

Abstract

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Title: Democracy and political concepts of children with a migration background. An explorative study with focus groups

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Abstract

As various studies have proven, children are already aware of political and democratic issues at primary school age. The studies show on the edge that the origin or rather a migration background influence the response behaviour. However, children with a migration background have not been the focus of scientific interest. In view of the above, this dissertation analyses the democratic and political concepts of primary school children with a migration background and thereby closes a research gap. By means of a qualitative and explorative approach in the form of three focus groups, (implicit) concepts on democracy and politics are identified. For the scientific interest different characteristics of democracy and politics emerge, which highlight the dimensions of data collection and evaluation. Therefore, the focus groups are sorted by topic in order to identify commonalities, differences and striking features within the individual focus groups and between these groups.

The research shows that different focal points of the focus groups emerge for all concepts, associations, impressions or views in regard to the conceptualized democracy and political features. Certain values such as justice, solidarity and tolerance are repeatedly named. These values define a value-related framework. Such a framework is elementary for a democratic coexistence if an authoritarian form of government, attitudes that violate human rights and a negative view of the German Constitution are denied as a basic postulate.

The students already knew about basic democratic processes (eg. the choice of class-speakers); and they independently developed democratic solutions to reported dilemma situations. Therefore, above all dilemma stories come into question as a method for learning democracy and politics. On the basis of these fictitious scenarios, it was possible to address and discuss the pluralism of opinion as well as dealing with differences of interest – essential features of democracy.

Most of the students had already heard the terms *democracy* and *politics* on television, but they could not make a connection eg. to the Office of the Chancellor or the mayor, although they later mentioned these offices themselves. Therefore, it seems logical that in the context of learning politics and democracy, these terms are specifically named and explained so that basic knowledge can be conveyed. It is helpful to pick up, include and question the children's previous experiences, spontaneous opinions and perceptions as well as media, such as television, computer or comic books, which are in part sources of first democratic and political insights impressions.

The results also show that no student stood out by his or her individual migration background; no democratic or political remoteness of these students could be identified. Consequently, disenchantment with democracy or politics seems to be establish itself at a different biographical date than at primary school age.