2

CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE TO DEMOCRACY

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Introduction

The research programme in the sociology of education broadly known as social realism breaks with the belief that academic knowledge is the preserve of conservative forces in education. Instead, social realists claim that providing equal access to an academic curriculum is a progressive option in support of democratic principles (Maton and Moore 2010, Barrett and Rata 2014, Young 2008). My aim is to justify this claim through an examination of the complex interweaving of the epistemic and the political. As with other areas of social realist research, my approach is in the tradition of Émile Durkheim and proceeds from the differentiation of knowledge into what Durkheim (1912/2001) called the 'sacred and profane'. This is the difference between the epistemically structured, rational, academic or conceptual knowledge (I use the terms interchangeably) created in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts on the one hand and the socio-cultural or everyday knowledge acquired from experience on the other. My engagement with Durkheim's ideas begins where he connects rational knowledge to the socio-ethical principles of democratic secularised and pluralised societies to argue that the 'logical integration' of the social order 'is the pre-condition of moral integration' (Durkheim cited in Bourdieu 1979, p. 79).

By engaging with this idea, I will argue that the link between rational knowledge (the 'logical') and democratic politics (with 'moral' or socio-ethical principles arising from the premise of the universal human being) is the result of connecting two features of rational thought. The first feature is the generalisability and universalisability of rational knowledge. Although the former does not necessarily lead to the latter, a link between the concept's generalisability and its universalisability is possible because epistemically structured knowledge serves two functions. It is both the '*instrument of thought* and the means of communication' (Durkheim cited

in Bourdieu 1979, p. 79). It is as the 'means of communication' that an abstract concept's generalisability may be linked to its universalisability. However, that depends upon the second feature. This concerns whether rational knowledge operates in simultaneously individualising and socialising each generation as 'partially loyal' citizens of the modern social order. It involves a person exercising the generality and universality feature of rational knowledge in relation both to that knowledge as the instrument of individual thought (individualisation) and in the exercise of that knowledge as the means of communication (socialisation). The argument that I will develop in this chapter is that when the generalisability and universalisability components of rational knowledge individualise and socialise to create the partial loyal individual, it is possible to connect knowledge to democracy.

The argument proceeds from Durkheim's claim that rational knowledge is the pre-condition of moral integration. My objective is to extend the idea by identifying the conditions that are required to take rational knowledge from being a pre-condition for moral integration to being a contingent connection. I will argue that these conditions are the provision of rational knowledge to all, provision that is only possible through national education systems that simultaneously individualise and socialise people into 'partial loyalty' (a concept I have developed elsewhere from its use by Alan Macfarlane [2002] [See Rata 2012]). This means that educating people into rational knowledge will not, on its own, create individuals who are committed to the type of universalised morality that characterises democratic ideals. These rationalised individuals must also be socialised to use their rational faculties to be simultaneously loyal to, yet critical of, their society – hence 'partially loyal' in contrast to the 'total loyalty' of the various types of communitarian societies.

Reproduction and interruption

The sociology of education is divided between the Durkheimian-inspired idea of knowledge differentiation with its view of rational knowledge as liberating powerful knowledge and the opposing view which regards disciplinary knowledge as the ideology of the powerful – the 'knowledge is power'/'powerful knowledge' dualism (Beck 2014, Young and Muller 2014). This intellectual divide produces either a 'reproduction' or an 'interruption' view of education's role in society. According to reproductionists, society is structured by the capitalist economic system with education contributing to the unequal relations of production of this system by differentially allocating the academic knowledge resource. In addition, knowledge itself is understood as the capitalist system's justifying ideology.

In contrast, 'interruptionists', including contemporary social realists, take an 'education is change' approach based on the understanding of epistemic knowledge as 'powerful knowledge'. This is the knowledge that liberates the individual and changes society through the type of thought that imagines what is not yet known. Their debt to the work of Basil Bernstein in particular is acknowledged in Rob Moore's (2013) description of Bernstein as 'a theorist not of reproduction but of

interruption: of the principles and possibilities of disordering and disruption, of the structuring of *change*' (p. 37). My exploration follows this line of enquiry to ask how does knowledge 'interrupt' unequalising forces to shape society according to democratic principles?

The reproduction view does not adequately explain why universalist principles and democratic political systems based on these principles emerge within and are maintained only in societies with populations educated in epistemic knowledge. Certainly, anti-democratic movements recognise and respond to the democratic possibilities latent in rational knowledge. The Khmer Rouge, ISIS, the Taliban and Boko Haram cut down (literally, as in the case of Nigeria's geography teachers) those in the population who are educated. Ironically, this is a very rational (and modern) position by movements claiming pre-modern ideals. Educated populations do not necessarily result in democratic politics. Indeed, the reactionary modernism identified by Jeffrey Herf (1984) is characterised by connecting rational knowledge to non-democratic forces. It may be an amoral society characterised by an instrumentalism, which emphasises technology (what we can do) at the expense of philosophy (what it means). It may produce the type of society described by Meera Nanda (2002) with reference to India where she describes the dilution of universal rationality with the post-1970s shift to various forms of racial/ethnic and religious fundamentalisms. Populations that fail to ask about the meaning of their technologically advanced pluralist societies because they lack the philosophical means with which to enquire subvert the very conditions that led to that advancement.

Given that rational knowledge and democracy are not causally connected, my purpose is to expand an idea that I have sketched elsewhere in relation to the following question: under what conditions, and how, does the rational knowledge–democracy connection emerge? Previously (Rata 2015), I have argued that knowledge and democracy are analogous structures, in that both the symbolic and political spheres are characterised by structuring contradictions. In the next section, I take this idea further to claim that these contradictions open up fissures for interruption and change and create the possibility for a rational knowledge–democracy integration. The main fissure is identified as an interruption that creates the potential for partially loyal moral identities. The interruption is in the contradictory individualisation–socialisation process that occurs as a result of the engagement with rational knowledge's duality as the instrument of thought and the means of communication. In turn, that engagement depends upon the existence of national education systems that provide access to such knowledge.

Analogous structures

The structures of knowledge and democracy are analogous in that both systems consist of structuring contradictions which allow for interruptions that provoke change and the potential for connection between the two spheres. In the political sphere, contradictions shape the three structuring components of the modern

nation (Rata 2000, 2012). The first component is the polity itself. The abstract or immaterial concept 'nation' is both the symbol of a population that does not share a common past, but requires a material history upon which to build the representations of the new collective. These representations are the source of the modern nation's stability in that they provide the pluralities of meaning (or collective representations) to bind the disparate populations that form the modern nation (Durkheim 1912/2001). They are also the source of instability in that they depend not upon the experiences of a shared past, but upon the future imaginary. This very unpredictability of what is predicted rationally contributes to the existential anxiety which characterises the modern condition. Despite their contradictory nature, collective representations are society's symbolic 'cement'. They provide new and multiple ways of giving meaning to life which mark the deep transformation from the mythological to the secular, from the kin or race group to the idealised universal human being. The replacement of kin/racial social relations by universal social relations conceptualised abstractly is the defining feature of the modern world. It is a consequence of rationalised and secularised knowledge replacing belief as a social order's collective representations. However, this replacement is never fully completed. Periodic resurgences of older forms of racial ideologies with their traditional socio-cultural social relations and justifying neotraditionalist ideologies continue to destabilise modernity's already unstable ethos.

The second structuring component of the modern nation is the State. It, too, has a contradictory character. It is the democratic nation's infrastructure, and it is simultaneously the capitalist state. As the regulatory site for both the economic and socio-political spheres, the State pulls towards inequality and equality. In its institutions and policies, the State regulates the economy on behalf of global capitalism. It establishes the national infrastructure. It ensures a legal regime for private property regulation, contractual law, taxation and employer–labour relations. It reproduces Capital's workforce in its national education system. However, despite this function, the State's institutional and legal character is based on democratic principles of equality, hence the nature of the contradiction as a structuring contradiction. Parliament, which makes the laws that guarantee sufficient stability for Capital to operate, also makes the laws that recognise the institution of Citizenship, the very institution to which the State is accountable.

The institution of Citizenship which provides the 'people' with equal political status and legal protection is the third structuring component of the modern nation-state. Citizenship, like the first two components of the Nation and the State, is deeply contradictory. Despite the guarantee of political and legal equality, the materiality of the status is experienced in how people live their daily lives as the unequal worker in the capitalist economy. These contradictions in the three structuring institutions of the modern social order; that is, the Nation, the State and Citizenship, are, I claim, the sites of Bernstein's interruption; of the 'structuring of *change*' (Moore 2013, p. 37) that I identify as fissures. It is within these fissures that structures are sufficiently de-stabilised to become processes. In an understanding of change derived from Spinoza, I regard processes as structures in motion. At the

point where the internal contradictions destabilise a structure to the point that it is unable to reproduce itself, that 'fissure' is the site for people to act in new ways; to 'interrupt' the existing stasis for good or ill.

Like the socio-political structure, rational knowledge is similarly structured along contradictory lines, and hence is a potential site for human agency to cause change. This type of knowledge is a conceptual and predictive way of thinking about the immaterial in order to understand and control the material. Such rationally created knowledge seeks what is not known to our common sense using future-oriented concepts that do not originate in the empirically known world of appearances (although the explanations may be a more or less 'best fit' to apply to understanding the material world). I argue that the existence of sites of interruption in both the political sphere and the knowledge sphere and in the interaction of the two spheres is a pre-condition for the contingent connections between rationality and democracy.

Collective representations

Having claimed that the inherently contradictory nature of both rational knowledge and democratic political systems creates fissures for interruption to those structures, my purpose in this section is to develop the argument further. I identify the possibility for contingent connections to be made between the two systems in the way that modernity's collective representations allow for an engagement with the contradictory structures found in each system. 'Collective representations' are the impersonal conceptual representations that connect people in modern societies. Durkheim (1912/2001) used the term to refer to the shared sense of reality which, in replacing the mythologies which played the same integrating function in traditional societies, enables modern societies to cohere. In fact Bourdieu (1979) uses the term *con*sensus for this shared reality, with the prefix 'con' capturing the extent of the integration (p. 79) to say that collective symbolic representation 'make(s) possible the *consensus* on the sense of the social world which makes a fundamental contribution towards reproducing the social order' (Bourdieu 1979, p. 79).

It is worthwhile pointing out how remarkable this coherence of shared meaning is given that modern societies consist of diverse socio-ethnic groups that not only do not share a common past, but may well be historical enemies. The remarkable nature of the integrating coherence for many modern societies is reinforced by the fact that 'being modern' is not, of itself, a guarantee of ongoing unity. Indeed, some societies are unable to maintain this coherence and revert to various forms of ethno-nationalism; the former Yugoslavia is an example. In addition, those nations that do succeed in maintaining democratic universalism despite their pluralistic populations, such as India and post-apartheid South Africa, still find the integration of these diverse groups a complex and potentially destabilising matter. The rise and decline of ethnic revivalism and multicultural politics in the decades at the turn of the 21st century (Rata, in press) serve to illustrate the inherent source of instability

that permeates the modern social order. Recent outbreaks of ethno-nationalism in the populist movements of Brexit and Trumpian politics exhibit the same attraction of a romanticised 'one volk' arcadia. In its extreme form, the rejection of progressive modernity appears as a traditional blood-and-soil ideology. However, its very anti-universalism is also part of modernity confronting its inherent and irresolvable contradictions; taking the form of reactionary (Herf 1984) rather than progressive modernity.

The problem for those interested in understanding the 'making of the modern world' (to use the title of Alan Macfarlane's [2002] book about this matter) is to explain the cohesive 'glue' that is sufficient to unite a social order made up of such diverse socio-ethnic groups. Durkheim found the 'glue' in modernity's symbolic system, regarding it as 'a homogeneous conception of time, space, number, and cause which makes agreement possible between intelligences' (cited in Bourdieu 1979, p. 79). He considered that the collective representations developed and reproduced in the symbolic sphere achieved this purpose because they provided both the 'means of communication' required for normative agreement and '*the instruments of thought*' required to create this 'thought' (cited in Bourdieu 1979, p. 79).

Durkheim's argument for the centrality of education systems in modern society was because he saw their function as producing and reproducing those very collective representations that enable secularised and pluralised societies to cohere. For Durkheim, the structure of symbolic power is more than knowing about something; it is 'a power to construct reality' itself (Bourdieu 1979, p. 79). That includes the power to construct the universalised social relations without which democracy could not exist. This function places universities and schools as one of the main structuring structures of the modern social order and the site of the knowledge–democracy connection. In performing this structuring function, national education institutions, rather than the traditional kin-based institutions, play the central role in producing and reproducing these representations. Drawing on Durkheim's insights, I identify two specific features of collective representations that serve this structuring function, and in so doing, connect knowledge to democracy. I recognise that knowledge may also be connected to the non-democratic politics of reactionary modernity, but my intention is not to pursue that connection in this chapter.

Concepts and symbols: thought and communication

The first feature is the character of epistemically structured, rational knowledge as the instrument of thought *and* the means of communication, that is, the means of representing that thought symbolically so that it can be shared. The second is how those collective representations are *exercised* in socio-political communication. This section discusses the first feature with the second feature addressed in the following section. According to Durkheim (1912/2001), concepts link communication and the content of that communication. He described the link in this way: 'Conversation, intellectual commerce between men, consists of an exchange of concepts. The concept is an essentially impersonal representation: through it,

human intellects commune' (p. 329). In saying that ideas cannot be separated from the symbols that communicate them, Durkheim commented: 'Through them, men understand one another, intellects can intermingle' (p. 332). However, it is not only the linking of the instrument of thought and its communicative function in the symbol that matters. That is necessary of course, but the link only occurs because of the nature of the instrument, that is, the concept, and the nature of the symbol. Therefore, an account of the first feature needs to identify its three components. These are the concept, the symbol, and the linking of the two.

Concepts are the instruments which create ideas 'in the mind'. Because epistemic knowledge consists of abstract concepts, it is these concepts' self-inferential systems of meaning which structure epistemic knowledge and provide society's collective representations. In fact, Durkheim (1912/2001) referred specifically to 'concepts [as] collective representations' (p. 329). Because these representations serve two functions as both the instrument of thought *and* the means of communication, it is these functions that make possible the integration of the logical with the moral or socio-political. In other words, it overcomes the mind–body dualism by linking the world of the mind and the world of social experiences. Karl Popper (1981) later explained this link as the integration of the world of subjective mental states (what he called the second world) with the third world. The latter is 'the world of ideas in the objective sense; the world of possible objects of thought: the world of theories in themselves, and their logical relations; of arguments in themselves; and of problem situations in themselves' (p. 154). Pierre Bourdieu also recognised this link when referring to Durkheim's idea of the concept's integrative function. His term is 'logical-conformity' (1979, p. 79), one I understand to refer to the closeness between a concept's generality (its 'logical' aspect) and its knower's 'conformity' (the socio-political aspect).

Concepts that are generalisable can be linked *to* other concepts to generate more complex systems of meaning. They can also be applied to various situations. Crucially the generalised concept can be used *by* anyone at any time or in any social context. At this point, the concept provides not only the possibility for humans to generalise, but for them *to generalise universally*. Durkheim pointed out that the generalisation of the concept is not the same as universalisation; however, he understood the former is required to produce the latter. Accordingly, 'the concept is, if not universal, at least universalizable (given that) it can be communicated to others' (1912/2001, p. 329). It is *this potential for the universability of the generalisable concept that provides one condition for the connection of abstract knowledge and democracy*. (The second condition depends upon the second feature, 'partial loyalty', which I discuss in the next section). The universalisability of generalised concepts is succinctly captured in Bourdieu's (2004) reference to the 20-year-old mathematician with 20 centuries of mathematical knowledge.

As I have already mentioned, the potential for a concept's generalisability to connect to its universalisability is based in the nature of conceptual epistemic thought as the instrument of thought and the means by which this thought is communicated. Symbolic communication is as important in the concept's functioning

as is the instrument of thought. Without shared symbols, it would not be possible to develop the consensus required for modern pluralised society's normative or socio-ethical code. Because the consensus consists of generalisable thought, those able to think these thoughts are not limited by *who* they are, as is the case in status-based societies, but by their *access to the thought* itself. This explains the social realist concern with the matter of access to knowledge.

The knower who is universalised is able to use knowledge in a generalised way, that is, by using conceptual ideas that make up rational knowledge. This takes that person out of his or her material and subjectively experienced world into the idea of a universal shared humanity. It gives meaning to human experience that is not fixed in a group's cultural and historical experiences, but is meaning captured within generalised and universalised concepts and expressed in the communicative symbols of those concepts. A person does not need to have had those experiences, or belong to the social group with such experiences to know them. 'Knowing' something is in knowing the immaterial idea rather than knowing the material object itself. It is this generalisability of an idea which makes it universally available to all knowers. In turn, this justifies the idea that concepts which are generalised in the separation from their creators are 'real' in the sense explained by Popper (1981). His 'virtual objects of thought' (p. 159) are '*knowledge without a knowing subject*' (p. 109). This rational knowledge 'exists in reality' because it 'transcends its makers' and acts back upon 'the world of subjective or personal experiences' (p. 155). Indeed, this idea of 'transcendence' is echoed in Rob Moore's (2010) explanation of rational knowledge as emergent or separable from its social origins; a feature which put the 'social' into 'social realism' but retains the object as autonomous from those social origins. Its very autonomy is what makes it 'real', as Popper explains:

> *It is possible to accept the reality or (as it may be called) the autonomy of the third world, and at the same time to admit that the third world originates as a product of human activity*. It transcends its makers.
>
> *(p. 159)*

Differentiating the objective knowledge made up of ideas (Popper's third world) and knowledge acquired from experience (Popper's 'subjective mental world of personal experiences' [1981, p. 156], his second world) is essential for understanding how collective representations serve society's integrative and stabilisation purpose. Collective representations that form the shared reality of the modern social order are not produced in the subjective experiences and understandings of the contributing groups, but are objective ideas produced in the disciplines that have expanded enormously in the modern period to fulfil this function. This role of the disciplines explains their importance via the universal distribution of disciplinary ideas through national education systems in the modern period. Knowledge produced in the disciplines does more than serve itself. Its main purpose is to provide society's shared reality and, by doing so, justify its role as a major source of the collective representations that are this reality. In contrast, disciplinary communities operating

within authoritarian regimes have a much more prescribed role. They tend to be insular and non-politicised when restricted to serving themselves rather than to serving society, where they would become politicised sources of change.

Locating modern collective representations in the disciplines is not to say that beliefs from a contributing historical group's past do not also contribute to the modern social order; rituals in the public sphere are examples of this contribution. However, on the whole, the way in which a modern society understands itself is rationalised and secularised. Indeed, the character of this type of collective representation is so naturalised that it tends to become visible only when confronted. The challenge presented to secularism and rationality by the emergence of culturalist ideologies from the 1970s is in fact the context within which the social realist approach to knowledge has developed, an approach captured in the title of Michael Young's 2008 book *Bringing Knowledge Back In: From Social Constructivism to Social Realism in the Sociology of Education*.

My own work (Rata 2012) has explored what happens when knowledge differentiation is rejected and disciplinary-sourced rational knowledge is conflated with the type of socio-cultural knowledge that is developed from experience. Popper identified Hegel as a source of this de-differentiation, saying that 'Hegel . . . conflated thought processes and objects of thought' (p. 154, fn. 2). An example from New Zealand illustrates how this confusion has found its way into education policy. A Ministry of Education report from that country refers to knowledge as 'the process of creating new knowledge' (Bolstad et al. 2012, p. 13), an idea used to justify the shift in the school curriculum from objective knowledge to skills, competencies and values (see Chapter 5, this volume). In addition, the conflation of the two types of knowledge has also privileged the subjective type. Elsewhere (Rata 2013), I have used the example of the inclusion into the university of a 'voice discourses' approach to examine these implications. Voice discourse or standpoint writers argue that knowledge cannot be separated from the knower because knowledge comes from the knowers' experiences and is in their interests. Claims for various forms of ethnicised knowledge such as Red Knowledge, African Knowledge and 'Kaupapa Maori Knowledge' use this justification.

The effects of knowledge conflation are observable at the individual level. My most recent encounter with localised voice discourses concerned one of my students. To investigate the experiences of male teachers in early childhood education, the researcher approached several to ask if they were willing to be interviewed. All expressed concern that the researcher was a female, with one suggesting that perhaps she use a male colleague to do the interviews. Her explanation that she would employ sociological concepts, rather than her own beliefs, to identify, analyse and theorise the phenomena their experiences illustrated, could not convince them that objectivity could be achieved this way. These teachers, who received their university education in the 1990s during the highpoint of culturalist ideology not only rejected the idea that objectivity was possible, but insisted that subjective experiences could only be understood, that is 'voiced' and understood by those who have those experiences.

In removing the use of disciplinary concepts and procedures as the conceptual tools of analysis and explanation, the knowledge conflation approach removes what rational concepts do; that is, generalise and universalise from objective concepts and not from subjective experience. The weakening of the conditions for generalisation and universalisation has direct consequences for democracy. Democracy is the only form of politics based on the concept of universalism. The idea that we are universally human makes possible the principle of human rights, and following from that principle, equal legal and political status contained in citizenship status. From equal status flow various interpretations of what it means in the way the social order regulates the relations between individuals and groups. The normative moral code is developed over time from these interpretations. The most obvious example is the extension of the franchise to females. Although it took various lengths of time for this interpretation of political equality to be widely accepted, the recognition of females as citizens was possible because the idea flows logically from the concept of the universal human being and its institutionalisation in citizenship status. In contrast, non-democratic communitarian political systems do not locate the status of the individual in the concept of the universal human. In traditional societies, the individual has an unequal birth-ascribed status. In societies along the fascist continuum, the leader 'holds' the peoples' power in a leadership status belonging to him alone, although claiming to exercise it on their behalf.

The connection between rational knowledge and democracy requires both components of the first feature; that is, a generalised and universalisable concept that is both the instrument of thought and the means of communication. However, a concept may be generalised but not universalised. My task in the next section is to explain what conditions are required for the social order to be integrated; an integration which is located in the generalisability and universalisability of the concept. This integration requires that the logical aspect of the concept (its generalisability) becomes more than the pre-condition of the moral integration (universability) to which Durkheim refers; it requires that the two aspects become contingently connected.

Individualisation and socialisation

I have identified the first of two features that connect knowledge and democracy as the integration of that concept's generalisability and universalisability. Like that feature, the second feature is also located in modernity's collective representations. In this case, it lies within the function of those representations and in their potential to express human agency. Political agency occurs when individuals contribute to the ongoing re-interpretation of how society *should* be organised; that is, its moral identity with a future orientation. But the expression of agency depends upon the nature of individualisation and socialisation that occurs in the nation's education system. Rationality (the 'logical' aspect in knowledge's logical-conformity character) belongs to the individual. Given that it is the individual who thinks, the process of individualisation is one of acquiring reason. Importantly, rationality has

a predictive logic with generalisation enabling the leap from the known to the not yet known, but hypothesised. This creates the future-oriented individual able to make the break with experience as the means to understand the world. Socialisation, on the other hand, occurs in acquiring the morality or socio-ethical values (the 'conformity' aspect) that conceptualise the enactment of social relations. It is profoundly experience based.

One thinks for oneself, but as a member of society. This means that the role of thought in individualisation and socialisation is a contradictory one. By thinking conceptually individuals develop the means to separate themselves intellectually from their conditions of existence, while at the same time, living subjectively within those conditions. In other words, we experience life and understand that experience both subjectively and objectively. We are caught in those contradictory conditions but, as rationalised individuals, are also able to imagine what they *should* be in contrast to what they currently *are*. This distinction between what is and what might be is a pre-condition for interruption and change. Future-oriented dispositions of the kind needed to conceptualise 'what *might* be' (the political dimension) and 'what *should* be' (the moral dimension) are produced in the ability to predict and hypothesise, themselves features of epistemic knowledge's generalisability.

The contradictions that occur in being individualised and socialised arise from simultaneously belonging to and separating from society; that is, experiencing social relations subjectively and at the same time being able to objectify society. This contradictory state creates the modern individual's partially loyal disposition. How does the individualisation process which enables this partial loyalty to the social order occur given, first, that it does not happen in the family and communities, the primary site of belonging, of 'total loyalty', and second, that it is so difficult to acquire and maintain? The modern individual's 'partial loyalty' disposition, the disposition created in the contradictory individualisation–socialisation function is the result of the lengthy and demanding engagement with society's collective representations. This is the case because in acquiring objective knowledge, one receives the instruments of thought (which belong to the individual alone as the thinker) *and* the means of communication, that is, the symbols of the concepts which connect individuals to the social.

Acquiring abstract knowledge involves acquiring the ability to distance oneself from the object of the thought (whether the object is another idea or a material thing). From that distancing comes a new relationship between the thinker and the idea. The ideas are no longer embedded in the thinker's subjective experience, but separated and able to be 'looked upon' as abstracted from that experience. It is now an object of the person's thought and, as such, amenable to the thinker's control. Such control over thought gives the thinker a degree of authorship over the idea. It is the authority to suspend belief (in contrast to the Romantics' call for the suspension of *dis*belief), to doubt the idea's claims, to criticise it and, most crucially of all, to judge. Judgement is an orientation towards power that creates the disposition required to exercise power. In democracies, one form of the exercise of power is located in the citizenship status of the individual.

The capacity to make judgements, which is the exercise of authority, is developed as individuals engage with epistemic knowledge. Rob Moore's (2010) distinction between judgement and preference is invaluable in understanding exactly how knowledge is involved in this exercise of authority. According to Moore, judgements are made by comparing the thing being valued to objective criteria, that is, to a reason(s). 'Preference', on the other hand, characterises decisions that are made according to the person's subjectively acquired values. The exercise of rational judgement where specified reasons are used as objective criteria is, in contrast to preference, an exercise of power involving the individual's simultaneous engagement with knowledge *and* with politics. When judgement is used with respect to knowledge, the thought is objectified then criticised and judged against criteria. When judgement is applied in the socio-political context, the same processes of doubt, criticism and judgement are used; the same instrument of thought is applied.

However, exercising authority according to reason depends upon the extent of the person's individualisation. Is he or she fully embedded in the social collective or partially loyal? A person who is fully loyal, fully embedded in the collective group, exercises preferences acquired from subjective experience and not judgements made from objective criteria. For these reasons, I have identified the partially loyal disposition created in the contradictory processes of individualisation and socialisation as the second feature involved in the contingent connection of knowledge and democracy. However, each feature acting independently is insufficient for the connection to occur. The two features must be connected. Generalisability linked to universalisability as the first feature must act together with the individualisation and socialisation processes. This combination enables the partially loyal citizen to take up the authority of democratic political status.

Conclusion

There is no necessary connection between rational knowledge and democratic politics. Neither is there a necessary relationship between rational knowledge and non-democratic politics. The issue therefore is one of establishing what conditions create the connections. My aim has been to identify two features specific to the rational knowledge–democracy connection and to argue that the context within which each feature exists enables the features to act as connecting mechanisms.

I have explained that structural contradictions in both the symbolic sphere (of which the education system is the primary site) and in the democratic sphere open up fissures for interruption and hence for change. This structuring structure of interruption ensures 'the stability of change' that characterises democracy. It also causes democracy's vulnerability to the stability of constancy (tradition in other words) offered by various types of non-democratic communitarian regimes. However, it is possible to stabilise democratic society despite its inherent and necessary instability in order to lessen that vulnerability and contribute to democracy's survival. This requires two mechanisms which, when working together, engage with the structural contradictions to connect the features I have identified. The first mechanism

is the generalisability of rational knowledge within which lies the potential for universalisability. The second mechanism is the exercise of universalisability with respect to knowledge and to politics by the partially loyal individual. Crucially, these processes take place in the public (as opposed to the privatised kin or community) institutions of national education systems in the encounter with epistemically structured rational knowledge.

The implication to be drawn from my argument is that the survival of democratic societies depends upon the extent to which public education systems provide rational knowledge to all children. This type of knowledge brings each generation into the collective representations that create partial loyalty towards knowledge (in the process of individualising) and towards the socio-political order (in the process of socialising). Tragically, the emergence of reactionary modernism in the current period of globalisation, one characterised by increasing inequality and political regimes using neotraditional ideologies, is affecting confidence in reason as social groups look to a romanticised past for the security that democracy cannot guarantee.

This crisis of confidence in a future-oriented and therefore unstable progressive modernity can be seen in the shift in education systems towards privatisation, instrumentalisation and localisation. It takes various forms; community responsiveness curricula concerned with connecting a child to the ethnic or religious group, instrumentalised curricula with an emphasis on relevance, skills and competencies, constructivist pedagogies that promote experience-based knowledge, or a type of individualising education concerned more with a child's emotions than with reason. The rapid growth of literature since the late 1990s which takes a social realist or 'bring knowledge back in' approach may be understood as a response to this weakening of equitable access to rational knowledge in the school curricula of democratic countries. It explains the research programme's focus on theorising curricular knowledge and on developing pedagogies that best enable equitable access to such powerful knowledge. It is the reason for my own interest in why access to rational knowledge matters.

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