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editorial: civic education after trump

On Education

The rise of right-wing populist movements across Europe and the world, and the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States, are perceived as a massive crisis of liberal democracy. The label `Trump´ has since then symbolised a widespread perplexity and confusion that pervades contemporary debates about the future of democracy and liberalism.

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The rise of right-wing populist movements across Europe and the world, and the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States, are perceived as a massive crisis of liberal democracy. The label `Trump´ has since then symbolised a widespread perplexity and confusion that pervades contemporary debates about the future of democracy and liberalism. As `fake news´, `post-factual´, and `post-truth´ emerge as the buzzwords of our time, some commentators share the impression that we are currently witnessing a political and epistemological hodgepodge of almost Orwellian dimensions, perhaps a radical transformation or even "great regression" (Geiselberger, 2017) of the political cultures of liberal democracies.

At present, it is certainly too early to predict whether these pessimistic diagnoses will turn out to be correct. At any rate, it seems safe to say that the current political crisis also has an important educational dimension; some commentators have even argued that we are currently facing a "Sputnik moment for civics education"*1*. Although it remains questionable whether proclamations like these substantially progress the debate, it certainly cannot be ignored that Trump is the elephant currently stomping through civic education classrooms all over the world. The political and educational issues at stake, however, are highly complex.

We believe that the current crisis, like every crisis, harbours various dangers, but also offers opportunities to rethink and reassess the current state of affairs. Therefore, we argue that it is time to step back to analyse the pressing, underlying theoretical problems and associated practical challenges that the crisis of liberal democracy has put on the agenda of everyone interested in politics in general, and civic education in particular. What, for instance, is the role of facts and truth in politics and civic education? Are we currently witnessing a practical breakdown of procedural and deliberative conceptions of democracy? What are the educational and political implications of distributing misinformation and lies via the social media? Do the critiques of elitism brought forward by right-wing populist movements also apply to conceptions of the `good citizen´ advocated by theoreticians of civic education? What (if anything) is wrong with `political correctness´?

There are certainly no simple and uncontroversial answers to such questions. This is why we have decided to invite eight scholars to shed some light on the problems and challenges of civic education

after Trump. We are looking forward to a lively debate and cordially invite our readers to comment on and reply to the essays of the first issue of **on_education**.

The Editorial Team

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