

## **DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION**

### **Democracy in Numerous Crises**

"Is this democracy collapsing?" (Rabe, 2024), "Is democracy dying this year?" (Shafy, 2024), "Are we even a liberal democracy?" (Bösch, 2023). Questions about the future development of democracy also concern social cohesion and challenge all areas of society and their institutions with their structures, processes, content, and actors. The decoupling of political influence and democratic representation, as well as post-democratic passivation (Crouch, 2017), create a tension in which the fundamental promise of the democratic welfare state, to enable a secure life in an orderly society, no longer seems redeemable without fundamental individual, societal, and political changes.

### **Democracy as a Dynamic Form of Life**

In view of increasing threats to democratic forms of governance, society and life, it is necessary to critically reflect on and discuss multiperspectively the diverse contributions of different societal areas and institutions to democracy and democratization (Haarmann, Kenner & Lange, 2020, p. 20). Democracy is not just a form of governance that follows majorities. As a "changeable form under temporal cultural conditions, requirements and phenomena" (Beutel, Beutel & Gloe, 2022, p. 81), it should not be seen as a static construct. It also represents a form of life that "must be discovered and rediscovered, newly created and reorganized" (Dewey 1987/1937, p. 182, cited in Biesta, 2007) and "must be learned through continuous effort" (Negt, cited in Widmann, 2024).

### **Democracy Education**

In this regard, the education system and especially schools receive special attention, including the expressions and demands of societal players. However, the education of democracy also includes other societal areas and institutions (politics, administration, healthcare, religious communities, prisons, associations, sports organizations, youth centers, nursing homes, etc.) that, in various forms and designs, contribute to making democracy visible and effective in everyday life and initiate democratic (self-)educational processes. Their practical implementations, theoretical foundations, democratic innovations, and the promotion or hindrance of democratization processes in times of multiple crises are the focus of this call, which also seeks to keep in mind the boundaries of undemocratic developments.

## Democracy in the Religious Context

For religious education, in addition to the school environment, there is also the context of the religious community/church, which could either contradict or support a democratic orientation in its foundations. Theological disciplines play a central role here. Religious education, in particular, is challenged to strengthen democratic education.

## Orientation of the Issue

The aim is, on the one hand, an empirical analysis of democratic education in different societal areas – also beyond schools – and, on the other hand, scientific advancement in the sense of innovative impulses for future theological, religious educational, and subject didactic reflections. The scope can range from empirical findings on democratic education to ideology-critical contributions and include (religious) educational sites in (pre-)school institutions and numerous other societal areas.

## Selected Focus Areas May Include:

- Foundations of Democratic Education
- Religions, Religious Education, and Democracy
- Anti-Democratic and Undemocratic Developments as Educational Challenges
- Democracy and Schools
- Democracy in Different Subject Didactic Discourses
- Democratic Subjectivation Processes

We cordially invite you to write contributions on this topic and submit them for the issue of the ÖRF, which will be published in autumn 2025.

Please send the **announcements** of your contributions (abstract) on the issue's topic or other texts (to be published under "further scientific contributions") to the following email address: [oerf.redaktion@uni-graz.at](mailto:oerf.redaktion@uni-graz.at). After a formal and content initial review, you will receive feedback from us. Once you have received positive feedback and completed your contribution, upload it yourself on our website to initiate the peer review process: <http://oerf-journal.eu/>

We also request the **announcement of publications** that have recently been produced and should be reviewed, as well as **short descriptions of excellent scientific religious educational qualification works** at various locations (master's or diploma theses, etc.).

The submission process and all corresponding formalities can be found on our homepage: <http://oerf-journal.eu/>

**Please strictly adhere to the manuscript guidelines!**

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*Timeline*

**Submission deadline** of contribution proposals: February 3, 2025

**Submission deadline** for all contributions for peer review: March 28, 2025

**Submission deadline** for reviews and qualification works: June 13, 2025

**Publication date:** Autumn 2025