

Educational Research 7

Paul Smeyers  
Marc Depaepe  
Edwin Keiner *Editors*

# Educational Research: The Importance and Effects of Institutional Spaces

 Springer

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# Educational Research

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## VOLUME 7

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### Aims & Scope

Freedom of inquiry in educational research can no longer be taken for granted. Narrow definitions of what constitutes 'scientific' research, funding criteria that enforce particular research methods, and policy decision processes that ignore any research that is not narrowly utilitarian, in many countries, create a context that discourages scholarship of a more speculative, exploratory, or critical sort.

In this series, internationally leading scholars in *philosophy and history of education* engage in discourse that is sophisticated and nuanced for understanding contemporary debates. Thus social research, and therefore educational research, is again focused on the distinctive nature of what it studies: a social activity where questions of meaning and value must be addressed, and where interpretation and judgment play a crucial role.

This educational research takes into account the historical and cultural context and brings clarity to what actually constitutes science in this area. The timely issues that are addressed in this series bear witness to the belief that educational theory cannot help but go beyond a limited conception of empirical educational research to provide a real understanding of education as a human practice. They surpass the rather simple cause-and effect rhetoric and thus transgress the picture of performativity that currently keeps much of the talk about education captive. The authors are united in the belief that 'there is a place within the social sciences in general', and within the discipline of education in particular, for 'foundational' approaches that enable the systematic study of educational practice from a discipline-orientated approach.

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# Educational Research: The Importance and Effects of Institutional Spaces

 Springer

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# Chapter 1

## Exploring a Multitude of Spaces in Education and Educational Research

Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe

The various faces of educational research have been at the centre of many sophisticated debates. This collection discusses the importance and effects of institutional spaces and frames for the shaping of educational research and knowledge, their production, dissemination and reception in international contexts. A historical and a philosophical focus are combined to understand different institutional spaces of educational research, but attention is also paid to their potential and limitations. Different meanings of ‘space’ are distinguished such as what this means at the level of the practice of education, for example, in a classroom, at the level of the institutions, and last but not least, when the focus is on the academic discipline of education. Thus, the perspectives on the multifaceted diversity of institutional spaces are addressed as well as the theoretical and methodological constructions of institutional spaces educational research is embedded in. The contributions to this volume discuss, among other things, the steps to investigate the social and epistemological communication patterns of historical and philosophical educational research, their disciplinary peculiarities and commonalities and their disciplinary boundaries. Thus, they offer a revitalisation of methodological reflections and approaches and strengthen the disciplinary self-observation and self-governance. Significant perspectives of investigation on institutional spaces of educational research are also

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dealt with; in addition to newly emerging ‘hybrid’ structures, networks and joint ventures, which take on functions of mediation, and control ‘knowledge management’ in the process of global adjustment, are focused on. Thus, the question is raised whether and under what conditions they are able to transnationally integrate national knowledge diversity according to common goals and perspectives. Already in medieval times and to a large extent apart from the local (spatial) constraints, a community came into existence which looked for a way to gather universal knowledge.

As can be witnessed from the existence of the many learned societies, the oldest of them founded in the fourteenth century, space, that is, an intellectual space, has been central to scholarly work in all academic disciplines. In some sense, ‘globalisation’ has changed this—as physical presence (geographical space) to take part in a debate, for example, is no longer necessary—yet in another sense, it foregrounds perhaps even more than in the past the embeddedness in ‘local settings’ and/or discussions. Spaces, as argued by Burbules in this collection, are relatively objective, defined by the contours of natural or architectural structures and locations—though they might already contain cultural markers and meanings. But *places* are spaces that have become personally or socially significant, because of their history, uses and cultural significance. Spaces are sometimes designed with the intention of making them places (a public square or a tourist attraction in a natural park), and sometimes they become so. But it is often the case that serendipitous events and circumstances make a space into a place that no one intended; other times, an existing place evolves over time to take on certain architectural or locational (spatial) features because it is where people actually gather and do things of cultural significance—here, the place defines and reshapes the space. The notion of ‘place’, therefore, raises issues about the relation between natural or human structures and dynamic processes of historical, cultural and social change, Burbules continues. Something can be a place and then lose that quality over time as people forget or as practices change; a space may acquire some new significance or meaning; or we might see ‘place conflicts’ when a particular space has different meaning and value as a place for different groups, thus far Burbules. The mental space, the way things are experienced (‘privatised’), is correlative to what is offered in the public space. Some places become spaces; others become unfamiliar. Educationalisation may bring the ‘private’ and the ‘public’ in competition. In some contexts such as child-rearing (see Schreuder & Dekker, Chap. 5, this volume), the educational space has increased in the sense that it is now more object of public scrutiny by professionals (correlatively the parents’ space to shape the upbringing of their children is narrowed). In other instances such as in the case of the curriculum, one observes a growing tendency to control the content of the curriculum (together with the educational processes). This dynamic seems to be crucially important: it delimits not only what one is allowed to think (e.g. in cases of censorship) but more importantly also what one *can* think (sometimes referred to by ‘cultural-historical geographies of knowledge’), in other words what one is initiated in. ‘Space’ is potentially a very rich notion: it has references to society, to interpretation and action; it allows for specificity such as in ‘mathematical space’ and invites to take up (challenging) opportunities and what is not yet conceived; finally, it admits to situate (individual) research projects.

In this collection, attention is paid to different disciplinary cultures, cognitive textures and languages, often locked into traditions of both national research cultures and educational systems. These disciplinary approaches form communicative spaces more or less separated from each other and use different concepts and criteria of methodological standards and scientific quality. Reference is made to different concepts, modes and structures of coupling or decoupling research and practice, and how this influences educational policy advice, raising the question whether and under what conditions educational policy and administrations are able to govern educational research into politically designated directions—including which criteria are used to justify, to evaluate and to analyse these directions. At present one finds a dominant tendency across the educational research cultures which introduce new developments: these include blurring the boundaries between research and technique, steering by results, radical shifts in communicative spaces, the appearing of distorting output indicators and new criteria for promotion. These affect the traditional research cultures and create new similarities and differences, new coalitions and resistances. In times of transition and uncertain and unclear situations, a contribution is made to investigate traditional and newly emerging institutional patterns of educational research, that is, disciplinary profiles of knowledge production, justification, reception and distribution, demands and expectations of educational professions and contemporary and historical policies in educational research in an international and comparative perspective.<sup>1</sup>

This is not the first time that the *Research Community 'Philosophy and history of the discipline of education'*,<sup>2</sup> established by the Research Foundation Flanders FWO, Belgium (Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek—Vlaanderen), addresses an area that is central for educational research. In both the first (1999–2003) and second (2000–2008) periods, which focused on '*Evaluation and evolution of the criteria for educational research*', various positions were scrutinised (see Smeyers & Depaepe, 2003, 2006). In the present (third) 5-year period of this *Research Community* (2009–2013), the overall interest is '*Faces and spaces of educational research*', which is divided into four subthemes (respectively addressed during the conference in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012): the ethics and aesthetics of statistics; the attraction of psychology; the institutional space, designs and material culture; and finally, the representation of educational research. The chapters published in this volume were first presented at the 2011 *Research Community* conference. Scholars from philosophy and history of education (some of whom are particularly interested in history and philosophy of science) combine their efforts to study 'institutional space' as part of both the academic discipline of education and the broader educational context. The chapters in this collection address a variety of topics such as how space in the geographical sense has helped to shape researchers' mental structures, how institutional spaces for young children emerged, how the parochial was dominant in the shaping of the American system of higher education and how the concept of space can help us to understand classroom practice. Texts (always in need of interpretation) are spaces too and such can also be claimed concerning the multilayered discursive space of research itself. An interesting area is mathematics education, and so are virtual spaces such as Web 2.0 to which other chapters turn. That all of

this has implications for the attitude of the researcher working in an environment of ‘innovation’ which may be one day possibly the virtual university is the focus of some other contributions.

In Chap. 2, *Lynda Stone* takes up the topic of institutional spaces in two regards, one the conception of democracy and the other in two times and exemplars of potentially democratic practices. The latter are first as a ‘failing institution’ particularly targeting youth in the USA today and second as a ‘successful institution’ in an innovative experiment at a psychiatric hospital in the late 1950s. Following the first setting, the central focus of the chapter is the theorising and its implementation of democratic character and institutional democratic development from political psychologist Harold Lasswell.<sup>3</sup> The last is in the form of research and its reporting. To begin with, the first section describes three contemporary instances of institutional failure: school discipline, the school to prison pipeline and the war on terrorism. At the least, these are a reminder that American democracy cannot be taken for granted and must be renegotiated again and again. The next sections introduce Lasswell, synthesise his text *Democratic Character*, describe and exemplify implementation of the innovation and offer an assessment by researchers Lasswell and Robert Rubenstein. The conclusion summarises the chapter, returns to youth and schools and closes with a comment on educational research.

In Chap. 3, *David Labaree* addresses ‘The power of the parochial in shaping the American system of Higher Education’. By the mid-nineteenth century, the United States had constructed the largest system of higher education in the world. Cobbled together without an overall plan, this system was characterised by wide geographical dispersion, radically localised governance and the absence of guaranteed support from either church or state. Only a small number of these institutions were creatures of the individual states and dependent on state appropriations. The modal institution was the independent college in a small town with a corporate charter and stand-alone finances. Most had the blessing of a religious denomination, which granted legitimacy and a source of students but provided little or no financial help. Instead, they had to survive on the tuition paid by students and the gifts of individuals from the town and from the larger church community. They operated in a very competitive market for higher education, where supply vastly exceeded demand and where their main selling points were that they were geographically accessible, religiously compatible, academically undemanding and relatively inexpensive. The purpose of this chapter is to show how this parochial and academically weak system rose from obscurity in the nineteenth century to world leadership in the twentieth century. By 1880, the system had developed a series of strengths that would serve it well in the emerging world of higher education: enormous capacity, spread across the landscape of a continental country; institutions that had the ability to survive in a highly competitive setting with little support from church or state; sensitivity to consumer demand, which allowed colleges to adapt quickly to changes in the marketplace; a broad base of popular support; and a reputation for providing a practical education. All the system needed was students and academic credibility, and the new model of the research university provided both. The rest is history.

In their chapter (Chap. 4), *Marc Depaepe, Lieven D'hulst and Frank Simon* deal with a remarkable historical example: 'Crossing the Atlantic to Gain Knowledge in the Field of Psycho-pedagogy: The 1922 Mission of Ovide Decroly and Raymond Buyse to the USA and the Travel Diary of the Latter'. They use a recent publication (Depaepe & D'hulst, 2011) reflecting the ubiquitous American influence on the construct of psycho-pedagogical sciences in Belgium, to clarify the extent to which space, in the geographical sense of the word, has helped shape researchers' mental structures, often for a lifetime. The publication contains the travel notes (in the original French and translated into English) of the future professor Raymond Buyse, made during his study trip to the United States—the country of choice for immigrants, at least that is the way in which it is impressed in our collective memory—together with Ovide Decroly in the spring of 1922. These notes are a gold mine for cultural-historical research into mental migration as well as into the related perception of the cultural context from which one wishes to import scientific opinions, ideas, theories, methods and techniques. On the other hand, they also reveal the reverse side of the scientific activity that these men went to study there, from the perspective of the history of science, among other things, as a consequence of their uncensored naiveté and stereotyping. The article is arranged into two parts: the first deals with the study trip and its mission, in relation with the general landscape of an emerging 'science of education' as well as with the individual careers of the travellers scientists. With some imagination, one can put this section under the heading 'macro space'. The second deals with some more specific aspects of the travel as reflected by the notes of Buyse. With the same imagination, one can call this the 'micro space' of the travel diary.

*Pauline Schreuder and Jeroen Dekker* continue with 'The Emergence of Institutional Educational Spaces for Young Children: In Pursuit of More Controllability of Education and Development as Part of the Long-Term Growth of Educational Space in History' (Chap. 5). They address both long-term developments and current manifestations of the continuous reshaping and growth of educational spaces, particularly in the Netherlands. From the nineteenth century onwards, those spaces developed together with the growth of educational ambitions as the notion of 'the child's best interest' became ever more prominent in policy, laws and in child-rearing theories. But there was no fixed understanding of what constitutes 'the best interest of the child'. Theories can be said to define mental space, that is, allowing for the dominance of certain understandings of the best interest of the child, resulting in the shaping of educational practices within the space that is allocated by laws. During this process, the boundaries between the private and the public, between the autonomy of the family and the jurisdiction of the state, fluctuate. Over time, the state has gained dominance over a larger educational space, while the autonomy of the family has decreased when it comes to deciding how to raise and educate children and how to decide on their best interest. The case of the Electronic Child Dossier is discussed as an example. New educational spaces in the Netherlands, developing within this long-term and gradual process of increasing influence of the public on the private educational space, became dominated by the notion of controllability. That notion can be found in the emphasis on procedures and systematic

educational methods and on asking parents to monitor their children's development. It is concluded that thus the parents' mental space to understand and shape the upbringing of their children is narrowed and has become an object for public scrutiny by professionals. As a result, public educational ambitions shape the everyday life of young children and their parents.

The interest for child-rearing is continued by *Pieter Dhondt's* 'A Different Training, a Different Practice: Infant Care in Belgium in the Interwar Years in the City and in the Countryside' (Chap. 6). Following the hygienic movement, the fight against infant mortality also became an important policy objective in Belgium around the First World War. Increasingly, the National Board of Child Welfare made an appeal to visiting nurses in order to give the mothers educational advice in their own environment and to control the children medically. The focus in this article is on the development of infant care as a specific educational space and how this received a somewhat different interpretation in the city and in the countryside, following on the training of visiting nurses in different nursing schools, themselves to be regarded as institutional spaces of educational research. The pillarisation of the education of visiting nurses along ideological lines resulted in a different approach of infant care. Whereas the catholic nursing school St. Elizabeth in Bruges regarded nursing primarily as a vocation and put an emphasis on the social role of the nurse in the countryside, the liberal *École belge d'Infirmières diplômées* decided in favour of an in-depth medical training, which resulted in a more professionalised medical approach of her work in the city.

*Pieter Verstraete's* chapter focuses on 'Disability, Rehabilitation and the Great War: Making Space for Silence in the History of Education' (Chap. 7). Although 'silence' can be considered a widespread educational instrument, until now historians of education have not devoted much research to the historical use made of it for educational purposes. In this chapter, he puts forward the fruitfulness of a historical exploration of the manifold and complex connections between silence and education. In particular he demonstrates how within a particular neglected subfield of the history of education, namely, the rehabilitation of Belgian disabled soldiers from the First World War, the silence or quietness one can encounter in particular spaces was thought to leave a stimulating impression on the mind of the mutilated soldiers. For those responsible of realising the rehabilitative measures towards (Belgian) disabled soldiers, silence was considered a pre-eminent educational tool that was intimately connected to the often heard pedagogical ambition of 'The right man on the right place'. However, by including the voices of the disabled soldiers themselves, it is also shown how silence at the same time was turned by the mutilated men themselves into a meaningful instrument, one that enabled them to resist the educational regimes of rehabilitation. The narrative enables us to steer away from the traditional interpretation of silence as being the opposite of language—and thus of the political. Silence, as will become clear, can and should be considered as something serving—whether intentionally or unintentionally—particular educational goals and bears in itself the outlook of particular world-views. Demonstrating this instrumentalisation, therefore, should be considered an important task to be carried out by historians of education in the twenty-first century.

Turning towards another kind of space, *Richard Smith* foregrounds ‘Interpretation: The Space of Text’ (Chap. 8). It is easy to forget that text too is an institutional space of educational research and one with distinctive forms in academic journal articles and books, forms that are often stranger and less innocent than they appear at first reading. If we suppose that text is a neutral and transparent medium for representing ‘research findings’, then we are unlikely to pay the attention we should to the forms that texts take, and in particular, we may not subject their more rhetorical and figurative manifestations to the criticism they deserve. As an example, he offers here a reading of a recent UK White Paper [*sic*] on Higher Education. Texts of course need to be interpreted: reflection on what constitutes sound interpretation moves us further away from the domination of empiricist paradigms of research in education and in social science more widely, and foregrounds the virtues of the good interpreter rather than shibboleths such as accuracy and ‘rigour’ that have their roots in scientific and empiricist paradigms. The strictures upon the written as opposed to the spoken word that can be found in a naïve reading of Plato (especially of a notorious passage in *Phaedrus*) have played a part in obscuring the significance of text and interpretation, as has the tendency to think of interpretation as a methodology of criticism rather than as a methodology of the production of knowledge and ideas. Interpretation, whether of texts or of people, can never achieve certainty, but the good interpreter can offer us grounds for confidence in her readings, and this is all the warrant that we are entitled to seek and that we need.

*Stijn Mus* continues this interest in his ‘Exploring Educational Research as a Multilayered Discursive Space’ (Chap. 9). In this chapter, a spatial metaphor to describe the pursuit of educational research is explored. During the last decades, all the possible candidates to safeguard the legitimacy of meaning in qualitative educational research—from scientific detachment to subjective agency—have come under pressure. What was shared by many of these orientations was a firm belief in empiricism and realist aesthetics to grasp the true nature of its object. A possible way out of this impasse might be to focus on the discourse itself and pay closer attention to the way realist aesthetics functions. Therefore, the chosen angle here is to focus back from the reality behind the text to the operative dimension of the text itself. Different levels of meaning, operative as different registers are identified, before exploring the ways in which their tropes influence one another. This will allow to appreciate how scientific conventions itself function as rhetorical codes to construct meaning. Starting from the fact that the text itself is performative for the emerging meaning, it is argued that educational research could be conceived as a cultural discussion, which engages in the construction of possible meanings and provides them an intersubjective—that is, a shared, public—character by gaining them legitimacy and recognition on the cultural forum. As such, qualitative research is caught in a permanent cycle of feedback loops between cultural description and cultural performance. From this follows the epistemic priority of the imagination over empiricism to bridge the seemingly natural and the not yet conceivable.

The chapter by *Karen François, Kathleen Coessens and Jean Paul Van Bendegem* turns to ‘The Spaces of Mathematics: Dynamic Encounters Between Local and Universal’ (Chap. 10). No doubt mathematics is the last place (or face?) to look for

‘situatedness’, that is, to show that mathematics too is linked to places, to people, to instruments and to practices. Yet over the past years, evidence has been accumulating that mathematics too needs a context in order to be understood. This contextuality ranges from the high-level, abstract mathematical discourse that requires a strong social closure in terms of experts to the educational context where mathematical thinking and doing is transmitted including the hidden philosophical and universal claims and to the ethno-mathematical context where mathematics is supposed to integrate into society rather than the other way around. In short, universality requires some very special contextual conditions to demonstrate its full force (at least so it is claimed).

*Ian Munday*’s chapter ‘The Classroom Space: A Problem or a Mystery?’ (Chap. 11) pays attention to another educational practice context. Though researchers from different backgrounds may perceive the classroom space in different ways, they arguably share one thing in common, namely, that they see it as a site for solving problems—teachers and children will be emancipated and students will become more effective learners. In this chapter, he considers what it might mean to think of the classroom as a space of mystery rather than a site for problem-solving. Here, he draws on the work of existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel: “A problem is something met with which bars my passage. It is therefore before me in its entirety. A mystery, on the other hand, is something in which I find myself caught up, and whose essence is therefore not before me in its entirety. It is as though in this province the distinction between *in me* and *before me* loses its meaning” (Marcel, 1949, p. 109). What might the loss of a distinction between ‘in me and before me’ mean for teaching and classroom research? This is discussed in relation to his own experience of both school teaching and working on a practitioner research course that employed the pedagogical model of blended learning (where most of the teaching took place online). He argues that the virtual spaces (forums and chat rooms) are suited to a pedagogy that favours problem-solving at the expense of mystery. During the paper, he considers the notion that cyber pedagogies fit in (too) ‘neatly’ with both current conceptions of practitioner research and school teaching more generally. All three are bound up in a libidinal drive to solve problems and delimit the classroom space.

The latter discussion is continued by *Nick Burbules* in his ‘Spaces and Places in the Virtual University’ (Chap. 12). He examines the transition of the traditional university into a partly *virtual university*, as we witness the growth of online courses and degree programmes as well as the increased uses of technology for the redesign of teaching and learning even within the traditional campus. He relies on the concepts of *space* and *place* to describe this transformation and relates these to changing understandings of knowledge, authority, and community within higher education. Finally, he relates this transformation to three key ideas in online education: the design of learning spaces; the social, collaborative nature of these spaces; and the potential and challenges of ubiquitous learning.

In ‘Material Contexts and Creation of Meaning in Virtual Places: Web 2.0 as a Space of Educational Research’ (Chap. 13), *Lynn Fendler* and *Karin Priem* offer further insights concerning the virtual space. They focus on the salient features of Web 2.0 as a space of educational research creation, distribution and interaction.

Web 2.0 is a relatively new reading/writing platform that cannot be fully understood without examining the history of reading and writing as cultural and literary phenomena. Drawing from the work of Roger Chartier and Bruno Latour, the paper highlights authorship and gatekeeping as salient cultural practices. Following a historical and epistemological approach, the paper has two main parts: (1) A Short History from Scroll to Screen: Materialities of Reading and Writing and (2) From Redaction to Compositionism: Epistemological Shifts in Web 2.0 Spaces. In the first part, they trace historical developments in reading and writing from scroll to codex to web-based formats, noting similarities and differences among various textual architectures and shifts in purposes of reading and writing. In the second part, they suggest that Web 2.0 spaces exemplify a shift from redaction to compositionism (Latour), which includes new displays of peer review comments and a redistribution of editorial gatekeeping. The paper concludes by suggesting that Web 2.0 spaces represent a historical shift in reading and writing practices for educational research, a recent shift that follows a long historical trajectory of previous shifts in the materialities of reading and writing. The architecture of the texts tends to be vertical (scroll-like) and multidimensional (hyperlinked). Authorship in Web 2.0 spaces tends to be dispersed, iterative and social, rather than individual, institutionally validated and static. The distinction between readers and writers has become blurred. The dynamic heterogeneity of compositionism is replacing hierarchical forms of redaction critique and authoritative reviewing mechanisms. Finally, Web 2.0 spaces have facilitated new research practices of data generation, community involvement, governance and surveillance.

In the final chapter, *Naomi Hodgson* discusses 'From Entrepreneurialism to Innovation: Research, Critique, and the Innovation Union' (Chap. 14). In the process of integration, Europe has been reframed as a different space. The Lisbon Strategy, which aimed to make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economy in the world, has recently been superseded by strategies for the creation of an Innovation Union. The recasting of the European Union as an Innovation Union recasts the role of the university and of the researcher. The shift not only affects institutions usually associated with knowledge production however; innovation is now a priority across all policy areas and for all actors to be able to adapt to and survive in current conditions. The creation of an Innovation Union brings about shifts of emphasis from a general entrepreneurialism to a more focused innovation and from learning to research. Current regimes of performance have been argued to effect an immunisation and thus a stifling, or domestication, of critique. The Innovation Union is constituted as a space by devices for measuring innovation and by actors acting in the name of such performance measures. The innovative researcher required of this space is a mobile, adaptable individual seeking permanently to rethink how she does what she does in the name of efficiency, sustainability and responsibility, for which she requires permanent feedback. The possibility of resisting this mode of governance requires a reorientation of the researcher's attitude to the present. This is explored with reference to the reconceptualisation of the university by Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons and the attitude of exposition found in the work of Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour.

## Notes

1. Some of the ideas used in the preceding paragraphs are based on the introduction that Edwin Keiner gave at the occasion of the 2011 conference.
2. For further information about previous work of the *Research Community*, see Smeyers, 2008.
3. For references to the works of the mentioned authors in this chapter, please see the list of references in the chapters that are dealt with.

## References

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# Chapter 2

## American Democracy and Harold D. Lasswell: Institutional Spaces of ‘Failure’ and ‘Success’, Present and Past

Lynda Stone

*We understand by democracy the practice of justice by majority rule.... [Government] of any kind is of the people; government by the people is majority rule; government for the people is the practice of justice.*

*When we respect the capacity of every individual to contribute to the common life, we practice justice and achieve democracy.<sup>1</sup>*

### 2.1 Introduction

Given in 2011 what came to be called the Arab Spring, with southeastern nation after nation demanding human rights and government change, democracy as an institution is at the forefront of minds worldwide. Central questions concern what *it* would look like in countries long without practice and what would be comparisons to nations with established democratic traditions. A year later, there are ‘success’ stories in some places but retention of the previous nondemocratic status quo in others. One aspect seems certain: This is that democracy necessarily looks different in diverse locales.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the institution of democracy in a US context beginning in the present in several domains that have educational import and returning to a theoretical, a philosophical, and an empirical past. The latter and principal focus is the writing and practical innovation in democracy by American scholar and political and social scientist Harold D. Lasswell who lived from 1902 to 1978.

As is commonly recognized, there are several meanings of ‘institution’. As used in what follows, the general term names something established and customary in a social order. Institutional spaces, moreover, are of various kinds that range from

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structures to conceptions. Herein a conception founds a structural innovation in democracy. Democracy, as the well-used phrase from the epigraph encapsulates, is government of, by, and for the people either directly or through representatives. The chapter has these sections: The first, entitled failing institution, sets out three examples of a seeming contemporary denial of democracy. The second section, introducing Lasswell, brings forth his career and character to a largely unfamiliar educational audience. The third, democratic character, explicates a text of the same name of his general theory of democracy. The fourth, innovation, tells of a democratic experiment conducted by Lasswell and a partner, Robert Rubenstein, at a psychiatric hospital in the late 1950s, of which the latter was a senior staff member. The fifth section, assessment, offers the researchers own evaluation of the innovation. The final section as conclusion summarizes the chapter and turns back to the point of section one to connect 'lessons' from Lasswell to American democratic practices today. These are important for society at large but especially for youth and schools. A brief comment on educational research closes the chapter.

Even though many forms of democracy exist or potentially exist for modern nation states, as an institution it entails commonalities; the introduction concludes with reminder of some of these. The institutional base of democracy is political but, in an evolving form, it is today understood that certain social and economic conditions are necessary for sustainability. Democracies seem not to do as well when people are insecure, hungry, homeless, out of work, and poor. Democracies are big and small, the size of nations, the size of neighborhood watch associations. Whatever the size, there is recognition of who members are, as individuals and/or groups. These members have rights and choices that in best senses include freedom of thought and action, of lifestyle, and of civic participation. Importantly, while participants need agreement among themselves for democratic activity, there must also be room for disagreement. Ironically, democracies flourish when dissent is centrally valued.

## **2.2 Institutional Failure**

This section begins with a bold contention: The institution of American democracy today is failing if not broken; its practices in many respects no longer embody just and equitable governance that are the ideals of its formulation. Instead, within hierarchical social structures, a rampant fear of uncertainty has led to a culture of behavior regulation, legal sanction and infraction, and severe consequences. This has resulted in what broadly may be termed a punishment and imprisonment society. Three present-day examples follow: The first is school discipline, the second is the 'school to prison pipeline', and the third is the 'war on terrorism'. All three, it is emphasized, almost entirely target the young.

School discipline today is often harsh and inflexible. It reflects a general impression, actually dating across a generation or more, that 'they' no longer are controllable and at any moment might revolt against their elders. Beginning especially with the

Columbine school shooting and heightened by September 11, respectively, in 1999 and 2001, this fear has resulted in a demand for ‘safety’ and ‘security’ at any cost. In schools, this is seen in very common discipline practices of entry metal detectors, surveillance cameras, police guards, drug-sniffing dogs, and even strip-searching of youth. In *Homeroom security: School discipline in an age of fear*, criminal justice scholar, Aaron Kupchik, describes the situation thus: “Schools define appropriate responses to misbehavior so narrowly that teachers, disciplinarians, and administrators tend to pursue only a single goal: following the school’s code of conduct and prescribing the appropriate punishment” (Kupchik, 2010, p. 6).

A school’s code of conduct quite typically is based in zero tolerance. This means that once a rule is in place, any infraction is treated in a same way, usually by suspension or expulsion from school. A child who unthinkingly brings a pen-knife in a lunchbox for cutting fruit is treated similarly as an adolescent victim of peer threats who for protection also carries a knife. Each instance is a ‘crime’, and criminalization of the young has become commonplace (Stone, 2011). A good example is the enactment of anti-bullying laws, passed in almost all states in the last dozen or so years.<sup>2</sup> Now schools, and their adults, can claim that they are no longer accountable for serious harm from bullying on and by young people that occurs in their domain. Rather, bullying is a matter for police and courts to handle.

An additional note. Along with invasive school discipline and youth criminalization has come an intensification of academic standardization and accountability, especially through testing. Even though there are voices calling for calmer responses, the nation is obsessed with its international rankings and what is widely perceived as the failure of public schooling. Larger issues of poverty, income inequality, and racist organization of schools are perhaps too ‘fearful’ to combat. At the edge of a national consciousness, however, looms the realization that punishment does not work.

Fear of disorder in school has an analogue in fear of crime in society. The second example is the ‘school to prison pipeline’ composed primarily of minority male youth—African Americans, increasingly Latinos, and those with disabilities (with female numbers growing overall). The school end of the pipeline begins in suspensions that culminate in dropping out. Across several decades, rates of exclusion are on the rise. Furthermore, youth lacking school credentials have difficulties finding work and turns to drugs follow. At the prison end of the pipeline, a first manifestation is massive incarceration largely for drug-related offenses. A second effect mentioned subsequently—and relating to the other two examples—is creation of a ‘penal state’. Numbers tell the story. The USA has the largest prison system of industrialized nations worldwide. A recent count of 2.3 million imprisoned persons means that 1 in 42 Americans at any time is confined. Social scientist Victor Rios (2007) breaks down the minority statistics. As of 2003, 12 % of all black males in their twenties were in prison or jail, almost 4 % of Latinos, and 1.5 % of whites. In recent years, states appear to be building more prisons; relating race and poverty, the lives of millions are tragic.<sup>3</sup>

The general result, creation of a penal state, is well described in a 2007 volume, *Governing through crime: How the war on crime transformed American democracy*

*and created a culture of fear*, written by legal scholar, Jonathan Simon. Even as statistics of adult violent crime show a decrease in recent years (as does youth violence), the generalized ‘fear’ of crime and need for safety remain. Simon offers this contemporary metaphor of a social classed society reacting to perceived threat. Across the USA,

the gated community style of subdivision and the oversized sport utility vehicles (SUVs) both reflect a priority on security and on reinforcing the distance that middle class families seek from crime risks they associate with the urban poor.... [This emphasis on fortification makes such communities] even more reliant on a command-and-control police and penal state. (Simon, 2007, p. 7; see also Western, 2006 and Marable, 2007)

The third example is the ‘war on terrorism’. Since 9/11, emphasis on personal safety from crime has been extended in the American imaginary into a desperate need for national security. This means to be free from attack at home and to engage in war abroad. The focus, fueled by religious fundamentalism, is Muslims ‘suspected of being terrorists’. Punishment for al-Qaeda, for example, has resulted in imprisonment practices unheard of since the twentieth-century world wars. In a relatively recent essay in *The New York Review of Books*, English, journalism and politics professor Mark Danner applies Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben’s term ‘the state of exception’ to America. If at first glance the first two examples of this section do not seem to relate directly to denial of democracy, this example is surely one of failure. Agamben relates that the state of exception is “a position at the limit of politics and law... an ambiguous, uncertain borderline fringe” (Danner, 2011, p. 2, citing Agamben, 2005, p. 1). Danner’s specific topic is the practice of official torture that previously was “‘illegal’ and ‘anathema’... [and] today... is a policy choice” (Danner, p. 3).

Policy, issued right after the 9/11 attack by the then President George W. Bush, called on the Central Intelligence Agency to ‘disappear’ perhaps in total as many as 100,000 persons into secret prisons around the world. No habeas corpus, no due process—as Danner puts this, “without legal status or even government confirmation that they are alive and in custody.... [such prisoners become the objects] of ‘indefinite detention’” (Danner, 2011, p. 5, citing Agamben, 2005, pp. 3–4). Different from earlier excesses by the CIA, this time the agency insisted on explicit approval for everything it did. Along with this, attorneys for the US Department of Justice actually explored and documented whether 12 torture techniques including the infamous waterboarding actually violated internal criminal and international agreements. In 2006, the US Congress granted approval in the Military Commissions Act.

Move closer to today. Public all along, gradually, these utterly severe practices of imprisonment and torture became more and more widely revealed. Media reports, Congressional hearings, investigative exposes, and former Vice President Richard Cheney’s proud memoir, *In My Time*, are confirmation. Under President Barak Obama, American policy is supposedly changed, but Guantánamo Bay remains open and ‘disappearance’ has been extended even for prisoners who are known to be innocent. As Danner concludes,

Americans, believing themselves to stand proudly for the rule of law and human rights, have become for the rest of the world a symbol of... a society in which lawbreaking, approved by its highest officials, goes unpunished. (p. 12; see also Cole, 2011)