevertheless, T-ns SOWL's movement and authority interactions signalled to and communicate with different audiences, thereby enabling them to reframe or redefine the issues around the new security legislation. Drawing on the example of storytelling in movements, for example, Polletta (1998) argues that storytelling is a practice of transforming the personal into the political through a creation of shared expressions between a speaker and broader audiences. Even if storytelling lacks logical coherence or generalisability, it enables what she calls an *interpretive interaction* with audiences. During the interpretive interaction, a storyteller can express his or her view without representativeness about the controversial issue that is difficult to explain logically, which in turn compels listeners to fill the gap between the personal story and general issues in an interpretive way. By doing so, storytelling in movements produces a shared experience of collaborative meaning-making among participants.

Although Polletta's primary focus is the role of storytelling in the movement, her idea of interpretive interaction can be found in the situation where audiences respond to T-ns SOWL's sets of movement and authority interactions. In response to the big school uniform demonstration (2 August 2015), for example, *Asahi Shinbun*, a popular (middle-left) newspaper in Japan, attached three different interpretations to teenagers' school uniform wearing:

²⁶ I am not claiming that teenage protestors practised these activities without thinking about the meaning of their activities. From teenagers' perspective, they have justifiable reasons for selecting specific repertoires of activities (e.g. school uniform, music) to problematise the issue in question (see SEALDs, 2015). However, due to the discursive nature of social movements in general, the meaning of the movements is often constructed and diffused by wider audiences rather than protestors themselves (see Tarrow, 2011). This article illustrates T-ns SOWL's activities as "ambiguous" activities from audiences' perspective because teenagers' internal logic of their selection of specific activity is, on the face of it, not observable.

“Teenagers’ Anti-Security Legislation Movement” (3 August); “Increasing Political Awareness of Teenagers and Their Right to Vote” (5 August); and “Our Hope for the Future in Japan (8 August). In addition, *Tokyo Shinbun* (middle-left) situated teenagers’ school uniform activity on 2 August 2015 into the context of peace-making movements.

Furthermore, T-ns SOWL’s movement and authority interactions also induced politicians’ re-interpretation of the issue around the security legislation. In the Diet debate between 2015 and 2016, different politicians mentioned the presence of teenagers in a different manner (see Table 2). On the one hand, some politicians interpreted teenagers’ activity as their expression of their anxiety about the future society (15 June 2015) or their anxiety about liberal democracy in Japan (17 September 2015); on the other hand, other politicians contrasted teenagers’ present activities with the traditional image of teenagers, such as political apathy (17 September 2015) or with other agents of democracy such as mothers, scholars, or university students (29 July 2015; 18 September 2015), by recognising teenagers as one of the citizens in Japanese society.

Despite the ambiguity or incoherence in T-ns SOWL’s movement and authority interactions, these contentious actions contributed to signalling to different audiences and facilitating their interpretive interactions. As a result, not only demonstration audiences such as newspaper media but also politicians had the opportunity to redefine and reframe the issues around the security legislation. When explained it from the angle of deliberative democracy, it is possible to argue that teenagers’ sets of expressions in public space can, despite their lack of deliberativeness, bring new vocabularies, voices, and perspectives into public deliberation.

Chapter 4 Teenage Protests and Deliberative Systems

| Date | Party | Quote |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| 15 Jun 2015 | Japanese Communist Party | - More and more students become interested in politics and want to have a say. |
| 15 Jun 2015 | Democratic Party | - SEALDs and younger generations stand up to protest because they feel anxiety for their future. |
| 29 Jul 2015 | Social Democratic Party | - Many citizens participate in the movement. SEALDs, younger students, mothers, scholars, actors, businessmen, and so forth. |
| 6 Aug 2015 | Democratic Party | - University students and high school students who participate in the movement are exposed to attacks and mental abuse made by many anonymous persons. |
| 17 Sep 2015 | Social Democratic Party | - Many citizens disagree with the legislation. SEALDs, Middles, OLDs, actors, movie stars, sports players, performers, mothers, high school students. They worry about the crisis of liberal democracy in Japan. |
| 17 Sep 2015 | Japanese Communist Party | - What I want to emphasise here is that more and more younger people who are regarded as being politically apathetic have become increasingly involved in political activities. |
| 18 Sep 2015 | Democratic Party | - People who experienced WWII, high school students, university students, mothers, scholars. They are all gathering in front of the Diet and making a protest. |
| 19 Sep 2015 | Democratic Party | - Junior high and high school students who experienced the great disaster of tsunami and nuclear accident in 2011 [...] They experienced various paradox and uncertainty in their own lives. [...] I strongly believe that their experiences may contribute to democracy in this country. |
| 25 Mar 2016 | Democratic Party | - On March 19, young people and adult citizens engaged in protests elsewhere. Even high school students stood up. |

Note: The Diet debate ran between January 2015 and December 2016

Table 2. How politicians commented on or framed the presence of teenagers in the anti-new security legislation movements in 2015-2017.

Micro-scale inclusion of teenagers' voice

T-ns SOWL's intra-movement interactions and movement and authority interactions helped to enhance the quality of inclusiveness in deliberative systems. Inclusion is conceived as a core element to make deliberative systems more democratic (Dryzek, 2010). Mansbridge et al. (2012, 12) contend that "a well functioning democratic deliberative system must not systematically exclude any citizens from the process without strong justification that could be reasonably accepted by all citizens including the excluded." In deliberative systems, there are two types of inclusiveness. On the one hand, there is a micro-scale inclusion that ensures communicative freedoms within a single activity where participants can express their view freely with few interventions; on the other hand, there is a macro-scale inclusion that focuses on the process in which the communication in a single practice can be transmitted to wider publics so that many voices of citizens can be considered in official decision-making processes.

As for micro-scale inclusion, T-ns SOWL opened up multiple avenues through which teenagers expressed their opinion, discontent, and perspectives freely, even if their political participation had long been regarded as "undesirable" (MEXT, 1969). In particular, the following three factors made this group more inclusive and open. Firstly, unlike a conventional form of protest movement where protestors go physically to the street and conduct a demonstration, T-ns SOWL's intra-movement interactions enabled a more relaxed form of participation by teenagers. Even if a teenager did not wish to participate physically in the demonstration, s/he played a different role in contributing to vitalising the movement, such as online-based participation through retweets of important information.

Secondly, T-ns SOWL's movement and authority interactions did not require its members to have certain political preferences or ideological frameworks prior to participation. In some

cases, participants in T-ns SOWL were allowed to be involved in the movements even if their motivation for participation was just fun. This is exemplified by the hashtag *#TorimaUnite* (just unite, even if there is no reason), which was used in around 250 tweets in T-ns SOWL's official Twitter account. On the surface, T-ns SOWL was a pointless movement group: many participants gathered and protested without a core collective identity. As we have seen, however, this group united individuals from different backgrounds and frames into its collective actions by making their activities visible and connecting these individuals in a way that enhanced their solidarity. As a result, T-ns SOWL served as a platform where various individuals, activities, and forms of participation were incorporated and blended, thereby facilitating their communication and collective actions.

Thirdly, T-ns SOWL's movement and authority interactions also made this group inclusive because T-ns SOWL valued teenager-friendly ways of expressions. More specifically, T-ns SOWL attempted to ensure a situation in which participants enjoyed their activity by encouraging them to use their everyday activities. By translating teenager-friendly means of action (e.g. music, school uniform) into their contentious action in public spaces, teenagers could find their own vocabulary to politicise the issue at stake, to announce their presence to wider publics, and to enjoy their activities. Importantly, teenagers could do so without relying on unfamiliar or unusual practices (e.g. singing a labour anthem, carrying out property destructions), which in turn lowered the threshold of participation and mobilised many teenagers in democratic politics.

Macro-scale inclusion of teenagers' voice

As for macro-scale inclusion, T-ns SOWL enabled teenagers to harness the opportunity for their voices, concerns, and interests to be heard and considered by the broader audiences. The use of Twitter as part of its intra-movement interactions played an important role. As we have seen, (re)tweets of the visual image helped diffuse their performances to wider audiences, thus helping many people to know what teenagers were doing.

In addition, as part of macro-scale inclusion, T-ns SOWL brought teenagers' voices to wider society so that further public reflection and deliberation could be induced. This is what deliberative scholars call transmission. According to Stevenson and Dryzek (2014, 28), transmission can occur subtly as a form of cultural change that "begins in public space but eventually comes to pervade the understandings of those in empowered space." While deliberative scholars have already discussed protests' transmission mechanism in deliberative systems (e.g. Mendonça & Ercan, 2015), the notable feature of T-ns SOWL is that it served as a *reflective* transmission, by which the voice expressed in one place is interpreted and examined by wider publics and then circulated across society. Again, the ambiguity of the expression was a key to understanding it. Due to the vagueness of the message and claim presented through, for example, music or school uniform, T-ns SOWL allowed audiences to interpret and frame these actions freely and reflectively. Such interpretive processes helped wider publics to redefine the issue from various angles in a reflective manner and thereby produce a new vocabulary about the issue. As we have seen, one newspaper (*Asahi Shinbun*) offered multiple interpretations of the school uniform demonstration ("Security Legislation Demonstration"; "Political Awareness of Teenagers"; or "Future of Japan"), and politicians variously framed the presence of teenagers in the movements. Even if teenagers' voices were not heard directly by

politicians, their voices were initially presented in a vague and incoherent form, which was then diffused through social media and the audience's reflection, thereby enabling politicians to recognise the presence of teenagers' "voice."

Distinguishing between non-deliberative and anti-deliberative expressions

Even if teenagers' non-deliberative activities contribute to wider deliberative systems, deliberative democrats should not idealise every contentious action carried out by teenage activists. In particular, when protestors use performance as part of their movement and authority interactions, it sometimes leads to an undemocratic consequence, regardless of the initial intentions. This risk is gradually recognised and indicated by some deliberative scholars. For example, Parry (2017) draws on the case of animal activists' use of graphic imagery of animal abuse and suffering and moral shock videos. Even if such activities can serve as tools for gathering public attention, they offer audiences too much psychological burden, thereby serving to alienate them. Parry (2017, 23) therefore contends that such non-deliberative tactics "may not always contribute to deliberative capacity" and "may not help animal activists get any closer to their own goals."

The same is true for contemporary teenage protests. In the joint demonstration of T-ns SOWL and other anti-government protest groups (e.g. SEALDs), for example, participants insulted the Prime Minister by drawing a swastika on the head of his picture and giving him a small moustache to indicate parallels with Hitler. This sort of expression may easily risk stigmatising or decimating specific individuals. More seriously, it can create a feeling of repulsion for those who support the Prime Minister, resulting in deepened divisions among citizens.

Given these risks, it is important not to acknowledge all forms of expression as informing deliberation, because some expressive activities are like double-edged swords. On the one hand, as we have seen in T-ns SOWL's movement and authority interactions, some expressions contribute to deliberative systems even if they are not deliberative. On the other hand, others can sometimes be problematic if they undermine or damage the authentic and/or inclusive quality of deliberative systems. In deliberative systems, the former is categorised as *non-deliberative* actions and the latter as *anti-deliberative* ones. As Rollo (2016, 7 – emphasis is original) rightly notes, the deliberative systems approach “highlights an important distinction between *anti-* and *non-deliberative* deeds.” Even if both forms of deliberation somehow have a particular influence on the wider systems (e.g. promoting public communications), this does not imply that they can be valued equally. This is because the aim of non-deliberative acts (e.g. using school uniform in the context of T-ns SOWL) is to include the marginalised in a way that differs from deliberative ideals, while that of anti-deliberative acts (e.g. hate speech) is to exclude specific individuals by making them more vulnerable and making a society more divided.

Although contemporary teenage protests have great potential to play a powerful role in deliberative systems, there is a risk that they can exclude specific individuals in a way that harms them or increases their vulnerability. Certainly, this is not the case only for teenage protests (e.g., Çolak, 2014); yet, as we have seen, since contemporary teenage protests use performative expression frequently, as T-ns SOWL did, they risk leading to exclusion rather than facilitating inclusion. Deliberative systems scholars working in the field of social movements should take into account the difference between non- and anti-deliberative activities.

As Parkinson (2012, 154) puts it, “if everything is deliberation, then deliberation means nothing any more, and contributes nothing to our understanding of democracy.”

Conclusion

This article examines the democratic potential of contemporary teenage protests from an angle of deliberative democracy. Drawing on the case of T-ns SOWL in Japan, it shows that this group helped wider publics to think reflectively about the issue at stake and facilitated the inclusion of long ignored teenagers in democratic politics in Japan in both micro and macro terms. Of course, we should not idealise all contentious performances of teenagers because they sometimes entail anti-deliberative elements and produce undemocratic consequences. Nonetheless, this article shows that there are various positive roles that teenagers as activists can play in contemporary politics. As such, it concludes that contemporary teenage protests are more than a “harmless entertainment” (c.f. Bruner, 2005).

The article advances our understanding of teenagers and protests in deliberative democracy in two important ways. Firstly, it describes the place and role of teenage protests in deliberative democracy. Although some deliberative democrats have emphasised the deliberative value of protests (e.g. Hendriks, Ercan & Duss, 2017; Mendonça & Ercan, 2015), they have paid attention only to adult protestors, aged over 18. Drawing on the case of T-ns SOWL, this article shows that teenagers, long ignored in deliberative studies, can play a powerful role in deliberative systems. Secondly, this article makes a case for the democratic role of symbolic challenges in deliberative democracy. Symbolic actions used in T-ns SOWL (e.g. music, school uniform, storytelling) take ambiguous or incoherent forms of expression, and thus are seemingly far from the deliberative ideal. However, since such ambiguity is open to

interpretation, the movement's performances and expressions allowed wider publics to interpret and contest their meaning, and thereby contributing to public deliberation. As a result, teenage protests helped to bring about new vocabularies, perspectives, and agents to vitalise public deliberation in deliberative systems.

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Chapter 5. Methodological and Ethical Reflection

Using the community of inquiry for interviewing children

Theory and practice^{27 28}

Chapter outline

Involvement of children in research processes requires various ethical considerations. In particular, while interviewing children, a researcher needs to take into consideration the power imbalance between a researcher and children as well as among children. This article suggests a possible way of mitigating potential risks, drawing on the idea and practice of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) as an interview method. CoI is the practice of group dialogue for knowledge-making, where participants talk about a common topic by sharing their lived experiences in a cooperative manner. This article shows that CoI allows children to act as both interviewers and interviewees, which helps children in reflective knowledge-making while at the same time mitigating the ethical concerns of interviewing. To illustrate how CoI can help achieve these goals, this article draws on the empirical research conducted with a group of junior high school students in Japan.

²⁷ This chapter was examined through the blind peer review process and published in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13645579.2018.1448220>. This chapter uses the original article without any change except for some spelling editions (e.g. from American to British English) for the formatting consistency of this thesis.

²⁸ The empirical research reported in this chapter was undertaken in accordance with the University of Canberra's Human Research Ethics guideline. The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee 29 September 2016 (Project No: HREC 16-179)

Introduction

With the growing number of qualitative research projects involving children, there is more interest in the interview methods that enable an active and deep interaction between a researcher and children (e.g., Christensen & James, 2008). The more a researcher actively interacts with children during the interview process, however, the more ethical concerns they can encounter. In an individual interview, it is reported that the power imbalance between a researcher and the respondents prevents children from speaking in a relaxed and free manner (Due et al., 2014). Group interviews entail certain risks as well. They can potentially reinforce the asymmetrical power balance among children (Graham et al., 2012). There exists a considerable body of work dealing with these ethical concerns while carrying out research interviews with children by combining multiple other methods, such as longitudinal ethnographical research, with conventional form of interviews where an interviewer asks sets of questions and an interviewee responds to them (e.g., Clark, 2005; Christensen & James, 2008; Greig & Taylor, 2002). Yet, only limited attention is paid to the question of how conventional interview methods can be redesigned in ways that are attuned to the ethical concerns and power relations involved in interviewing children.

This article aims to respond to this question and to offer a way of redesigning conventional interview methods in a way that mitigates the existing ethical concerns. In particular, this article suggests using the idea of *the community of inquiry* (CoI) as an interview method. CoI is a group dialogue where participants share opinions and thoughts about an open-ended common topic by sharing their lived experiences, offering reasons, questioning, thinking reflectively, and listening to different views, thereby refining their knowledge and perspectives. The CoI contributes particularly to the “interpretive interview” (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012) when

working with children. An interpretive interview aims to reveal children's culturally, contextually, and/or historically situated knowledge, the meanings of their actions, and their experiences. CoI, as an interpretive interview method, allows children to act as *both* interviewers and interviewees, and thereby (a) assists in their reflective knowledge-making and, in parallel, (b) mitigates the power imbalance, during interviews with children, between children and a researcher as well as among children. Drawing on an experimental practice of CoI conducted with 11 junior high school students in Japan, this article shows how CoI can help achieve these aspirations.

This article answers important questions step-by-step: Why does power matter when interviewing children? (Section 1), What is CoI? (Section 2), Which interviews can CoI be applied to? (Section 3), How does CoI as an interview method address the power imbalance between children and a researcher as well as among children while interviewing children? (Section 4), What are the limitations and potential challenges of CoI? (Section 5).

Interview with children and issues related to power imbalance

Over the past several decades, we have been witnessing the growth of qualitative research carried out with children (e.g., Clark, 2005; Corsaro & Molinari, 2008; Due et al., 2014). Unlike the traditional understanding of children as passive research *objects*, a new paradigm of research *with* children suggests that children are social actors and experts on their own lives (Christensen & James 2008; Crivello et al., 2009; Ebrahim, 2010; Graham et al., 2012).

The interview is one of the most effective methods of approaching and learning about children's lived experiences. In an interview, researchers normally not only encourage children to speak in their own terms but also allow room in which children can examine and think reflectively

about what they have just said or what they are going to say (Clark, 2005; Ebrahim, 2010). A researcher working with children is therefore expected to be an active listener who interacts with children during the interview by asking questions that induce reflective meaning-making (Davis et al., 2008).

Whilst there is a considerable body of work that values the significance of in-depth interviews with children, some ethical concerns, especially issues related to power imbalance during the interview process are also indicated by theorists and practitioners alike (e.g., Christensen & James, 2008). A research interview inevitably entails power asymmetries between an interviewer and an interviewee (Kvale, 2006), and this is frequently found in research involving children (Due et al., 2014; Graham et al., 2012; Greig & Taylor, 2002).

Power imbalance is reported in both individual and group interviews. In an individual interview, the waves of questioning offered by an interviewer can strengthen the power imbalance between an interviewer and interviewee. To enable a deeper understanding of children, an interviewer asks many questions from different angles, which, however, make children feel uneasy because they may feel they are being rushed (e.g., Ebrahim, 2010; Westcott & Littleton, 2005). In such an unpleasant situation, children utilise some “counterstrategies” (Kvale, 2006), which can include, for example, maintaining silence, just smiling to avoid additional questions, or saying just “hmm” or “I don’t know!” to cut off the interview.

In addition, the researcher’s active presence during an interview can also produce a power imbalance. While working with children, a researcher is expected to approach children’s everyday experiences deeply. Punch (2002, p.328), however, indicates that children “may actually prefer an adult researcher not to invade their child’s space.” In many cases, Punch

continues, research environments are “adult spaces where children have less control,” and it would thus be stressful for them when strangers (interviewers) enter their world.

Even if a researcher successfully enters the children’s space, children can still feel uneasy. Due, Riggs, and Augoustinos (2014, p. 218) note that children are often accustomed to “please adults and thus to give socially desirable or confirmatory responses” (see also, Clark [2005] for a similar point). As Hill (2005) rightly suggests, making children perform with the intention of meeting the expectations of adults has “the risk of putting the children on guard” and thus places a great burden on them.

In order to avoid such ethical concerns emerging from an asymmetrical power imbalance between a researcher and children, some scholars prefer the focus group interview. The focus group interview is broadly defined as “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (Morgan, 1996, p. 130). Its aim is not to steer the interaction toward consensus, but to gather diverse perspectives on the topic in order to articulate participants’ knowledge and experiences (Kvale, 2007). Since the focus group interview allows children to speak relatively freely with a minimum of adult intervention, it has a capacity to relax the potential power imbalances between the researcher and the children (Ebrahim, 2010). However, there are also challenges posed by the focus group interview.

Even if the focus group interview succeeds in drawing out diverse perspectives, it risks being just an accumulation of ill-examined information as a result of the lack of moments during which participants reflect on what they/others say, value, and believe. The focus group interview is likely to emphasise how and what people *speak* (Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1996), which makes it hard for a researcher to gain a deep understanding of research subjects.

Moreover, the talk-centric feature of the focus group interview can be problematic, when it comes to addressing power imbalance *among children* (Graham et al., 2012; Greig & Taylor, 2002). For example, the garrulous child who thinks the discussion topic is interesting may prefer talking to listening (Kvale, 2007). Furthermore, as Graham, Phelps, Nhung, and Geeves (2012, pp. 12-13) indicate, “some children would dominate the interviews and while the researchers attempted to address this, some less vocal children would simply agree with statements made by their partners (Yes, me too).” Therefore, in the focus group interview, those who can speak fluently may easily dominate the conversation.

Up to now, scholars working with children have made considerable efforts to develop methods that are capable of addressing power imbalances while interviewing children. For example, their often-used strategy is to add a specific research technique into an interview. Some stress the importance of building rapport through the longitudinal research process (Corsaro & Molinari, 2008; Greig & Taylor, 2002). Drawing on ethnographical research with migrant and refugee children, Due, Riggs, and Augoustinos (2014, pp. 217-8) argue that a researcher has to acknowledge the importance of spending time with children through regular visits so that children trust them. In a similar vein, Davis, Watson, and Cunningham-Burley (2008) argue that the role of the researcher needs to be non-authoritative and friendly in order for children to allow researchers to interact with them.

Multi-methods are also used frequently for the same purpose. The Mosaic Approach developed by Clark (2005) is one notable example. It aims to listen to children’s various perspectives from different angles through the combination of interview with observation, child conversation, child photography, child-led tours, and/or role-playing (see also, Crivello et al., 2009; Ebrahim,

2010). Such research “toolkits” enable a rich uptake of children’s voices and perspectives in ways that are difficult to obtain through an interview only.

What these strategies share is an effort to deal with the issues of power by adding specific strategies to a *conventional* form of interview. As Clark (2005, p. 31, emphasis added) describes the Mosaic Approach, it “combines the *traditional* methodology of observation and interviewing with the introduction of participatory tools.” While these are important additions to the conventional interview methods, this article suggests that it is also important to *(re)design the interview itself* in ways that are more attuned to the issues related to research with children. Indeed, as elaborated in the subsequent sections, redesigning the interview method can offer various benefits when interviewing children. To support this claim, the following sections will apply the idea of *the Community of Inquiry (CoI)* to an interview with children. CoI being used as an interview method can help, not only in approaching children’s lived experience but also in minimising, though not completely eliminating, some of the ethical concerns of situations involving interactive interviews with children.

The Community of Inquiry (CoI)

The community of inquiry (CoI) was originally pioneered by pragmatist philosophers, such as Charles Peirce, John Dewey, and Jane Addams (Shields, 2003). It is theoretically defined as a reflective process of knowledge-making that occurs through interpersonal interactions. This conceptualisation of CoI is based on the idea that knowledge is intertwined in people’s lived experiences and that such knowledge can be approached only through communications (Dewey, 1938). While this definition is too broad, there are two important concepts that underpin the following aspects of CoI – lived experience and dialogue.

The significance of *lived experience* is suggested by Dewey. He argues that “an ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance” (Dewey, 2004, p. 138). In other words, what Dewey suggests is that there is no theory existing prior to our experience. Following Dewey, advocates of CoI also believe that there is an inseparable relationship between lived experience and knowledge. They reject an ontological assumption about the presence of “universal” knowledge independent of one’s own experience, and argue that knowledge is constructed and formulated by the experiences of differently situated people. Consider, for example, knowledge about the “right thing.” One person (e.g., a volunteer) might say that “the right thing is to do something that can make others happy,” whereas others (e.g., children) might say “the right thing is to do what my parents told me.” In approaching knowledge about “the right thing,” therefore, it is indispensable to take into account diverse perspectives generated from different experiences.

Having said that, one’s lived experience *alone* does not help to make knowledge because it is a monologue. Peirce (1995, p. 259) argues that “one man’s experience is nothing, if it stands alone ... It is not *my* experience, but *our* experience that has to be thought of,” there must be “a pooling of experience in which each is as ready and willing to learn from each other’s experience as from his or her own” (Lipman, 2003, p. 111). To this end, *dialogue* plays a powerful role. Advocates of CoI believe that dialogue about diverse views enables us to examine taken-for-granted knowledge and perspectives reflectively and help people to view things from various angles, thereby producing more reflective and more scrutinised knowledge (Kono, 2014). Drawing on a practical application of CoI in the context of an educational program (called Philosophy for Children), Lipman (2003, p.20) argues that the ideal dialogue in CoI is to help people (students) to “listen to one another with respect, build on one another’s

ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions." Unlike competitive debates, CoI aims to promote participants' cooperative thinking on untested beliefs, stereotypes, and values; to support and to question each other for the purpose of gaining deeper understanding of the topic at hand; and to listen to the other side for understanding new perspectives. Put simply, CoI values a cooperative exchange of reason, mutual listening, and questioning rather than just talking.

Building upon these theoretical ideas, CoI is practised as a particular form of a group dialogue during which participants share their experience using their own vocabulary, justifying their opinion, asking questions, and listening to each other. A dialogue happening in CoI is different from a conversation because it aims to unpack not only what participants think about the topic under question but also *how* they think and *why* they think as they do. Hence, dialogue in CoI encourages participants not only to speak about their experience, but also to think about and to listen to what others say. To this end, dialogue in CoI centres around "questioning, more narrowly a quest for truth, more broadly a quest for meaning" (Lipman, 2003, p.95). In this context, Kono (2014, pp. 128-129) offers a useful classification of the questioning models in CoI. They include questions for (a) clarification (e.g., what is the meaning of X?), (b) reason (e.g., why?), (c) evidence (e.g., for example?), (d) authenticity (e.g., is X true?), (e) generalisation (e.g., is there a counterexample?), (f) clarifying assumption (e.g., why do you think so?), and (g) inference (e.g., if what you have said is true, what will happen then?).

It should be emphasised that all participants in CoI are, in principle, seen as co-inquirers (Lipman, 2003). This implies that those who intend to dominate a dialogue by showing off their knowledge always become the target of criticism. In order to avoid the situation where

particular individuals dominate a dialogue, CoI requires participants to agree upon the rules on “intellectual safety.” Intellectual safety seeks to ensure that “there are no putdowns and no comments intended to belittle, undermine, negate, devalue, or ridicule ... within this place, the group accepts virtually any question or comment, so long as it is respectful of the other members of the circle” (Jackson, 2001, p. 4). Only when a participant breaks this rule, is the facilitator’s interventions into the dialogue justified.

In sum, CoI is the means of achieving the reflective knowledge-making, and its practical application takes the form of a group dialogue. It is underpinned by the process of interpersonal communicative engagement during which participants share and examine their own experience, thereby elaborating knowledge and perspectives.

Applying the Community of Inquiry to interpretive interviews

There is no one-size-fits-all method of interviewing because an “appropriate” interview method should be selected in response to different research agendas (Kvale, 2007). In fact, CoI is not applicable to many types of interviews. The underlying claim of CoI is that knowledge is embedded in contextualised experiences and, therefore, such knowledge can be approached and observed only through communication. Given this, it may not suit the factual interview (e.g., doctor’s diagnostic interviews) or the survey interview (e.g., market research) as both types of interviews aim to *collect* data rather than to *generate* and *examine* it. Instead, CoI is most helpful when the research purpose is consistent with an interview informed by the *interpretive approach* (Gaskins et al, 1992; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Walsham, 2006), which is now used by many scholars when researching with children (e.g., Corsaro & Molinari, 2008; Due et al., 2014).

The interpretive approach is a part of qualitative research that seeks “to understand the meaning underlying an intention, action, object, or phenomenon” (Ercan et al., 2016, p. 5). This approach is critical of the idea that there is a “real” world waiting to be discovered by a researcher (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Instead, it is ontologically based on the idea that social realities, knowledge, and meanings are constructed in particular contexts. According to Yanow (2007), an interview is an important method in interpretive approaches as it reveals interviewee’s culturally, contextually, or historically situated knowledge, the meanings of actions, and experiences through the deep interactions between an interviewer and an interviewee (see also, Greig & Taylor 2002; Schaffer, 2006; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Walsham, 2006).

In a traditional approach, the interviewer is expected to be invisible during the interview to minimise his/her influence over the interviewee (Backstrom & Hursh, 1963). Yet, in an interpretive interview, the active involvement of the interviewer is highly valued. This is because it is only through the interviewer’s active involvement that the interviewee can examine the meaning of his/her actions and experience reflectively. Hence, as Yanow (2007, p. 410) notes, an interpretive interviewer “seeks to draw the speaker out, much as one would a conversational partner, in order to gain further understanding of the terms being used or the perspective being articulated.” In this sense, the image of the interviewer in the interpretive interview is similar to Holstein and Gubrium’s (1995) idea of the “active interview.” The active interviewer (and the interpretive interviewer) brings conflict into the interview process by asking various questions and indicating contradictions.

The interpretive interview and CoI share several characteristics. The first is their *ontological and epistemological position*. Both practices stand upon the idea that knowledge is socially and

discursively constructed and that only deep communicative interactions enable us to approach contextualised knowledge (Dewey, 2004; Lipman, 2003; Marsh & Furlong, 2002).

The second is that both practices place a special emphasis on *in-depth dialogue*. Even if both practices centre on communicative interactions, this does not imply that they are just like everyday conversations. As Soss (2006, p. 136) argues, the interpretive interview must be based on an in-depth interviewing format so that the researcher can draw out well-examined information, and CoI is also grounded in “mutual exploration, an investigation, an inquiry” (Lipman 2003, p. 87).

The third is that both practices use the idea of *Socratic questioning* as one of the core techniques for making the dialogue interactive. Socratic questioning is questioning-based maieutic interactions aimed at helping respondents to express logic, presuppositions, or knowledge grounded in their experience. As Brinkmann (2007, p. 1117, emphasis in original) notes, the purpose of Socratic questioning in an interview is to move “from a state of being simply *opinionated* to being capable of *questioning* and *justifying* what they [respondents] believe in the case.” Likewise, CoI values Socratic inquiry as a practice where “ignorant” participants think, ask, and listen together to gain a deeper understanding of the question at hand rather than brag about their own knowledge or talk down to others (see, Fisher, 2008).

Mitigating power imbalances through the Community of Inquiry

As already discussed, an interactive interview with children – both in individual and group forms – entails certain ethical concerns about the power imbalances even if it is a theoretically effective method used to approach children’s lived experience. The same is true for the interpretive interview method because it also requires an active interaction between an

interviewer and interviewees. To explain how and why CoI helps to minimise such ethical concerns, this section draws on an example of CoI undertaken with 11 junior high school students (aged 13), in December 2016, in Japan. A facilitator and the author were also present for this dialogue. The data was collected by participant observation and recorded by field notes and audio recording.

The general process of the Community of Inquiry

Since 2012, the author has practised CoI in several schools in Japan while conducting Lipman's (2003) educational program, Philosophy for Children. Building upon the theoretical backgrounds developed above and practical knowledge of CoI, the author made an outline of the general process of CoI as an interpretive interview with children:

1. The researcher (interviewer) and children (interviewees) sit together in a circle.
2. The researcher proposes a topic to be discussed in a dialogue (e.g., education, politics, animal rights) that suits the researcher's research purpose. Children pose questions from the proposed topic (e.g., should children go to school? What is politics? Should people stop eating animals?) as much as possible. Such questions should be open-ended so that various experience-based knowledge, values, and beliefs can be pooled and examined. Then, children choose one question from the gathered questions. Sometimes, the question is chosen by voting or as a result of discussion.
3. Before starting a dialogue, the researcher announces some important rules that the children should follow (e.g., explaining "intellectual safety" and showing types of good questioning to be used in dialogue).

4. Children talk, question, listen, and think together about the selected question through a critical as well as reflective dialogue by referring to their own experiences. It usually takes 30–60 minutes, which should be changed flexibly in response to children's capacity to concentrate.
5. The role of the researcher here is to facilitate children's dialogue by helping them question each other and examine their experiences more deeply, summing up discussion, questioning, and politely cutting off answers that may be irrelevant to the inquiry.
6. After the inquiry, the researcher analyses the dialogue.

The general process of CoI can be customised flexibly depending on the context and the purpose of the inquiry. At the analysis stage, for example, both the researcher and the children can engage in a meta-inquiry where, after their dialogue, they analyse together what they have talked about. In this particular research, the author used a so-called “community ball” (Figure 1) as an assistive research tool to slow down the dialogue so that students can have enough time to think and listen to what others say. The community ball is made of colourful wool yarns, and it is often used in CoI in educational settings. Jackson (2001) describes the rules of the community ball as follows: (1) only the person who has the community ball can speak, while others must listen, (2) the person who has the community ball can choose who will speak next, (3) the person with the community ball has the right to skip their turn if s/he does not wish to speak. As such, the ball plays an important role in preventing the domination of dialogue by one specific student, for instance the most talkative one.



Figure 1. The community ball

The CoI with Japanese students was conducted on the basis of this process. The topic was “students’ everyday and school life and the questions generated from it.” Prior to the dialogue, the author collected students’ questions relating to their everyday/school life with the help of their teacher. Before starting the dialogue, we shared the questions suggested by students and then asked them to choose the highest-priority question. The students chose “why is talk about sex erotic topics prohibited in the classroom?” They were particularly interested in this question because they said their teacher often got angry with her students when they talked about sex and erotic topics in the classroom. In this situation, if this teacher (or other teachers in this school) asks this question directly to students in a one-on-one interview or conversation, it may strengthen the power imbalance between the teacher and the student. This is because students, namely those who want to engage in sex-related talk with friends, may hesitate to respond to this question honestly. Instead, they may act strategically offering answers consistent with the teacher’s expectations.

The following draws on some excerpts from the transcripts to show how CoI helped to address and mitigate the ethical risks of interviewing children.

Dealing with issues of power through the Community of Inquiry

During the dialogue, the facilitator asked, “why does your teacher not like erotic talk?” and students answered as followed:

Student 6: I...I can't totally understand why teachers see sex-talk as a shameful act. We don't need to feel ashamed, because sex is very important in our lives.

Student 7: I think this [sex] is usually required to be hidden from the public eye. So I think sex-talk is something that exposes such a hidden thing unnecessarily. This is why teachers may prohibit it.

Student 8: I think there is a culture or tradition that expects us not to talk about sex or erotic issues because it is indelicate to bring them up in public. We may unconsciously internalise these cultures into our minds, and thus we feel guilty when we talk about sex.

Student 4: If children are instilled from birth with the idea that sex is a good thing, will they not feel ashamed even if they talk about sex in public?

Other students: Hmmm...

As discussed in the previous section, waves of questions asked one-sidedly by an interviewer can make children feel uneasy because they feel they are being rushed. Although both in-depth interview with children and CoI use various forms of (Socratic) questioning, CoI has a better potential of minimising ethical concerns by using a group dialogue. Due to this group dimension, in principle *everyone* in CoI becomes responsible for considering the shared questions. As the above excerpt shows, no specific individual can be a target of a series of questions. In this sense,

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as advocates of CoI (e.g., Fisher, 2008; Gregory et al., 2016) emphasise, CoI enables the creation of a moral community where everyone is equal and a co-inquirer.

CoI also helps to prevent particular speakers from dominating the dialogue process by encouraging interactions, such as listening and questioning. This is beneficial not only for creating room in which students can think and examine the dialogue deeply, but also for reducing the adult's active presence during the dialogue. For example:

Facilitator: Do you think that the image of naked ladies in the textbook is erotic?

Students: Absolutely!

Student 3: But, I am wondering why our school prohibits us from talking about sex and erotic issues, even though our school values naked ladies in the textbook.

Student 4: Well, this is because both schools and the arts recognise the ladies as a model of beauty.

Student 5: If so, why does our school not see our sex talk as one of the models of beauty? Why is bringing up sex and erotic issues in the lecture good, whereas our sex-talk is bad?

Other students: Hmmm...(Silence)

Student 6: But...but is there room for understanding our sex-talk as beauty?

In this dialogue, students not only expressed their opinion, but also asked questions (Students 5 and 6), offered supportive or counter examples to vitalise the process of inquiry (Students 3 and 5), and thought about the proposed question in silence. When CoI is used for interviewing children, it allows children to act not only as interviewees but also *interviewers*, whereby they ask questions, listen, and support each other in order to deepen their understanding of a topic.

Such a role-reversal in which students, not adults, play the role of interviewers can also help to reduce the active presence of adults during the dialogue. The total number of speech turns of students during the whole dialogue was 114, whereas that of the adult (facilitator) was 42. Although the number of speech segments per se offers insufficient criteria to evaluate the quality of the dialogue, this fact may allow us to assume that there was significant active involvement of students in this dialogue. Such student-centric interactions eventually helped their examination of knowledge regardless of the low involvement of adults, and thereby mitigated the risks of the adult's active presence in the interpretive interview.

It goes without saying that the role-reversal does not mean the researcher can do nothing in CoI. The researcher has to support the interactions among the participants. Without the facilitator's effort to move the dialogue forward, the inquiry would end in just an everyday conversation or exchange of unexamined opinions. Hence, even if CoI mostly entrusts the facilitator's role to the participants (children), there are many roles the facilitator has to play during the dialogue (e.g., asking supportive questions, listening to participants' voices and statements carefully, and, most importantly, trusting participants and their ability to act as interviewers/interviewees).

Enabling students to act as a type of interviewer differentiates CoI from the focus group interview (or similar practices such as child-led conferencing). Of course, the focus group interview and CoI share some common characteristics. Both practices emphasise the importance of diverse perspectives offered by participants, they centre on their active interactions, and they encourage them to state opinions in their own terms. However, as discussed above, while the focus group interview tends to encounter the pitfall of unreflective opinion exchanges, CoI aims at deepening participants' understanding of issues by emphasising the process of thinking and listening (Dewey, 1938). CoI participants are encouraged to listen

to the stories of others, to consider statements of others reflectively, to engage in inner dialogue, to ask questions, and thereby to express their opinions. In other words, CoI brings about the moment during which participants examine and recognise reflectively their unsupported assumptions and justify what they think and believe based on the reflection.

By helping students to elaborate their views, the dialogue revealed that the underlying topic was the students' sense of unfairness directed towards their teacher:

Student 5: ...teachers teach various facts such as knowledge about sex. But we get yelled at for speaking about these issues. Why?

Student 4: Ahhhh... In my experience, one teacher said the sex and erotic conversation was dirty, and those who speak about sex a lot may be seen as dirty and of socially lower status. The teacher thought elegant people do not behave in such a manner.

Student 5: Also, one day we were chatting while one teacher said a word that can be interpreted as a sort of erotic-word. Suddenly, the teacher said "why were you laughing!?" and he got angry. We didn't know the word had an alternative erotic meaning, and only the teacher assumed that this word was something associated with an erotic meaning. This is very unfair.

Student 7: Yeah, we want teachers to understand that we use sexual and erotic words not because they are funny but because we learn them in science or in health education class. We don't want teachers to prohibit us from talking about sex just because it is dirty.

They considered their experiences of their teacher's unfair behaviour and expressed their discontent about the teacher's behaviour (e.g., Student 5). In this context, the final statement of Student 7, which uses "we" continuously, is worthy of attention. By using "we," she summarised previous arguments (e.g., students' displeasure about the ban on sexual and erotic

talk in the classroom – see, Students 4 and 5), and then attempted to represent the opinions of other students, pointing out their teacher’s narrow understanding of sex and lack of trust in the students. This is the moment in which the dialogue unpacked the students’ underlying claim about their school life experiences and about their strained relations with their teachers. Such well-considered and examined knowledge and perspectives are the very data that the interpretive interviewer wishes to gain (Corsaro & Molinari, 2008; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2012; Schaffer, 2006).

Limitations of the Community of Inquiry

CoI is not a panacea for resolving all ethical concerns regarding interviewing children. Despite valuable benefits provided by CoI as an interpretive interview method, it has some limitations and potential challenges. In particular, there are two limitations (nature of topic being inquired and pre-existing hierarchy among participants) and three potential challenges (structural barrier, age-appropriateness, and applicability).

Despite CoI’s capacity for reducing some ethical concerns of the interpretive interview with children, in practice, there are two other ethical concerns. This is especially informed by two students (both boys) who did not speak at all throughout the dialogue. Although CoI is not a practice that forces participants to speak, the reasons for their silence would be worthy of consideration.

One possible reason could be the *nature of the topic* being inquired. Whether it is an open-ended question or not, there are apparently some topics that some categories of people do not want to discuss. For adolescent children (e.g., junior high school students), for example, discussing sexual and erotic issues with their classmates might be embarrassing. Although the

discussion topic in this case was chosen by voting, a minority of students might hesitate to discuss it simply because it makes them feel embarrassed. For example, what was directly observed during the inquiry described above was that the silent boys lowered their eyes in embarrassment when the girls talked about concrete examples of sex and erotic talk. In this sense, there are some topics and questions that need to be avoided even if the specific participants and situations call for them. While CoI values silence, this does not mean that all types of silence are worthwhile. The CoI facilitator needs to make a clear distinction between silence that induces reflective thinking and imposed silence.

Another possible reason is a *pre-existing hierarchy* among participants. This fact is also pointed out in studies on the focus group interview. Kitzinger (1995) argues that a pre-existing hierarchy in the focus group can lead particular individuals to be less open. Such a hierarchy causes peer pressure, exclusive dialogue, and/or creation of a situation where one may hesitate to speak, all of which may affect the quality of the data generated. This can also be observed in the empirical case above. According to the classroom teacher, for example, the classroom consists of seven girls and four boys, and what he usually observed was the situation where the girls were more likely to be active and powerful than the boys. Such a pre-existing relationship between them affects the number of their statements. Whereas the total number of statements of the girls was 91, that of the boys was only 23. Combined with the feeling of embarrassment when talking about sex in the classroom, the pre-existing classmate relationship may contribute toward the asymmetrical number of statements.

In addition to such limits of CoI in practice, there are also some potential challenges. *Structural barrier* is one example. As Graham, Phelps, Nhung, and Geeves (2012) rightly put it, “participation is deeply implicated within broader social and cultural considerations.” In a space

where adults' language is traditionally dominant (e.g., school), for example, the voices of children who are able to speak such adult (or school) language are more likely to be valued than other voices. Similarly, as Davis, Watson, and Cunningham-Burley (2008) claim, focusing intensively on a specific form of "voice" may result in neglecting the voices of specific individuals, such as, for example, disabled children. To respond to such challenges, it should be emphasised that it is risky to rely solely on CoI. What is important is to allow room for incorporating various strategies (e.g., the Mosaic Approach [Clark, 2005]) into CoI. For example, Due, Riggs, and Augoustinos (2014) argue that the use of multiple method (e.g. photo elicitation, visual techniques) will enable the researcher to listen to different forms of voices generated from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds that are not reduced to the dominant codes. Likewise, Davis, Watson, and Cunningham-Burley (2008) suggest the value of the longitudinal ethnographical approach when we listen to disabled children's "unspoken understandings."

Some may be sceptical about the *age-appropriateness* of CoI, arguing that it is hard especially for younger children to engage in relatively "sophisticated" communication. In fact, CoI requires children to use a specific form of communication, which includes not only expressing one's view but also reasoning, listening, and questioning (Dewey, 1938; Fisher, 2008; Lipman, 2003). However, it should be noted that CoI does not force children to communicate in the same way as adults. It is rather, as Jackson (2001) contends, a practice in which children communicate with each other on their own terms and in their own manner. Taking the example of children's storytelling, for example, Ebrahim (2010, p. 295) argues that it can help children "to construct a sense of self, to become a part of culture, make sense of the world, to problem solve, to deal with feelings and to form relationships," even if the story plot is quite abstract.

Indeed, in the context of education, the practice of CoI is utilised not only in the compulsory schooling context but also in the kindergarten (Gregory et al. 2016), which may partially support the applicability of CoI to a wider range of children. Arguably, some techniques are helpful in assisting (younger) children's interaction, such as the community ball.

Applicability also matters. This article does not suggest that the general process of CoI can be applied universally to all children and contexts. The role of CoI should be considered reflectively and flexibly by taking the inquiry context into account. Nevertheless, the general process of CoI is open for a flexible customisation. In countries where traditionally there is a fixed teacher-students relationship (see, Graham et al. [2012] for the case of Vietnam), for example, it would be better to avoid a classroom teacher facilitating the dialogue because this may easily dominate the dialogue. Given this, a researcher who wishes to use CoI as a method for interviewing children needs to consider, in a reflective manner, the complex relationship between CoI and context.

Conclusion

This article discusses the view that CoI, as an interpretive interview, offers theoretical as well as practical insights into the way in which a researcher working with children can approach children's lived experience, can support their reflective knowledge-making, and at the same time, can mitigate the ethical concerns of interviewing them. Theoretically, this article examines the potential role and contribution of the pragmatic idea of "the Community of Inquiry" as the interpretive interview method and the enabler of avoidance of some ethical concerns. In practical terms, this article examines how the practical application of CoI is possible and how it is practised, drawing on the empirical case of CoI conducted with Japanese

students. Since the general process of CoI described in this article is open for customisation, we can use it flexibly depending on the context and the purpose of the interview, although its applicability needs to be considered carefully in further research.

Despite the benefits of CoI, this article does not aim to idealise it. There is no “one-size-fits-all” interview method that can deal perfectly with the ethical concerns defined in this article. These concerns ought to be resolved flexibly within the whole process of research, such as the long-term building up of rapport, the use of multi-methods. Although this article makes a case for the significance of the interview method in itself, it does not recommend that researchers rely solely on CoI when conducting research and interviews with children.

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Conclusion

This thesis sought to explore children's participation in deliberative democracy, focusing particularly on their democratic engagement both in and outside classrooms, schools, and on streets. Through a close examination of three case studies from Japan, this thesis offered a theoretical and empirical examination of the ways in which children and their activities in these spaces can make a meaningful contribution to deliberative systems.

Children's democratic participation itself is not a new topic of research. Since the introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, children have been part of various participatory practices (Lansdown, 2001; Bulling et al., 2013). The growth of children's democratic participation is arguably a welcome development. Children are now seen as important actors in many political spaces and scenes.

However, are children also heard in a meaningful manner in political scenes and spaces? In recent years, some researchers have raised similar questions. It gradually becomes apparent that the existing participatory practices of children are at risk of becoming adult-led and therefore tokenistic practice (Begg, 2004; Thomas, 2007). In addition, while Ruth Sinclair noted in 2004 (p. 116) that "the challenge for the next decade will be how to move beyond one-off and isolated consultations," this problem remains unsolved.

Against this backdrop, this thesis sought to explore children's *alternative* forms of democratic participation happening in classrooms, schools, and streets. These spaces are traditionally viewed as neither democratic nor participatory spaces. However, recent innovations have transformed the democratic potential of these spaces. For example, a recent democratic curriculum innovation breaks down the traditional assumption of classrooms as spaces for

socialisation alone and encourages children to deliberate in and beyond the walls of the classroom (Hayward, 2013; Hess & McAvoy, 2015). Likewise, it has been gradually recognised that schools can serve not only as pedagogical institutions but also as social as well as political spaces that facilitate students' democratic participation across society (e.g. Senge, 2013). Furthermore, with the assistance of a recent technological developments (e.g. social media), streets become a popular space where children can become activists.

In these ways, classrooms, schools, and streets offer children various alternatives for democratic participation. In order to capture the democratic potential of children's alternative forms of participation in these spaces in more detail, this thesis employed the idea of *deliberative* democracy, with a systemic understanding of it (deliberative systems) as a theoretical framework. With the deliberative systems framework in mind, this thesis focused on and examined the deliberative potential of the cases of *Philosophy for Children* (classroom), *The Future Talk* and *Ari to Pla* (schools), and *T-ns SOWL* (streets).

It is important to emphasise that children's activities in classrooms, schools, and streets do not always have an immediate and substantial influence over the official decision-making processes. Nor, do their activities always fit perfectly within an authentic model of deliberation. Nonetheless, this thesis demonstrated that children's activities observed in the above cases contributed to vitalising the overall quality of the wider deliberative systems in the following ways:

- Classroom deliberation curricula and protests on the streets allow children to challenge taken-for-granted values and discourses (Chapter 2 and Chapter 4).

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- Children's deliberative activities in public spaces can open avenues through which their voices are heard by wider publics (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).
- Children's various deliberative activities enable adult citizens to think deeply about the issue in question by considering children's voices and experiences (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).
- Deliberative enclaves allow children to talk freely without anxiety over adult's intervention (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).
- Deliberative opportunities provided by classrooms and schools can cultivate children's motivation to participate in further deliberative activities across the systems (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).
- Children's engagement in protest movements can facilitate democratic inclusion by encouraging various forms of participation (online and offline), connecting differently situated children, and mobilising them to further protesting movements (Chapter 4).

On the basis of these insights, this thesis proposes to conceptualise children as effective *deliberators* in a deliberative system.

Children as deliberators: Key insights of the thesis

If we accept “children as deliberators” as suggested and formulated throughout this thesis, how do and should we rethink about the relationship between children and (deliberative) democracy? In what follows, I respond to this question by presenting eight key insights emerging from the research undertaken in this thesis. I also show how these insights speak to the fields of deliberative democracy, children's participation, democratic education, and interpretive methodology.

1) *Deliberative democrats should pay more attention to children, because children are not only future citizens, but they already deliberate in varied ways.*

As problematised particularly in Chapter 1, children's roles and contributions to democracy are rarely discussed in democracy studies including in the field of deliberative democracy. Due to the widespread discourse about children as "incapable" or "citizens-in-waiting," some scholars emphasise the need to educate children for their "future" deliberation (Crittenden, 2002). This thesis challenges such an assumption by rethinking children's "deliberative" activities from a systemic perspective of deliberative democracy. While some deliberative democrats may ask "can children deliberate?" the answer according to this thesis is "Yes, they *can* deliberate" and "Yes, they *already* deliberate." Indeed, children's deliberation can be found at various sites within deliberative systems, although, as indicated above, the way in which children "deliberate" varies.

For example, a specific deliberative curriculum (e.g. P4C) enables children to engage in authentic forms of deliberation in the classroom during which they challenge taken-for-granted/dominant discourses and create a new foundation for mutual-understanding (Chapter 2). Children's democratic participation also serves as a remedial practice that problematises and challenges the failures of authority figures such as politicians, adult citizens, or teachers (Chapter 2, Chapter 4). Also, the deliberative enclaves organised and managed by children can allow children to create counter-publics where they deliberate without the potential interventions of adults (Chapter 3).

Children's deliberative activities do not always take a verbal form. In some occasions, they use various non-verbal activities such as dancing, music, or irony (Chapter 4). As Young (2000)

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suggests, such non-verbal reasoning and expressions enable the traditionally marginalised individuals to gain sympathy and attention, to monitor authority from the outside, and to make public communication more inclusive. These communications are not deliberative in an “authentic” (Dryzek 2010) sense, yet in the context of deliberative systems, they function as inducer of public reflection and further communication in public sphere.

These activities involve children confronting adults’ power and authority, thus challenging deliberative democrats’ assumptions about children’s capacities, and creating counter-discourses from alternative perspectives in the public sphere. In deliberative systems, these activities should be taken seriously because they shape the possibilities of effective and meaningful deliberation across society (see, Mansbridge et al., 2012).

2) Democracy gains various benefits from children’s participation in classrooms, schools, and streets because of the “critical” dimension of these activities.

According to John Dryzek (2000), deliberative democracy has two theoretical roots: liberal democracy and critical theory. The former focuses on the democratic processes in the representative institutions and legal systems, while the latter emphasises the significance of emancipation from domination. Emancipation from domination here refers not only to “emancipation of individuals and society from oppressive forces such as dominant discourses and ideologies as well as structural economic forces” (Dryzek, 2000: 20-1): it also means emancipation from the role given one-sidedly by socio-political structures and authorities (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994). By promoting people’s emancipation, deliberative democracy rooted in the critical tradition seeks the ways in which people challenge and examine the dominant

structures and authority by using their communicative power (see, Dryzek, 2000; Hammond, 2018).

Children normally do not have direct influence over the representative institutions or legal systems due to their age. Yet, this should not lead to the conclusion that children cannot deliberate or children cannot play a role in deliberative democracy. What this thesis demonstrated is that classrooms, schools, and streets enable children to act as “critical” deliberators who make society more deliberative and democratic in a different way from “liberal” deliberators. Through activities in classrooms, schools, and streets shown in this thesis, children can emancipate themselves from the predetermined roles in conventional modes of participation and then examine and challenge failures and weaknesses of authority and adult-centric society. Children’s alternative democratic participation allows them to design, initiate, organise, and facilitate *their own* deliberative activities. While the traditional model of participatory practice tends to require children to behave as small adults and speak on behalf of common good rather than self-interest (e.g. Begg, 2004), children’s alternative participation is structured around their own experiences, interests, perspectives, and opinions. By doing so, children can find ways in which their voices and reasons are heard and considered in many spaces across society. In addition, children’s alternative participation in deliberative systems enables them to have an opportunity to examine and politicise their own lives and to challenge authorities and dominant discourses. Such practices help them elicit their own vocabularies to frame and politicise the issue in question and introduce new perspectives into public deliberation

- 3) *If we accept “children as deliberators,” classroom deliberation ought to be designed and practised based on children’s present capacity, experience, and agency.*

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One of the key claims of Chapter 2 was that democratic education anchored by “children as deliberators” is the opposite of “education for future democracy.” This claim is important because even scholars who acknowledge children’s democratic agency tend to value democratic education that relies on the concept of children as future citizens.

Drawing on the contemporary youth participation literature, for example, Chou et al. (2017: 78) argue that “while children and youth are often discussed in terms of a deficit model owing to their age, they often have a lot to offer to contribute to democracy.” Even if children are indeed not interested in official democratic processes such as elections or political parties, they find some alternative options and paths differing from conventional participation in order to get involved in democracy (ibid, Ch. 1). There are many overlapping points between this thesis and Chou and his co-authors’ work. However, Chou et al. are still likely to see schools and classrooms mainly as educational spaces where children can be given the opportunity to *prepare* for future participation.

Learning deliberative skills in classrooms and schools is arguably one of the powerful aspects for understanding the democratic capacity of these spaces. This thesis does not deny this perspective. Yet, it argues that such a perspective does not capture the democratic dynamics of classroom deliberation in their entirety. This is so because this perspective prevents us from recognising the fact that children deliberate in and beyond classrooms and schools as deliberators.

If we accept the conceptualisation of children as deliberators, democratic education ought to be designed based on children’s “present” experiences, voices, capacities, and perspectives. Yet, this does not mean that all classroom deliberation is structured around children’s present agency.

When we design classroom deliberation as a tool for simulating fictional or future deliberation, classroom deliberation may reinforce the dominant perception of children as future citizens. Specific deliberative curriculum designed based on children's present agency, such as P4C described in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, on the other hand, encouraged children to deliberate and to democratise their own lives through a cooperative inquiry. Children in P4C become deliberators as a consequence of their *participation* in deliberation rather than their preparation or simulation. This sort of democratic education is worthy of investigating further because it values *both* children's education and their participation. In other words, this sort of democratic education is a key to making "education" (as an inherently future-oriented practice) and "participation" (as a present-oriented practice) compatible.

4) The role of schools in deliberative democracy should be evaluated in terms not only of the presence of classroom deliberation, but also of schools' function in wider deliberative systems. Even if the "classrooms" lack deliberative moments, "schools" can offer alternative avenues for children to deliberate across society.

As illustrated above, classroom deliberation is one of the key practices in facilitating children's deliberative participation across society. However, some may rightly worry about the current worldwide situation in which there are many schools that cannot afford to introduce deliberative curriculum for various reasons. As exemplified by Foucault's (1977) "prison" analogy in explaining the nature of schools, schools are normally grounded in an asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship between teachers and students that produces and sustains a power imbalance between them. Also, some authoritarian schools may not want their students to deliberate freely because such deliberation may end up challenging the school's established legitimacy. Furthermore, in some countries where the educational system values cramming, as

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it is the case in Japan, there is no room for designing and introducing deliberative curriculum. Seen in this light, many schools are far from the democratic education ideal. If this is so, do such schools become meaningless relative to deliberative democracy?

Chapter 3 in this thesis offered one answer to this question. With the deliberative systems framework, Chapter 3 demonstrated that the absence of deliberative curriculum is not always associated with the lack of deliberative democratic potential of schools. Distinguishing between schools and classroom is the key to understanding this claim. Even if there is no deliberative moment *in the classroom*, schools at large provide students with networks and opportunities to encounter differently situated others and to increase their interest in democracy and their engagement in democracy. Schools are spatially, conceptually, and functionally wider than classrooms, and therefore what classrooms can (or cannot) do is not always the same as what schools can (or cannot) do. This is best exemplified in the case of the non-democratic and illiberal school in Pakistan (without any deliberative curriculum), where the school served as a crucial seedbed for Malala Yousafzai's everyday interaction and conversation with friends and teachers, thereby cultivating her interest in girl's education and peace-making. Overall, when thinking about the meaning of the democratic school in deliberative systems, we should pay attention to different aspects of schools rather than focus only on what is happening in the classroom. Children's learning about deliberative democracy is a practice happening *across* schools, which is irreducible to a practice within the confines of the classroom.

- 5) *Non-deliberative performances and expressions conducted by teenage protestors can create an important foundation for deliberation unless they take an anti-deliberative form.*

As shown in Chapter 4, contemporary teenage protestors use a rich variety of repertoires of contention. Their activities are sometimes described as “festival” or “carnival” (St John, 2008) because we can see various performative, expressive, humorous, or funny activities that can be practised as parades, marches, cosplay, music festivals, and dancing. However, these activities do not always neatly adopt the authentic form of deliberation. Rather, due to their non-deliberative character, some deliberative democrats distinguished between protests and deliberation as a different, or even opposite, practices (Young, 2001).

Yet, this thesis demonstrated that there is a deep relationship between deliberative democracy and non-deliberative activities, drawing on the case of contemporary teenage protests in Japan, T-ns SOWL. More specifically, Chapter 4 empirically unpacked deliberative dimensions of teenage protests. This group’s sets of communicative activity take “ambiguous” forms (e.g. school uniform, Hip-Hop music). Yet, due to their ambiguous nature, the group’s activities signal to different audiences in a way that induces different interpretations of the teenagers’ activities. As a result, their activities enable wider publics to recognise the multiple political aspects of the issues surrounding the new security legislation, to redefine and reframe this issue from different angles, and thereby to create the foundation for reflection and further communication in public space. Even if children’s activities *per se* could be evaluated as non-deliberative with respect to authentic deliberation, deliberative systems at large can benefit from children’s activities as they develop further opportunities for deliberation across the system.

It should be made clear that the purpose of this thesis is not to collapse everything into “deliberation.” This thesis does not claim that all communications found in children’s participation are deliberative. Deliberative systems are “more than a sum of deliberative moments” (Mansbridge et al., 2012: 30). What this thesis emphasised is that we should not

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assume an absolute distinction between deliberative and non-deliberative. Even seemingly or low-quality or non-deliberative activities carried out by children can have a democratic potential, contributing to inclusion and reflection within wider deliberative systems.

In order to avoid uncritical concept-stretching, we should also be sensitive to the difference between non-deliberative and anti-deliberative activities. As discussed in Chapter 4, while the deliberative systems framework allows room for appreciating a specific *non*-deliberative symbolic action in a particular context, it does not do so when non-deliberative activity takes an *anti*-deliberative form. Anti-deliberative activity is neither deliberative nor democracy in the sense that it harms, stigmatises, or excludes specific individuals without a reasonable justification and thereby deepens divisions in society. As Mansbridge et al. (2012: 12) rightly note, deliberative systems should be deliberative *democratic* systems where there is no exclusion of “any citizens from the process without strong justification that could be reasonably accepted by all citizens including the excluded.”

Of course, there is a possibility that practices traditionally recognised as “anti-deliberative” can be re-interpreted as an important contributing part of the system. Drawing on the case of indigenous people’s practice of exiting from public debate in Australia and Canada, for example, Rollo (2017) argues that, while their exit was initially conceived of as the rejection of deliberation, it became recognised and re-interpreted as their rejection of domination, thereby inducing public deliberation afterwards. In this sense, “history is a key part of the evaluation of deliberative systems” (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2014: 30). History allows re-interpretation to happen and, more importantly, the effects of deliberation may take time to play out at the system level.

6) *Inclusion of children who have long been marginalised in deliberative democracy requires not only micro- and macro-scale inclusion but also meso-scale inclusion.*

Thus far, deliberative system scholars' main concern about inclusion is twofold: inclusion at the micro and macro scales (see, Bohman, 2012: 84). On the one hand, it is expected that various voices, interests, and concerns of the marginalised individuals ought to be listened to and taken into account by others (micro-scale inclusion). On the other hand, such expression needs to be informed by wider publics so that more and more people can have the chance to examine it in public deliberation and thereby can make a legitimate decision (macro-scale inclusion). This concern is valid. Yet, what is often missed here is *how*: *How* are micro-scale and macro-scale inclusion connected? *How* can children's voices presented in micro-scale deliberation be recognised by wider publics? For children as individuals who normally have a limited accessibility to connect with the wider public or authorities, they alone may not be able to make the wider public take up children's voices even if they are heard on a smaller scale.

One implication of this thesis is that we have to take into account the *meso*-scale inclusion that demands the design and inclusion of a space located at the intersection between children's everyday life and public spaces. As discussed in each chapter, classrooms, schools and protests on the streets can help children to politicise and examine their everyday experiences and then encourage them to bring their experiences into public spaces. The society potentially has varying meso-scale space that can induce macro- and micro-scale inclusion, which includes parks, churches, playgrounds, online spaces, and so forth (see, Moss & Petri, 2002). Viewed in this light, children's experiences shown in this thesis suggest that such space should be counted as one of the important constituting parts of inclusive deliberative systems.

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- 7) *The cases from Japan offer insights into how children who have long been recognised as “apathetic about democracy” contribute to democratisation of society through their engagements in alternative forms of participation.*

This thesis focuses on the cases from Japan despite the fact that Japanese children are usually considered as neither active nor enthusiastic agents when it comes to participation in democracy (e.g. Furuichi, 2011). However, similarly to other countries, here we have recently seen the growth of children’s alternative forms of democratic participation in classrooms, schools, and streets. Firstly, as we have seen throughout this thesis, more and more schools and classrooms in Japan and beyond are introducing democratic innovations into their curriculum (Hess, 2009). Secondly, inspired by the global raise of teenage activism, Japanese teenagers also engage in collective protesting activities.

The cases of Philosophy for Children, Ari to Pla, The Future Talk, and T-ns SOWL have emerged from such contexts. Through a close examination of these cases, this thesis demonstrated that children are not necessarily apathetic towards democracy, even if they might be apathetic towards the traditional understanding of democracy associated with the representative institutions or legal systems. Children sometimes design their own deliberative activities (e.g. Ari to Pla, TFT – Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). Moreover, children have the capacity to challenge authority and dominant discourses in a way that translates their everyday practices (e.g. school uniform) into politically contentious actions (e.g. T-ns SOWL – Chapter 4). And children sometimes harness the opportunity of classroom deliberation to examine and politicise their own lives and to get themselves involved in deliberative activities in public spaces (e.g. P4C – Chapter 2 and 3). In these ways, even if children can be apathetic towards political parties,

elections, or politician's activities, some children find alternative ways to become involved in democracy.

8) When interviewing children, issues emanating from power imbalances between children and an interviewer are hard to be resolved. Yet, it is possible to mitigate these issues by applying the idea and practice of the Community of Inquiry to the interview method.

Chapter 5 discusses the significance and ethics of approaching the lived experiences of children. Since this thesis, namely Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, significantly relies on the data gained from children's lived experiences, dealing with some problems associated with power imbalances between the children and the interviewer is essential to ensuring the trustworthiness, and credibility, and the overall quality of this thesis.

Interview in interpretive research places a special emphasis on the interactive process between participants in order to gain a deep understanding of the lived experiences of the research subjects (Shwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). However, this interaction is not always straightforward as theory expects, especially when it comes to conducting interviews with children. In many interview scenes, children do not want a researcher to enter into their world, simply because an interviewer is an adult. Also, some children try to answer the question in ways that meet the interviewer's expectations. Overall, children often use "counter-strategies" to protest against the power posed by an adult interviewer.

In mitigating these issues and the power imbalances in interviews with children, this thesis suggests using the pragmatist's practice of the "Community of Inquiry" as an interview method. This method encourages children to engage in question-based maieutic interactions so that they can act both as interviewer and interviewee. The benefit of this practice is to achieve *both* the

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generation of a well-examined lived experience of children and the minimisation of power imbalances between adults and children. Although CoI is not a one-size-fits-all interview method, it offers valuable hints about how interpretive researchers working with children can approach children in a justifiable and meaningful manner.

Limitations and future directions

The first limitation of this thesis, though outside of its scope, is that it did not deal with the way in which children's alternative democratic participation can connect with participation in more official spaces. Although this thesis seeks to understand how children's experiences can contribute to the vitalisation of public space, it does not unpack their contribution to officially empowered space. Of course, as illustrated throughout this thesis, having a substantive influence over deliberation in empowered space is not the only contribution of children in deliberative systems. Yet, in order to make children's voices heard in a more effective and meaningful manner, this question should be investigated in more detail. Future research can examine the links between children's alternative participation and existing participatory practices such as youth parliament. Examples of unaddressed but important questions are: Is there a link between children's alternative democratic participation and existing participatory forums, such as youth parliament?" "How can children's voices expressed in their participation in classrooms, schools, and streets be heard and considered in the broader democratic process?"

This thesis did not offer a deep analysis about the relationship between children and adults in deliberative systems. Even if children's democratic participation in classrooms, schools, and streets often challenges adult-centric norms and values, adults are not enemies. Establishing a healthy relationship between children and adults would offer various benefits compared with

boosting their division. Hence, questions such as “what kind of adult’s cooperation is necessary in promoting children’s participation?” and “what is a healthy relationship between children and adults in deliberative systems?” could be addressed in future research.

The core topic of this thesis was children’s alternative forms of democratic participation. While beyond the scope of this thesis, other spaces are also important to our understanding of democratic participation of children. Home, as part of intimate sphere in deliberative systems (Tamura, 2014), is arguably one of the important spaces where children are politically socialised, but also where they grow into deliberators (e.g. Bowes, 2004). Online spaces are another key space in understanding children’s participation in contemporary society. Although this thesis, notably Chapter 4, focuses on the *connective* rather than *spatial* feature of online space, as increasingly acknowledged by recent scholarly investigations (UNICEF, 2017; Livingstone, 2009), more and more children use online space as one of the sites for participation and become online activists challenging authoritative figures. Social media has been playing a powerful role in connecting children who live remotely to different spaces and serving as a platform where new political engagements are formed. Investigating the deliberative potential of these spaces shall be one of the future projects of the author.

A core presupposition of this thesis is “children’s democratic and political involvement is fundamentally beneficial for children.” Yet, this presupposition can be questioned by some scholars who are concerned about the “dark side” of children’s political participation and experience. Hannah Arendt’s controversial essay *Reflections on Little Rock*²⁹ (1959) is one

²⁹ After the US Supreme court announced desegregation of black and white students in public schools in 1954, black students were allowed to attend white-only schools. Yet it boosted white students’ discriminative acts toward black students especially in the Little Rock High School.

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classic example of this. One of her points in the essay is that it is adult's responsibility to keep children free from the burden of political conflicts (e.g. racial discrimination) because it unnecessarily exposes them to injustice which deprives them of their political freedom.

There are two recent examples that may support Arendt's view. The first one relates to Malala Yousafzai, who experienced a number of discriminative and anti-human-rights interruptions by anonymous others during her engagements in peace-building activism. Although she overcame such interruptions with her bravery, it is not reasonable to assume that everyone can act as she did. Rather, it is easy to imagine that many children may feel exhausted physically as well as psychologically if they were placed in the same situation as Malala was. The second example comes from student activists participating in the "March for Our Lives" in the US. After surviving the Parkland school shooting, the students stood up and challenged the current gun-control policy by organising a massive anti-gun movement. Yet, as a result, they were abused and criticized publicly by the right wing and the NRA (National Rifle Association). Hence, even if there is a lot of space in deliberative systems where children can act as agents of democracy, this thesis cannot claim that they are always beneficial for all children.

Finally, some may question the qualitative nature of this study. Given its interpretive focus, the thesis does not focus on a representative sample of the population. Yet, in order to show the role of children in deliberative democracy beyond the confines of the context of Japan, it is the author's responsibility to unpack the degree to which the insight gained from this article can be applied to other contexts. This brings the relevance of cultural differences in understanding children's participation in democracy. The study of "deliberative culture" (Sass & Dryzek, 2014) would offer some valuable insights in moving this type of research agenda forward.

Next year, 2019, will be the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that emphasised the significance of children's participation in democratic processes. Despite the limitations indicated above, this thesis has revealed alternative forms of children's role and participation in deliberative democracy that can offer new insights into the way in which we reflect and examine past practices and consider future ones.

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