Dewey’s *Democracy and Education* in the age of digital reason: the global, ecological and digital turns

Michael A. Peters\(^a,b\) and Petar Jandrić\(^c\)

\(^a\)University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand; \(^b\)University of Illinois, Champaign, IL, USA; \(^c\)Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia

**ABSTRACT**

Dewey was perhaps the foremost theorist and advocate of participatory democracy as an ethical ideal based on a belief and faith in human experience as a general theory of education that would generate the requisite aims and methods for what he called ‘organized intelligence’ and what we might call today ‘collective intelligence’ – that is, as he says, ‘faith in democracy is all one with faith in experience and education’. In this paper we revisit Dewey’s *Democracy and Education. An introduction to the philosophy of education* (1916/2001) in order to evaluate the growth and development of democracy against the decline of social democracy in the West. We identify the three turns which separate democracy of Dewey’s times and democracy of today – the global, the ecological, and the digital turn – and relate them to changing notions of citizenship. We analyse complex interplay between the turns, and show that they cannot be understood and / or analysed in separation. While the identified turns have indeed significantly changed circumstances in which Dewey produced his understanding of democracy, we conclude that his work still carries a lot of value and call for its reinvention in and for the age of digital reason.

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(...) education as the process of forming fundamental disposition, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow-men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education. Unless a philosophy is to remain symbolic—or verbal—or a sentimental indulgence for a few, or else mere arbitrary dogma, its auditing of past experience and its program of values must take effect in conduct.

– Dewey, J. (1916/2001). *Democracy and Education. An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, p. 336.

Dewey was the most important advocate of participatory democracy, that is, of the belief that democracy as an ethical ideal calls upon men and women to build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for every individual to realize his or her particular capacities and powers through participation in political, social, and cultural life.

– Westbrook, R. B. (1993). *John Dewey and American Democracy*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. xv.

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Dewey’s ‘Creative Democracy’

John Dewey’s pragmatism, championed and revived almost singlehandedly by Richard Rorty (1979), is a form of naturalism that holds knowledge arises from the experience of the human organism in the process of adapting to its environment. This philosophy inspired first by Hegelian idealism increasingly came under the influence of Darwin leading to Dewey’s empirical and experimentalist epistemology or as he preferred to call it ‘theory of inquiry’. Dewey’s naturalistic logic underlies his work as an educational theorist and his account of democracy as social inquiry that emphasizes the importance of discussion and debate as a mechanism of decision-making. In *Liberalism and Social Action*, he deliberates that democracy is a form of ‘organized intelligence’ (Dewey, 1935/1963, p. 47) not just a means of protecting our interests or expressing our individuality but also a forum for determining our interests. In line with his early interests in psychology Dewey founded the University Laboratory School at Chicago in 1896 that issued in his first major work on education *The School and Society: Being Three Lectures* (Dewey, 1899) and culminated in his classic work *Democracy and Education. An introduction to the philosophy of education* (Dewey, 1916/2001) suggesting education for democracy is ‘sharing in common life’. As he asserts in *My Pedagogic Creed* (Dewey, 1897, p. 15): ‘education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction’.

Dewey is the foremost philosopher of education in the twentieth century and perhaps also the most concerned for developing an account of education and democracy – of education as essential democratic institution in building civil society and citizenship. His power and influence was eclipsed in the post-war period with the ascent of analytic philosophy that focused on the clarification of concepts and perhaps best represented by R. S. Peters’ *Ethics and Education* (1968). Peters, along with Paul Hirst and many others in the ‘London School’, attempted to answer the question concerning the meaning of ‘education’ – requiring a form of conceptual analysis – and its worthwhileness – requiring a justification. As Cuypers and Martin (2011) note: ‘Peters’ analytical paradigm is conceptually foundational in the sense that it deals with key concepts that are constitutive of the discipline …’.

As Richard Rorty began to move away from analytic philosophy in the early 1980s with his masterful *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (1979) to view analytic philosophy as a failed enterprise he chose Dewey along with Wittgenstein and Gadamer as his three philosophical heroes who tried to find a way to make philosophy ‘foundational’– a new way of formulating an ultimate context for thought. Each of the three came to see his earlier effort as self-deceptive, as an attempt to retain a certain conception of philosophy after the notions needed to flesh out that conception (the seventeenth-century notions of knowledge and mind) had been discarded. Each of the three, in his later work, broke free of the Kantian conception of philosophy as foundational, and spent his time warning us against those very temptations to which he himself had once succumbed. Thus their later work is therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic, designed to make the reader question his own motives for philosophizing rather than to supply him with a new philosophical program. (Rorty, 1979, pp. 5–6)

What is important for Rorty’s understanding of these three philosophers is that they came to reject ‘foundations of knowledge’ – in fact they were both anti-foundationalist and anti-
representational which means they moved away from the position that suggested that knowledge consists in accurate representations of reality (normally expressed in the form of the correspondence theory of truth). Rorty, increasingly, jettisoned Wittgenstein and Heidegger and came to rely more and more on Dewey. Embracing Dewey’s naturalism and anti-essentialism, Rorty believed in the deepening and widening of solidarity as the key to advancing economic justice and increasing citizens’ freedom (Ramberg, 2009). While some critics accept that Rorty follows Dewey in ‘freeing liberalism from its traditional philosophical foundations in Enlightenment metaphysics’, they also recognize that there is a difference between Dewey’s ‘hope for philosophically inspired social reform and more participatory democracy’ and Rorty’s piecemeal social reform and ‘private irony’ (Shusterman, 1994, pp. 392–393). The differences between Dewey and Rorty might be described in terms of differences in the history of American democracy – the first three decades of the twentieth century versus the last three, roughly the socially progressive era with great faith in a universal and comprehensive system of education versus the late post-war era of neoliberalism beginning in 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan with its emphasis on privatization and charter schools.

Writing in his eightieth year, more than two decades after Democracy and Education (1916/2001), and during the rise of fascism in Europe, in a piece called ‘Creative Democracy – The Task Before Us’ (Dewey, 1939/1988), Dewey reflects on the nature of democracy as it was then created one hundred and fifty years before suggesting that America faced a moral rather than a physical frontier and that democracy as a way of life requires recreation every generation. He writes optimistically: ‘Democracy is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature’ (Dewey, 1939/1988, p. 226) – not merely by faith ‘but by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished’ (Dewey, 1939/1988, p. 227). Of course, to be pragmatically consistent we would have to askew essential theories of human nature together with the attempt to draw moral consequences and emphasize that human subjectivities are molded by institutions; it is manufactured or shaped. Dewey advances his mature philosophical position as follows:

democracy is belief in the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience will grow in ordered richness … Democracy is the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained, so that special results achieved are of ultimate value only as they are used to enrich and order the ongoing process. Since the process of experience is capable of being educative, faith in democracy is all one with faith in experience and education. (Dewey, 1939/1988, p. 229)

Inquiring of the relation between democracy and education today, we have to acknowledge certain historical changes from Dewey’s era but also from Rorty’s era even if we accept the general case for pragmatism, naturalism and participatory democracy, as we are inclined to do so. Just as political and economic history shape our institutions, so our institutions shape our subjectivities. And often institutions and the ‘rules of the game’ are imposed by those who have economic and political power rather than being chosen for the good of society. Thus ‘institutions are the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction’ (North, 1990, p. 3). This is to argue broadly that our democratic institutions influence our conceptions of citizenship.
We are persuaded by Foucault’s account of political liberalism through the development of what he calls ‘governmentality’ which shifts from the eighteenth century from *raison d’État*, literally ‘reason of state’, to a new form of governmentality that Foucault identifies with the birth of ‘biopolitics’ where he identifies different forms of ‘neoliberalism’. Mark Olssen argues that Foucault suggests a theory of democracy as ‘as set of historically contingent practices’ built on a ‘relational and dialogical conception of ethics’, ‘a conception of liberty as nondomination’, a principle of opposition to any government policy that conflicts with the cultivation of self, an argument for political pluralism, ‘a historicopolitical discourse on rights’, a theory of power (sovereign, disciplinary, pastoral and bio-power) and resistance, an the ethos of speaking truth to power (*parrhesia*) (Olssen, 2007, pp. 205–206).

Be that as it may we do not have the time to go into detail about Foucault’s notion of democracy or his relation to Dewey. Rather we want to argue for three ways in which the democracy of today differs from Dewey’s notion and time and to analyse how those differences broadly affect education and notions of citizenship. Accordingly, this paper analyses three ‘turns’ – the global, the ecological, and the digital – each of which changes the conditions of democracy and attendant notions of citizenship and education.

**The global turn**

One of the most powerful ideas, movements, and policy approaches has been what is called ‘neoliberalism’ – a notion that starts its life as a political idea in the hands of the German *ordoliberals* that come to power with Dr Ardenauer in the reconstruction of post-war Germany and in a different way with Fredrich von Hayek and the Mount Pelerin Institute he founded with some 36 other scholars in 1947 (see The Mont Pelerin Society, 2017). In the immediate aftermath of WWII, Hayek and his colleagues felt that ‘the central values of civilization are in danger’ (The Mont Pelerin Society, 2017). The Mount Pelerin Institute was dedicated to defending the liberal order against the overweening power of the State and especially the rise Fascism in Europe. It was a classic liberal creed designed to protect the individual against the intrusions of the State, but it became a set of policies in the hands of Margaret Thatcher used to roll back the welfare state. With the adoption of such policies by Ronald Reagan, neoliberalism defined the Anglo-American policy orientation that was later reformulated as the ‘Washington Consensus’ – a set of ten policy prescriptions promoted by the IMF, World Bank and the US Treasury. John Williamson (2002) coined the term to refer to: fiscal discipline; reordering public expenditure priorities; tax reform; liberalizing interest rates; a competitive exchange rate; trade liberalization; liberalizing foreign direct investment; privatization; deregulation; and property rights. In effect, these policies became the ruling policy mantra during the 1980s and beyond.

The worldwide market economy and trade liberalization essentially redefined neoliberalism as the mainstream form of globalization. As a set of domestic policies neoliberalism substantially eroded the base for social democracy, limiting the state through state assets sales, cutting the public sector, and privatizing institutions of the welfare state. This means in large measure an attack on public schools, introduction of student fees, and state support for private schools (see Peters & Jandrić, 2018, forthcoming). In effect these policies meant a move away from principles of participatory democracy with a greater
emphasis on user-pays education and a greater individualization and strengthening of consumer rights. In Britain, Anthony Giddens and Tony Blair saw the Third Way as an opportunity to renew social democracy with an emphasis on rights and responsibilities. Giddens (1998), following Anthony Crosland’s *The Future of Socialism* (1956), rejected state socialism as a doctrine of top down economic management and central planning. By contrast, on the basis of a critique of individualism, he embraced an ethics of social and collective responsibility for welfare. Critics suggested that this kind of social democracy never resolved issues inherent in its relationship to capitalism.

Reviewing two important books by Meyer and Rutherford (2012) and Cramme and Diamond (2012), David J. Bailey (2015, p. 163) begins with the focused question to which he believes motivates their separate projects:

Now that both the Keynesian and the neoliberal variant of capitalism have been largely discredited by empirical experience, and the goal of transcending capitalism has long been discarded by social democrats, do the latter need to think about what can and should form the basis for renewed social democratic appeal?

He summarizes the challenges facing the future of social democracy in terms of four problems. First, social democracy under the sway of Third Way capitulated to neoliberalism in accepting a market economy/social democracy coupling and thus undermined its subsequent ability to respond to the financial crisis of neoliberalism. Second, ‘the language of the Third Way centre-left has been detached and technocratic, preventing social democrats from connecting with the electorate and particularly with the less privileged members of the electorate who historically have been their core electoral supporters’ (Bailey, 2015, p. 164). Third, as a result, working class voters have been captured by the rise of far right parties who have cashed in on the feeling of abandonment by the center-left. Fourth, as Bailey comments, ‘many of the contributors focused on the impact of migration in undermining social solidarity/community, and the difficulties this creates for social democratic parties’ (Bailey, 2015, p. 164).

Susan Watkins writing an editorial for the August (now old) *New Left Review* (Watkins 2016) suggests that the left – social democrats – were slow to mobilize after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) until in 2012 the Syriza coalition in Greece took 27% of the vote and later constituted itself as a party. In France, Italy, and Spain, the left made some headway but there was little renewal elsewhere either in Europe or the Americas. Most political action was directed at the mismanagement of the Great Recession, outrage at the rapid growth of inequalities, and most recently the international tax scam of American info-multinationals and tax havens for the super-rich. Third way neoliberalism that tried to marry social democracy with the global market economy lost its luster as the realization that there was no structural global democratic parallel to global markets even in its deliberative forms and the plunder of free floating ‘rogue’ multinationals upset world sustainability goals. The result was a right leaning stance of ex-social democrats that lacked inspiration on economic policy and lacked the means to protect social provision in any areas of the remnant of the welfare state.

In the US, as Watkins points out – ‘students in 2010, Occupy in 2011, state-level trade-union revolts, Black Lives Matter’ – provided a militant edge of Bernie Sanders campaign to contest the Democrat nomination and doing far better than anyone gave him credit for against Clinton who at the beginning looked like a shoo-in. Typically, the opposition
forces do better in proportional representational systems than exclusionary first-past-the-post systems like the US. Sanders (US), Corbyn (UK), Tsipras (Greece), Grillo (Italy), and Mélenchon (France), emerged as charismatic figures with the first two squarely within the social democratic tradition and Grillo (Italy) being the exception. The problem is that both Sanders and Corbyn do not really head Democratic parties so much as a framework to run for office. Their programs reflect it – as Watkins notes: ‘Sanders has stuck to marginal reforms … encouraging more Americans to vote’ but not systematic reform. They all attack austerity and the easy target of the super-rich. Sanders talks of investing a billion in infrastructure; Corbyn stresses public housing; Grillo emphasizes high-end agriculture; and Syriza’s demands are the most modest of all. Watkins notes in parenthesis: ‘(None so far has tried to grapple with the scale of the profitability problems facing the world economy – manufacturing overcapacity, labour surplus, debt limits – which would seem to render “sustainable growth” unfeasible on capitalist terms)’. (Watkins, 2016, p. 14)

These oppositions differ widely on NATO and immigration, and it is interesting to note that Corbyn has embraced the discredited Blair-Brown Labour right. Finally, Watkins comes to a characterization of these opposition forces:

Respectful of NATO, anti-austerity, pro-public investment and (more guardedly) ownership, sceptical of ‘free trade’: as a first approximation, we might call them new, small, weak social democracies. The founding purpose of the original, late 19th-century social-democratic parties was to defend and advance the interests of labour, under the conditions of industrial manufacturing … . (Watkins, 2016, p. 24)

Watkins suggest that the founding purpose of the new left oppositions – strictly speaking the new new left – is to defend the interests of wage earners against public austerity in face of the massive bail-out for private capital. Is that new democracy? Small democracy? Weak democracy? Social democracy? This purpose is disappointing on all counts, and also quite some distance from ‘soft anarchism’ of the ‘alter-globalization’ and ‘social movements’ only a decade ago. Only Sanders and Corbyn have avowedly social democratic starting points; ‘Podemos and Syriza originated in more radical tradition’ (Watkins, 2016, p. 29); Méléenouch is only part SD; while Italy’s Five Star Movement is the exception sharing aspects with all parties. Most striking as Watkins notes is that youth are breaking left – what have they to gain from mainstream parties, that are parasitic on their labor but deny them access to education and jobs?

In the face of neoliberalism and globalization, Dewey’s concept of democracy is no more. Furthermore, the notion of citizenship has grown beyond the nation state to embrace various new notions such as global, world, cosmopolitan, multicultural, ecological, digital, and many other forms of citizenship (see Carter, 2013; Heater, 2002; Hutchings & Dannreuther, 1998; Osler & Starkey, 2005). It is within these challenging conditions, that the basic assumptions behind Dewey’s theory of democracy have irreversibly changed by the global turn in contemporary conditions for democracy.

The environmental turn

We have every reason to think that whatever changes may take place in existing democratic machinery, they will be of a sort to make the interest of the public a more supreme guide and criterion of governmental activity, and to enable the public to form and manifest its purposes
still more authoritatively. In this sense the cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy.

– Dewey, J. (1927/1954). The Public and Its Problems. Ohio: Swallow Press, p. 146.

Writing this paper in September 2017, when three ‘one-in-a-century’ storms have simultaneously hit the US with horrifying consequences, we do not feel the need to prove that environment is one of the most pressing issues of the contemporary world. Furthermore, during the past decades, worldwide environmental movements have exercised some of the most prominent practices which actively challenge the described transformations of democracy. Therefore, we proceed to bring together two powerful concepts and international movements of ecology and local democracy that are needed to bring about the transformation of grassroots civil society. We call this combination ‘ecological democracy’ that rests on two fundamental principles – the freedom to participate in local society and our growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things.

One definition of ecological democracy emphasizes sustainability in action by emphasizing a relationship between biological processes and political subjectivities of participatory democracy considered as a co-evolutionary strategy. Education for Ecological Democracy is based on an alternative democratic model that strives to educate students about the norms and values of democracy-in-action and eventually incorporate them as interested citizens into environmental decision-making and collective action. ‘Ecological democracy’ is still a concept in the formative stage. In its radical form ‘it places the goals of direct democracy, local and bioregional economies, cultural diversity, human well-being, and ecological resilience at the core of its vision’ (Kothari, 2014). In our version it is closely associated with the notion of deliberation that is considered central to consensus decision-making and majority rule. We embrace deliberative democracy for its educative power and its pedagogical force in teaching students to reason in democratic fora about ecological issues. The deliberative nature of ecological democracy we argue has strong roots in grassroots participation in civil society. In philosophical terms it is indebted to John Dewey’ Democracy and Education. An introduction to the philosophy of education (1916/2001) and more recently to the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas’ (1984) theory of communicative rationality based on the ideal of a self-organizing community of free and equal citizens coordinating their collective affairs through their common reason. Free and open debate is a necessary condition for the legitimacy of democratic political decisions based on the exercise of ‘public reason’ rather than simply the aggregation of citizen preferences as with representative or direct democracy.

From its development in the 1980s and 1990s as Green Political Theory or ecopolitics founded on the work of John Dryzek (1987), Robyn Eckersley (1992), Val Plumwood (1993) and Andrew Dobson (2004), participatory democracy has been viewed as a central pillar and key value, often associated with descriptions of decentralization, grassroots political decision-making and citizen participation, ‘strong democracy’ (Barber, 1984), and increasingly with conceptions of deliberative democracy. The value of participatory or grassroots democracy also seemed to gel with a new ecological awareness, non-violence and the concern for social justice. Green politics favored participatory and more recently deliberative democracy because it provided a model for open debate, direct citizen involvement and emphasized grassroots action over electoral politics.
Local government is more democratic than any other level of government and at the same time it provides education for the practice of political education instructing children and others in the art if decision-making that is sensitive to local opinions based on local knowledge. It is especially appropriate in mobilizing community to gain local support for ecological projects ensuring that power is widely dispersed. It also encourages people to rebuild democracy at the local level moving toward self-organisation. This approach fits well within the local-global dynamics pertaining to contemporary experience and theory of citizenship, where one can simultaneously be a citizen of own locale, and a citizen of the world, and an ecologically concerned citizen. Inherent tensions and contradictions between those forms of citizenship are still present – local self-organization is still unable to tackle large polluters behind the border. Nevertheless, democratic developments theorized and practised by environmental movements, or what we call the environmental turn in contemporary conditions for democracy, does provide a theoretical and practical framework for countering some pressing problems caused by the global turn.

The digital turn

Dewey’s view of democracy as organized intelligence is closely related to the concept of collective intelligence, which has a historical tail in political philosophy at least since Aristotle’s Politics (350 B.C./1912). Collective intelligence has also been an area of interest in mathematics. In 1785 the Marquis de Condorcet wrote Essai sur l’application de l’analyse à la probabilité des décisions rendues à la pluralité des voix (Essay on the Application of Analysis to the Probability of Majority) (Condorcet, 1785) which includes the much quoted Condorcet’s Jury Theorem – a mathematical description of the probability of arriving at a correct decision for any given group of individuals. Taking various routes, philosophers such as Rousseau, Mill, Peirce, Dewey, Habermas, Rawls, and Rorty have identified links between epistemology and democracy. In recent years, this theoretical background has given rise to the concept of epistemic democracy (List & Goodin, 2001).

With the arrival of information and communication technologies, the idea of collective intelligence applied to society has been taken up by various authors (for detailed recent accounts see Jandrić, 2017; Peters & Jandrić, 2017; Rheingold & Jandrić, 2015). Prominent books in the field include Howard Rheingold’s Smart mobs: The next social revolution (2002), James Surowiecki’s Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economics, Societies and Nations (2004), Pierre Lévy’s Collective intelligence: Mankind’s emerging world of cyberspace (1997), and others. It is not difficult to understand reasons behind these developments – information and communication technologies have brought about significant changes in ways we see the world and make (individual and collective) decisions. In words of Michael Peters, we have arrived into ‘the age of digital reason’ (Peters, 2014; Peters & Jandrić, 2015a, 2017; see also Jandrić, 2017) where individualist approaches to knowledge making and dissemination are being slowly but surely supplemented, and in many contexts fully replaced, by collective approaches based on the notion of technology supported collective intelligence (Peters, 2015; Peters & Jandrić, 2015b, 2017; see also Jandrić, 2017).

Arterton (1987) identifies two general frameworks dominating the discussion over (then) new communication technologies and democracy: the plebiscitary framework, and the deliberative framework. The plebiscitary framework, sometimes also called
teledemocracy, is based on bringing voting opportunity to each individual through communication technologies. In this model, information and communication technologies are seen primarily as vehicles for enhancing traditional voting opportunities, and many versions of the plebiscitary framework end up in direct democracy. In opposition, the deliberative framework uses information and communication technology to expand the notion of representative democracy, and focuses to efficient management of information in order to enable voters to make better decisions.

Obviously, today’s technologies can strongly enhance both the plebiscitary framework and the deliberative framework. Following Dewey, however, there is much more to democracy than more efficient access to voting and / or more efficient access to information. The digital reason is, both epistemically and practically, fundamentally different from its historical precedents. In the age of digital reason, therefore, the notion of collective intelligence also acquires a new meaning. Let us look at two definitions by some of the most prominent researchers in the field. For Pierre Lévy, collective intelligence is

a scientific, technical and political project that aims to make people smarter with computers, instead of trying to make computers smarter than people. So, collective intelligence is neither the opposite of collective stupidity nor the opposite of individual intelligence. It is the opposite of artificial intelligence. It is a way to grow a renewed human/cultural cognitive system by exploiting our increasing computing power and our ubiquitous memory. (in Peters, 2015, p. 261)

In a similar spirit, Hendler and Berners-Lee write:

we look ahead to a time when it will be possible to create and then evolve new kinds of social machines that will provide people, individually and collectively, with the ability to immerse themselves in the accumulated knowledge and the constant interactions of humankind. People’s interactions will be not just as passive recipients of information created by others, but also as contributors to this global information space in a way far beyond that of today’s Web. In looking to this future, our focus is not primarily in terms of the cyber-infrastructure of high-speed supercomputers and their networked interconnections, but the even more powerful human interactions enabled by these underlying systems. (Hendler & Berners-Lee, 2010, p. 5)

In the age of digital reason, collective intelligence – and, consequently, today’s democracy – cannot be approached by mere development of the plebiscitary framework, the deliberative framework, and any combination thereof. We have more opportunity for communication than ever, yet we also probably still need some sort of representation. Technologies bring numerous new opportunities, yet the human being and its place within the society are still in the center of attention. In order to examine democracy in the age of digital reason, therefore, we need to re-examine and reinvent our epistemologies and political theories.

One practical attempt is Jeremy Corbyn’s ‘The Digital Democracy Manifesto’ (2016) (for a more detailed analysis, see Peters & Jandrić, 2017). Corbyn, the Leader of the Labour Party and Leader of the Opposition in Great Britain, supported by the prominent political scientist Richard Barbrook, has tried to sum up some of the above insights into a short political document covering the following themes: Universal Service Network, Open Knowledge Library, Community Media Freedom, Platform Cooperatives, Digital Citizen Passport, Programing For Everyone, The People’s Charter Of Digital Liberties, and Massive Multi-Person On-Line Deliberation. The last chapter of the Manifesto says:
We will utilise information technologies to make popular participation in the democratic process easy and inclusive. The holders of a Digital Citizen Passport will be automatically placed on the electoral register of their new constituency as soon as they change their home address. We will aim to organise both online and offline meetings for individuals and communities to deliberate about pressing political issues and participate in devising new legislation. The National Education Service will enlighten the British electorate with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills of digital citizenship. We will create a 21st century networked democracy where everybody can be a political decision-maker. (Corbyn, 2016)

‘The Digital Democracy Manifesto’ simultaneously operates in the plebiscitary framework and in the deliberative framework, while acknowledging deeper epistemic changes and the notion of digital citizenship. While it is still too early to foresee its practical effects, ‘The Digital Democracy Manifesto’, or at least some of its elements, reflect Dewey’s idea of democracy as organized intelligence.

Some authors, such as Paul Levinson, are fully positive about the relationships between digital technologies and democracy: ‘it is the global village, to again use McLuhan’s term (McLuhan, 1962), that social media have brought into being – and that certainly fosters democracy’ (Jandrić, 2017, p. 295; see also Levinson and Jandrić, 2016). Others, such as Henry Giroux, are more careful:

I think that the Internet has an enormous potential for development of participatory democracy. However, I think that what needs to be unmasked immediately is the precept position that the Internet is equal to democracy. I think this position is just nonsense, because it erases the questions of politics, power, and control. (…) the Internet is both situated within the existing historical conjuncture and the power relations that define it and at the same time there is the question of how the Internet can be understood as a source of resistance, a sphere capable of narrating new voices, modes of representations, and establishing cross border modes of communication and educational and political alliances. (Jandrić, 2017, pp. 141–142; see also Giroux & Jandrić, 2015)

We are still in early stages of the age of digital reason, and effects of the described digital turn in contemporary conditions for democracy and social arrangements at large are hard to assess. Yet, it is safe to say that the digital turn is a site of struggle which is growing in scope, extent and importance, and which needs to be understood as integral to all contemporary theories and practices of democracy.

The three turns

Revisiting Dewey’s Democracy and Education. An introduction to the philosophy of education (1916/2001) after 101 years, we identify three important turns which separate democracy of Dewey’s times and democracy of today: the global, the ecological, and the digital turn. The global turn refers to various consequences of marriage between social democracy and global market economy, which has resulted in the worldwide rise of right-wing policies, in the declining role of the state, and in the rise of advanced forms of ruthless global capitalism which place immediate profit above common good. The ecological turn operates in opposite direction. Placing environmental sustainability at the forefront, it redefines the relationships between the local and the global and insists on local, grass-roots political decision making closely linked to local knowledges, local communities, and of course education. The digital turn is both global and local. It enhances, and reaches beyond, the plebiscitary framework and the deliberative
framework of democracy. Most importantly, it reaches all the way to epistemic questions, while avoiding the analytical trap of the ‘London School’ and allows reinvention of relationships between knowledge making and dissemination and democracy.

According to George Ritzer, globalization is a complex phenomenon which consists of (at least) two opposing forces: grobalisation, which refers to the growing influence of transnational, predominantly US-based entities such as corporations) and glocalization, which refers to the trend of adapting globalized products and services to local circumstances (Ritzer, 2004). The three identified turns consist of complex interplay between those opposing social forces. For instance, the digital turn is a complex mixed bag of grobalization (all major digital technologies are created in the US) and glocalization (in spite of their origin, these technologies quickly adapt to local circumstances and needs). The interplay between grobalization and glocalization profoundly impact the notion of citizenship: we are both (digital and non-digital) citizens of the world and citizens of our localities. Probably the best illustration of complex relationships between these forms of citizenship is described within the ecological turn, where local decisions can (and often do) heavily impact global environment and vice versa. Therefore, none of the identified turns can be analysed in separation – it is only through their mutual relationships, and through their interplay, that we can start grappling contemporary conditions for democracy and seeking viable alternatives.

**Conclusion**

Published exactly 101 years ago, Dewey’s *Democracy and Education* is still surprisingly relevant. Dewey’s understanding of democracy as organized intelligence (these days, the commonly used phrase is collective intelligence), links between democracy and education, belief in collective human capacity for improving own circumstances, and insisting on importance of experience, remain central pillars of our contemporary understanding of democracy. However, that does not imply that Dewey’s understanding of democracy can be applied straightforward to the contemporary context. The three important turns which happened since Dewey’s times – the global, the ecological, and the digital turn – have significantly altered circumstances in which Dewey wrote his theses. Today’s collective intelligence is miles away from Dewey’s organized intelligence, the plebiscitary framework and the deliberative framework have undergone drastic changes and became inextricably interconnected, and citizenship has become both grobal and glocal, with many shades of grey in the between. Instead of reading and especially applying Dewey ‘s theories literally, therefore, we need to carefully reinvent his main concepts for the moment here and now. As it happens with great thinkers, Dewey’s work invites continuing active engagement which, instead of followers, requires courageous thinkers and practitioners who are not afraid of theoretical and practical experimentation.

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Notes on contributors

Michael A. Peters is Professor of Education at the University of Waikato, New Zealand and Emeritus Professor in Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. He is the executive editor of the journal, Educational Philosophy and Theory, and founding editor of five international journals, Policy Futures in Education, E-Learning and Digital Media (SAGE), and Knowledge Cultures (Addleton), The Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy (Springer), Open Review of Education Research (T&F). His interests are in philosophy, education and social policy and he has written over eighty books, including most recently: Wittgenstein and Education: Pedagogical Investigations, (2017) with Jeff Stickney, The Global Financial Crisis and the Restructuring of Education (2015), Paulo Freire: The Global Legacy (2015) both with Tina Besley, Education Philosophy and Politics: Selected Works (2011); Education, Cognitive Capitalism and Digital Labour (2011), with Ergin Bulut; and Neoliberalism and After? Education, Social Policy and the Crisis of Capitalism (2011). He has acted as an advisor to governments and UNESCO on these and related matters in the USA, Scotland, NZ, South Africa and the EU. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of NZ in 2010 and awarded honorary doctorates by State University of New York (SUNY) in 2012 and University of Aalborg in 2015.

Petar Jandrić is an educator and researcher. He published five books, several dozens of scholarly articles and chapters, and numerous popular articles. Petar’s works have been published in Croatian, English, Ukrainian, Spanish and Serbian. He regularly participates in national and international educational projects and policy initiatives. Petar's background is in physics, education and information science, and his research interests are situated at the post-disciplinary intersections between technologies, pedagogies and the society. Petar worked at Croatian Academic and Research Network, University of Edinburgh, Glasgow School of Art, and University of East London. At present he works as professor and director of BSc (Informatics) program at the Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, and visiting associate professor at the University of Zagreb. Personal website: http://petarjandric.com/.

ORCID

Petar Jandrić http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6464-4142

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