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## **“It actually has little to do with democracy”**

Everyday theories and implicit knowledge of students in music teacher education on democracy education and participation<sup>1</sup>

*„Es hat ja eigentlich wenig mit Demokratie zu tun“ – Alltagstheorien und implizites Wissen zu Partizipation und Demokratiebildung von Musikstudierenden*

*Die Befähigung von Studierenden zur aktiven Teilhabe an der Gesellschaft ist ein zentrales Ziel von Bildung. Diese Studie untersucht, wie Musikpädagogik-Studierende Demokratiebildung und Partizipation im Alltag an der Musikhochschule erleben und reflektieren. Im Rahmen des TEAM-Projekts analysieren wir mittels der dokumentarischen Methode die Alltagstheorien und das implizite Wissen angehender Musiklehrkräfte in zwei Gruppendiskussionen aus einem Seminar zur demokratischen und partizipativen Musikpädagogik. Die Ergebnisse zeigen eine Diskrepanz zwischen den normativen Vorstellungen der Studierenden von Demokratie und deren gelebter Praxis im Hochschulkontext. Es lassen sich vier zentrale Bereiche identifizieren: eingeschränkte Partizipationsmöglichkeiten im Hochschulalltag, unterschiedliche Auffassungen von Bildung trotz oder durch Partizipation, die Bedeutung von Verantwortung in Gruppenprozessen sowie Zusammenhänge zwischen Partizipation und Leistung. Unsere Interpretationen bieten Ansätze zur Weiterentwicklung des musikpädagogischen Studiums und von Lernangeboten, stärker an den Erfahrungen der Studierenden anzusetzen und demokratische sowie partizipative Kompetenzen gezielt zu fördern.*

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## 1. Between high expectations and missing insights into learning and teaching practice

In the policy debate at European level, democracy and participation are currently highlighted as important topics. The “Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture” (Council of Europe, 2018) indicates that supporting democracy education is one of the central goals. Parallel developments can also be observed on the national level in Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2018) as well as at state level.<sup>2</sup> In these contexts, democracy education is used as an umbrella term that encompasses learning about democracy as well as shaping educational spaces according to democratic principles. In many concepts both aspects are linked. Kenner and Lange (2022, p. 62) describe democracy education as a holistic process of education for ‘Mündigkeit’<sup>3</sup> that starts with the subject, based on basic democratic values such as freedom, equality, justice, solidarity and emancipation. Hawkins (2024) argues in a similar way when he states that „a democratic music education begins with equitable decision-making, incorporates community and belonging, recognises student agency and achievement, engages them in learning through open and guided communication, and enables them to have worldshifting impact throughout their lives“ (p. 270).

Recent positions like this can be seen in the tradition of Dewey’s (1916) broadening of the concept of democracy as a communal way of life, Freire’s (2000) pedagogy of the oppressed as a starting point for criticism and resistance, as well as Klafki’s (1996) claim to enable learners to participate responsibly in social life or Biesta’s (2023) world-centered approach as part of enlightenment. In music education corresponding positions are discussed with different emphases by Woodford (2005), Allsup (2007), DeLorenzo (2016), and Elliott et al. (2016), among others. In the German-speaking discourse, Bossen and Tellisch (2020) as well as Dunkel and Oeftering (2023) have recently contributed to the discussion on democracy and political education.

These positions are closely connected to the discourse on “Teilhabe” resp. participation (e. g. Geuen & Orgass, 2007; Günther et al., 1983, p. 34; Krupp-Schleußner, 2016) as reflecting possibilities of oneself and others to participate and bring in a voice in decision making processes. They lead to questions of the democratic nature of social practices. In this sense the participation pyramid by Straßburger and Rieder (2014) or Hart’s (1992, p. 8) ladder of participation and its various levels from “getting informed” to “civil society self-activities” and “shared decisions” suggest a constructive educational concept that begins in everyday social life.

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2 Baden-Württemberg, for example, describes democracy education as one of five key innovations in the course of the transition to the nine-year Abitur (Staatsministerium Baden-Württemberg, 2024).

3 Mündigkeit: maturity, responsibility

While these discourses are mainly addressing educational theory, norms and policy work, empirical research is widely missing (Theisohn, in press; Dunkel & Oeftering, 2023). There is a lack of information about what music students and teachers think about and how they experience democracy education and participation in everyday life in school or university. Addressing this research gap, we analyse everyday theories of democracy education and participation shared by music students and we reconstruct what implicit knowledge is underpinning their actions in everyday life at the university of music.

## 2. Methodology and method

To pursue these questions, we apply the documentary method (Bohnsack et al., 2013), which is theoretically grounded in the praxeological sociology of knowledge (Bohnsack, 2017). This approach enables empirical access to both the explicit and implicit action-guiding knowledge of people and thus to the everyday theories and norms as well as the hidden logics of their practice (Bohnsack et al., 2013).

Data was collected through two group discussions with university students enrolled in a music teacher education program. They were participants of a seminar focussing on democracy education and participation in music education. This learning offer is designed in the project *TEAM – Teacher Education Academy for Music* and explores democratic processes in joint music-making as well as questions of university policy. Methods used in the seminar are rotating leadership and the veto-principle. Our reconstructive insights into the students' perspectives inform the re-design process of democracy related learning offers (Buchborn, 2022).

The group discussions were initiated by an open impulse. The participants were asked to share their everyday experiences of democracy education and participation. The data was analysed in two steps. We analysed the content of the group discussions (formulating interpretation) and reconstructed how the students discussed the given topics (reflecting interpretation).<sup>4</sup> By interpreting metaphors, analysing text types, and uncovering the structure of discourse, we gain insight into the implicit logic underlying students' practices. Comparing students' theories about their everyday experiences in music teacher training, as well as their visions and expectations for their future professional practice in schools, with the implicit knowledge that shapes their actions in practice allows

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4 While our reconstructive work was conducted on the basis of the original transcripts in German, we have translated the excerpts into English for this article to make our results accessible and understandable for an international readership. In the translation, we followed the approach of remaining as close as possible to the German sentence structure and expression.

us to understand the discrepancies between established norms and hidden logics. In short: We analyse what they do and how they act in comparison to what they want to do and how they want their practice to be.

### 3. Results

In the following sections, we will present our central findings with regard to students' perspectives on democracy education and participation. To this end, we will draw on selected passages from our data that reveal central norms as well as the implicit knowledge that guides actions in everyday life.

#### A. Not much participation in university life

The first passage is the beginning of one of the group discussions. After shortly discussing the impulse, the students start to explore their understanding of democracy education and participation (transcript 1).

52 Am: well at first uhm what first came to my mind  
 53 now is well at the seminar (.) well in the seminar of  
 54 \*Peter  
 55 (someone is touching the recording device)  
 56 Bf: Loh  
 57 Am: Lit is (1) the topic and also somehow uhm  
 58 Bf: L@(.)@  
 59 ?: L@(.)@  
 60 Am: he try=try somehow uhm he tried to pull it through somehow with  
 61 this with the democracy? Uhm. #00:03:16-2#  
 62 But what else? Well a lot. Well part=participation yes but  
 63 democracy education at the university of music actually  
 64 rather little (.)  
 65 Bf: So maybe something like the AStA theme and stuff well are voted  
 66 democratically and so on from the students  
 67 Am: Lyes  
 68 Bf: assuming we go to the polls.  
 69 Am: Yes (.) right yes. (3) #00:03:37-0#  
 70 Bf: Otherwise there is relatively little democracy going on here I  
 71 would say. (1) @(.)@ well I mean  
 72 Df: L@(.)@ Lyes true  
 73 Am: Lyeah  
 74 Bf: how much right- to have a say do we have maybe in the study  
 75 commission or something?  
 76 Df: L((clears her throat)) Actually nothing.  
 77 Am: Luhm (2)@(.)@

*transcript 1: entrance passage group discussion LES*

Am opens the discussion by referring to the seminar on democracy and music education the group visited. Relating the topic of the group discussion to the seminar makes Bf and another participant laugh. The shared knowledge causing this laughter might be the obvious relation between the data collection and the seminar. The way how Am is reporting about this shared experience of the seminar reveals logics on the implicit level: Using the phrase “he tried somehow to pull it through [...] with the democracy” shows that he experienced the lecturer in the seminar in an active role. Thereby he attributes the commitment to the topic of democracy education to the teacher. “To pull through” also suggests that addressing the issue is either laborious or possibly even against the interests or will of the students. In either way, this shows that the students experienced the seminar as teacher centered and/or steered – a mode that seems to contradict seminar work based on basic democratic principles. Another possible interpretation could be that a course based on basic democratic principles has been experienced as contradictory to the students’ normal teaching experiences and that the lecturer therefore had difficulty sticking to his plan. Both interpretations point to the fact that the topic of democracy education or a way of teaching and learning that follows democratic principles is experienced as an exception to their everyday experiences.

The next section is characterised by a search for examples of democracy and participation in university life. Am states that he sees “rather little” democracy education at the university. This common-sense-theory is underpinned by implicit knowledge. The explanations are interspersed with pauses, and Am falters several times. This shows that he seems to be having difficulty with the search. Bf further elaborates this search and can cite the AStA – the students’ union executive committee – as an example of student participation which is validated by Am. However, Bf immediately qualifies her own statement. She points out that shared decision-making via the AStA can only succeed if “we go to the polls.” This is also validated by Am. This points to the fact that going to the polls is not a common practice by the students. Bf comes to the conclusion that “there is relatively little democracy going on here,” which is validated (Am) and accompanied by laughter (Df). The students share this common-sense-theory. By means of a rhetorical question Bf proves her argument right by transferring it to another field of students’ political work. She states that the students do not have much “rights” or “much to say” in the “study commission or something.” Df validates Bf’s contribution and concludes with “actually nothing.”

The interpretation of the passage shows that the students see not many possibilities to participate on a policy level at university. Rare possibilities like AStA or the student commission are not framed positively. All in all, the students ascribe themselves a low enactment potential. The way the students discuss in this passage points to a criticism with regard to their role in a non-democratic everyday student life, even though it is not explicitly criticised.

Participation in the AStA is also addressed in the other group discussion. Here, students discuss why they do not get involved in university politics (transcript 2).

- 107 Cf: I am not somehow in (.) the AStA or whatever, well I am  
 108 here now since October but anyway not involved in the AStA  
 109 somehow. (.) But also otherwise, phh (2)  
 110 Am: But do you want to? (.) or (.) do you want to get more  
 111 Bf: Lhm  
 112 Am: involved.  
 113 Cf: L(breathing out loud) not necessarily, I have to say (2)  
 114 lack of time  
 115 Bf: Lyes, with regard to time management (.) actually not.  
 116 but so, clear you always think so wow I uhm (.) I could  
 117 actually advocate for something like that now, for a lot of  
 118 things and do a lot of things. And then you think: yes, great,  
 119 I didn't even find the time to practice the piano (.)  
 120 Cf: Lyes, yes  
 121 Bf: @(. )@ well  
 122 Cf: LI guess, a:dvocating for something (.) advocating for  
 123 something reasonably, needs, requires commitment  
 124 Bf: Lhm  
 125 Cf: and also uh stuff like mental capacities for this. Well

*transcript 2: excerpt from group discussion SEN*

At the beginning, Cf says that she is not involved in AStA activities, although she has been at the university since October. The way Cf reports this allows for several interpretations. Her opening statement suggests that not being “in the AStA” is quite normal among students. By adding “or whatever,” she suggests that she has no clear picture of the political work of students at the university and distances herself from this practice. Her second sentence “well I am here now since October but anyway not involved in the AStA somehow” can be read as an excuse. She has not been part of the student community for a long time and this could explain why she is not active in the AStA, yet. However, the adverb “anyway” also could lead to the opposite interpretation: Even though she has already been at university since October, she is not involved. This would put emphasis on her strong entrance statement. In combination with the unfinished sentence “but also otherwise, phh (2)” something like regret could be interpreted.

Am asks for clarification: “But do you want to?” This brings another dimension into the discussion. While Cf’s statement does not show if she should or wants to be more involved or if she considers it as normal not to be involved, Am emphasises the fact that personal motivation is crucial. Bf is reacting with a long breathing sound, denies and justifies this with lack of time. Bf validates Cf’s justification and elaborates further: She explains that she has always had the

ambition to get involved, but does not even find the time to practice the piano. Her argumentation reveals several norms and logics: First of all the shared norm of the importance of being involved in political work or engagement in a broader sense becomes clear. This is conflicting with the actual practice of the students who are not politically active. The justifying argumentations can be read as an attempt to process this discrepancy between norm and habitus. Several arguments are used: lack of time, the excessive demands that come with the oversupply of opportunities to get involved as well as other priorities. The last aspect is implicit, while arguing that she does not even find the time to practice the piano, Bf's prioritisation of engaging in her studies over getting involved in political work becomes obvious.

Now Cf validates Bf's argumentation and elaborates further by bringing up other arguments. She points out that real advocacy requires commitment and "stuff like mental capacities." This rather dense interaction reveals that Cf and Bf attach a great importance to the personal engagement in the political work of the student body. At the same time, they share the knowledge on the implicit level that they are not actively involved in such activities. They justify their practice against the conflicting norm on an argumentative level.

Our interpretation of the two passages shows that the students share little experiences connected to democratic principles and participation in their everyday practice at university. As they elaborate the seminar of democracy education as contradictory to their common experiences in the opening passage this logic seems to be underpinning their teaching and learning practices in seminars. Further, the elaborations on the AStA reveal that this logic also guides acting at the level of structural participation and engagement in university policy. This conjunctive knowledge seems to shape what goes on in different areas of everyday university life. At the same time, this is in tension with the shared norm of the students as they value democracy education and criticise the lack of participation.

## B. Oppositional understandings: 'Bildung' despite or through participation?

Another example from our data points to the students' concepts of 'Bildung' (transcript 3).



The second group discussion revealed similar oppositions (transcript 4).

248 Cf: No, I think that's a good thing because that they well so that  
 249 doesn't necessarily have to have a consequence in the sense of  
 250 (.) five people in the class thought that's a shit-teacher  
 251 Am: Lyes  
 252 Cf: and therefore he is now fired. That's not what I mean? (.)  
 253 Am: Lyes, yes uhm  
 254 Bf: Lyes #00:54:57#  
 255 Cf: however, so that the first control authority maybe not the last,  
 256 but the first control authority for the competence of a teacher  
 257 (.) should be those taught?  
 258 Bf: (breathing in)  
 259 Am: yes, but that means that the teacher then teaches f (.) for the  
 260 benefit of the students.  
 261 Cf: Lyes, but isn't this cool?  
 262 Bf: Lyes.  
 263 Am: But ts to to get their favor not to (.) promote their  
 264 intelligence.  
 265 Bf: Lbut their favor (.) that they learn something.  
 266 Am: well (.) I don't think so.

*transcript 4: excerpt from group discussion SEN*

Cf argues that she does not believe that it should result in the teacher losing his job even if five children in class assess him as a “shit-teacher.” Am and Bf are validating this position. However, Cf continues in her argumentation and points out that students’ “control authority” should be considered as a valuable but not the only way for evaluating teachers. Am initially agrees with this position, but then expresses concern that the “teacher then teaches for the benefit of the students.” Cf asks back: “yes, but isn’t this cool?”, which is validated by Bf. Cf and Bf seem to share the opinion that teachers should care for students’ needs. This leads Am to be more specific about his position. He points out that too much emphasis on such student control could lead to teachers being more concerned with gaining students’ favor than with promoting their intelligence. Bf disagrees, even if her position remains unclear due to the incomplete sentence structure. Am contradicts again. There is an opposition here, presumably because the viewpoints are based on different implicit educational orientations. While for Am the promotion of students’ intelligence should be the focus of school education and an evaluation of lessons by the students could conflict with this goal, Bf and Cf take the position that the students’ judgments are important for successful learning. A ritual conclusion is reached.<sup>5</sup> The understandings of ‘Bildung’ therefore also con-

5 A ritual conclusion is a communicative strategy used to end a conversation or discussion in a socially acceptable way – often by shifting the topic, using a general or irrelevant statement, metacommunication, or symbolic gestures – without resolving underlying contradictions (Przyborski, 2004, p. 75–76).

flict in this group with regard to the question of the extent to which including the wishes, ideas and interests of the learners could compete with the autonomy of the teachers in the design of lessons.

Both examples show how democracy education and participation are linked to educational norms and the implicit concepts of education of the students. The orientation towards 'effective' learning leads to highlighting the importance of authority and compulsion and to doubting the importance of shared decision-making. However, the orientation towards a student-centred education aiming to self-determination leads to valuing participation and democratic principles in learning and teaching.

### C. Taking responsibility in group processes

305 Bf: Most of the time it is actually the case  
 306 that the person who wants to do it does it because the others  
 307 say yes just do it. (1) Almost like.  
 308 Df: L@(.)@  
 309 Bf: L@(.)@ and we are rid of more work @(.)@  
 310 Am: ((puh))  
 311 Cf: Lyeah, although I don't know if that might also be a bit  
 312 personality-related.  
 313 Am: yes, n definitely. (.) But those who uhm those who want to do  
 314 something they (.) just want to do it and most of the times  
 315 there are there are (.) if if someone says yo I want to do it  
 316 then those who want to do something say yes good  
 317 Bf: L@(.)@  
 318 Cf: L@(2)@  
 319 Am: then I'll just do something else. (.) and those who don't want  
 320 to do anything say fine.  
 321 Cf: Yes, but that's a completely normal group dynamic, right?  
 322 Am: Lyeah  
 323 Bf: Lyeah  
 324 Am: However, it actually has little to do with democracy, if someone  
 325 says I do it and then all the others okay  
 326 Bf: L@(3)@ oh no the poor one  
 327 Am: good @hm@ @(2)@ #00:12:30#  
 328 Df: L@(2)@  
 329 Cf: Lyes, but what if all the others say no not good?  
 330 Then it is also (.) also democracy.

*transcript 5: excerpt from group discussion LES*

In this section (transcript 5), Am, Bf, Cf and Df comment on coordination processes and dynamics in groups. Bf describes a practice in which "the person who wants to do it just does it because the others say yes, just do it." Although the passage has a narrative character, Am uses phrases such as "actually" and "most

of the time” to indicate that the processes of assuming responsibility are common in his everyday experience. Df’s laughter suggests that she has a similar collective orientation regarding their perception of delegation and responsibility. Cf also validates and differentiates by elaborating a common-sense-theory when she states that “that might also be a bit personality-related.” Am confirms and elaborates further referring to similar experiences. He points out that group members accept individuals taking the lead either because they “want to do something else” or “don’t want to do anything.” Cf validates this by stating that this is “a completely normal group dynamic.” Am and Bf confirm and conclude this passage.

This suggests mutual role expectations within social groups and implicit action logics: individuals often act out of social expectations to leave the decision to others, while others tend to take responsibility. The passage shows that, according to the group’s experience, responsibility is assigned without prior negotiation processes. The subsequent section of the discussion reveals a significant overlap between explicit and implicit knowledge on this issue, despite the fact that the logic described stands in contrast to established norms of democracy education and participation.

Am states: “However, it actually has little to do with democracy.” In doing so, he points out on an abstract level that the group’s passive consent puts democratic values into question. This implicit logic of the practice of action indicates that those involved may reflect the difference between the ideal of democracy and the actual behavior in group situations.

Two hypotheses on collective orientation can be derived: Firstly, the delegation of responsibility is documented. There is a shared perception that makes it seem logical to delegate responsibility to individuals, which ultimately relativises democratic processes. According to the experience of the group, people tend to leave decisions to others. Secondly, there is a shared criticism of those group dynamics. The participants seem to be aware of the mechanisms of group dynamics and recognise their influence on decision-making processes. This shows a deeper reflection in which social interactions can be designed democratically. However, the open ending of this thematic section implies that the group sees no solution for the dynamics: democratic decision-making processes in groups seem to be complex and demanding and in everyday practice pragmatic solutions seem to be dominant.

#### D. Participation and performance: The example of applied piano

Df explains that she thought about the topic of participation during the discussion and then describes observations from student life which she combines with initial sketches of an everyday theory (transcript 6).

186 Df: Yes, what I just think participation (.) is well I (.) just  
 187 thought about it the whole time but I think this is such a  
 188 difficult topic because on the one hand because we get so man=y  
 189 opportunities to study (.) well in so many different areas, (.)  
 190 we are enabled to learn anywhere. On the other hand we all we  
 191 all come here with different prior knowledge and different  
 192 skills (.)  
 193 Am: L<sub>uhm</sub>  
 194 Df: and then again I nearly think (.) that's why I think it is  
 195 somehow prevented again because (.) appl a subject where I  
 196 realise this (.) and also (.) just (.) get that from the others  
 197 is somehow well @(applied piano)@ I don't know.  
 198 Bf: L@(.)@  
 199 Am: L<sub>yes</sub>  
 200 Df: Some just come here and they just know how to do it. They sit  
 201 down (1) play by chords craziest accompanying things and then  
 202 Bf: L<sub>yes</sub>  
 203 Df: there are people that just don't (.) that just don't know how to  
 204 do it and then I think it is always really wild that it is also  
 205 well that one has also always a kind of pressure that at a given  
 206 time it will be graded. Well  
 207 Bf: L<sub>uhm</sub>  
 208 Df: somehow it is like this (2) yes it is somehow really difficult  
 209 is is somehow really two (.) and like a double-edged (.) uh (.)  
 210 thing (.) because somehow (.) one has the possibilities but  
 211 Bf: L<sub>hm</sub>  
 212 Am: L<sub>yes</sub>  
 213 Df: one the other hand (.) if one (.) doesn't meet a certain  
 214 standard it is somehow really difficult to use those  
 215 possibilities. (2) yes #00:08:30-7#  
 216 Bf: L<sub>hm</sub>  
 217 Am: L<sub>yes</sub>  
 218 Cf: Is it about participation for you now?  
 219 Df: Exactly.  
 220 Cf: L<sub>hm</sub>  
 221 Am: (2) Yes as long as long one is good one can somehow do  
 222 everything #00:08:38-9#  
 223 Df: yes exactly exactly.  
 224 Bf: L@(.)@ yes

*transcript 6: excerpt from group discussion LES*

Df compares two aspects: On the one hand, she describes that studying opens up a lot of opportunities due to the many options on offer; but on the other hand, you can only use these if you have the skills needed. She elaborates this by referring to the example of applied piano: some of the students seem to have a very high level of expertise. Df ascribes them to be able to use a lot of possibilities in the studies. Others, however, who don't "meet a certain standard" have difficulties to use the possibilities the curriculum offers. This is further exacerbated by

the fact that actions during studies seem to be framed by a certain pressure to perform through the awareness of being evaluated.

This orientation is shared by the group as Cf and Am contribute to her elaboration and the three participants can conclude this passage. This points to a shared knowledge with regard to the topics discussed and the implicit logics that underlie the discussion. The observations Df made in her everyday university life are underpinned by the implicit knowledge that participation is connected to individual performance and those who are talented already in the beginning of their studies have more privileges to further develop in an autonomous way. The group largely succeeds in explaining this logic and developing initial approaches to a relevant everyday theory, so that implicit and explicit knowledge in this passage seem to largely coincide. However, the group's characterisation of their results as exceptional and their expression of astonishment – such as Bf's laughter at the end of the conclusion, which could be interpreted as a sign of surprise – indicate that the observed logic contrasts with the prevailing norm of a music study environment designed to offering equal development opportunities for all students. The performance norm and performance logic of music teacher studies contradict the idea of participation.

#### 4. Conclusion, discussion and outlook

Our reconstructions show a complex picture of how students experience participation and democracy education in their everyday studies. The participants do share the norm that all students in teacher training and music lessons should have the opportunity to actively shape educational processes and participate. In practice, however, it is clear that many students do not get involved and do not actively participate. This logic underlies the descriptions of hierarchies in teacher-learner-relationships, of work and discussion processes in seminars and groups as well as at a university policy level. Students attribute group dynamics that lead to the unquestioned acceptance or delegation of responsibility to differences in personality. Time and mental capacity seem to be a key requirement for involvement in university politics. However, both are hardly present in everyday student life, which also shows an implicit prioritisation in favor of the course content.

We were also able to identify different understandings of 'Bildung.' The students were not able to resolve their differing orientations between 'Bildung' despite or through participation. Another finding is that, from the students' point of view, participation opportunities seem to be linked to musical performance. According to the participants, only students with a high level of musical expertise can take full advantage of the creative freedom and learning opportunities offered by their studies. Our reconstructions also show that the structures at the music university are perceived as school-like, while students at the uni-

versity have more freedom of choice. Comparative work with other university locations or even abroad would be an interesting perspective for further research.

If we consider our results in the context of the positions from the discourse on democracy education mentioned at the beginning, our study points to a difference between what is normatively demanded and what actually happens in practice. Even though the participants underline the need for a critical attitude towards institutional structures and highlight the need for authentic participation, they seem not to experience an education underpinned by democratic principles. However, this is considered as key in order to achieve 'Mündigkeit.' It seems to be demanding in teacher education at university to anchor democratic principles in everyday life and social interactions to give students possibilities to actively experience participation in personal and collective encounters.

This raises further questions, for example with regard to consequences for (music) university teaching. Where should prospective teachers build up the knowledge they need to design educational spaces at schools and in music lessons that are shaped by basic democratic principles and autonomy? How can freedom, equality and justice that appear to be central to 'Mündigkeit' in the context of music universities be addressed? Freedom in the sense of freedom of choice in everyday study, equality in the sense of equal conditions and justice in the sense of different opportunities to participate at all.

In the TEAM project, we discuss how these findings can be used to re-design the learning offers on democracy education. One approach could be to confront the seminar groups directly with these results, i. e. to show them how participation and 'Bildung' take place in everyday university life and to discuss how this relates to their own ideas, experiences and norms. In this way, in-depth reflection processes could be stimulated with regard to the logic and structures of the music university educational space, but also with regard to later professional activity. Together, we could critically reflect how decisions are made and discussions are held. In general, learning offers in democratic music education should be adapted to create even more space for democracy and participation. In this way, students could be encouraged to reflect and to actively shape their studies and university policy.

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