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Propaganda as a (new) challenge of civic education

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Abstract

This paper argues that propaganda poses a (new) challenge to civic education. It examines the tension between education and propaganda in relation to civic education for adults considering (1) civic education as protection against propaganda attempts and (2) propaganda as a possible element of civic education. This paper explores didactical approaches and core principles of civic education that strive to both resist and deal with propaganda. The core proposal of the paper is to root civic education in the tradition of the German concepts of Bildung and Mündigkeit in order to contrast civic education with propaganda or manipulation.

Keywords: Adorno; autonomy; Bildung; indoctrination; instrumentalization of education; Mündigkeit; plasticity of human beings; propaganda

Introduction

Civic education – for people of all ages – is based on the assumption that each democracy is reliant on active, autonomous, civically educated citizens. As things stand today, one of the core challenges of civic education is the question of how to equip adult citizens with the ability to deal with the omnipresence of propaganda. This challenge seems to require an explanation, because everyday life and the political systems in liberal democracies do not appear to be connected with propaganda. Propaganda, indoctrination, or manipulation mostly played a role in historical considerations or analysis of totalitarian societies. Since the 2014 "hybrid war" of Russia in Ukraine, it has gradually become evident that propaganda and manipulation still present an important challenge for democracy today and thus for civic education. During this time, propaganda was one of the most important means of warfare, disseminated through a massive disinformation campaign in various forms of social media (known colloquially as “fake news”) and so-called “troll factories” (see Gerber & Zavisca, 2016). According to the 2016 Annual

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Imperva Incapsula Bot Traffic Report[1], 51.8% of Internet traffic came from bots, while 48.2% came from human users. Throughout the internet, automated scripts are buzzing: both advertising bots, which artificially increase the number of followers, and propagation robots spread "fake news".

The current situation is thus characterized by the fact that attempts to influence people's attitudes and beliefs through massive disinformation campaigns are ubiquitous. The intended deception behind such disinformation, as in the case of so-called social bots and trolls, suggests propaganda attempts. According to Ferdinand Tönnies, the essence of propaganda lies in the agitation of public opinion in a "grand style", which is intended to spread an opinion without regard for its truth and evidences (Tönnies, [1922]/1981, p. 79).

Propaganda was originally used in a neutral, rather than pejorative, sense as a means of disseminating ideals important for a special group. In 1622, Pope Gregory XV established the "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" (Congregation for Propagating the Faith) for the purpose of promoting catholic religion in non-Catholic countries. The word "propaganda" later developed a negative connotation as a means to indoctrinate citizens. Stanley distinguishes between supporting and undermining propaganda, defining the former as a sort of discourse aiming at increasing the realization of some worthy political ideals "by either emotional or nonrational means" (Stanley, 2015, p. 53). He defines undermining propaganda as discourse that 'undermines a political ideal by using it to communicate a massage that is inconsistent with it' (ibid., p. 57). Stanley refers to the WEB Du Bois's paper "Criteria of Negro Art" (1926) as a prominent example of supporting propaganda. Here, Du Bois calls on the African-American artist to use "propaganda" along with emotional appeals to win the respect, empathy, and understanding of Whites (ibid., p. 58 f.). Following his examples of supporting propaganda, it can be argued that democratic ideals could be supported by propaganda. However, Stanley emphasizes that any form of propaganda 'is a kind of manipulation of rational beings toward an end without engaging their rational will, so it is a kind of deception' (ibid.).

This article will examine the tension between education and propaganda in relation to civic education for adults. The issue of propaganda is certainly significant for the education of different age groups. For adults, resistance to propaganda is essential if only because propaganda, which works subtly, undermines the foundations of civic action of adults, and thus their role as a citizen. The adult as a co-creator of the democratic order needs civic education, which maintains and strengthens abilities such as autonomous decision-making, critical reflection and analysis, as well as autonomous opinion formation and thus the ability to undertake deliberate and mature civic action. Civic education is considered to be the guarantor, but also a beneficiary of the liberal-democratic order. Must it thus be an urgent current task of civic education to take a position on the outlined political and social change? Can (and should) education therefore reflect on and appeal to adults' traditional values such as autonomy, responsibility, and the capacity for judgment in order to strengthen the ability of adults to identify, analyze and disprove propaganda and therefore immunize adults against propaganda attempts? How can adult education develop skills that are lacking in the adult population? These are key questions of this article.

This article consists of two core parts. In the first part, after explaining the danger that propaganda poses to democracy, I will place propaganda in the context of civic education and democracy using two perspectives: that which considers civic education as protection against propaganda attempts and that which considers propaganda as a possible element of civic education. In the second part of this article I will discuss propaganda as

challenge of civic education and explore didactical approaches, core principles and ideas of civic education that strive to both resist and deal with this challenge.

The outline of the problem

Propaganda as a threat to democracy

Democracy is based on the principle that participation in political processes and decision-making is open to everyone. For the maintenance of democracy, it is essential that not only this participation, but also the corresponding deliberation and formation of opinions, is carried out without manipulative deception from any side: 'A democratic culture is one in which citizens assume that their fellow citizens have good reasons for acting as they do' (Stanley, 2015, p. 104). Democratic processes are legitimized by the existence of certain directives that are binding for all citizens, which must be the result of public discussion and participation to serve the common good. At the same time, it is obvious that discussions and deliberations based on deception or manipulation do not lead to legitimate decisions and therefore will not ensure legitimate democratic procedures. In his book *How propaganda works* (2015), the sociologist Jason Stanley calls for a scientific discussion of ideals and values that can serve as a foundation for public debate in order to find legitimate democratic rules (Stanley, 2015, p. 87).

The concept of propaganda is understood as communication addressed to the larger groups of society that aims at influencing public opinion on controversial issues. Propaganda was described by the American historian Peter Kenez as '…an integral part of the modern world' (Kenez, 1985, p. 4). Propaganda is thus a problem for educational processes given that, according to Jacques Ellul, propaganda by its very nature perverts the significance of events and insinuates false intentions (Ellul, 1962). In keeping with Ellul, propaganda is understood not only as the antithesis to education, but also as a challenge for education, which counteracts propaganda and other attempts of "seduction".

Hans-Jochen Gamm established the term "seduction" in a pedagogical discussion (Gamm, 1964) in order to characterize the nature of with which he characterized the educational practices and approaches of the Nazi dictatorship and the effects of Nazi ideology on the broad population. The "seductions" of today are certainly different from those described by Gamm in 1964 – at least in terms of content. Current propaganda is not aimed at the awakening of racial hate, at the production of obedience to a leader, or the breeding of a destructive drive against anything opposed to a racist ideology. However, people today must still be able to withstand the fears of an unmanageable world, seductive simulations and "alternative facts" as well as ignorant anti-intellectualism. Another challenge today is handling new digital forms of information dissemination, which are an integral part of modern society. These forms, which influence 'public opinion in a grand style' (Tönnies, [1922]/1981, p. 79), can create structures in which individuals and groups are irrationally guided by emotion, as was the case with propagandist mass events in totalitarian societies. In his study, the American education scientist Sam Wineberg even speaks of a "new reality", which demands a new "digital intelligence" in order to resist the manipulation and propaganda attempts of modern society (Wineburg & McGrew 2016).[2] How education can address these challenges, what the educational implications will be for methods, content and values, to what limits education will confront these issues, and what ethical considerations may be necessary - these questions will be central to the second part of this article. Next, classic conceptions such as those presented by *Bildung* and *Mündigkeit* will be considered as an adequate answer to new problems (see below, p. 18), including those of the digital world.

Civic education as "protective umbrella" against anti-democratic threats

Today it is hardly possible to imagine a life without digital search and fast-access information. The rapid availability of information, however, makes it necessary to critically examine the relevant facts and data. Therefore, competency is required when dealing with information disseminated by the media in order to analyze and reflect about the acquired knowledge – or, using Adorno's term, it requires "education for maturity autonomy" ["*Erziehung zur Mündigkeit*[3]"] when handling this information. The latest book by Fareed Zakaria, *In defense of a liberal education*, underlines the current need to once again focus education on strengthening those skills that help us meet the challenges of the increasingly globalized world. According to Zakaria, there are three key skills that form a solid basis for acting in this fast-changing and unsafe world: (critical) thinking, (argumentative) speaking and writing, and (lifelong) learning. These are also the qualities included in the German concept of "*Bildung*" (in some cases translated as education)[4] developed by Humboldt and interpreted more broadly by Gadamer, Adorno, Holzkamp and other thinkers. This article will therefore refer to the German concept of "*Bildung*" (and to the related concept of "*Mündigkeit*") to illustrate the distinction between (civic) education on one side and propaganda (and indoctrination) on the other.

Civic education is considered – from the perspective of many actors in the fields of science, politics and society – to provide at least partial security against anti-democratic threats. Political education is often seen as a "protective umbrella" against radicalization and group-focused enmity (Hufer, 2011). It can also provide a means to the formation of mature ("*mündig"*), active, and reflective citizens (Deichmann, 2015), a means of dealing with information in a global society (Overwien & Rathenow, 2009), and the development of a self-conscious attitude within citizens.

Likewise, civic education is considered to be an indispensable part of a democratic liberal society because it promotes its development and continuation. As Oskar Negt states: Democracy is the only social order that has to be learned – 'again and again, day after day, for a lifetime' (Negt, 2004, p. 197). A good civic education is able to provide this protection by fostering critical thinking within its citizens while pushing them to contemplate contradictions between appearance and reality in social and political life and also encouraging them resist, if necessary.

American education scientist Galston argues that: '[t]he viability of liberal society depends on its ability effectively to conduct civic education' (Galston, 1989, p. 92). The key word of his statement is "effectively" – but what does it mean to conduct civic education effectively? Questions about how effectiveness can be measured and other ethical concerns can arise in this context. Shall we accept any attempts of misusing pedagogical power by overwhelming students with pre-determined positions and beliefs, even for a good purpose? Civic education is obviously necessary, but how is it possible, given the societal diversity and plurality of world views? Stanley points out that '[i]n a managerial society, the greatest good is *efficiency*. In a democratic society, by contrast, the greatest good is *liberty*, or autonomy' (Stanley, 2015, p. 20).

To begin with the obvious: if the main goal of civic education is to enhance the autonomy and maturity of an individual and to foster the ability to think and to act for oneself, then there should be concerns that civic education might prioritize civic consensus for the sake of societal cohesion over the original objective of empowering individuals to disagree rationally with that which is simply seen as a "given", following the concept of *Mündigkeit* by Adorno (Adorno, [1971]/2013). In the concept of Amy Gutmann civic education is limited by the requirements of "nonrepression" and "nondiscrimination" (Gutmann, 1989, p. 78 f.). Are these principles robust enough to protect the civic education from misuse?

We need to ask ourselves what bothers us when we think about propaganda. I would argue that we should differentiate at this point between propaganda in principle and its consequences. Propaganda bothers us in principle, because it thwarts our autonomy and agency and is therefore an affront to our independence and rationality as learners:

> To attempt to thwart the goals someone has qua rational moral agency is to fail to respect her rational moral agency. And since a person's rational moral agency is crucial to her personhood, to fail to respect it is to degrade her; it is to treat her as less than a person. (Noggle, 1996, p. 52)

Propaganda also disturbs us if we consider the consequences of the way that an indoctrinated person acts and behaves in a community or society - without the ability to question doctrines or explore other alternatives, without developed agency and autonomy, but at the same time confronted with the complex challenges and uncertainties of a modern society. Propaganda is therefore of special concern for the field of civic education, where we connect with education our expectation of the development of autonomous, rational, competent citizens who are able and willing to make well reasonable, well-thought-out and mature decisions.

Propaganda as a part of civic education?

Civic education is never neutral, as it advocates for democracy. It is barely possible to imagine a neutral stance on such issues as human rights, human dignity, slavery, or racism. It is not unusual for civic education to be focused on different methods of teaching, learning and supporting rational inquiry rather than special content. Civic education starts with the experience of learners and provides them with the tools they need to analyze their own situation and to convert a personal situation into a political issue.

Civic education is however still in danger of being civic propaganda or even civic indoctrination. Sears and Hyslop-Margison wrote an article about "The Cult of Citizenship Education" in which they claimed that the discourse surrounding citizenship education used false crises and the language of crisis, sloganeering, committing to a cult mentality, oversimplifying, and demonizing opponents in order to achieve its goals. (Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2006). The fact that civic education could "overact" and become coercive and simplified should not be overlooked. Civic education demands that an educated, autonomous person search for truth and make intelligent choices that further her or his interests. Propaganda is often defined as a method of influencing people that attempts to bypass their reason and critical faculties, and therefore does not appeal to *Mündigkeit*, but reinforces the opposite - *Unmündigkeit*. Most importantly, propaganda follows the pleasure principle It works by steering those who are susceptible to its ideas toward a conclusion which is to be accepted without objection For this reason, it simplifies, is one-sided, tends to illusion, conceals, embellishes, offers stereotypes, presents itself as faultless and turns as a whole, because it can here most likely to be successful, appealing to the so-called deep person, to the emotions in people, to the existing needs and impulses, to the unfulfilled wishes which they claim to satisfy, not so much to the critical and ever-recurring mind; It seeks to persuade by stubborn repetition of its slogans, or by means of flattering images and affective signals; It seeks to avoid conflicts, hide alternatives, occupy consciousness with urgent short-formulations, etc. (Kuckartz & Sprey, 1969, p. 50). Kuckartz and Sprey, however, go so far as to attest to the similar motives and techniques of education, especially to education, which by methods "suitable for children" makes every effort to "get to the child" (ibid.):

> It [Education] is developing ever more elaborated methods of childhood, youth and adulthood appropriateness. It benefits from all pedagogically relevant results of anthropological research which have to secure the conditions of its success; It is increasingly taking advantage of a roundabout route through images and other emotionally appealing methods. (ibid., p. 51)

The theory of adult education as well as its practice is equally concerned with questions how to enable and support learning in the adulthood, how to foster receptivity and susceptibility of adults towards new knowledge and experience, how to overcome "learning barriers". It seeks to develop methods of teaching suited to adult learner.

The second part of this article will argue that teaching methods considered adequate for adults should be strictly oriented towards the autonomy and independence of the adult learner, which at the same time will strengthen the capacity to resist against manipulation and propaganda. The thesis of this article is thus that civic education aimed at preparing adults to deal with propaganda should include the principles and values described by the German concepts of *Bildung* and *Mündigkeit*. After providing different perspectives on the aims and functions of civic education I will briefly clarify its connection to the principles of *Bildung* and *Mündigkeit*, discuss its didactic principles, and outline the core ethics of civic education that seek to avoid propaganda and to protect adults against it.

Principles and strategies of dealing with propaganda in civic education

The purpose of civic education and its role in a democracy

William Galston differentiated between "philosophical education" and "civic education", defining the first as aimed at seeking truth and increasing capacity for rational inquiry (Galston, 1989, p. 89) and the latter as the 'formation of individuals who can effectively conduct their lives within, and support, their political community' (Galston, 1989, p. 90). Galston claims that philosophical education is universal and not 'decisively shaped by the specific social or political circumstances' (ibid.), but it can also have 'corrosive consequences for political communities' because 'pursuit of truth […] can undermine structures of unexamined but socially central beliefs' (Galston, 1989, p. 90). Civic education is, on the contrary, 'within, and on behalf of, a particular political order' and does not 'stand in opposition to its political community' (ibid., p. 90). Galston's classification can be accused of fostering a very narrow notion of civic education, but he does raise the important issue of a potential clash between rational inquiry and civic education if civic education is understood as a confirmative, (rather than, for example, subversive) element of education. Galston specifies, however, that 'liberal democracies, in particular, are founded on principles that can survive rational inspection, and their functioning is facilitated (or at least not crucially impaired) by impeded inquiry in every domain' (Galston, 1989, p. 90). Still, he holds the notion of civic education as an affirmative commitment.

Intuitively, we may tend to equate philosophical education as defined by Galston with the concept of "*Bildung*" (as it was defined by Humboldt, see below), while at the same time shifting civic education towards the pole of manipulation and instrumentalisation. *Bildung* is concept that implies as a condition sine qua non the attempt to capture the world in all its diversity, but also the specific given circumstances and the ability to shape this world. Using Galston's definitions and placing civic education only in the realm of supporting and consenting action would mean to narrow the very notion of civic education. Civic education for its part is understood by the prominent scholars as education aimed towards opposition (Hufer), which empowers participants to

question political communities and to change them or even to resolve them (in some extreme cases). Klaus-Peter Hufer claims:

> To my mind, civic (German: political education, TK) education is always critical, otherwise it would be neither civic nor education. It would be training, indoctrination or agitation with the aim of forcing the participants to conform, it would not be education, but its opposite. (Hufer, 2013, p. 120)

He claims that formulating criticism is already part of the concept of civic education itself. Basically, the common creed in civic education (at least in the German contexts) is the conviction that it should contribute to the (political) autonomy ("*Mündigkeit*") of the citizens. Autonomy means in this case that one can form an independent judgment on political issues and become aware of ways to participate politically. Civic education is therefore not aimed at simply supporting and strengthening political communities, but also implies a necessary element of intelligent criticism - thus it is routed in the concept of *Bildung*.

The relationship between civic education and Bildung

Bildung is supposed to be an open-ended process and could not be predetermined as an act of creation. The main goal of classical *Bildung* (understood in the tradition of Humboldt) is to give a person individual form or strength while developing his or her powers – and thus does not allow a person to be the object of any extrinsic vision. A human being should strive, according to Humboldt, to 'embrace as much of the world as possible and to unite himself as closely as he can with it' (Humboldt, 1903, p. 283). Humboldt therefore describes *Bildung* as binding oneself to the world in order to achieve the most common, living and unlimited interaction – the interaction between individual [human] receptivity and self-activity. The modern concept of *Bildung* considers education as targeting an active, autonomous person and his or her interactions with the material and social environments. *Bildung* is thus an open, self-reflective, never-ending process involving self-development through encounters with the unknown. According to Horkheimer, education is a pursuit of inner freedom. 'The desire for *Bildung* contains the will to become powerful within oneself, to be free from blind powers, apparent ideas, obsolete concepts, and dismissed views and illusions' (Horkheimer, 1981, p. 160). Furthermore, the central aspect of the *Bildung* tradition is a critical attitude towards the tendency of instrumentalism in educational policy and concepts. Instrumental thinking looks at learning primarily as a means to achieve "useful goals" or "results," and these results are often associated with economic metrics. *Bildung*, in contrast to the instrumental perspective, focuses on reaching autonomy along with personal development, growth, autonomy, and refinement. There is a "utopian hope" which is described in the classical concept of *Bildung* and entails a "pathetic" element: 'Education […] goes beyond the existing society - to a society of free and equal [persons], in which the humanity of the human being can emerge on the horizon of mankind' (Peukert, 1998, p. 19).

Education (combined with emancipatory cognitive interest), rational deliberation, and humane ways of life were considered by Habermas to comprise part of the path toward change in a society. The formation of (individual and collective) identity can be seen as a continuous learning process through critical reflection. Habermas pits his hope on "deliberative politics", that is, a process which is essentially based on the informed decisions of citizens that are made through democratic processes. These processes must

therefore be as fair as possible and must be "herrschaftsfrei" ("free of domination"), meaning that the participants of a deliberative communication are free in their thinking and judging and do not have any special privileges. The central element of the discussion is the argument obtained in pursuing the truth. Thus, this vision presupposes that citizens will maintain a constant interest, critical (self-)reflection and commitment, but also a special kind of education. The education and structures of society should be therefore shaped in a way that individuals (especially in their role as citizens) can be adequately qualified to exercise their autonomy (Habermas, 1992, p. 503). Education (in a broad term) therefore has a compensatory function: to strengthen knowledge, communicative skills, the commitment to common aims and values, and the capacity for critical reflection and assertiveness as well as self-belief and autonomy (ibid, p. 494 f.).

Within the German context, traditional theories of *Bildung* embrace the processes that involve transformation and development of the learner's personality and the transformation of one's relation to the world. Humboldt speaks of man's receptiveness and self-activity, therefore referring to both the process of understanding the world and the process of changing and designing the world. In this sense *Bildung* means dealing independently with beliefs and opinions – without indoctrinative coercion. It implies at least two dimensions: argumentative integration of something initially foreign into the horizon of the own world, and independent thinking and judging which enables one to relate to the issues at hand. The fundamental structure of every process of *Bildung* is the fact that every person should deal independently with things that are external to him or her. It is the process of world's disclosure ("*Erschließung*" as Buber puts it). *Bildung* therefore does not come from the acceptance of an external doctrine or piece of knowledge, but from the fact that something "opens" itself to a person which demands that the person expose him or herself to the world. *Bildung* is the persistent preoccupation with what is at first glance strange. *Bildung* means (open-ended) changes: through the process of receiving and producing the person changes him or herself, while also altering the world. Buber distinguishes between disclosure ("*Erschließung*") and the imposition ("*Auferlegung*") (Buber, 1973, p. 284f.). According to Buber, there is two ways of influencing the people and their attitudes: The first is imposing one's attitude and opinion on person he or she may adopt these imposed thoughts and reflect on this way of thinking as if it were his or her own. The second way is developing what a person has recognized in him or herself as good. Because it is good, it must also be alive in the microcosm of the other person as a 'possibility under possibilities' (ibid.). A person must only be opened up to this possibility through encounter, rather than instruction. The first way is for Buber close to the field of propaganda, the second corresponds to education.

For Humboldt the person and the citizen are not one as it was considered in Ancient Greece; but rather he ranks the person and personal development first: 'Humboldt argues that persons educated to free individuals will ultimately be better citizens than men educated to be citizens […]'. (Sorkin, 1983, p. 64). Sorkin underlines hence the interdependence between the inward *Bildung* and the outward societal structure and the civic activity of a person in the given society:

> In order for the individual to achieve and maintain that condition, the ideal of *Bildung* necessarily incorporated a vision of regenerated social relations. Society was to be recast to facilitate and foster self-cultivation, guaranteeing the freedom, autonomy, and harmony it required. (Sorkin, 1983, p. 66)

Sorkin argues that Humboldt's concept of *"zweckfreie Bildung*" (education for its own sake) seems to be oriented inwardly, though it also implies the "civic conception": 'Though social ties are the societal precondition for *Bildung*, the individual who has

achieved harmony in turn reacts upon society, and reshapes it according to the standard of that harmony' (Sorkin, 1983, p. 68). So, a developed (*gebildete*) person acts politically by judging and improving the conditions of the society or entity in which he or she lives. However, Humboldt was opposed to a purely political education ("*rein politische Erziehung*"), suspecting that *Bildung* would be subordinated and would lose its sovereignty to the patriotic education – the very problem which he elaborated upon in his essay *Decline and Fall of the Greek Free State*.

There are several practical examples of the prioritizing of human development over civic purposes (be they as noble and relevant as they may). One historical example is given by the famous Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, which is considered to be a hotbed for civic talents during the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. Myles Horton, the founder of this school, hoped to create a center for adult civic education which would foster the potential of adults to challenge an unjust social system affecting their lives. I want to briefly consider what the approach of Horton's school can teach us about the challenge of dealing with propaganda in an adequate way. Although Horton himself never spoke about propaganda, I will claim that his pedagogy could be considered as a useful tool to face this problem nowadays. Horton aimed to help adults become empowered, think and act for themselves, and change conditions they didn't want to accept. The people who attended Highlander included many of those who sparked the Civil Rights Movement: Septima Clark, Rosa Parks, Bernice Robinson, Martin Luther King, Jr., Esau Jenkins, and Andrew Young. There are, of course, some tensions between the two main goals of the Highlander Folk School: organizing and development. In general terms, the involvement of the community in these controversial discussions and deliberations helps the participants to go beyond the discussed issues and develop their cognitive, emotional and critical skills. At the same time, development (learning) as such can also divert attention from the active struggle for a urgent issue. Horton supports these dual components while emphasizing the principal indispensability of education as a person-oriented process. Horton believed that education was the key to social justice and the new social democratic order. Nevertheless, his vision of education was not instrumental, but aimed at fostering personal growth and development of citizens so that they were prepared to face all kind of social and political challenges:

> I'd say if you were working with an organization and there's a choice between the goal of this organization, or the particular program they're working on, and educating people, developing people, helping them grow, helping them become able to analyze – if there's a choice, we'd sacrifice the goal of organization for helping the people grow, because we think in the long run it's a bigger contribution. (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 116)

His ideal was not to inculcate knowledge and beliefs into the adults' mind, but to let them think for themselves and find their own ways of dealing with problems. Horton tells stories about having a gun pointed at him while angry strikers screamed at him to tell them what they should do. Horton instead insisted that he did not know what they needed to do - they had to find their own solutions for themselves (Horton & Freire, 1990). My argument is that Horton educated the adults so that they were prepared to examine various positions and solutions critically. He also encouraged them to lead and make significant contributions to their own discussions, and not to take any piece of knowledge for granted. Consequently, he developed an adult education institution that can be considered a prime example of inoculation against manipulation and propaganda.

The relationship between civic education and Mündigkeit

The core concept of the epoch of Enlightenment, related to *Bildung*, is the idea of or plea for *Mündigkeit* which involves freedom of thought and freedom to make own moral decisions. Kant was one of the first to try to define "*Mündigkeit*", but he does not speak about "*Mündigkeit*", but about "*Unmündigkeit*", and thus defines the term *ex negativo*. *Unmündigkeit* (often translated as tutelage) results, according to Kant's famous quotation, from a lack of the resolution, commitment and courage needed to use one's own reason without direction from another. Every single person therefore needs to have enough courage the think and act independently on the basis of his or her own decisions: 'Dare to know' is thus the famous motto of the Enlightenment (Kant, 1784).

> In Kant, however, this regulative idea of *Mündigkeit* cannot be understood as a condition or a goal of education to be attained by the development of competences, but rather as a permanent task of self-liberation from immaturity, as a courageous, uncomfortable process of emancipation, deviation and criticism from traditions and prescribed doctrines. (Eis, 2016, p. 115)

This reference to reason is interwoven with the notion of "embracing the world" (Humboldt) as a whole, or at least as much as one can by conceptualizing the experienced world. In other words, judgements and beliefs should be transformed into objective, universal validity, based on the assumption that there is a world in itself towards which all particular perspectives are directed. Stojanov explained the self-development of a person to be a social practice of world-disclosing:

> Here individuals are developing into subjects who are able to transform their opinions, notions and intuitions into concepts. The individuals are developing into undertakers and ascribers of commitments and entitlements, into scorekeepers who are able to apply the norms […].[5] (Stojanov, 2012, p. 83)

Bildung in the sense of cultivating *Mündigkeit* implies therefore a special attitude and special patterns of action: First, this is the attitude needed:

> To search for sound reasons for one's own and other's opinions and claims, second, this is the readiness and the ability to transform one's own intuitions and beliefs into justifiable conceptual contents, and finally, this is also the willingness and the ability to discriminate between good and bad reasons, that is, to distinguish reasons that have an inter-perspectival validity from those that are only expressions from private, purely subjective positions and interests. (Stojanov, 2012, p. 84)

The use of reason has, according to Kant, a private and a public dimension: He demands absolute freedom of the *public* use of reason (Kant, 1784, p. 484). Kant only meant for the public use of reason by adult persons who are the members of the relevant communities. The results of reasoning about public issues are then to be presented to the "audience for evaluation" (ibid, p. 486). In consequence: Every person, while thinking and acting explicitly from own reason, contests given assumptions and beliefs, criticizing them and adjusting them if necessary. By doing so, the person becomes responsible for his or her own reasoning and actions, and must make public his or her own reasons to follow (or not follow) the given norms of the society (Kivelä, 2012, p. 62 f.) By using reason in the realm of public space we are principally able to be co-creators of this space and to free this space of inadequate or obsolete concepts. *Mündigkeit* as a concept therefore implies an autonomous, public action.

> However, the basic direction and the essential endeavor of enlightenment philosophy is by no means exhausted by going through life only in a contemplative way and by mirroring it in a reflexive way. It does not provide merely a retrospective review, but the *power to shape the present way of life*. (Faulstich, 2016, p. 54) (emphasis supplied by TK)

The apparent link between autonomous thinking and acting is perhaps most obvious if we approach the famous demand on education made by Theodor W. Adorno and stated in his "Education for *Mündigkeit*": The first and most important goal of education is to see that Auschwitz mustn't happen again. He holds thus that the primary task of all types of education is to prevent a possible future Auschwitz, which is used as a symbol of absolute evil and barbarism. In order to eliminate existing and to prevent future barbarism, the "de-barbarization" of the society should to be carried on. The de-barbarization of society is, according to Adorno, possible only through education, but a special type which Adorno calls "Education for *Mündigkeit*". Adorno calls *Mündigkeit* (sometimes translated in this context as autonomy) the only true force against the symbol of Auschwitz. He refers to the definition of *Mündigkeit* by Kant and describes it as a power for reflection, for self-determination, and for non-participation. The path to a future Auschwitz lays, according to Adorno, with blind identification with the collective opinion as well as with manipulation by collectives. Adorno claims:

> Autonomy [*mündig*] is one who speaks for himself because he has thought for himself and does not merely parrot [...]. This, however, is proven by the force of resistance to predetermined opinions, institutions, and everything that is merely imposed and justifies itself only with its existence. (Adorno, 1971, p. 785).

The blind submission to a collective deprives one of the potential for self-determination and grades a person to a material or object, which Adorno called "the reified consciousness" (Adorno, [1971]/2013, p. 99). The prototype of "reified consciousness" is the "authoritarian character", which is characterized by the inability to make *immediate* human experiences. Without emotion, the person with authoritarian character is indifferent to other human beings (Adorno, [1971]/2013, p. 88 ff.). Adorno understands *Mündigkeit*, which depends on the critical judgment of every citizen, as a prerequisite for democracy:

> People who blindly integrate themselves into collectives are already making themselves into something like material, erasing themselves as self-determined beings. This includes the willingness to treat others as amorphous masses. […] A democracy that is not only supposed to work, but to perform according to its concept, requires autonomous people. (Adorno, [1971]/2013, p. 107)

No entity has the right to form human beings from the outside according to a given model or to forge a person to meet a given standard, according to Adorno (Adorno, [1971]/2013, p. 106). Amy Gutman put it similarly: 'Even if there were someone wiser than Socrates in our midst, she still could not claim the right to order the souls of all citizens.' (Gutmann, 1989, p. 72). It is precisely the value of *Mündigkeit* that underwrites Kant's famous dictum that we are morally obligated to treat each individual always as an end in him or herself, never as the means to an end. The autonomous person only can build and foster democracy because democracy is founded on the independent conscious decision of each individual. *Bildung* has therefore two main, though at first glance contradictory, tasks: On the one hand, it should serve the purpose of helping people adapt to the world that they live in; on the other hand, it has the task of reinforcing the individual nature and capacity to resist that which is given. *Bildung* is therefore situated between two poles: adaptation

and resistance. According to Adorno the overpowering societal structure fosters individuals more towards the adapting process, and therefore more education for resistance should be encouraged.

Over the past 50 years, interest in the question of increasing people's autonomy through educational efforts has grown. There has also been more attention paid to the development of a common framework for citizenship education emphasizing individuals' standing against any kind of oppression. Nussbaum and Sen have inspired an effort to develop an understanding of the overlapping capabilities which would enhance the ability to exercise a degree of control over one's lives, to make informed choices, to take part in the decision-making processes, and to envisage alternatives to given solutions (Boyadjieva & Ilieva-Trichkova, 2018). The questions of learners' control over the learning process and their willingness and ability to manage their own learning endeavors have been developed in the context of the theory of self-directed learning (Brookfield, 201; Candy, 1991). Several authors (of which Paulo Freire was the most prominent) drew attention to the issues of the relationship between hegemony and adult education, structures of oppression in societies, problems of dynamics of power (and how to manipulate these dynamics) and methods of emancipation from diverse situations of oppression (Mayo, 1999). Inspired by Freire's ideas, Jack Mezirow developed a transformative learning theory that was aimed at the enhancement of critical thinking and education-driven transformations on both individual and collective levels (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). The core feature of these diverse approaches (similar to the ideas of critical theory) is the belief that developing critical reasoning in learners and citizens is indispensable to the proper function of a free, democratic society. All of the aforementioned ideas fit together under the overlying concept of autonomy (Mündigkeit). Lifelong learning that address both universal and current challenges faced by society should still focus on the question of how adults learn to recognize (and resist to) ideological domination and manipulation.

How to protect civic education from misuse for political aims?

The question of the misuse of civic education for political aims has also arisen in Post-War-Germany – not least due to the historical experience of the Goebbels propaganda. After thorough discussions going on for a long-time pedagogues and political scientists convened in a sort of didactical Charta, the so-called '*Beutelsbach consensus*' (its name deriving from the small German town Beutelsbach where the conference was held). This Charta has been put down on paper in the year of 1976 and has not lost its significance until now. In the Germany of today civic (German term: political) education is still based on the principles of this *Beutelsbach consensus*. With the *Beutelsbach consensus* a stop sign has been erected, clearly expressing the message that political education is legitimate only if it is not exploited for political purposes. The following passages give a direct quotation from that document (Charta of the *Beutelsbach consensus*):

> 1. Prohibition against overwhelming the Pupil:
> It is not permissible to catch pupils unprepared or unawares - by whatever means - for the sake of imparting desirable opinions and to hinder them from `forming an independent judgement'. […].
>
> 2. Treating Controversial Subjects as Controversial:
> Matters, which in intellectual and political affairs are controversial, must also be taught as controversial in educational instruction […].

> 3. Giving Weight to the Personal Interests of Pupils:
> Pupils must be put in a position to analyze a political situation and to assess how their own personal interests are affected as well as to seek means and ways to influence the political situation they have identified according to their personal interests.[6] (Wehling, 1977)

These three principles need further explanation as well as expansion in order to meet the current challenges of civic education for adults, connected with modern propaganda. The first point of the *Beutelsbach consensus* makes a clear reference to the concept of *Mündigkeit* as the principal goal of every civic educational process. This point also highlights the issue of neutrality of the (liberal) state towards the diverse conceptions of a (private) good life. The neutrality of the state, among the diverse conceptions of good, is pursued in this case for the sake of opportunity and choice. At the same time this doctrine of the democratic state has to find a legitimate and justified foundation. As such, Gutman suggests:

> A state of democratic education is minimally objectionable insofar as it leaves maximum room for citizens to deliberately shape their society, not in their own image but in an image that they can legitimately identify with their own informed, moral choices. (Gutmann, 1989, p. 77)

This premise therefore implies the obligation that civic education has to increase and cultivate the capacity for rational deliberation among people from different ways of life.

The second aspect of the *Beutelsbach consensus* is closely connected with the idea of maintaining pluralism: reasonable pluralism (Rawls) is an indispensable characteristic of a democratic society that assures its preservation and development. Reasonable citizens are ready to propose and adhere to acceptable rules when living together in society, so long that they are certain that others are also doing so. Every reasonable citizen has a "comprehensive doctrine," or world view, though he or she should not want to impose this doctrine on others. In this sense, the presence of propaganda in interactions or public debate between human beings in their roles as *homo politicus* is a particular danger. Propaganda makes it difficult for participants in the debate to be reasonable. If there are propaganda attempts, being reasonable should mean then to exclude a certain propagandist perspective from the debate. Stanley claims that propaganda, which pretends to provide a reasonable contribution to a public debate, destroys the empathy of a group (Stanley, 2015, p. 108). Furthermore, propaganda undermines basic features of "public reasonableness" such as dignity and respect for the fellow citizen (Stanley, 2015, p. 109). So, this second point of the *Beutelsbach consensus* seems to require further explanation when considering the potential for manipulation. The technique of searching for balance where there is none could be misused to shift the opinion towards a supposedly “ideal compromise”. Not all controversial positions have the same claim to truth, and this claim must therefore be thoroughly examined. The concept of truth remains thus one of the central points of the discussion about education and propaganda. Here, truth is not the schematically calculated, or “golden” center between the expressed positions. The search for truth has nothing to do with a “mathematically” calculated balance, as the truth can also be "marginal". This marginal position must at least not be interpreted as that which has to be "moderated", "corrected" or "mitigated" by other positions. A contribution to a (political) debate must be justified, and be assessed solely by its impact on the truth of the issue, or what Habermas famously calls ‘the unforced force of the better argument’ (Habermas, 2005, p. 20). Timothy Snyder, a historian at Yale, speaks about the demolition of truth as an intentional action of propaganda machinery that aims to ruin trust in a society. If nobody knows what truth can be, the

feeling of mutual distrust spreads throughout society ending in an erosion in any belief in authority. For Snyder, to abandon facts is to abandon freedom, and abandoning the search for truth means abandoning the basis for judgment and critical reflection (Snyder, 2017). Snyder points out that 'Post-truth is pre-fascism' (Snyder, 2017, p. 71). In this context the concept of a "noble lie" could be mentioned. This idea, developed by Plato, questioned whether deception can be justified if its purpose is to protect someone or to mobilize a group for supporting a worthy idea. Michael P. Lynch points out that the problem with "noble lies" is that 'they are like potato chips: it is hard to stop with just one,' and the risk is high that, for example, 'cover-ups become noble lies' (Lynch, 2016, p. 83). Karl Popper (similar to Snyder) sees the noble lie as a part of a totalitarian society (or at least leading to one).[7]

The third point of the consensus was expounded in the 1990s against a background of discussion about civil society and communitarianism:

> The pupil (and adult) must be enabled to analyze political problems, to put him or herself in the situation of those who are affected [by these problems], and to search for ways to influence solutions in the sense of his or her own well-intentioned self-interest, while taking into account the co-responsibility for social coexistence and the community in its various manifestations. (Schneider, 1996, p. 220)

This point emphasizes the demand on education to foster the ability to defend one's own personal and political commitments (if they are defensible). The idea is that educators and educational institutions would act not only unprofessionally, but also immorally, if they did not take note of the intuitions, desires, fears and biographies of their participants. These educators or institutions would be similarly tainted if they denied participants' ability to articulate those intuitions, desires and fears, and therefore prevented the 'game of giving and asking for reasons' (Brandom, 2002, p. 350), which would mean that the ability to argue is an important but not unique precondition for *Bildung*. Stojanov speaks of the necessity to make a jump: from the only narrative expression of one's own beliefs and opinions to their conceptual articulation (Stojanov, 2012, p. 85). What is meant here is the ability to generalize particular problems and concepts, to transcend the limitations of purely subjective experiences and perspectives, and to recognize principles of the "whole world" (without oversimplification and homogenization).

Plasticity of a human being: Bildung and Bildsamkeit/education and educability

It seems obvious that propaganda and manipulation pose a threat for developing autonomy and critical reflection in a population. One of the ways to understand how manipulation threatens autonomy and *Bildung* is to think in terms of self-determination and (certain) independence from the external will. But at the same time if one considers the preconditions for propaganda and education, the possibility of influencing human beings must be considered as well. Propaganda and education, however, are limited by the individual's motivational structure. In German pedagogical theory, the topic of vulnerability to influence is discussed under the term "*Bildsamkeit*" (educability). The term "*Bildsamkeit*," which was introduced and developed by Hegel, implicitly describes the susceptibility of a person to being influenced. This is the fundamental presupposition of every pedagogical effort, because it is the only way to trigger a change in a person. This tradition reaches into in modern times when a person is seen as *homo educandus*, a lifelong learner, and a plastic and flexible "learning being". The most important representatives of German anthropology such as Scheler, Plessner, Gehlen, or Portman postulate that the openness and plasticity of human beings are distinctive features of

mankind. Educability is the precondition for education, thus the possibility of education requires the ability to be educated as a matter of principle.
The naturally given educability of a human being is not infinite, however. In his anthropology Humboldt has coined the term "powers" ("*Kräfte*") as something given to a human being by nature, making up his or her very essence. Power is energy that allows and facilitates the action of a human being. "Power" by Humboldt can also be understood as a resistance to all possible attempts at manipulation:

> How deeply one would delve and how close one would get to the truth always remains an unknown dimension of the primitive force, the original ego, and the personality, given with birth. The freedom of man rests upon it, and it is, therefore, man's proper character. (Humboldt, 1904, p. 90)

It is also the power that limits all educational efforts:

> It is precisely this power which, in education, so often misleads our expectations, or makes our efforts fruitless. […] *No living force behaves by merely suffering against foreign exposure*. However, it may be strengthened and supported externally, though all that happens is by internal energy and is its own work. When we complain about the resistance that human nature also offers against a wise *Bildung*, we must not forget that without such a power of repulsion a faculty of appropriation wouldn't be possible. (Humboldt, 1904, p. 90) (emphasis by TK)

It is therefore "power" as an inner trait which (partly) protects a human being from manipulation and propaganda.

Fridenthal-Haase differentiates between "educability" and a general ability to learn. To follow the approach of Martin Buber, Friedenthal-Haase considers that the general ability to learn is always given, throughout the whole life span. Educability implies the possibility of education in the sense of an "essential influence" (Friedenthal-Haase, 1991, p. 17). An adult person with a high degree of autonomy and maturity develops resistance against fundamental change. In this way, however, the mature person is also at risk of reinforcement, of closure, even of "encrustation", as Buber put it. The tendency toward reinforcement and closure is, however, characteristic for only the "normal" situation, but if a person passes through a period of personal or social crises, he or she is likely to re-open him or herself to a fundamental change, such as a personal growth or development. A severe crisis rousing the person out of his or her sense of security dissolves the feeling of ready-made personality and re-opens the possibility of "essential influence" (Buber, 1934).

> Crisis is always a decisive situation of the greatest seriousness, when it comes to the realization or failure of ultimate values. It includes the possibility of decay, destruction, death or salvation, healing and a new beginning. (Friedenthal-Haase, 1991, p. 21).

So, we can also pose the question: If a person in the time of crisis is open to an "essential influence", is he or she at the same time more susceptible to propaganda? In any case, the situation is characterized by a particular dependency on others. In the best case, the result of crisis management is, according to Buber, a development of the bonds between the people in the newly formed learning and teaching community where 'man helps man, instructs him, and lets himself be instructed by him' (Buber, 1963, p. 605). Thus, in the pursuit of human existence, a human being is constantly in need of guidance on norms and ethics.

Reluctance to learn and the autonomy of learners

In order to attract the learning person (especially adult learners) and to facilitate learning processes, pedagogical research develops approaches that attempt to reduce or even overcome the so-called reluctance to learn ("*Lernwiderstände*"). Since the 1980s innovative didactics have been developed to utilize the interactive method, low-threshold offers, and addressee-appropriate language. Visualization methods have proved particularly effective. According to different learning theories there are at least two ways that a person learns: implicit, unintended learning and intentional learning. Intentional learning is learning which is consciously intended by the person. Intentional learning is triggered when people encounter problem situations that are caused when their routine is no longer successful, or when they are experiencing a clash between their wishes and their abilities.[8] Here Klaus Holzkamp makes a distinction between defensive learning and the expansive learning. We learn expansively coming from own interests and gaining an "extension" of our empowerment. Learning under coercion - whatever it may be - is a defensive learning (Holzkamp, 1991). Learning opportunities (and, maybe, in a certain sense *Bildung* opportunities) cannot always be considered as a privilege, but sometimes may be seen as an annoying impertinence. The so-called "pedagogical index finger" can indicate the disesteem of a learning subject (Schäffter, 2000, p. 20). Schäffter points out that there are forms of "intelligent learning refusal": the reasonable resistance to learning (Schäffter, 2000, p. 21).

The challenge for education is therefore to arrange and define learning opportunities, without causing learners to perceive them as patronizing impositions of learning. However, the decision between learning and non-learning remains with the adult student. The (adult) learning person must necessarily be recognized as self-responsible subject and autonomous actor, who, in the context of his or her own life and future plans must deal with the constraints and possibilities of everyday praxis, thus accepting or refusing the occasion to learn and change based on his or her own ability to think, to judge and to act for him or herself. This would require a certain quality of pedagogical/social relations which, referring to Stojanov, can be considered to be a form of "educational justice": (Institutionalized) interaction structures in the education system must enable the participants to experience recognition, moral respect and social appreciation. Bildung is only possible through social appreciation and recognition which Stojanov calls "cultural-biographical recognition" (Stojanov, 2006, p. 199). This recognition implies the core assumption that every person has the potential for individual autonomy and social participation (Stojanov, 2006, p. 164 ff.). "Educational justice" is therefore a precondition for human growth and for *Bildung* which is defined by Stojanov not as a "possession" of something but as process of personal development. The phenomenon of injustice in the education system must be interpreted as a lack of recognition for every single individual. This means 'Recognizing the ability of all individuals to articulate their personal and distinctive, biographically-embedded qualities and competencies so that they can be seen as a potential contribution and / or enrichment for the whole society' (Stojanov, 2007, p. 43). The center of the competence profile of a teacher's profession is not defined by didactic and methodical skills, but the ability to achieve intersubjective recognition. *Bildung* is therefore also about the qualitative improvement of social relationships. *Bildung* is anchored in social conditions; Stojanov asks therefore what standards should be fulfilled by these conditions, 'so that they can foster education and subject' (Stojanov, 2011, p. 70). The experience of recognition is considered essential for the maintenance of positive identity and capacity for action.

According to Gertrud Wolf the experience of autonomy is the core motivating factor for learning and acting as an adult person. The feeling of being autonomous is an

important part of one's identity, because it opens up opportunities for action in which one can judge and act independently of others. Considering autonomy as a necessity, learning in adulthood can be accompanied by anxiety or at least stress-inducing feelings. The demand for autonomy can thus cause inner opposition to learning processes, or, to use the established term, provoke the "*Lernwiderstand*". This "opposition" can be, according to Wolf, a sign of a successful learning process and of stable autonomy (Wolf, 2013, p. 27). To recognize the (adult) learner as an autonomous being means to give him or her full respect, to recognize his or her life experience and motives as well as his or her resistance, and to deal with it carefully: 'This fundamental recognition of the autonomy of the learner lends the adult pedagogical claim to self-determination its actual dignity' (ibid.).[1]

Once we consider such a perspective we can argue that the ideal tool against propaganda and manipulation might not involve an educational strategy to overcome resistance to learning, encouraging the learners to gain as much knowledge as possible. Rather, a successful strategy might seek to reinforce one's own position as a reasonable stance in the world or one which respect the limits of "educability" determined by the person's powers (Humboldt) and therefore protects space for self-development within the framework of the immediate person-world-interaction.

Gutman points out that 'a good life must be one that a person recognizes as such, lived from the inside, according to one's own best lights' (Gutmann, 1989, p. 72). So, it is each person's responsibility to choose and to justify for him or herself a concept of a good life, and not that of a philosopher (king) to choose the best life and the best society for a given group, because this sense of good must justified by every citizen by accepting it as his or her own. The aim of civic education could therefore be to achieve the greatest possible balance between consent and disagreement, between transformation and integration, and between the capability to personally embrace social issues and to look critically upon them from the perspective of the "foreigner" in order to seek the truth.

Emotional competence as "protective umbrella" against propaganda

Propaganda is supposed to work through simplification and appeals to emotion (such as fear, anger, etc.). The problem here lies not in the simple fact that education appeals to emotions as well, since education cannot help but address the human being as a whole. It is problematic when education misuses emotion in a purposeful way to define and form the attitudes and beliefs of the learner, bypassing the learner's opportunity to reflect critically on these beliefs. According to the notion of *Mündigkeit*, a person acts autonomously/*mündig* when his or her actions are determined by reason, rather than by irrational impulses or emotions. For the self-governance of the person, use of reason is essential.

Besides the use of reason and power of judgment, the ability to develop *Mündigkeit* and the process of lifelong *Bildung* are important. Different thinkers use different language: mutual respect, empathy, solidarity etc. In every case it is about recognizing the other person as a subject (according to Kant, persons are ends in themselves, not as objects[9]) and as a human being equipped with reason and the ability to provide reasonable justification for one's own beliefs and actions. While emphasizing the notion of autonomy

[1] The focus on autonomy in this section doesn't embrace the notion of collective-based identity. The reliance on the others and reciprocity is nevertheless an important dimension of human development and human growth. This reliance doesn't automatically undermine personal autonomy; in fact, the feminist and communitarians approaches advocate the opposite. The aim of this part of the article is, however, to elaborate on individual perspectives, rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment.

as the core aspect of adult education, Eneau looks closely on the interpersonal dimension of education and advocates the idea of reciprocity as a precondition for gaining autonomy as a result of the reciprocal relationship between individuals (Eneau, 2008). Stanley argues that a democratic society must demand empathy, or the ability to take the perspective of another, of its members (Stanley, 2015, p. 101 f.). Martha Nussbaum also regards the ability to empathize as one of the most important preconditions for democracy and logical thinking outside the restrictive stencils. This includes 'the ability to imagine what the experience of another might be like' and 'the ability to see the world as a place in which one is not alone—a place in which other people have their own lives and needs, and entitlements to pursue those needs' (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 97). Nussbaum considers emotions to be a form of cognition for thinking about things that are important from the personal perspective, but often exceed personal control (Plumb, 2014). For developing empathy, according to Stanley (2015, p. 102), one needs an "imaginative capacity" - an ability to imagine oneself in the situation of another, as well as the ability to give equal weight to different perspectives of fellow citizens. This "imaginative capacity" is the distinguishing feature between benevolent paternalism and the democratic culture favoring the latter: 'A benevolently paternalistic society is one in which policymakers have empathy with those who are subject to its policies, but do not treat them with equal respect' (Stanley, 2015, p. 101). Following Darwall, Stanley speaks of cognitive empathy (ibid.). At the same time, Stanley admits that cognitive empathy is an ideal goal and provides an effective basis for another ideal - for the ideal of democracy (Stanley, 2015, p. 103). Gutman argues that citizens must be taught 'mutual respect among persons' and 'rational deliberation among ways of life' – and this is one of the most difficult challenges facing peaceful coexistence in a heterogeneous society.

Conclusions

Education during the whole life means developing one's own strategies of action in the face of the given social and political situation: by recognizing one's own situation requirements in the context of what is given and by conceiving of possibilities to improve one's own world by intervening in the given. In this sense, education does not mean the mediation of knowledge but the development of judgment - the postulate, which has its roots in the epoch of Enlightenment.

The core idea of this article is to root civic education in the tradition of the German concept of *Bildung* and *Mündigkeit* in order to contrast civic education from propaganda or manipulation. We offer several reasons to justify referring to *Bildung* as an important concept which has not lost its meaning and importance in the present day: 1) *Bildung* respects the individual and puts personal development in the center and therefore 2) *Bildung* prohibits any kind of instrumentalisation of a human being 3) *Bildung* imposes the foundation of democratic principle and civic activities 4) with these characteristics *Bildung* can be seen as an effective tool against propaganda and discrimination.

The special nature of the concept of the *Bildung* is that education is considered not as an individual acquisition of knowledge (with a special emphasis on the instrumental function) but as a path to individual and collective self-determination and liberation (emancipation). Education is a social process and depends as such on communication, exchange, and mutual understanding. Learners are not objects, but subjects in their own learning process, at the same time they determine their own study interests and acquire the necessary knowledge that they will later reflect upon and apply in practice. Education must however be an education 'for protest and for resistance', says Adorno.

In his last major work, *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, Kant has defined the following maxims of good judgement: '1. Thinking *for oneself*. 2. To think oneself (in communication with human beings) into the place of every *other person*. 3. Always to think consistently with oneself' (Kant, 2006, p. 124). This seems to be a good guideline for the way in which civic education and propaganda can be separated: The first demand formulated by Kant is aimed at the promotion of autonomy/*Mündigkeit* of the individual through education; the second demand stresses the need for empathy and insights into the standpoints of the others; the third point requires a coherence of convictions and judgments. These are the very aims of a civic education which is based on the traditions of emancipation, empowerment and the development of agency.

Notes

[1] https://www.incapsula.com/blog/bot-traffic-report-2016.html (Retrieved August 24, 2017).
[2] The study has not yet been published; the first results have already been presented in numerous newspaper reports. The official summary of the results is available at the following link: https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%2011.21.16.pdf (Retrieved August 24, 2017). In the study, Wineberg points out the inability of pupils to recognize "fake news". In his follow-up study, to be published 2017/2018, Wineburg said to have come to similar conclusions even with adults.
[3] *Mündigkeit* is translated into English as autonomy or maturity. For the reason of accuracy there is a need to use the German term "*Mündigkeit*" at some places of this article.
[4] The term "*Bildung*" seems to be a specifically German term difficult to translate in any other language. For the reason of accuracy, we will use here the German word *Bildung* without English translation.
[5] Stojanov refers here to the approaches of Robert Brandon and McDowell.
[6] Translation by R. L. Cope: http://www.lpb-bw.de/beutelsbacher-konsens.html
[7] On the contrary, Leo Strauss defends the concept of "noble lies" as necessary myth giving meaning and purpose to a stable society (Strauss, 1952).
[8] In the Theory of transformative learning by Mezirow it calls "disorienting dilemma".
[9] Adorno also requires "turning to subject" as means to fight the barbarism in the German society after the Nazism.

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