

# Moral Values Education:

*Characterizing Japan and Norway's Primary School Curriculum*

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Master Thesis

Master of Philosophy in Comparative and International Education

Institute for Educational Research

Faculty of Education

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

November, 2006



## **Abstract**

The idea of moral values education as a formal subject in the curriculum has waxed and waned; however, considering the rapid rate in which societies are evolving, it is clear that moral values education is as important as ever. In order to insure that children and young adults are prepared to become active and educated participants and decision-makers in modern society, they must be guided responsibly by moral and democratic principles. This thesis is a comparative perspective of moral values education in the primary school curriculum of Japan and Norway, which considers both of these nation's unique historical and cultural foundations, as well as the evolution of the philosophy of education in each society. The aim of the paper is to characterize moral values education in Japan and Norway and to determine what is distinctly Japanese and Norwegian in terms of moral values education in the primary school curriculum.

The study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm and is mainly qualitative in nature. I have chosen a multi-method approach which includes reviews of historical events connected to the foundation of moral values education, and a comparative and evaluative design of the current national core curriculum as it outlines the goals of contemporary moral values education. As a starting point, my inquiry examines the historical development of the national education system and the philosophy of education in both Japan and Norway. Specific attention is paid to the conception and understanding of moral values and the element of democratic education in terms of the curricular rhetoric. John Dewey's conception of democratic education and sociological concepts from cross-cultural studies are the guiding principles used in analyzing the findings.

The conclusion of this thesis is that despite contrasting educational foundations, a unique philosophy of education inspired by different cultural traditions has evolved in both Japan and Norway. From the early foundations of the educational system through today, this philosophy of education has enabled a distinctive approach to the development and implementation of ideas surrounding moral values education.

*Key Words: Moral Values Education, Primary School Curriculum, Japan, Norway, Democratic Education*

## Acknowledgements

My interest in cross-cultural studies could have turned out very differently had my first experience at the young age of 16 not been a positive one. This thesis encapsulates who I have become since embarking on that first adventure. Those of you who have been there from day one, and those who I have met along the way, you have my appreciation.

My classmates in the CIE program made this experience worthwhile. Whether in study or play, there was friendship and support, and many shared perspectives on life back in our home countries. Not only has my awareness of their home countries been increased, they have also generated more interest in me to explore their worlds.

A warm thank you to the Nordic Association of Japanese Studies (NAJS) for being the first sounding board for my project and encouraging me to pursue my interest in Japan, and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen for hosting me as a SUPRA scholar.

It was a pleasure working with Janicke Heldal-Stray as my supervisor. She eagerly agreed to guide me down this long path, supported my work-hard-play-hard ethic, and not once gave me a deadline. Mange hjertelige takk!

A very special thanks to Jennifer, who provided an educated ear and necessary comedic relief, especially when teamed with Tobias. And of course, to Tobias, who has supported my writing since the day we met, although he still hasn't read a word of it. I appreciate your friendship and encouragement more than you both know.

I am still not sure whether my family and friends in the U.S. fully understand what my life as a student in Oslo has encompassed over the past two years, or whether they understand my nomadic lifestyle in general, but I will always appreciate their support. They endlessly provide humor and encouragement, even when they disagree with my opinions. So, here is what I have been up to...

Oslo, November 2006

Cara Jacoby

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## List of Acronyms

ALT	Assistant Language Teacher
EU	European Union
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
KD	Kunnskapsdepartementet (Ministry of Education and Research)
MESSC	Monbushō (Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture)
MEXT	Monbukagakushō (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)
MOE	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UDIR	Utdanningsdirektoratet (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training)

The Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education was first established in 1814. The Ministry was divided in 1982, and responsibility for cultural affairs, higher education, and research was shifted to the new Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs. After further reorganization in 1991, the Ministry was renamed the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. Following a change in government, Church Affairs reverted back to the Ministry of Culture in 2002, and The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (KD) is the present name of the department.

The Japanese Ministry of Education was formally known as the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MOE), but was later renamed the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture (MESSC). In 2001, as part of the administrative reforms, MESSC merged with the Science and Technology Agency to become the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Principle Objectives and Problem Statement

“It is a commonplace of educational theory that the establishing of character is a comprehensive aim of school instruction and discipline,” (Dewey, 1916: 346). Yet, the “establishing of character”, also referred to as moral values education, in both name and content, has waxed and waned in education systems. However, since the 1990s, there has been a resurgence of interest in all corners of the world. According to UNESCO *Human Rights Education* (2005), the number of formal democracies in the world has increased from 76 (46.1%) to 117 (61.3%). Samuel P. Huntington (1991) termed the emerging international push towards democratization the “Third Wave”, which referenced considerable global events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the beginning of democratization of former communist states in Eastern Europe, and the ending of apartheid in South Africa. A significant repercussion of these and other events is the growing pluralism within societies, which further encourages the development and implementation of strong civic education programs to promote a shared values system. At the local level, there are additional challenges with which parents and policy makers must contend including an increase in delinquency among youth and the family’s lessening ability to deal with these situations. Additionally, the dilemma between church, state, and school presents other concerns in finding an all-inclusive program to raise and educate future citizens. It is clear that moral values education is as important as ever in order to insure that children and young adults are prepared to become active participants and decision-makers in modern society, they must be guided responsibly by moral and democratic principles.

The underlying idea of this study originated from a single concept which has been at the forefront of my mind as an American, and has also been presented by Lee, Grossman, Kennedy, and Fairbrother (2004) in *Citizenship Education in Asia and the Pacific*: What is the primary role of Western democratic values in non-Western countries? After all, as Dewey (1916) has observed, democracy is more than a form of government, it is about the common experience of living together and having mutual respect of shared values. Education is central to democracy, but how different societies and cultures understand the fundamental concept of democracy impacts the educational system. Kennedy and Fairbrother (2004) have elaborated on this theme in the Asian context, and I have posed my central research question

in light of the concepts presented in their work. The aim of this paper is to reflect on the following:

- In light of both Japan and Norway's unique historical and cultural foundation, as well as the evolution of the philosophy of education in each society, how can moral values education in Japan and Norway be characterized? What is distinctly Japanese, and Norwegian, in terms of moral values education in the primary school curriculum?

The scope of my inquiry includes a look at the historical development and the role of moral values education in the primary school and society and the conception and understanding of moral values and democratic education in terms of the curricular rhetoric, with specific attention paid to the primary school.

## 1.2 Background of the Problem

When Japan re-opened her doors during the Meiji Restoration in the late 1800s, the Japanese looked far from their Asian neighbors, with whom they shared many common ideologies, for concepts in modernization. Instead, they turned to the West for innovative ideas and models to adapt to their own growing needs as a country looking to rapidly transition into a competitive international player. From technology to society, Japan attempted to replicate ways of the West in order to make her own mark in the very early days of globalization. The Japanese educational system was one of the first institutions to be directly affected by these imported ways. Imperial Japan soon realized that an educational system based on the way of the Samurai<sup>1</sup> would not provide the solid foundation young people needed to not only catch up to the West, but to get ahead. Arinori Mori<sup>2</sup>, Minister of Education (1885-89) clearly illustrated this goal:

Our country must move from its third class position to second class, and from second class to

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<sup>1</sup> Bushido, literally "the way of the warrior," is a code of conduct influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism, Zen, and Shintoism. The combination of these religions and schools of thought created the warrior code, which is not unlike chivalry or codes of the European Knights. The main developments of Bushido occurred between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Inazo Nitobe (1904) described Bushido as "...the code of moral principles which the knights were required or instructed to observe. It is not a written code; at best it consists of a few maxims handed down from mouth to mouth or coming from the pen of some well-known warrior or savant...It was an organic growth of decades and centuries of military career." (p. 7)

<sup>2</sup> In Japanese, it is customary that the surname is written first, however for the sake of consistency, I have listed all names in the western fashion – given name followed by surname, for example, Ikuo Amano.

first; and ultimately to the leading position among all countries of the world. The best way to do this is [by laying] the foundations of elementary education. (quoted in Passin, 1965: 68; Hood, 2001: 17)

Western philosophies of education served as important building blocks in laying the foundation for a Japanese model of education. However, the question remains: did the Japanese legacy of character foundation overshadow the Western tradition of the democratic spirit?

Today, Japan maintains a dominant political and economic role in Asia, as well as a competitive role in the globalized market; yet, continues to struggle with the paradox between East and West, individual will and societal norms, democracy and tradition. This dichotomy became evident in early educational reforms, which were heavily shaped by western philosophies and practices. Official documents governing education quickly replaced a Confucian and Shinto influenced value system with democratic ideology from the West and little consideration to the actual Japanese cultural fabric. The purpose of moral education evolved from teaching simple differences between right and wrong, to promoting loyalty and nationalism, emphasizing education as a vehicle for nation-building and economic growth rather than a tool for citizenship and democracy.

Conversely, the foundation of the modern educational system in Norway has its roots in the Protestant ethic<sup>3</sup>. With the passing of The 1739 School Ordinance, all young people were required to attend school “in order to be taught the fundamentals of the Christian faith,” in preparation for confirmation to the church (Hansen, 2005: 177). During the century from 1850-1950, Norway also experienced a nation building period and modernization, including expansion of the education system. While other European nations were struggling with the values of the Enlightenment, the notion of equality became the foundation of the Norwegian compulsory education system and the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment was made available to all (ibid). Despite the fact that contemporary Norwegian society has become more secularized, piety remains an element of the Norwegian culture. Elements of Dewey’s principles of democratic learning and learning by doing also influenced the evolution of the

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<sup>3</sup> Protestantism is attributed to Martin Luther and his break from the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. Lutheranism and Evangelism evolved from Protestantism and remain prevalent in Scandinavia today. The Protestant ethic describes the value of hard work, thrift, and devotion to God. The notion of the “Protestant work ethic” was coined by Max Weber in the early 1900s. His thesis related these values to the growth of capitalism (Protestant Ethic, 2006).

curriculum. Significant changes in the Norwegian education system can be traced to the end of the German Occupation, when specific ideas of citizenship and democracy were key elements in rebuilding the morale of the country. In 1945, questions about the function, task, goal, and values of the education system were actively pursued. The conclusion reached drew upon what some called “parallel” values of a Christian and democratic education with equal possibilities for all (Telhaug, 1994: 37).

A variety of social factors contributes to the moral values education debate. The introduction of substantial national wealth to Norway came with the discovery of North Sea oil in the late 1960s. With this increased revenue, Norwegians prospered and were soon able to enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world. While the social welfare state flourished, major educational changes were also underway. First in 1969, compulsory education increased from seven to nine years (age 7-16), then in 1974, Parliament was finally able to replace the national curriculum guidelines of 1939 (Hansen, 2005), which were again revised in 1987. L97 and subsequent reforms have authorized some decentralization, promoted diversity, and encouraged a stronger knowledge-based and national-content curriculum, but the overall notion of social democratic values remains at the center. The core curriculum, which was generated during the 1997 reform and remains the fundamental core of the 2006 reform called *Kunnskapsløftet* (Knowledge Promotion)<sup>4</sup>, expresses six points, which metaphorically describe the key values to be instilled upon the students. A culmination of these values results in the final point: the integrated human being. While the goals of education are often contradictory, the concluding sentence of the L97 curriculum sums up the ideal of Norwegian education: “The ultimate aim of education is to inspire individuals to realize their potentials in ways that serve the common good; to nurture humaneness in a society in development,” (The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs: 40).

Recent education reforms in the Japanese school system have been a response to the sharp increase in children’s behavioral issues, including bullying and violence, which the government blames on a rapidly changing society (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

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<sup>4</sup> Some terms specific to Japanese or Norwegian which are frequent or familiar are first given in italics with the English translation following in parentheses, for example, *Storting* (Norwegian parliament), *hinomaru* (Japanese national flag). The English term is used in the remainder of the text. Japanese words have been Romanized and macrons are used over long vowels, for example, *Monbushō*. Norwegian spellings remain as they are found in Norway, for example, *læringsplan*.

Science, and Technology [MEXT]: RAINBOW). Villegas-Reimers (1997) comments that considering the “pervasiveness of social problems faced by societies, a stronger commitment by societies to educate participatory and ethical citizens seems necessary” (p. 231). *The Education Reform Plan for the 21st Century – The Rainbow Plan*, established by MEXT in 2001, is a seven-point priority strategy to revitalize schools, families, and communities, and specifically calls for the improvement of moral education (MEXT: RAINBOW). Additionally, a new course of study was implemented in 2002 in order to foster “zest for living” (*ikiru chikara*) in children and encourage “education of the heart” (MEXT: MAJPOL). To spur children’s motivation for attending school, the school week was reduced from six to five days. With a “back to the basics” philosophy, the new course of study aims to promote the “rudimentary basics of education, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, and to learn, think and act for oneself as well as develop problem-solving skills” (ibid).

It is evident that issues surrounding a society influx have influenced curricular reform in both Japan and Norway. The growing need to address a changing population by incorporating a variety of understandings of citizenship and democracy into education and society is a reflection of this. Green (1996) claimed that there has been an increasing difficulty, especially among advanced, Western states, in maintaining social cohesion and solidarity. He attributed this to “growing individualism and life-style diversity, secularization, social mobility and the decline of stable communities,” (quoted in Power and Whitty, 1999: 135). One possible solution points toward clearer educational goals.

Broader national educational objectives in terms of social cohesion and citizenship formation have become increasingly confused and neglected, in part because few western governments have a clear notion of what nationhood and citizenship mean in complex and pluralistic modern democracies. (ibid: 58)

On the other hand, to what extent can “education of the heart” and progressive Deweyan principles of “learning by doing” be effectively implemented to promote democratic learning for citizenship building in societies which have had historically different motivations?

The question of “whose values” and “on what terms” presents a dichotomous answer in both the Japanese and Norwegian context. In Japan, China, Korea, and parts of Europe, education has previously been associated with the idea of “culturedness” (*kyōyō*) – or “the development of rationality, intelligence, and a love of truth and beauty acquired through education,” (Kobayashi, 1997: 666). The goal of education was self-realization and social status was

implicit. Education in other parts of the world was connected with the church and forming a relationship with God; self-fulfillment was found in terms of the realization of God. Whether it was Karl Marx questioning the social hierarchy or contemporary times becoming more secular, education gradually become linked with national interests and development, and in turn, identified the strength of the nation. If the goal of formal modern school is to promote national development, a consensus on individual, social, cultural, economic, or other *development* must first be reached, then the appropriate tools necessary to achieve this goal can be determined. When the state assumes central responsibility for education, it implies accountability for creating a framework which will promote common values and benefit society. Does the understanding of national development differ in the Japanese, collectivist state and the Norwegian, social-democratic state? How are these perceptions conveyed by the government via the national curriculum? Where does the role of cultural understanding and social development factor into this debate?

It is obvious based on international standards that the Japanese system of schooling is effective in meeting the economic demands of globalization. However, if an alternate goal of schooling is to foster individuality and creativity, the rhetoric of participation is not the most efficient tool in communicating with a society that is not founded on the ideology of Western democracy, where individualism is prized and promoted over collectivism. Conversely, when examining the 2003 OECD PISA results in mathematics, Norwegian 15 year olds scored notably lower than Japanese youth. Yet, according to the 1999 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study<sup>5</sup> which measured “the development of political knowledge, skills, and attitudes among young people”, Norwegian youth ranked high overall in terms of their understanding of democracy and citizenship.<sup>6</sup> According to the concepts which this thesis will explore, civic and moral education in a democratic society should be mutually exclusive. The question is to what extent are the goals of civic and moral education mutually exclusive to Japanese and Norwegian styles of democracy?

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<sup>5</sup> IEA is the same body responsible for international assessment of mathematics and science (TIMSS).

<sup>6</sup> While the results are insightful, I have not incorporated the survey into my research because Japan was not a participant in either phase of the study.



### 1.3 Research Approach

My perspective is cross-cultural: I am an American, observing Japan and Norway in terms of my personal experiences and understanding of my own culture. While often challenging to express, the aim is to illuminate the reader to similarities and differences which can increase our awareness and understanding of the phenomena observed. The starting point of the thesis will be a brief, historical overview of each education system, focusing on the element of moral values education. The historical context is necessary in establishing the environment and framework in which the core curriculum was generated. The historical summary continues to the present, at which point the presentation of data shifts to a comparison based on a specific point in time, specifically the recent reform period which can be identified as starting in the early 1990s in both Japan and Norway. The new vision of each respective education system is reflected in documents created during the late 1990s - a strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Considering time and money constraints, it would be impossible to carry out an extensive evaluation of the reforms. Therefore, by employing document analysis and utilizing moral and democratic educational theory, as well as some guiding principles from cross-cultural sociology, I have examined the reforms via the rhetoric of the core curriculum. Through this analysis and supporting literature, I have formulated a response to my research questions.

### 1.4 Relevance of the Study

The most obvious question is “Why compare Japan and Norway?” As a student in a comparative education program and learning that the field of comparative education is lacking in comparisons, I felt strongly about conducting comparative research. Instead of focusing in-depth on a single country, this paper is contributing to the fields of comparative education and contemporary Japanese and Nordic studies by critically examining a current issue in an inter-disciplinary context.

Both Japan and Norway have a unique social and educational history which is important to examine in this context. Indeed, a comparative and inter-disciplinary approach, incorporating the fields of education and contemporary Japanese and Nordic studies, is relevant for a variety of reasons:

- The Japanese/Nordic aspect in comparative educational studies is limited and should be broadened. While the Japanese education system has been widely

studied and there is excellent literature available in English, including translated government documents, the study of Norwegian political, social, and educational systems is proportionately smaller, even within the larger Scandinavian or Nordic scope.

- Due to the international popularity of Japanese *anime*<sup>7</sup> and *manga*<sup>8</sup> alone, many young people have taken an interest in the Japanese society and culture, and are pursuing Japanese or East Asian studies programs. While neither *brunost*<sup>9</sup> nor *Tungtvann*<sup>10</sup> may be as internationally renowned, Norway represents a unique model of the welfare state, which is a valuable resource in the face of globalization.
- While geographically occupying opposite ends of the Eurasian template, Japan and Norway represent contrasting populations, in terms of numbers and culture. Considering that 60% of the world's population inhabits Asia, should be reason enough to expand our understanding. The total population of Norway (4.6 million) barely represents one-third of the population of Tokyo (12.5 million).
- Aspects of Japan's collectivist culture are rooted in Confucian, Shinto, and Buddhist beliefs, which provide a spiritual and cultural foundation and characterize the Japanese value system. On the other hand, Norwegians demonstrate a dichotomy between individualism and collectivism, which could be attributed to a recent tradition of Protestantism based on the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, which replaced the earlier pagan belief system of the Vikings.
- Despite this, their inhabitants share many common attributes: a social-democratic style of government, social welfare, high standards of living (no thanks to the discovery of oil and a boom in technology), a relatively homogeneous population as well as an indigenous population, country-specific national languages, and even some negative attributes like a high suicide rate.

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<sup>7</sup> The Japanese word *anime*, short for the English word *animation*, refers to a visually distinct form of animated cartoons of Japanese origin.

<sup>8</sup> *Manga* is the Japanese word for comic. Similar to *anime*, *manga* has distinctive features which differentiate it from Western-style comic books. *Manga* stories range in genre and target audience and are sometimes animated.

<sup>9</sup> A sweet, brown cheese made of the whey from goat's milk, also called *geitost*, common to Norway.

<sup>10</sup> A Norwegian hip-hop group with predominantly Norwegian lyrics.

A comparative approach provides an overall better understanding through the exploration of both similarities and differences, and to demonstrate that there are alternatives to the Eurocentric, Western version of modernity.

### 1.5 Limitations of the Study

Initially, and even throughout the research and writing processes, I faced the difficult task of delimiting my topic. Indeed, it is a broad topic and can be approached in numerous ways. I am neither a Japan specialist, nor an expert on Scandinavian studies. My disciplinary background is in fact in German and International Studies. However, I consider myself a student of culture and it is through the lenses of my personal background, experiences, and interests upon which this study is based. Education is a subjective area making it difficult to define “success” or quantify results in the capacity of a master thesis. My thesis attempts to understand the definition, role, goal, and implication of moral values education, not to evaluate the success or result of moral education programs, as presented historically and in the curriculum. As is stated in the title, I have limited my study to the core curriculum as it pertains to the moral values program in the primary school.

I chose to carry out a library-based study. I also ruled out conducting formal interviews, surveys, or classroom observation, although I did carry out informal discussions<sup>11</sup> with several Japanese educators and students, and even a Japanese film maker, who were visiting Oslo. My supervisor suggested that while observations can be useful in painting a picture of school life, it would take an entirely separate set of research and methodology to attempt to understand what I had observed. I agreed. In fact, I lived in Japan for two years and worked as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in four public high schools and I still am trying to make sense of my experiences. Instead, I opted to use those experiences and other informal observations and interviews to enhance my understanding of the topic and convey a more colorful picture to the reader. While I understand the dangers of broad generalizations and drawing conclusions from a small sample, based on conversations with friends, colleagues, and other researchers, as well as other literary sources, I know my observations are typical.

Another issue concerning interviews, as well as working with primary sources, is language. Unlike the Norwegians I have met, most Japanese are shy and have less self-confidence in

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to the interview guide listed in the Appendix.

their foreign language abilities, thus are unwilling to use English as a means of communication. While I consider my Japanese to be at an intermediate conversation level, I would not expect non-native English speaking participants to express their views in a foreign language which might hinder their ability to convey their answers clearly. Japanese can also be hesitant to provide direct responses to questions which may require a personal opinion. Working with a translator to overcome these issues is also a timely process. For these reasons, I have also chosen not to examine the content of school text books, although I have reviewed literature which discusses text book controversy. I engaged in several informal conversations and interviews<sup>12</sup> with Norwegian educators and policy makers, and parents and students of varying ages, in order to gain a more native perspective on the Norwegian educational system as a whole, and the ideas surrounding moral values education as a school subject.

This thesis is intended to be a social discussion, rather than a political debate, which limits the references to political parties and agendas to general ideas surrounding the role politics plays in education. While a discussion about moral values education can include ethics, morality, and religion, it does not infer any religion or belief to be superior, rather that all religions can share a common set of values considered to be good and educational. Additional terms and definitions which are relevant to the understanding of this thesis are presented in the next section.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework

The terms I have chosen are not fully arbitrary, although the usage is frequently dependent on the country or current trend. Initially, this focus of my study was on *moral* values education, but it became clear to me that these terms used in conjunction with one another elicited different meanings for different people from different societies, especially the Japanese and the Norwegians. Generally, the Japanese use the term moral education, and the Norwegians talk of values education<sup>13</sup>. It would be false advertising to refer to these concepts in a way that natives do not identify with, so I went back to the drawing board.

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<sup>12</sup> Refer to the interview guide listed in the Appendix.

<sup>13</sup> Norwegian education follows in the tradition of *Bildung*, known as *dannelse* in Norwegian. In simple terms, *Bildung* is the ability of the individual to be able to learn. It encompasses the developmental process of the individual; however the goal is not knowledge, but rather accumulation of knowledge via experience and growth of the self (Bildung, 2006). Telhaug, Mediås, and Aasen (2004) refer to *Bildung* as “the values of a liberal education, i.e., students’ development of their individual identity (p. 152).

Considering that the aim of this thesis is to characterize the kind of values education in each country, I decided to maintain the names of the concepts as they are referred to in each country, respectively, and I have used the term moral values education in general references.

In terms of educational policy and practice, shifting between the usage of character education, values education, and moral education is not uncommon; however, the terms moral values education and civic education are frequently used synonymously and it is important to elucidate the differences. In researching this thesis, I learned that there is a common misconception of moral values education. On one hand, moral values stem from society and are imbedded in the educational system via the core curriculum with the ultimate aim of shaping the next generation. This could also be viewed as the “hidden curriculum”. On the other hand, moral values can be a subject of study within the formal school system. Chu, Park, and Hoge (1996) have clarified that moral educators emphasize that moral education as a subject focuses on the affective domain while other subject matters emphasize the cognitive domain.

The terms *moral* and *values* when used together often produce an image of a religious figure preaching from a pulpit or a self-righteous person wagging a finger and passing judgment. In fact, this study is not concerned with a narrow conception of morality or piety and if we examine the terms separately, we can paint a different picture. According to Dewey’s *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), the terms *moral* and *morality* in the broadest sense are concerned with what is just, conduct, and our relationships and interactions with others. “Certain traits of character,” which he described as truthfulness, honesty, chastity, amiability, etc., are considered moral because they are linked with other numerous qualities, attitudes, and social interactions (ibid: 357). He also explained that we can understand the term *value* in two separate ways: 1) the attitude of “prizing a thing, finding it worth while, for its own sake or intrinsically,” within a complete experience; 2) the intellectual act of “comparing and judging”, appraising, estimating, valuing when experience is lacking (ibid: 238, 249). For example, based on my experience, I value the crispness and juiciness of a freshly picked apple in the autumn. If it were my first time to sample a freshly picked apple, or to eat an apple at all, I could estimate the value of the taste of the apple based upon the qualities of other fruits or vegetables which I know to be nutritious and good. Thus, through this systematic definition alone, moral values can be deemed the comparing, valuing, or holding in esteem of interactions and relationships which people experience.

Considering that there are a range of definitions and conceptions of moral values education presented in the literature, Villegas-Reimers (1997) has provided an additional, straight-forward view based on a definition from Ryan (1985). She explained:

In its simplest form, moral education is the process followed when individuals and/or social groups pass on to the younger generation their views about and values of what is right and what is wrong. From a culturally specific point of view, moral education implies the teaching and learning of the specific values of a culture. (quoted in Villegas-Reimers, 1997: 234)

It is apparent that culture plays a fundamental role in the process of moral values education. However, she notes that this definition can be problematic when referring to the formal curricula in a specific cultural context because determining “whose values” to teach in heterogeneous societies cannot be easily answered. She continued with a more universal point of view, which she considered less controversial:

Moral *education* can be seen as the formal and informal *processes* followed to teach and learn values, to promote ethical decision-making, and moral behaviour. Which particular set of values are to be taught can be defined by each country, state, or school system. (ibid: 234)

I agree with Villegas-Reimers in that we can understand a certain set of values to be universal, including “honesty, tolerance, and respect.” Additionally, some values found in each society may be “culture-specific” (ibid: 235).

The alternative is civic education, which she commented has a more simple definition. “...everyone seems to agree that civic education refers to the processes of teaching about society’s rules, institutions, and organizations, and the role of citizens in the well-functioning of society” (ibid). Some topics which might be dealt with in civic education include the fundamental structure and organization of the State (i.e. Constitution); rights and responsibilities of citizens; governmental laws; local, national, and international institutions; etc. Civic education may be taught as its own subject, or included in a social studies curriculum, and is sometimes referred to as citizenship education.

A key difference between moral values education and civic education lies in the method of instruction. Whereas civic education may involve a text book and the memorization of facts, moral education focuses on the more complex task of “promoting the development of a social consciousness that encourages citizens’ active participation in the actual process of decision-making in society” (ibid). This approach of actively fostering democratic principles

and promoting democratic awareness can also be considered education for democracy, or democratic education. Based on the above definitions, we can see that the term ‘democracy’ plays a strong role in the understanding of this study. The concept of democratic education is broadened and the most basic lessons of democratic education are elaborated on in Chapter 3 with respect to Dewey’s philosophy.

In light of these views, in my opinion, moral values education in a contemporary, democratic society is understood as:

- A process or continuum of the development of relationships, based on a set of both universal and cultural-specific values and norms, which correspond to education for democratic citizenship in promoting the development of social consciousness and awareness.

The concept of the *welfare state* is also a critical element in the understanding of this thesis. Tjeldvoll (1998) articulated the key points in the definition of a welfare state, which he based on the Scandinavian<sup>14</sup> model:

All five countries have developed a state organization characterized by a considerable degree of social justice. The ideal of creating a democratic society has been a very high priority. This aim has been realized by means of an overall social policy, which was intended to create optimal and equitable life conditions for all social groups, regardless of social background, gender, ethnicity and geographical location. (p. xi)

The impact of the welfare state on educational, social, and economic systems will be further discussed in later chapters.

As this thesis is organized specifically around the *primary school curriculum*, a definition of these terms must be put forth. *Primary* and *elementary* school can be used inter-changeably. As an American, I grew up with the term *elementary* (junior high and middle school follow, then high school). The Japanese often use *elementary*; whereas the Norwegians refer to *primary school*. I have opted to use the term *primary school* simply for the sake of organization and consistency, unless in the context of a specific system. Secondary school

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<sup>14</sup> In his definition of Scandinavia, Tjeldvoll referred to the northwestern region of Europe including the countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The term “Nordic” countries may also include Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands.

follows primary school, then tertiary or higher education. Primary education is understood as the first six years of formal or structured schooling (excluding kindergarten or pre-kindergarten), or the most basic level of schooling which children around the world experience commonly.

Cummings (2003a) established the *curriculum* as:

...the consensus among stakeholders concerning what should be taught, why, how and where. This consensus covers not only the lessons conveyed in the formal subjects but also those conveyed through the co-curriculum and the entire routine of the modern school. (p. 142)

He includes the hidden curriculum and even architectural design as aspects of the “routine” school (ibid). Stakeholders can be considered a committee, organization, or other external body. It can be seen as a map that guides education at a national or local level. This thesis is concerned with the national core curriculum, which has been devised by the national educational ministry (or representatives) in each respective country. I understand the core curriculum to be central and mandatory, outlining the general concepts surrounding learning and not necessarily focusing in-depth on requirements in specific subjects taught in the classroom. The responsibility of interpretation and adaptation is dependent upon the level of decentralization of the national government. In my opinion, the core curriculum can be viewed as a national mission statement for the educational system in a specified country.

## 1.7 Organization of the Study

I have organized my study into eight chapters. This chapter has served as an introduction to the topic and my study specifically. The research strategy is outlined in Chapter 2, which describes the paradigm within which my study is situated and the methodology I have followed. Chapter 3 addresses the theoretical framework by further developing the key concepts within moral values education, and expanding upon the educational philosophy of John Dewey and the sociology of culture, including the individual and the collective, according to Harry Triandis. Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to a focused, historical survey of the Japanese and Norwegian educational systems, detailing the evolving philosophy of education concerned particularly with moral values education in each society up to the contemporary learning environment. Chapter 6 presents the current Japanese and Norwegian core curricula as it is concerned with moral values and related education programs in the



primary school system. The core curricula, along with supporting literature, provide the foundation for analysis and discussion of the state of moral values education in each of these societies, as put forth in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 provides a summary of the thesis, the conclusion of my analysis, and my recommendations to educationalists and policy makers concerned with this topic.

## Chapter 2: Research Strategy

It was once explained to me that the objective of a social science researcher is “to turn the exotic into the ordinary, by seeing the underlying structures and describing them with understandable concepts,” (Yngve Lindvig, *Utvikling av skolen som lærende organisasjon*, Læringslaben, personal correspondence, 2005). The researcher utilizes acquired skills in order to examine phenomena, correlate data, and draw new conclusions based on his/her understanding and interpretation. In a matter of speaking, a new story is crafted, using concepts which are familiar to the reader. However, just as any story is influenced by the personal qualities of the author, so, too, is formal research influenced by the paradigm and methodology which the researcher uses to deconstruct the phenomena. This section will present the methodological framework I have chosen to conduct my research by both outlining the design and addressing issues and concerns related to this methodology within the context of my study.

### 2.1 Paradigm

My study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm and is mainly qualitative in nature. While some might argue that taking a qualitative approach requires dialog and comments from participants, my study utilizes the analysis and interpretation of text. This approach “emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data,” (Bryman, 2004: 266). As Janesick (1994) has described, qualitative design has many characteristics. Some which I have incorporated into this study include:

1. Qualitative design is holistic. It looks at the larger picture, the whole picture, and begins with a search for understanding of the whole.
2. Qualitative design looks at relationships within a system or culture.
3. Qualitative design is focused on a given social setting, not necessarily on making predictions about that setting.
4. Qualitative design demands that the researcher develop a model of what occurred in the social setting.
5. Qualitative design incorporates room for description of the role of the researcher as well as descriptions of the researcher’s own biases and ideological preference.
6. Qualitative design requires ongoing analyses of the data. (p. 212)

In contrast to the positivist tradition, interpretivist epistemology stems from Max Weber's concept of *Verstehen*, the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition, and symbolic interactionism. Bryman (2004) has asserted that the hermeneutic approach is concerned with theory and method of the interpretation of human action, whereas *Verstehen* contributes explanation and understanding. Weber's (1947) description of Sociology as "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects," reflects the strategy of the social scientist to understand and explain the subjective meaning of social action (p. 88; quoted in Bryman, 2004: 13). Kelly (2002b) explained the starting point of this approach to be "the belief that we cannot apprehend human experience without understanding the social, linguistic and historical features which give it shape" (p. 398). Interpretivism allows us to use both insider and outsider perspectives in not only understanding, but also interpreting data, which is necessary when analyzing across cultures. Triandis (1994) noted that "even concepts that translate easily across languages do not have identical meanings" (p. 89). This notion is critical to the discussion of the individual and the collective later in the thesis. Deciding to conduct my research from within the interpretivist paradigm was a natural choice for me as I tend to employ these techniques to approach the world around me in my daily life.

## 2.2 Methodology

I have chosen a multi-method approach employing historical narrative to capture the context of what was really going on in connection to the foundation and development of moral values education and a comparative and evaluative design of the current national core curriculum as it outlines the goals of contemporary moral values education. Not only does this approach reflect the nature of my personal interest in the subject of my study, it also contributes to the field of comparative education in a manner which demonstrates a unique relationship between the educational and social systems of two countries. An interpretivist paradigm is valuable in carrying out comparative research because it finds the appropriate balance between theory construction and contextual understanding. The terms "emic" and "etic" are useful in understanding this balance. Pike (1967), a linguist, used *emic* "to signify an approach to understanding from within a cultural system, one that provides insight into indigenous phenomena, and in which meaning derives from understanding phenomena in their own terms," and *etic* "to refer to outside perspectives, and specifically the use of theory in understanding phenomena," (quoted in Kelly, 2002b: 404-405). Hodder (2000) has explained that there are three areas for the interpreter to consider:

- Identify the contexts within which things had similar meaning;
- Recognize similarities and differences;
- Ascertain the relevance of general or specific historical theories to the data at hand (p. 711).

Through a combination of the emic and etic voices, I have derived a method of both comparing and evaluating one component of an educational system, the primary school curriculum, to determine the extent of the relationship between moral values and democracy within the goals outlined. It is important to note that comparative research can be approached from several perspectives, including political events, specific points in time, longitudinal, general comparison, and others.

In some ways, I found it difficult to identify which of these perspectives would best contextualize my research questions. On one hand, my thesis will probably be read and evaluated by Norwegian-based educators who might not be as informed about the Japanese educational system or society in general. On the other hand, as a comparative educationalist, it is my hope to disseminate the information provided in this thesis to others working in the field of Japanese studies, as well as other disciplines. Considering both of these viewpoints, I determined that the starting point of the thesis will be a concise, historical overview of each education system, focusing on the philosophy of education and the element of moral values education, beginning in the late 1800s. The historical context is necessary in establishing the environment and framework in which the core curriculum was generated. The historical summary continues to the present, at which point the presentation of data shifts to a comparison based on a specific point in time, specifically the recent reform period which can be identified as starting in the early 1990s in both Japan and Norway. Carrying out an extensive evaluation of the reforms is outside the scope of this thesis; however, by employing document analysis, I am able to evaluate points within the curricula based on moral and democratic educational philosophies and cross-cultural sociological theory, in order to answer my research questions.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Evaluation can take place at numerous levels within a system. The focus of this research is specifically on the rhetoric concerning the program level of the core curriculum, within the context of the institutional level of primary schooling. The internet demonstrated its value as

a research tool as I was able to retrieve the Japanese and Norwegian curricula in English, as well as other key documents and information. While these official, and often translated, documents derived from the state provided substantial data for my study, I also reviewed additional primary and secondary sources such as books and journal articles, which provided the appropriate supporting information, and consulted statistical databases from international evaluations such as OECD, PISA, UNESCO, and others. I drew on two years of personal experience and observations as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) of English in four Japanese secondary schools. I also spoke informally with Japanese and Norwegian students, teachers, and policy makers to gather ideas and opinions for inspiration. Bryman (2004) pointed out that recently the term “text”, once synonymous for a “written document”, is now associated with “an increasingly wide range of phenomena, so that theme parks, landscapes, heritage attractions, technologies, and a wide range of other objects are treated as texts out of which a ‘reading’ can be fashioned” (p. 391). While this study does not understand, in Bryman’s terms, “the world as text” (ibid), it is important to note his remark as I have read for meaning in the classroom observations and comments from informal interviews.

## 2.4 Evaluation of Data

The analytical aspect of the thesis is crucial in presenting answers to the research questions in a clear and concise manner. In order to effectively analyze data and arrive at a sound conclusion, similar to carrying out a formal evaluation of an educational program, the terms of reference must be established. With a clear, evaluative framework in mind, making sense of the data can be more straightforward. The primary method I have used to compare and evaluate my data is document analysis. The concepts defined in Chapter 1 and the foundational framework outlined in Chapter 3 can be viewed as additional tools that have been implemented to provide consistency and support.

Analysis of documents and text provides understanding of the meaning of language and other sign systems, which determines the significance of the document, and this is a goal of qualitative research. Silverman (2000) pointed out that “...every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing” (p. 825). In quantitative research, coding schemes often overlook “uncategorized activities,” (Atkinson, 1992; quoted in Silverman, 2000: 825). In order to compensate for this, Silverman (2000) has suggests that qualitative researchers approach texts at face value for what they are. Scott (1990) pointed out that the problem of meaning can then occur at two levels: the literal and the interpretative. It is not the language, per se,

which is being analyzed, but the concepts and ideas present within. To combat the problem of literal meaning for me as a researcher and the community who will be reading my findings, I selected only documents which were written in English or translated into English. The Japanese language, for example, is often metaphorical and indirect, so working with translated text means that someone else was already occupied with discerning the literal meaning.

Tackling the issue of interpretative meaning is more subjective. Silverman (2000) stated that “*text* [can be used] as a heuristic device to identify data consisting of words and images that have become recorded without the intervention of a researcher” (p. 825). One method of reading for meaning within text makes use of material culture and semiotics. Silverman (1993, 2000) has asserted that semiotics treats texts as systems of signs on the basis that no meaning ever resides in a single term. Rather, this is to consider symbols and text not necessarily in terms of *what* they are, instead the ideas behind them and what they represent, and how they fit together to form a complete picture or understanding. This can be viewed as a kind of discourse between reference points or ideologies: who is the voice and what is being said?

One approach to understanding material culture is via the hermeneutic process of interpretation. Hermeneutics, derived from theology and later a Kantian and Hegelian tradition of German philosophy, in its most simple definition, requires that the researcher learn as much about the “particular way in which a concept was defined and applied over time and from place to place,” (Scott, 1990: 30). Siegfried Kracauer (1953), a German critical theorist, drew on the hermeneutical approach and advocated bringing out “the hidden meaning of the text” rather than breaking it down into units (quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 359). In other words, Scott (1990) has defined the hermeneutical approach as involving:

- Interpretive understanding of individual concepts;
- Appreciation of the social and cultural context through which the various concepts are related in a particular discourse;
- Judgment on the meaning and significance of the text as a whole. (ibid: 31)

Meanings and concepts can only be understood in terms of each other; therefore, the frames of reference build upon each other and become intertwined. As this continues, a hypothetical dialog is entered into between the author of the documents being studied and the researcher.

Scott termed the mediation between these two frames of reference the “hermeneutic circle” and this approach is used to interpret material culture (ibid). Hodder (2000) elaborated that analogies are made between past and present or between different examples of material culture. According to Hodder, “The material evidence always has the potential to be patterned in unexpected ways. Thus, it provides an ‘other, against which the analyst’s own experience of the world has to be evaluated and can be enlarged” (p. 710). By entering into a dialogue with new or alternative data and theory pairings, different and varied interpretations can occur.

Interpreting material culture and semiotics within documents and text is a method of presenting the data in a well-rounded manner. Within the content of a text are beliefs, ideas, and intentions which are important to action and practice (Hodder, 2000). This point is essential in analyzing broad concepts such as moral values, citizenship, and democracy. In order to explore these terms further and how they are applied in daily life, it is important to go beyond language. The intent of my study is to expand on dictionary definitions of these terms to the extent which they are interpreted, understood, and practiced in two societies. Hodder (2000) related that “...most material symbols do not work through rules of representation, using a language-like syntax. Rather, they work through the evocation of sets of practices within individual experience...they come to have abstract meaning through association and practice” (p. 707). Historical situations influence ideology and culture, and only on the basis of this knowledge can I as a researcher begin to understand the implications of particular practices and expound upon them (ibid).

## 2.5 Issues and Concerns: Validity

The main issue in conducting any scientific research is that of validity. Scott (1990) confirmed that the quality of the evidence is ultimately the foundation of scientific research. I maintain that the validity of my study is upheld by meeting the following conditions which Scott has outlined (p. 6):

1. *Authenticity*. Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
2. *Credibility*. Is the evidence free from error and distortion?
3. *Representativeness*. Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?
4. *Meaning*. Is the evidence clear and comprehensible?

The documents used in my study are considered official documents created by the State; therefore, we must assume them to hold a certain level of legitimacy and authenticity. While the author(s) of these documents cannot always be specified, it can be presumed that the documents were objectively formulated in light of the social atmosphere of the time by advisors and policy makers employed by their respective Ministries. Also, my documents are in English and I have taken into account that additional people have been involved in the translation from the original text. Again, I must believe that in these specific cases, the translators have maintained objectivity in their interpretation. The documents are typical in that Ministries in other States produce similar documents to inform and evaluate policy, and detail goals. It is my role as a researcher analyzing the data to give meaning to the information held within the documents and present it in a clear and comprehensible manner.

Another term used to demonstrate validity of a study is through the triangulation of data. Triangulation utilizes alternative methods and diverse sources of data to provide evidence which supports the findings. Denzin (1970) identified four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory, and methodological (quoted in Kelly, 2002a: 430-31). Janesick (1994) introduced a fifth type: interdisciplinary triangulation. This type is especially relevant to my study as it utilizes the perspectives and findings from other disciplines: education, sociology, and both Nordic and Asian studies. Additionally, I have employed data, theory, and methodological triangulation to confirm the validity of my study.

With regard to the analysis of material and written culture, Hodder (2000) presented an alternative to validity, called confirmation. He explained:

The twin struts of confirmation are coherence and correspondence. Coherence is produced if the parts of the argument do not contradict each other and if the conclusions follow from the premises...Because material evidence endures, it can continually be reobserved, reanalyzed, and reinterpreted. (p. 712)

Similar to validity, there are two aspects to coherence: internal and external. Internal coherence is derived when the theory and observations do not produce contradictory results. External coherence is "...the degree to which the interpretation fits theories accepted in and outside the discipline" (ibid). Hodder concluded:

The notion of correspondence between theory and data does not imply absolute objectivity and independence, but rather embeds the fit of data and theory within coherence. The data



are made to cohere by being linked within theoretical arguments. Similarly, the coherence of the arguments is supported by the fit to data. On the other hand, data can confront theory, as already noted. Correspondence with that data is thus an essential part of arguments of coherence. (ibid: 713)

I attempted to keep these issues in mind through the process of analyzing my data and making connections between observation, theory, and text.

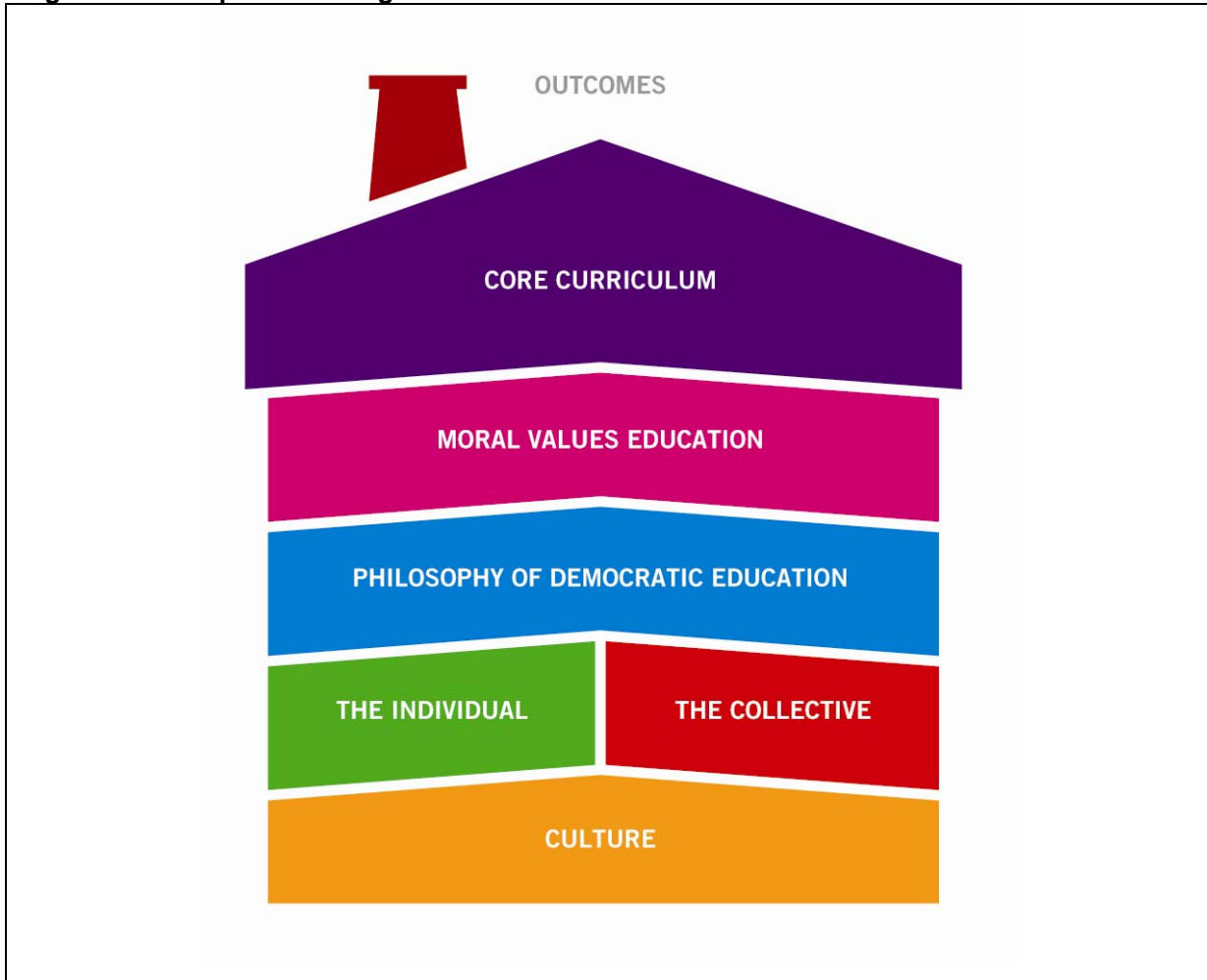
## Chapter 3: Foundational Framework

Initially, I intended to utilize both Eastern and Western ideology in my foundational framework because the lens through which Eastern societies are examined differs from that which we use to study those in the West. However, I learned that many contemporary Eastern approaches stem from Western philosophies of thought. While I familiarized myself with several of the guiding principles which could be useful in better understanding this topic, I concluded that it would be best to incorporate two broad approaches which encompass general ideas from education and sociology. Due to the range of theories concerning the acquisition of character or morality given by cognitive developmentalists, behavior modificationists, theologians, and philosophers, the psychological aspects of human development and the cognitive development of a moral person are not explored in this paper.

Figure 1 (refer to the following page) represents the conceptual building blocks of a schoolhouse: culture, individualism, collectivism, the philosophy of democratic education, moral values education, core curriculum, and outcomes. Initially, only the bare concepts exist and these concepts represent the foundation and building blocks of this thesis: the concepts of culture and democratic education influence the content of a document, such as the core curriculum. The individual, the collective, and the scope of moral values education are influenced by the surrounding blocks. The outcomes reflect the incorporation of this document into the school system, and in turn, represent a microcosm of intended social behavior. The white space between the blocks illustrates the building process. The focus of this chapter is to expand upon the key concepts and categories found within moral values education, to outline the guiding principles surrounding John Dewey's philosophy of democratic and moral values education, and to present the underpinnings of the collective and the individual according to definitions stemming from cross-cultural sociologist Harry Triandis.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The primary sources for this chapter are Chazan (1985), Dewey (1916), and Triandis (1994). The year of each publication is referenced in the first citation only. In references within subsequent chapters it is repeated.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Building Blocks**

### 3.1 Key Concepts and Categories within Moral Values Education

As noted in Chapter 1, a variety of terms have been used to discuss moral values education. These terms can also be identified in relation to larger concepts or categories, which Chazan (1985) has classified as the philosophic, the educational, and the practical (p. 1).

#### 3.1.1 The Philosophic: Moral Philosophy

The philosophic, also known as “ethics”, relates to the moral sphere and questions such as “good”, “right”, “ought”, “duty”, and “moral” (ibid). As the term implies, it deals with philosophical reflection on the moral sphere, which Chazan further breaks down into five types of issues: the social and the individual, moral principles, reason in ethics, content and form, and action. Of these five, this thesis is most concerned with the first issue – the social and the individual.

Chazan has referenced an essential issue to the understanding of the role of moral values as applied to educational research which is often questioned by social scientists, which is whether “morality” is a group phenomenon or an individual experience (Dewey, 1922; Musgrave, 1978; quoted in Chazan, 1985: 2). He has explored whether morality stems from the social or individual level, but is inconclusive:

If morality is essentially social, then moral education has the responsibility to transmit and inculcate the collective moral code; if morality relates to individual reflection and choice, then moral education’s function would be oriented to the development of qualities indispensable for individual reflection and choice. (ibid)

Arthur (2003) has drawn on Emile Durkheim’s theory of moral socialization presented in his work *Moral Education* (1886) to contribute to this discussion. He has summarized Durkheim’s approach, called “moral individualism,” which means that “individuals seek to fulfil their own potential while recognizing that contributing to the fulfilment of others is an integral part of their own fulfillment,” (Arthur, 2003: 89). Schools are similar to groups of people and develop their own distinctive moral norms which are not reducible to the sum of the individuals’ moral perspectives; however, individuals are free to develop their own potential while maintaining a sense of social cohesion, under the condition that common values and practices of the community are respected. The role of the individual and the collective will be reflected upon further in the next sections.

### **3.1.2 The Educational: Philosophy of Moral Education**

The educational encompasses the philosophy of moral education in terms of socialization, and the difference between indoctrination and education. Chazan pointed out that there has been a shift in philosophy of education literature to include topics in moral philosophy within the educational framework in recent decades. Contemporary discussion has led to the creation of two new sub-categories: “a conception of ‘the morally educated person’, and ‘indoctrination’ and moral education” (ibid: 6).

The conception of an “educated” person is a philosophical debate which is examined in Deweyan terms in the next section. Similarly, the conception of a “morally educated” person is in line with the moral philosophy as previously discussed. Chazan has suggested that in the educational context, the morally educated person is “an image of the ideal student”, or a product which the system strives for (ibid).

On the other hand, indoctrination generally has a negative connotation and implies an undesirable activity (ibid). Moral education has often been interpreted as indoctrination. Chazan has posed several questions to consider in light of this connection:

1. What are the distinguishing criteria of indoctrination?
2. Are moral, religious, and political education the paradigm examples of indoctrination?
3. What are the differences between indoctrination and education?
4. Is education possible without indoctrination? (ibid)

He continued that all of these concerns have alluded to the central issue: “what we believe ‘education’ should or should not be” (ibid). As this research will show, many share the belief that the teaching of moral values is a valid and fundamental educational activity (ibid: 91). However, opponents of moral values education, and Chazan includes anarchists, socialists, atheists, and Christians in this tradition, reject this practice for a variety of reasons. Among others, these critics have argued that “moral education in schools is a form of imposition and indoctrination”; that the structure of schools, in there very nature, is manipulative and imposing; and that schools are simply not adequately equipped to “fix” the social problems which require the attention of moral values education in the first place (ibid: 91-102). Indoctrination, in relation to the concept of freedom and the philosophy of democratic education, is discussed further in Chapter 7.

### **3.1.3 The Practical: The Practice of Moral Education**

The practical considers the role of the teacher and pedagogy, including methods, procedure, and materials, and teacher training. In other words, practical considerations about how moral values education is implemented. Chazan summarized that education is realized by administrators and teachers, who utilize pedagogical methods and materials, to put particular programs into practice (ibid: 8). This element of moral education is essential, but broad and varied and requires an additional set of data and observations in order to fully its role and contribution to moral education.

In terms of this thesis, a document such as the core curriculum, demonstrates the relationship between these three categories. Beginning with Chazan’s first category, the underpinnings of a given curriculum are based upon that society’s moral philosophy. The overall goals of that particular educational system, and in turn, the goals of a particular moral values education program, are illustrated in the rhetoric within the body of the curriculum. In many instances,

the practical implementation of these goals by school administrators and teachers is also outlined in this document, or a parallel document is referenced.

### 3.2 Moral and Democratic Educational Philosophy: John Dewey

According to John Dewey (1916), education and democracy go hand in hand. In order to develop and put to use the capacities necessary for operating a democratic society, education must simultaneously promote democratic understanding (ibid). As a starting point, Dewey's educational philosophy as conveyed in *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), provides a common point of reference. Dewey was quite a liberal thinker for his time and influential in the American progressive education movement of the late 1800s and early 1900s, which promoted an educational program based upon the development of cooperative social skills, critical thinking, and democratic behavior within a community-based environment. Not only is Dewey one of the most well-known educationalists and "a major contributor to the emerging theory of participatory democracy", but both educational systems in this research have drawn upon his philosophy in their inception, evolution, and contemporary curricular framework (Caspary, 2000: 1). This section will examine aspects of Dewey's moral and democratic educational philosophy to provide a framework for characterizing Japanese and Norwegian moral values education. The point of departure for exploring Dewey's philosophy begins with an examination of his notion of education.

#### 3.2.1 Common + Community + Communication

The term *education* can be understood in numerous ways and since this research utilizes Dewey's framework, his conception of education is a necessary building block of the foundation. Dewey illustrated one aspect of education through the relationship of three components: common, community, and communication (ibid: 4). Dewey first addressed "education as a necessity of life" in that the transmission of information in order that life can be renewed is based upon the simplest notion of education (ibid: 1). The term *experience* can be substituted for the term *life*, which encompasses the broadest range of events, ideas, and commonalities which constitute the being of a person, more so than a physiological description. Hence, it is education which provides the "social continuity of life", which communicates experience from one generation to the next (ibid: 2). Therefore, communication is an essential element of teaching and learning, which transpires in a community. He stated:

Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. What they must have in common in order to form a community or society are aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge – a common understanding – like-mindedness as the sociologists say. (ibid: 4)

Dewey continued that to live in a community takes on greater meaning than just what is implied by cooperation, but additionally the consciousness of a common aim, and the communication of this aim and the progress toward it, with the other members. This process of communication is intrinsically educative and experience-building (ibid: 5). What constitutes a community? According to Dewey, the terms community and society are nearly inter-changeable (ibid: 20). Any group of individuals who takes part in an associated form of living represents a community or a society. Households to cities, clubs to gangs, churches to jails, a business partnership to a guild of artists are among the examples he listed (ibid: 21). The group can be homogenous or based upon diverse interests, mainly that the individuals within the group have common aims. Based upon this notion, the school represents a community, a society.

### **3.2.2 Education = Growth**

The process described above is very organic in its inception. This metaphoric description illustrates another aspect of education – growth. Dewey used terms such as “a fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating process” to convey this notion (ibid: 10). Educationalists are familiar with the metaphor of likening a child to a plant – the seed is cultivated and the growth process ensues, similar to the upbringing of an individual. Further to this notion, he maintained that individuals are organic beings which can shape the environment, and who are also concerned with the influences of the environment upon them (ibid: 11). According to Dewey, this process of association or interaction indicates a social environment (ibid: 12). The individual, then, is an inherently social being that depends on the environment, and being nurtured within that environment, for growth. Likewise, an “unconscious influence of the environment” exists which affects the educative process of the individual (ibid: 17). Dewey cited examples of acquiring language or good manners as ways in which the individual is influenced by the environment (ibid: 17-18). One function of the formal school is to simplify the environment by removing as much as possible these “unworthy features of the existing environment” (ibid: 20). Through selecting the more deserving features to transmit via education, society is also becoming better. An additional function of the formal

school is to provide a balance, to “coordinate” between the individual and the diversity of environments (ibid: 22).

Dewey defined growth as “cumulative movement of action toward a later result” (ibid: 41). This definition denotes development and when paired with the development of an individual, Dewey suggested the individual has the “*ability* to develop” (ibid: 42). “Cumulative movement of action” occurs over time when the capacity and potential of the individual are enabled in order to undergo a continual process of experience, followed by modification. Dewey indicated that a common misperception of growth is that it is understood as “movement toward a fixed goal” (ibid: 50). However, he pointed out that growth should be regarded as “*being* an end”, rather than “*having* an end” (ibid). Therefore, growth does not cease upon completion of the formal school, but should continue throughout life. The ultimate aim of education is then growth.

### **3.2.3 Dewey’s Democratic Conception in Education**

According to Dewey, democracy must be envisioned as a holistic experience, not merely a construct used for governing.

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. (ibid: 87)

Maintaining a common understanding among individuals is a central operating mechanism in this ideal environment.

The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. (ibid)

In other words, Dewey conceptualized democracy as an experience, brought about through the participation and interaction of individuals who share common aims, within the context of a community environment.

However, Dewey differentiated between a society and the “democratic ideal” with two criteria pointing towards the latter:



The first signifies not only more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest, but greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control. The second means not only freer interaction between social groups...but change in social habit – its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse. (ibid: 86-87)

The democratic ideal relies on the recognition of mutual interests and voluntary interaction so that growth can occur. Mutual interests can range from a single common goal to diversity in aspirations. The beauty of a democratic environment is that each individual is free to contribute his or her unique perspective to the collective, both the individual and the collective reflect and discuss, and grow from new understandings which are reached based upon the diversity of ideas and interaction. As defined in Chapter 1, morals and morality are attributed to the interaction between individuals, so an understanding of moral values also develops in the kind of environment which encourages discussion and reflection of thoughts and ideas in a given situation. If growth is equated to education, then education is also equated to moral growth.

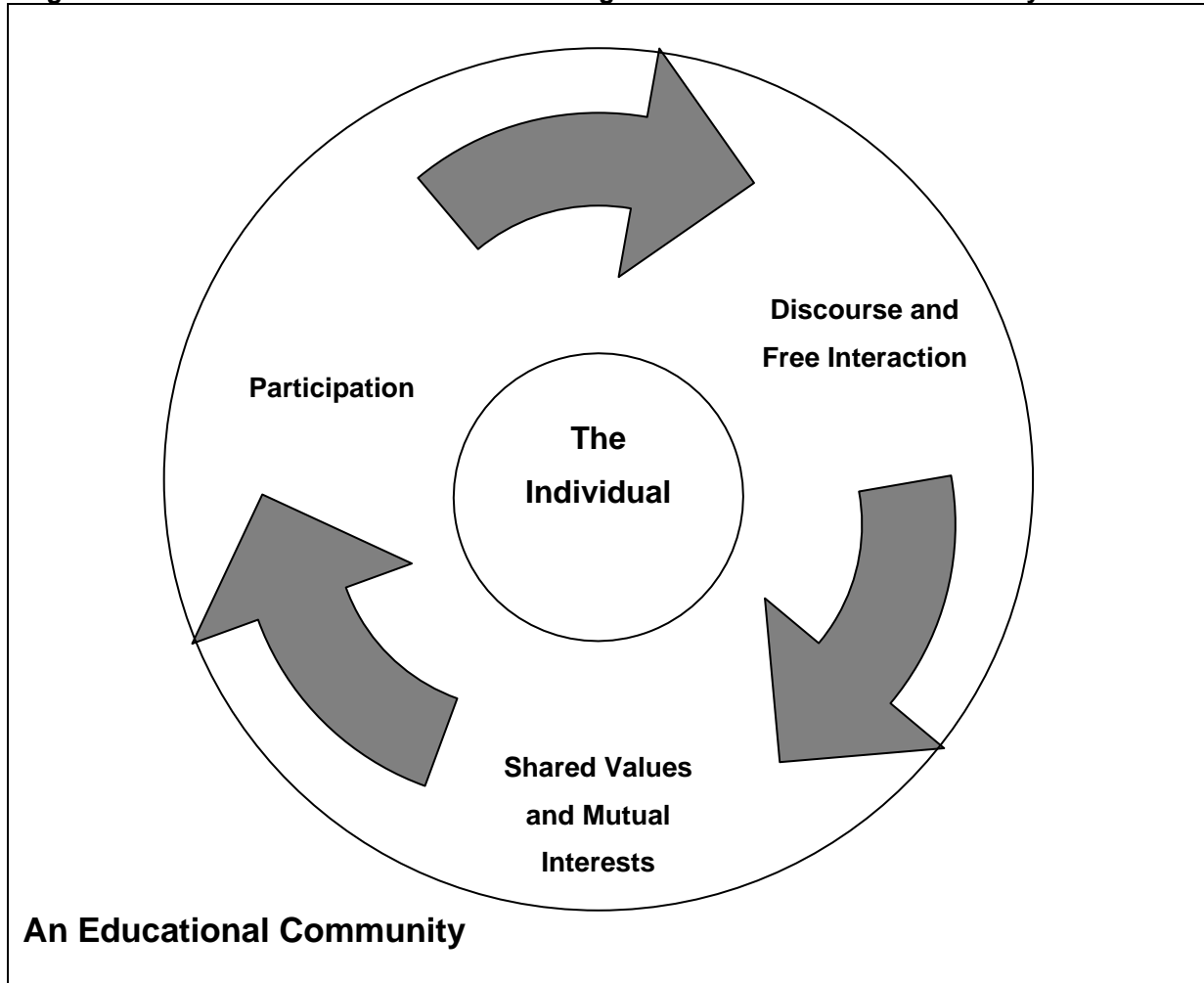
In his writings, Dewey acknowledged the contributions of early European philosophy to the evolution of educational philosophy. Each of the three periods he examined illustrates a social ideal which can be measured by two points: "...the extent in which the interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups" (ibid: 99). Dewey continued that a prerequisite for a democratic society includes the equal possibility of participation by all members, among all institutions and groups. A democratic society must also provide an education which encourages "personal interest" by individuals "in social relationships and control" (ibid).

In order to facilitate the "give and take in the building up of a common experience" of learning in a democratic community, the criteria of participation, shared values and mutual interests, and free interaction and discourse between social groups must be recognized (ibid: 358). "Give and take" also refers to having a common understanding of these criteria and the functionality of such an environment, as well as acceptance and tolerance of the individuals and ideas which comprise the environment. In terms of measuring an educational system, Dewey stated that "the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits and aims of the group" (ibid: 83). In order to have common values, he suggested that all the members of the group have an equal opportunity to give and take, and have shared activities

and experiences (ibid: 84). Reciprocity among the members of a group would provide the foundation for a common discourse, and the equal opportunity to participate in it. Social control as a result of a consensus about shared aims and values, rather than through coercion, would be one outcome. No education would lead to differentiation between groups or classes, rather a culture balanced in experience and discourse. Encouraged interaction between groups would promote a further break-down in physical space and bring people closer.

The school as an educational community provides the environment in which a framework for democratic learning can be effectively implemented. Figure 2 (refer to the following page) reflects the interdependency of these conditions to promote growth of the individual. If one is absent or failing, the others cannot function appropriately. The mechanism in which the framework operates is cyclical to illustrate that democratic learning is a continual process. This is only an example, so it should be kept in mind that the conditions function in any order. It can be envisioned spiraling and developing upwards, achieving the ultimate goal of education: growth. The educational community in which the concept functions includes other individuals who are interacting with one another and undergoing similar processes, attaining both individual and collective growth.

**Figure 2: A Framework for Democratic Learning within an Educational Community**



### **3.2.4 The Individual, Individuality, and Individualism**

The individual is the most essential element of society, and the role of the individual and the relationship to the community is fundamental in both Dewey's philosophy and the framework of this thesis. Dewey offers one perspective on the understanding of individual, individuality, and individualism in relation to the democratic ideal, which will provide useful in the analysis and discussion of chapter 7.

The concept of the individual has evolved over time, reflecting both the organization of society, as well as the aim of education, and Dewey's examination of early European educational philosophy characterizes this. There are several conclusions to be reached from Dewey's assessment. The first is that the individual is characterized not as an isolated organism, but rather as a social being who gains knowledge through experience. Each individual is shaped by experience, by growth, in a unique way; hence, all humans are diverse individuals who acquire the mechanisms to reason, to think rationally, and to think, most importantly, for him or herself. Individuality, in Dewey's framework, is the mental

freedom one has in thinking and learning (ibid: 302). In a democratic learning environment, individuals are permitted freedom in individual activities such as “intellectual initiative, independence in observation, judicious invention, foresight of consequences, and ingenuity of adaptation to them”, which allows individuality to develop (ibid). When individual intellect of the masses is suppressed by the authority of the few, the democratic condition does not exist (ibid: 305). Alternately, “true individualism is a product of the relaxation of the grip of the authority of custom and traditions as standards of belief” (ibid). History shows that this is “a comparatively modern manifestation” and even today, we are still exploring an appropriate balance between intellectual freedom and governmental authority (ibid).

### **3.3 Cross-Cultural Sociology: Harry Triandis**

In my understanding, culture plays a significant role in the development of society and social behavior, thus it is problematic to remove this conception and its implications from the human experience. Arthur (2003) asserted, “Culture shapes individual character: it must have a degree of particularity about it and it is the general culture which provides the reasons, restraints and incentives for conducting life” (p. 97). Indeed, culture matters. On the other hand, it is important to realize that culture alone cannot be held responsible for differences in societal development. History and environment must also be recognized as influences on culture and behavior. In order to clarify this relationship, I draw on the cross-cultural theory presented by social psychologist Harry Triandis (1994). Cross-cultural theory is not so much a theory as it is an approach, or a set of ideas, that simply guides us in looking at the role culture plays in our own society and across societies, especially with regard to the role of the individual and the collective. There are numerous perspectives presented in the literature as to how to interpret the complex relationships within culture. I believe Triandis defines the concepts clearly and concisely, and in my understanding of his work, I have selected the key concepts and definitions necessary in understanding these phenomena, without having a background in sociology.

#### **3.3.1 The Significance of Culture**

To facilitate this discussion, a common definition of culture must be understood. While there have been numerous definitions of culture, Triandis illustrated his definition with a simple metaphor: “Culture is to society what memory is to individuals” (ibid: 1). Culture encompasses traditions and past successes, “the way people have learned to look at their environment and themselves, and their unstated assumptions about the way the world is and

the way people should act” (ibid). His definition is based on cultural anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits’ (1955) broad, yet inclusive definition that “culture is the human-made part of the environment” (quoted in Triandis, 1994: 1). He elaborated that we can think of culture as “*unstated assumptions*, standard operating procedures, ways of doing things that have been internalized to such an extent that people do not argue about them...[including] ideas and behavior patterns that are ‘obviously valid’ for members of the culture and that need not be debated,” (Triandis, 1994: 16). Culture impacts social behavior and the function of moral values education relies on the understanding of the relationship between these concepts. Just as individuals are bound to society through culture, researching and methodology are also culture-bound. It is often difficult to separate the two and examine each with an objective point of view, especially if we have not experienced another culture or society. Because my study examines and compares across two different cultures, one eastern and one western, Triandis’ guidelines are necessary for establishing an objective perspective.

Culture further consists of objective and subjective aspects, and when we differentiate between these, we can examine social behavior and how people view their environment. Subjective aspects of culture include norms, values, categories, and roles. These are organized into four groups, identified as *cultural syndromes*. Triandis stated that “a cultural syndrome is a pattern of beliefs, attitudes, self-definitions, norms, and values that are organized around some theme that can be identified in a society” (ibid: 2). He discussed four syndromes, which are also relevant to this thesis:

- *Complexity*: Some cultures are more complex than others.
- *Individualism*: Some cultures structure social experiences around autonomous individuals.
- *Collectivism*: Some cultures organize their subjective cultures around one or more collectives, such as the family, the tribe, the religious group, or the country.
- *Tightness*: Some cultures impose many norms, rules and constraints on social behavior, while others are rather loose in imposing such constraints. (ibid)

The proximity of these syndromes suggests the kind of cultural norms and behaviors of societies.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See also Triandis, 1994: 178; Geert Hofstede’s (2005) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*

### 3.3.2 Generality and Context

Despite the perspective that every culture is unique in some ways, Triandis has emphasized that when dealing with culture, we must deal with broad themes and avoid narrow definitions. At the same time, he stressed not limiting ourselves to our own culture and “what we learn in the West”, rather taking advantage of generality within the context of other cultures (ibid: 55). As was previously discussed in Chapter 2, it is necessary to separate between the emic voices, or the cultural specific elements, and the etic voices, which are the universal cultural elements that are used in comparing cultures. My research investigates Japanese and Norwegian societies using “native” perspectives, as well as applying a “neutral” paradigm. As Kelly (2002b) stated, “*contextual* research...is more concerned with making sense of human experience from *within* the context and perspective of human experience,” as opposed to applying theories which pertain to “all people in all contexts” (p. 398). Indeed, science deals with generalizations (Triandis, 1994).

Triandis has cited the studies of Pepitone and Triandis (1987), who found that some theories which deal with biological or ecological phenomena, or social structures that are common to humankind, are likely to be universal; however, the meaning of the stimulus conditions must be the same across cultures (quoted in Triandis, 1994: 34). Since meaning, which is defined by culture, cannot be understood across the board, the findings must first be checked cross-culturally before generality can be assumed. This notion will be useful later in discussing why some elements of democratic learning do not work, or work differently when borrowed and applied to the Japanese or Norwegian case.

### 3.3.3 Defining Values

A definition of moral values education was presented in the first chapter, but since *moral* values are a subset of *values*, this section serves to expound upon the understanding of the term. Simply stated, “Values are principles that guide our lives” (Triandis, 1994: 111). In other words, values provide direction towards goals. Various aspects of values have been researched and Triandis has drawn on the work of Schwartz (1992) to present a concrete definition of values (quoted in Triandis, 1994: 112):

(1) Concepts or beliefs

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utilizes these concepts to measure the degree of individualism and collectivism in cultures and organizations.

- (2) that pertain to desirable end states or behaviors,
- (3) that transcend specific situations,
- (4) that guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events,
- (5) and that are ordered by relative importance.

Schwartz conducted a study, which sampled 200 teachers and about 200 others (generally university students) from more than 30 countries to determine value patterns, and asked the cohorts to rate the importance of 56 values to them “as a guiding principle in *my* life” (ibid: 112-113). Following statistical analysis, the values were grouped into the following ten sets. The idea that these ten sets of value patterns appear repeatedly in a range of cultures suggests that while a basic value system is universal, the importance of one set of values over another is dependent upon culture.

### 3.3.4 Understanding Individualistic and Collectivist Cultures

According to Triandis, researchers acknowledge two kinds of collectivism: *horizontal*, which emphasizes interdependence and oneness; and *vertical*, which emphasizes serving the group (ibid: 167).<sup>17</sup> The main differences are in terms of goals and social behavior; however, for all intensive purposes of this study, horizontal and vertical collectivism is not differentiated because they share most attributes. Generally, the collectivist culture defines the self in terms of membership to the group; whereas in the individualistic culture, the self is defined as an individual and autonomous from any groups. Triandis has provided some examples describing the various attributes among individualists and collectivists, which I have summarized on Figure 3 (refer to the following page). These attributes are more or less self-explanatory and serve as a point of reference to differentiate in simple terms between the two cultures.

It is important to keep in mind that all cultures include aspects of both individualism and collectivism, and that some attributes appear more frequently in one or the other culture. Additionally, Triandis has stated that financial independence tends to lead to social independence; thus, affluence increases individualism (ibid: 165).<sup>18</sup> Also, factors such as

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<sup>17</sup> Triandis has noted that these aspects are statistically correlated and similar to concepts presented by Fiske (1990, 1992).

<sup>18</sup> A study by Scheper-Hughes (1985) associated extreme economic deprivation with individualism also (quoted in Triandis, 1994: 165).

urban residence, migration, and social mobility create more complex cultures, which contribute to individualism in that they generate more choice as to which groups people want to belong.

**Figure 3: Some Attributes of People in Individualistic and Collectivist Cultures**

<b><i>Individualistic</i></b>	<b><i>Collectivist (horizontal)</i></b>
Independent Self	Interdependent Self
<i>Individuals</i> as the basic units of social perception	<i>Groups</i> as the basic units of social perception
Autonomous and independent of groups	See themselves as appendages or aspects of a group (ex.: family, the tribe, a corporation, the country) and feel interdependence with members of this group
Personal rights are emphasized; Believe it is okay to do what they want to do, regardless of their groups' wishes or acting appropriately	Willing to subordinate personal goals to the goals of the group in order to act appropriately; Doing one's "duty" as defined by the in-group
Success is attributed to ability; failure is attributed to other factors (ex.: task difficulty, bad luck); Can "do your own thing" without being rejected	Success is attributed to help from others; failure is attributed to lack of effort; "Doing your own thing" often results in rejection
Achievement for self-glory: "I want to be myself. I want power."	Achievement for the group: "I represent the group, cooperation, endurance, order, self-control."
Value pleasure, achievement, competition, freedom, autonomy, fair exchange; concern for "truth" versus "action consistent with important principles"	Value security, obedience, duty, in-group harmony, personalized relationships, persistence; concern for "virtuous action" or appropriate action
<b><i>Individualistic</i></b>	<b><i>Collectivist (vertical)</i></b>
Individual and group goals are often inconsistent	Individual and group goals are often consistent
Social behavior is egalitarian, horizontal relations are more important	Social behavior is hierarchical, vertical relations are more important

Source: Adapted from Triandis, 1994: 4, 15, 167-172.



### 3.3.6 In- and Out- groups, Social Behavior, and Cultural Differences

People belong to in-groups, which are “based on similarity and common fate” (ibid: 115). These are the groups people feel closeness to, tend to pledge their allegiances to, and would defend. Conversely, out-groups would be those groups to which people are indifferent. Collectivist and individualist cultures perceive these groups differently. Cultural homogeneity is one of the key factors which influence differentiation between the groups, thus, cultures differ on what is significant. In terms of this study, it is important to note that historically, both Japan and Norway have been very culturally homogeneous nations; however, with immigration on the rise<sup>19</sup>, both countries are seeing an increase in ethnic and cultural diversity of the population. Furthermore, the situation or environment is a criterion when individuals are determining in-groups. For example, two Muslims in Ethiopia might not be part of the same in-group, but in Norway they may be in-group members simply because they are Ethiopian Muslims (based on an example in Triandis, 1994: 115).

Social behavior is not always understood the same way across cultures, due much in part to cultural differences. For example, a Swiss in Switzerland might greet a friend with three alternating kisses on the cheek. When the same Swiss greets a Norwegian in Oslo, the Norwegian might have a different interpretation or understanding of the greeting. Understanding the impact that cultural differences have on subjective culture (individualistic and collectivist) helps to predict some social behaviors.

## 3.4 Summary

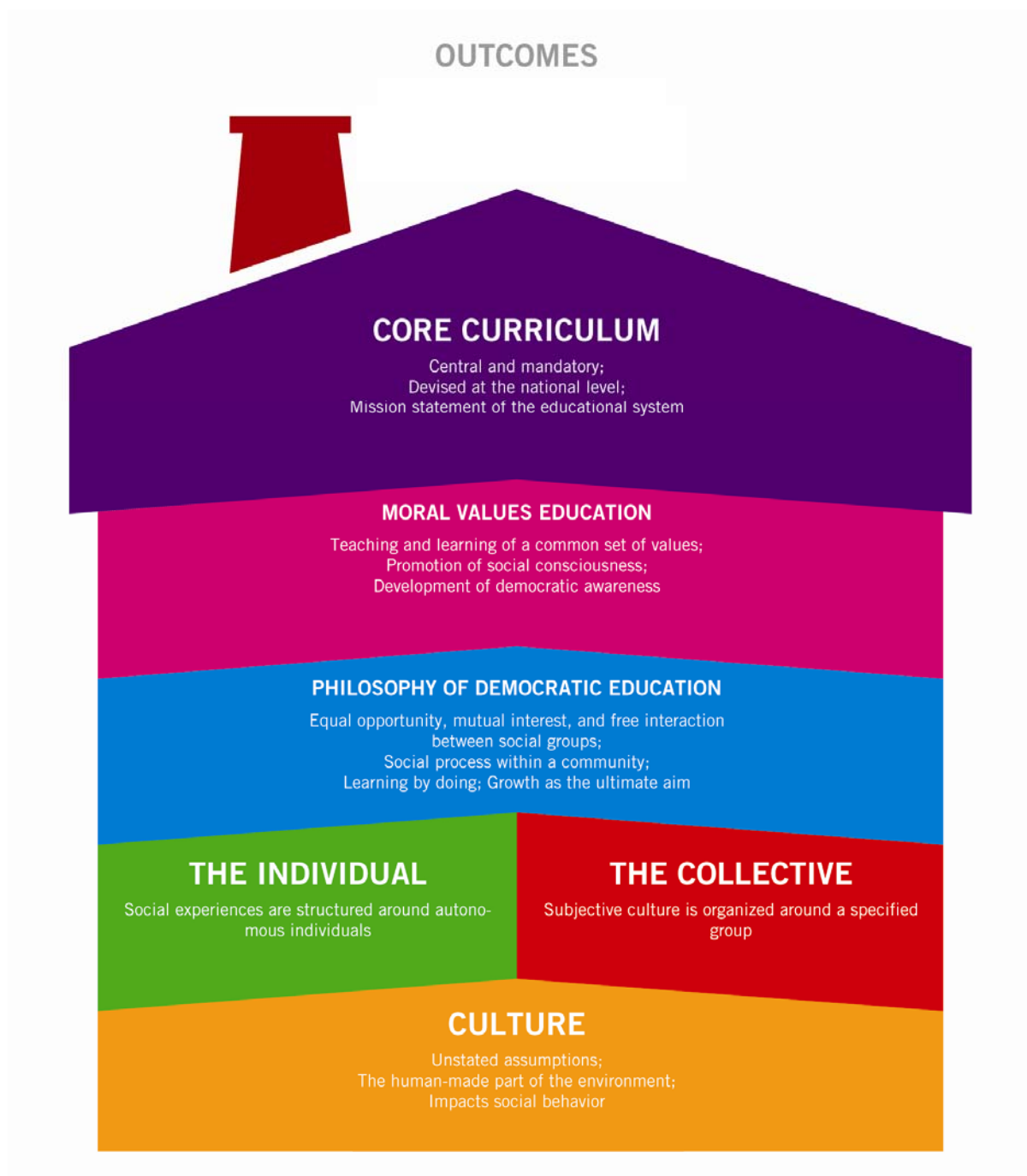
The aim of this chapter is best summarized in reference to Figure 4 (refer to the following page). The conceptual building blocks of Culture, The Individual, The Collective, The Philosophy of Democratic Education, and Moral Values Education, with definitions as mortar, have been laid and will provide the foundational constructs of the school house. The final building block, the Core Curriculum, and its role in conveying the rhetoric of moral values education both historically and at the present, is the focus of the next chapters.

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<sup>19</sup>An immigrant population consists of people with two foreign-born parents: first-generation immigrants who have moved to a new country and people who were born in the new country of two parents who were born abroad (Statistics Norway, 2006). In Japan, immigrants are often referred to as *gaikokujin* (literally foreigners or people from the outside, sometimes the term is translated into “alien”). According to the Statistics Bureau Japan (2000), the immigrant population accounts for less than one percent of Japan’s population and 8.3% of Norway’s population (Statistics Norway, 2006). These figures indicate the ethnic background of the population, and not those immigrants who have established citizenship in either Japan or Norway.

Outcomes of moral values education will be discussed in Chapter 7. The intention of the school house concepts is to provide a guide for reading the subsequent chapters and will be revisited in the analysis and discussion in Chapter 7.

**Figure 4: School House Constructed of Conceptual Building Blocks**



## Chapter 4: From Meiji to Modern: The Philosophy of Moral Education in Japan

It is necessary to first examine the foundational building blocks of any national education system in order to understand better the evolution of it. This chapter outlines the foundations of the modern learning environment in Japan through highlighting the developments in ideas surrounding the subject of moral education, the introduction of the philosophy of democratic education, and the intertwined relationship of curriculum, philosophy, and policy.

Most historians and scholars have classified educational developments in three periods: early Meiji, post World War II, and the 1980s to the present (Amano, 1997; Cummings, 2003b; Stevenson, 1998). Each period reflects significant changes in the stance of the government on national policy, which steered educational policy, specifically curricular reform. As the next sections illustrate, the Japanese educational philosophy is multi-faceted and can be characterized as nationalistic and patriotic, progressive and democratic.

### 4.1 The Meiji Restoration and Modernization

The modernization of Japan is associated with the Meiji Restoration of 1867/68, a political revolution in which the feudal system under the Tokugawa shogunate, in power since 1603, collapsed and was replaced with a period referred to as *bunmeikaika*, or “Civilization and Enlightenment”, a move toward the modern state (Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Culture [MESSC], 1971). After two and a half centuries of self-imposed isolation, the newly formed Japanese government quickly turned to the West to re-establish economic relations, as well as seek out models for innovation and society, including education. Immediately following the restoration, the newly established government sought the indoctrination of nationalism and patriotism, via a foundation in Shinto<sup>20</sup> and the promotion of the Great Doctrine (*taikyō*). By 1872, the movement inspired by the Great Doctrine lost momentum and began a rapid decline. Historians noted that despite its ability to achieve the position of authority it aspired to, the movement was significant in that it came to constitute “the prototype for the extreme nationalism that dominated educational philosophy and policy sixty years later” (ibid, chapter 1.2.5).

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<sup>20</sup> Shinto is the earliest religion recorded in Japan, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, and is based upon animism and the worship of ancestors. The Emperor used Shinto, or State Shinto, to encourage nationalism in order to unify the country following the Meiji Restoration. State Shinto became illegal, but Shinto still exists. Buddhism and Confucianism have also influenced the Japanese belief system (Shinto, 2006).

As the concept of Civilization and Enlightenment gained popularity, the new government recognized the need to incorporate Western ideas of society and learning into their own and began sending scholars abroad, as well as instating foreign teachers in their own schools. In 1872, under the *Education System Order*, the first modern educational system was set forth, which opened non-traditional elementary and middle schools and abolished traditional Japanese education of the *terakoya* schools that were based on Confucian and samurai values. Japan “imported and imitated” a Western-style educational system based on German, U.S., and French models (Amano, 1997: 363). Beauchamp (1991) described the procedure of “borrowing”:

At the beginning of the reform process, the policy makers essentially borrowed ideas and the best features (i.e. those that best suited the Japanese) of Western education systems. The result was a hybrid of many education systems: the centralised education structure of the French system; a few elite universities based on the German model; the moral discipline of the English system; and an elementary school system from the United States. (p.28; quoted in Hood, 2001: 18)

Under the motto “Enrich the country and strengthen the army,” the new system promoted two key goals: “... first to train the elite who would master Western knowledge and modernize the country; second, the new schooling would form the people to have loyalty to and a sense of the membership in the nation ...” (ibid). In order to promote a policy of educational unification, the Department of Education was established in 1871, and had absolute authority and responsibility for education.

Western ideas about education had been quickly imposed without taking into account the nature of the Japanese situation. The post-reconstruction period saw antagonism between traditional and progressive values, as well as a fluctuating state of political affairs. In 1878, following an inspection of social and educational conditions, the Emperor realized that Western reforms in education were misunderstood by, and irrelevant to the common citizen. Nakano (1989) stated that claims were made that “the West had gone too far, leading to a neglect of Japan’s traditional values; thus, it was necessary to seek loyalty to the state and the reinvigoration of feudal family-based values” (p. 20). Deputy Secretary of Education, Tanaka Fujimaro, responded to the rising criticism, and other social and political factors, with the proposal of the Japanese Education Order, in which a new system of national

education was introduced based on the decentralized system he had experienced in a recent visit to the United States.

At this time, moral education was not considered a subject, although the study of manners was one element in formal schooling which was intended to teach children, based on facts, how to conduct themselves in daily life. In order to slow the pervasiveness of Western culture and unite the nation under the Emperor's ideology, the focus shifted to civic education and the Imperial Will on the Great Principles of Education was drafted in two parts. General Observations on Education clarified "the notions of loyalty and filial piety as they relate to the formation of the Japanese educational tradition" and pointed out "how the single-minded respect paid to Western technical knowledge and the concentration upon the nonessential aspects of the Civilization and Enlightenment brought about popular confusion concerning ethical values," (MESSC: FIRST, chapter 2.5.2a). Two Provisions for the Conduct of Elementary Education stressed "the importance of instilling these virtues in the minds of children as thoroughly as possible" and promoted "practical training appropriate to the common man's station in place of the more abstractly oriented education," which was being stressed during that time (ibid). As a result of the Imperial critique of the Enlightenment, elementary and middle school curricula were revised to buildup moral education through the institution of *shūshin* (moral training) as one of eight school subjects. By 1881, moral education as a school subject peaked and accounted for 17 percent of total school hours in the primary school curriculum (MESSC, 1971).<sup>21</sup> An editorial board, established by the Department of Education, quickly published *Moral Education for Elementary Education*, a manual based largely on "famous adages from traditional Eastern classics illustrative of various virtues central to Confucian thought," (MESSC: FIRST, chapter 2.5.2b). Decentralization efforts progressed in 1879 with the passage of the Education System Order, which granted considerable authority in educational matters to the local municipalities.

The national government moved towards the establishment of a constitutional government in 1880, and with the introduction of a national diet and a new constitution came the overall

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<sup>21</sup> In 1873, when the restructuring of the education system first began, moral education as a subject in the primary school was hardly worth mentioning and less than one percent of total hours were devoted to it. Japanese, social studies, arithmetic, and science were the predominant subjects of the study during the time period. Moral education, fine arts, physical education, and other subjects (including music, home-making, technical subjects, and special curricular activities) were added or removed, based on the curricular policy.

restructuring of the government departments. The Prime Minister appointed Arinori Mori as the first Minister of Education to a reformed Ministry of Education in 1885. Mori had been active in educational affairs since the beginning of the Meiji Restoration and sought opinions of American policy makers and educators as to the direction education should take. He believed in education for the sake of national development and prosperity.

If we aim at having our country stand equal to the great nations of the world, if we aim at carrying on forever the great endeavor called the Meiji Restoration, if we aim at becoming a strong nation, it is necessary to develop and create a base for the nourishment of an unexcelled spirit among the people. (MESSC: FIRST, chapter 3.1.1b).

Mori felt that only the upper class of society understood the reasons behind modernization, so it was the duty of education to exploit this sense of loyalty and patriotism among the people in order to strengthen the nation. Mori's elitist characterization of the school system was well-known (Dale, 1986), as were his nationalistic goals and militaristic style, based on the way of the samurai, which was still being employed in schools during this time.

By 1890, many felt that the goals of education and the spirit of the new constitution did not match. The debate concerned the relationship between moral education and traditional Japanese values, as well as the role of moral education in school. Article 1 of the 1890 Elementary School Order, influenced by the strong foundations of schooling found in the German tradition, outlined the purpose of elementary school:

...to attend to the development of the bodies of children and to furnish them with the skills and knowledge necessary for daily life together with basics of moral education and education fundamental to the members of the Japanese nation. (MESSC: FIRST, chapter 3.2.1c)

The goal of elementary education was no longer a "vehicle for general education," but served a broader purpose, including "moral education, education for citizens, and education for skills and knowledge" (ibid).

#### **4.1.1 *Taishō* Democracy**

The Emperor's policy toward moral and ethical education based on Confucian ideals and loyalty to the throne prevailed until his death in 1912. With the establishment of *Taishō* democracy, came the introduction of John Dewey and his principles. Masatarō Sawayanagi served in the Ministry of Education and introduced Deweyan philosophy via his writings in *The School and Society* (1900) into the Japanese education system. Similar to Dewey,

Sawayanagi had established a small, private elementary school. In 1914, he called for the abolition of moral education in the lower grades of the elementary school, as he believed children should not be forced to memorize what they could not comprehend. He argued that the role of the school was to cultivate the student's initial awareness of moral and ethical matters, instead of instilling set principles into them. The notion of moral training for life gained some popularity and was compared to the religious philosophies of Shinran (1173-1262), a Buddhist leader who believed all human beings to be equal in the eyes of the Absolute: Buddha (Nakano, 1989). However, sympathizers of the Shinran philosophy were also critical of the contents and usage of the national textbooks. In 1924, a young teacher in Nagano prefecture was fired for choosing works of other well-known Japanese writers over the national moral education text because he thought it would be more interesting to his fourth graders, not because he was in opposition to the government. The case signalled that the Japanese government was moving away from democracy and toward nationalism and militarism.

#### **4.1.2 Totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s**

There was unprecedented prosperity in Japan following the First World War. Under *Taishō* leadership, which lasted until 1926, when Hirohito succeeded as Emperor, a two party political system was developed and calls for universal suffrage were starting to be heard (Taisho, 2006).<sup>22</sup> However, there was growing disillusionment by the public due to the increasing national debt and the emergence of a Japanese communist party.<sup>23</sup> When the Sino-Japanese war began, which would rage for fifteen years, Japan faced another difficult period beginning in the 1930s and growing economic pressures and new military leadership were unable to ease matters. Bitter winters and starvation deeply affected the eastern agricultural region of Japan, including Tōhoku and the island of Hokkaido. Nakano (1989) stated that some teachers dealt with these harsh realities by encouraging students to write essays about what they were experiencing in their daily lives, thus promoting moral content “concerned with an awareness of life and the need for mutual cooperation among people” (p. 31). Unfortunately, totalitarianism in education prevailed. In April 1941, the elementary school system and curriculum were reformed and moral education was reinforced with a nationalistic perspective. Nakano noted the wartime atmosphere:

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<sup>22</sup> Universal suffrage was not granted until 1925, but only men above the age of 25 were allowed to vote (Taisho, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Although communism was banned in Japan, the party still existed.

While tightening its control over speech, the government employed every means to instill faith in certain victory in the people. Even children were required to demonstrate resignation and perseverance, to further the war effort. Under the slogan ‘No personal desires until victory,’ people were urged to suppress their own wants in the name of wartime cooperation. Maps of Asia were displayed in classrooms, a Rising Sun flag marking each spot the Japanese military had occupied. The slogan ‘Destroy the American and British Brutes’ was used to inflame hostility ... In the schools, children were compelled to pledge their loyalty as subjects of the Japanese Empire every morning. (ibid: 32-33)

## 4.2 Post-World War II and Educational Reconstruction

Following the surrender of Japan to the Allied Forces in 1945, the post-war educational period was characterized by the dual goals of demilitarization and democratization, which eradicated the previous “Emperor-led mechanism,” (Cummings, 2003b: 32; Saito and Imai, 2004: 584). Under the auspices of the American Occupational Force, democracy gained a new meaning. Shintoism supported by the State had been viewed as a contributing factor to Japanese aggression and was officially abolished in order “to prevent a recurrence of the perversion of Shinto theory and beliefs into militaristic and ultra nationalistic propaganda,” (Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994: 70). The devastation caused by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki left both students and teachers in a state of disbelief. The Ministry of Education reacted by censoring all textbook pages referring to war and the Occupational Force went even further with the suspension of courses in morals, Japanese history, and geography, as they were instructed with Ministry of Education authorized textbook (ibid).

The United States Education Mission to Japan arrived in 1946, and began promoting democratic educational reforms not “in the spirit of conquerors, but as experienced educators who believe that there is an unmeasured potential for freedom and for individual and social growth in every human being” (p. vii; quoted in Saito and Imai, 2004: 584). They produced a report, which “aimed to liberate the Japanese from the effects of a pre-war education based upon militarism, nationalism and the Emperor system,” (Saito and Imai, 2004: 584). Furthermore, it criticized the rigid state control of education and the distrust by the Ministry of the intelligence and capability of teachers (Nakano, 1989). Saito and Imai (2004) noted the “progressive spirit of Deweyan democracy” which influenced the mission and permeated their report, demonstrating the “Deweyan sense of democratic faith – the ideal of creating universal solidarity among human beings through education” (p. 584-585). Educational democratization was underway, and it was organized by the West.



The passing of the 1946 Japanese Constitution instilled a Western-influenced democracy and provided a foundation to the new educational system. Article 1 of the Fundamental Law of Education, instituted in April 1947, outlined “the perfection of character” as the aim of education (ibid: 585).

Education shall aim at the full development of personality (or character), striving for the rearing of the people, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of the peaceful state and society. (Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994: 109; Horio, 1988: 400-401; Nakano, 1989: 37)

The Law was comprised of eleven articles, which outlined the aim of education, educational principle, equal opportunity in education, compulsory education, coeducation, school, social, political, and religious education, and school administration. Additionally, in May 1947, the Ministry of Education published the New Educational Guidelines to further the democratic approach. The objectives were simply stated and aimed to cultivate children to “seek, honor, and act with truth,” think independently and act with a strong sense of responsibility, and hold overall “friendly and cooperative attitudes,” (Nakano, 1989: 37-38). A new curriculum was introduced which excluded moral education as separate subject. Instead, the new approach to moral education was democratic in content and more holistic, “developing a deeper awareness of human relationships at home and in the wider society” (ibid: 38). The subject of Social Studies was introduced to take the place of the abolished morals, history, and geography courses. A short-lived, post-war, Dewey-inspired democratic approach and progressive movement flourished, which echoed *Taishō* democracy (Saito and Imai, 2004: 585).

#### **4.2.1 Patriotism through Education in the 1950s**

The demise of the progressive movement came with a resurgence of national control. In June 1950, the Korean War began. Again, nationalist attitudes peppered educational discussions. McCarthyism and “moral panic” raged in the U.S. and invoked the fight against communism in the East. Per the suggestion of the Minister of Education, Teiyū Amano, who advocated *patriotism* (my italics) through education, schools began flying the national flag (*hinomaru*) and singing the national anthem (*kimigayo*), as was common practice during the pre-war period. While the Ministry and the advisory body were in disagreement about the specific philosophy of moral education, it was agreed that moral education was important, although

the Japanese teacher's union (*nikkyōso*) accused the Ministry's version of moral education to be another name for "authoritarian ethics" propagated by the state (Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994: 146). Shortly thereafter, the Ministry published a guide to the subject of moral education in which they recognized the previous mistakes in teaching methods and the dangers faced if moral education was to be reinstated as a separate subject. In the debates that ensued, conservatives pushed for *patriots*, not *cosmopolitans*; reformists, backed by the Japanese teacher's union, promoted truth and peace (Nakano, 1989: 41).

After changing their position several times, the Ministry revised elementary and junior high school curricula and introduced moral education as a separate subject in 1958. According to Nakano (1989), "The Ministry believed that the moral education course was needed to awaken students to their position and roles: their duty to work for the good of society, to cultivate patriotism, and to respect other countries and peoples" (p. 43). There was strong opposition not only to the Ministry's policy, but also to the process used in determining the policy. An organization comprised of Japanese scholars called the Japanese Education Society (*nihon kyōiku gakkai*) evaluated the Ministry of Education curriculum policy-making process. Their published report criticized the biased evaluation and non-public deliberations, blamed the government for failing to address the fundamental causes in the deterioration of morals, and charged the government for not following due process in adding the additional subject of moral education (*ibid*). Despite the publication of these findings, the Ministry's policy stood.

Saito and Imai (2004) have characterized the political and educational atmosphere of the 1950s as "engulfed in the ideological battle of the Cold War" (p. 587). Consequently, conservatives, Marxists, and Soviet-inspired pedagogy criticized Deweyan practice as "anti-intellectualism", "empiricism of aimless doing" (Sugiura, 1998; Tanaka, 1998; quoted in Saito and Imai, 2004: 587), and even as a contributing factor toward "the decline of morality and the faltering academic performance of children" (Mori, 1992; quoted in Saito and Imai, 2004: 587). Although Japan had been learning from Dewey and incorporating his philosophy, Kamidera (1959) observed that "Dewey had 'come and gone' like a fad: his thought had not taken root in the soil of Japanese culture," (p. 285; quoted in Saito and Imai, 2004: 587).

### 4.2.2 The 1960s and 1970s: The Development of the Ideal Character

From 1960, Japanese society transitioned from recovery to economic growth. National interest and human capital were mobilized and the idea that everyone must contribute to the “education factory” manifested (Kamata, 1984; quoted in Saito and Imai, 2004: 588). Innovation and productivity in industry necessitated educated workers and the number of students continuing on to high school rose dramatically. Competition to enter top schools was fierce and cram school (*juku*) was introduced outside of the formal education system. However, while industry flourished, societal morale declined. In 1970, Beresford Hayward, a member of a visiting OECD research committee, noted that Japan, “with its rapid, dynamic development, is a good example of a general lesson to be learned from the 1960s: that economic growth as formally measured will not automatically produce an equivalent increment in human welfare,” (Nakano, 1989: 46-47). Hayward published an article in a Japanese government journal and listed numerous “costs of rapid economic growth”, including urbanization, pollution and environmental destruction, traffic accidents, the collapse of the family, juvenile delinquency, and an increase in crime and violence (*ibid*).

Hayward’s comments were a reality with which the Ministry of Education was already contending. In 1966, the Central Council for Education, an advisory body for the Ministry of Education, published a report entitled “The Image of the Ideal (Japanese) Person” (*kitaisareru ningenzō*). Although it did not reference specific economic and political factors, which Hayward and others believed were at the heart of educational problems, it did consider the problems facing the Japanese from three perspectives: the characteristics of contemporary civilization, the international situation, and issues confronting the Japanese people. Furthermore, it outlined an image, based on appropriate morals, for an individual, a family man, an adult member of society, and a citizen (*ibid*; Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994). A narrow definition of patriotism, through respect and love for the Emperor, reinforced Japanese character and evoked notions of pre-war nationalism. Nakano (1989) cited criticism of this document:

The basis of democracy is mutual understanding of differences in ideology and belief and mutual respect for rights and freedoms. In a democratic nation, therefore, a governmental organization should not instruct the people in proper morality, values, or the way to live. No nation that dares to do so could be called democratic. (p. 48)

It was apparent that policy makers still had conflicting understandings of democracy. Yet, could any understanding of democracy prosper under such conditions?

The Central Council for Education convened again in 1967 and worked for four years to prepare a reform agenda entitled “Basic Guidelines for the Development of an Integrated Educational System Suited for Contemporary Society” at the request of the Minister of Education. The “Final Recommendation” was reported on 11 June, 1971, and the development of the individual was the central theme. The document elaborated on the contribution and expectations of home and social education, and also stressed the cultivation of an individual’s personality to develop into the integrated being.

... The objective of education for the development of personality should be to help people acquire the abilities for building a satisfactory and spontaneous life, for adapting to social realities, and for the creative solution of difficulties. The Japanese people, showing tolerance for the values of others, should realize their national identity, and on the basis of the rules of democratic society and their national tradition should contribute to the peace of the world and the welfare of mankind through the development of a distinct but universal culture. (MESSC, 1971: 7)

The recommendation was published following the OECD report (11 January, 1970) “Reviews of National Policies for Education: Japan” in which the “conformist nature of the Japanese system, over centralized control, and an over-emphasis on standardization in the name of egalitarianism” were highly criticized (quoted in Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994: 25). The examiners suggested, “The time may have come to devote more attention to such matters as *cooperation*, in addition to discipline and competition, and *creativity*, in addition to receptivity and imitation” (ibid).

### 4.3 The Third Wave: The 1980s, Liberalization, and Liberation

Signs of Japan’s economic prosperity were everywhere. Mass produced goods such as cars, TVs, and refrigerators were common. Food was imported from all corners of the world. Vending machines with soft drinks, beer, cigarettes, and even eggs became easily accessible. Life became convenient and comfortable, and the failing ability of youth to deal with social factors was more evident. Schools increasingly struggled with juvenile delinquency and other behavior problems, violence against teachers, and overall school violence, including corporal punishment and bullying. The third wave had a rocky start and was characterized by

a motto describing conflicting approaches to reform Japanese schooling: “economic liberalization versus educational liberation,” (Horio, 1988: 362).

In the 1980s, educational policy took a new turn. Yasuhiro Nakasone, the newly appointed Prime Minister who served from 1982-1987, included education initiatives on his agenda and was eager to use reform of moral education as a tool to combat the decline in educational welfare. The Provisional Educational Reform Committee, appointed directly responsible to him, debated the purpose of education and advocated “the need for a new Japanese citizen who was more self-reliant, independent, and individual,” (Cummings, 2003b: 33). In addition to supporting values reform, Nakasone also supported a more relaxed school experience, more active learning, choice and competition, international experiences, and creative and useful academic research into his educational reform platform (ibid).

In 1983, the Ministry administered a survey of actual conditions of moral education in elementary and junior high schools and issued guidelines to be used by teachers to strengthen moral education in their schools. This was followed by a revision in the Course of Study for Elementary Schools in which the overall objective of moral education was defined:

Moral education ... is aimed at realizing a spirit of respect for human dignity in the actual life of family, school, and community, endeavouring to create a culture that is rich in individuality and to develop a democratic society and state, training Japanese to be capable of contributing to a peaceful international society, and cultivating their morality as the foundation thereof. (Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994: 263)

The contents of the document detailed 28 morals, which the Ministry deemed appropriate and necessary in order to enhance, enrich and improve moral attitudes among students. Even today, these concepts are often displayed in elementary classrooms under the precepts: perseverance (*ganbaru*), kind-hearted (*yasashii*), strong and healthy (*jobu na*), and diligent in studying (*susunde benkyo*) (Stevenson, 1998: 108).

After much deliberation, the Council published its fourth and final report in 1987, citing the strengthening of moral education in elementary and secondary education as a priority in order to provide a foundation to youth for lifelong learning (Beauchamp and Vardaman: 1994). The Curriculum Council responded with revised objectives, which emphasized Japanese identity and nationalism. They recommended that the subject of moral education become inter-disciplinary and applied in other courses including Japanese and physical

education, as well as promoted in extracurricular activities. Critics of the policy were numerous and reflected the previous disapproval of the Ministry's approach. Nakano (1989) cited that the main criticisms encompassed:

- continued national control intended by both councils;
- the curriculum and methodology suggested revival of the pre-war pattern of indoctrination and the link to nationalism and militarism, rather than encouraging moral education to emerge naturally via all subjects in the curriculum;
- the approach to extra-curricular activities stressed group orientation, strengthening totalitarianism over individualism and self-government. (p. 58-59)

Nakasone and his cabinet were criticized for using buzz words like “liberalization”, “individualization”, and “diversification”, which echoed policy calling for the deregulation of the school system, the reduction of state control, and the promotion of privatization (Amano, 1997: 373; Horio, 1988: 297; Saito and Imai, 2004: 588). Nakasone's interests mirrored the needs of a post-industrial democratic society and they steered the direction of educational policy for the next 10 years.

#### 4.4 The 1990s and Beyond: Riding the Third Wave

Japanese education reform, including the debate over moral values education, continues to ride the third wave, although it still appears to be out at sea. Beginning in the mid-1990s, new approaches surfaced from both the liberal and conservative sides. The liberal course of action seemed to reflect the golden age of globalization, promoting decentralization and privatization and equipping the individual with the skills and character necessary for the transition into the global economy. The new individual is inundated with such catchphrases as “individuality, internationalization, opening Japan to the world, the power to live, and freedom for leisure and creative activities,” (Saito and Imai, 2004: 588-89). As Saito and Imai pointed out, this neo-liberalist trend has been criticized by Japanese scholars (including Manabu Sato and Hidenori Fujita) because the capitalist principles of a free-market economy which it is based ultimately “increase[s] inequality and lead[s] to a more stratified society,” (Fujita, 2001; Sato, 2000; quoted in Saito and Imai, 2004: 589). Alternately, the conservative course of action emphasizes a stronger course in moral education to combat the most common social problems, including juvenile delinquency, *ijime* (bullying), and *juken jigogu*

(examination hell), which have continued to affect student motivation to attend and remain in school.

In 1998, a national curriculum standards reform, which focused on the development of identity and the role of moral education outside of the school, was introduced by the Curriculum Council. The objective of elementary education was explained in a holistic manner and excluded overt tones of nationalism.

The elementary school education aims at helping children acquire essential knowledge, skills and mind to have healthy social life as an individual as well as a member of the society/nation. It also aims at helping children develop rich humanity, recognize their own charm and individuality through interactions with others and foster mind of self-reliance. (MEXT: CURR1998)

Specific content of moral education would help “children acquire social rules and basic morality, a sense of norms, public morals, justice and fairness, sound judgment, strong will and ability to take action, awareness of responsibility, autonomy, self-control and the like” (ibid). The concepts of learning by doing and participation were introduced and expected to take place in the family, the community, and the classroom. In order to allow additional school time for hands-on learning projects, volunteerism, creative problem-solving, and other inter-disciplinary activities, a “period for integrated study” was also established. The individual development of integrated study curriculum would be left to the discretion of the school, although the text and other teaching materials would be developed by MEXT. Beginning in 2002, the distribution of free notebooks for moral education of the heart (*kokoro no noto*) to all elementary and lower secondary school students was implemented. The booklet simply explained the morals to be acquired by children and would provide them a chance to deepen their understanding and reflect on morals and values by themselves (MEXT: FORMAL). The overall approach to teaching moral education shifted so that instruction would “touch children’s hearts” and encourage them to think independently (MEXT: CURR1998). However, critics have sited “Love for Japan” as a “mask” to hide behind (Saito and Imai, 2004: 589). Nationalism is disguised as internationalization, with the overall policy looking too inward to cultural identity and traditional values (ibid).

## 4.5 Summary

While many other parts of the world were focused on social welfare and workers rights, the Meiji Restoration was intent on unifying the country to promote national development and prosperity. Looking to the West presented Japan with a paradox: the educational policy which attempted to unify the system fluctuated between traditionalist and progressive values. Ultimately, the moral education program was expanded in schools to encourage loyalty to the state and patriotism. *Taishō* leadership recognized the Deweyan philosophy of democratic education, but hopes at a large-scale democratic reform were short-lived due to renewed nationalistic and militaristic goals. Totalitarianism prevailed and moral education verged on indoctrination until post-World War II reconstruction, which began the second wave, when educational democratization re-introduced humanistic values of freedom, growth, and solidarity. The subject of social studies was introduced in place of moral education. The outbreak of the Korean War established a new reason to re-instate nationalist policy: the fight against communism, and post-war progressive education was cut short. The economic development of the next decades was a result of the education factory mentality; yet it simultaneously necessitated a development strategy to foster the character of the ideal Japanese person. The third wave, beginning in the 1980s and continuing through today, can be characterized as an attempt to liberalize and liberate educational policy which was reflected in a new moral attitude focusing on mutual respect, culture of the individual, a democratic society, and peace.



## **Chapter 5: Democratic Education: The Foundation of the Learning Environment in Norway**

Education reform is often seen as a vehicle for social change or improvement, as was previously detailed in the Japanese educational history; however, as Val D. Rust (1989) pointed out, the Norwegian education system has long since reflected the democratic beliefs of society and he argues that the early establishment of the unified school aided in creating an institution which supported the existing social life (p. xi-xii). The ideals of democracy and egalitarianism are deeply woven into the social and cultural fabric of Norway and it can be said that Norwegians pride themselves on having a high-level of understanding of democracy. While the Norwegian education system has incorporated many components of other European schooling systems, it has evolved differently due to the nature of this belief system. This section illustrates the Norwegian educational history as characterized in several cycles: social and educational foundations prior to independence, the emergence of romantic nationalism, the free-state and the origin of the modern school, World War II and post-war education, and the decades of the 1950s-1980s, which lead to the present day (Rust, 1989; Telhaug, 1994).

### **5.1 Social and Educational Foundations: Piety and Democracy**

Prior to 17 May, 1814, Norway had been dominated by Danish rule for some four hundred years. Denmark ceded rule of Norway to Sweden, but Norway as a nation remained in the shadows for yet another century. Despite the vast geography which separated not only the King from his constituents, but also the local folk from one another, the Danish influence ran deep and greatly impacted Norwegian social and cultural life. As a result of the struggle for Norwegian independence, the country established a constitution which permitted autonomy from Sweden except in foreign affairs and created the first modern parliamentary system in Scandinavia (Elder, Thomas, and Arter, 1982; quoted in Rust, 1989: 3). This democratic spirit was the influence on other firsts for Norway, including the abolishment of all future hereditary titles and privileges and granting the right to vote to a large portion of the population (Rust, 1989: 3). Although Norway had been ruled by an elite class, the breakdown of the stratified social class structure further contributed to the promotion of democratic values, as did their “fierce sense of personal independence,” law-abiding character, and sense of national identity (ibid: 4). Rust noted that even prior to the fifteenth century, “Norwegians were already ‘in possession of that strong fellow-feeling and mutual

acknowledgement of homogeneity which constitute the essence of nationality,” (Keilhau, 1944; quoted in Rust, 1989: 4).

The Norwegian education system prior to independence was basic to say the least, but the nature of the system suggested a strong link between the church and the state and drew upon Christian values and piety. At the time of the Reformation, the cathedral schools, which had been established by each archbishop in connection with his cathedral, were transformed into Latin schools to educate future church and state officers and the aristocracy, although religious and moral education were to remain the goals of general education (Rust, 1989: 10). Higher education could only be commenced at the University of Copenhagen or other foreign institution as Norway did not possess any institution of high learning until 1811 (ibid: 9). The Latin schools, however, had little bearing on the typical Norwegian’s education as only one person in every 5,000 was able to attend (Rust, 1989: 11). Eventually in 1809, a law was passed which recognized a new curriculum and the secularization of the Latin school began.

On the other hand, an education in the lower school was accessible by those in the less privileged classes. As Rust (1989) noted, a consistent value orientation among Norwegians was the Luther-advocated type of equal educational opportunity that “all God’s children were capable of leading equally holy lives” (p. 15). The aim of “salvation rather than vocation” required children learn to read the scriptures in order to participate in the rite of confirmation (ibid: 12). Lutheranism preached a direct and personal relationship with God, so as children grew literate, worship shifted to the individual level, as opposed to collective worship, which was previously the norm (Sødal and Eidhamar, 2005). Pietism<sup>24</sup> as the state religion had been handed down by the Danish monarchy in 1736, followed by the introduction of compulsory education under the 1739 School Ordinance (ibid: 48). This applied to all young people in the countryside, regardless of social status, and according to Articles 37 and 38, required they attend school “for the purpose of gaining a Christian faith and turning toward salvation” from the age of seven until the age of ten to twelve, or until they could read and undergo confirmation (quoted in Rust, 1989). While the ordinance pertained only to rural education, it was significant in European compulsory education, which predated domestic-Danish, German, Prussian, British, French, and even Swedish

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<sup>24</sup> The introduction of pietism also encouraged the missionary movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with a second wave beginning in 1840 (Sødal and Eidhamar, 2005: 48).

mandates (UNESCO, 1958; quoted in Rust, 1989: 13). Due to both Danish regulations and the sparse population centers, there were difficulties in establishing permanent schools in the countryside and many children and teachers traveled for instruction. Conversely, even prior to the mandate, common lower schools in towns were progressing in the teaching of reading and religion, and some schools also taught trades or skills and permitted half days of working (Rust, 1989: 14-15).

Although both Christian piety and the democratic spirit preceding Norwegian independence were contributing factors, the social atmosphere of the time was influential to the foundation of the modern national education system. Rust (1989) pointed out that the “ingredients of a democratic state were already in place as Norway declared independence” and the transition was easy (p. 32). There was no revolution or bloodshed, and more importantly, no social crisis, which permitted its leaders to focus their attention on building an education program similar to the one they had been exposed to as elite youth. Primarily educated abroad with strong foundations in theology, philology, and philosophy, Professor Georg Sverdrup, Bishop Frederik Julius Bech, and Professor Niels Treschow emerged as the key leaders in the national education movement at this time. Treschow chaired the first educational committee, called the *Kirke- og undervisningskomite*. In 1818, it was formally recognized as the Church and Instruction Committee to the Church and Education Department, with Treschow as its minister (ibid: 33).

The main imperative was to redefine the educational system in terms of Norwegian views, not those determined by previous Danish policy. As the common school began to take shape, there was no discussion relating to its purpose, as it would continue “to be devoted to knowledge and virtues necessary to live a good Christian life” (ibid: 36). In 1832, the curriculum of a poor school in Fredrikstad included “handwriting, reasoning exercises, reading exercises, mental calculating exercises, catechism, *Bible* history, arithmetic and writing,” (Dehli, 1964; quoted in Rust, 1989: 36). Some secular skills were being introduced, but overall, the tone of education remained focused on a religious upbringing. Even in the early years of independence, a sense of nation building had yet to be introduced in school instruction, contrary to “the virtues of industry, piety, and patriotism” which were taught alongside basic skills in Prussia and France during this time (Tews, 1914; quoted in Rust, ibid).

## 5.2 The Emergence of Romantic Nationalism

However, romantic nationalism was looming on the horizon. By the middle of the nineteenth century, economic change was breeding discontent. The outlet for this discontent was expressed in a variety of ways. Rust (1989) asserted that several movements of note greatly impacted education: a religious revival, a labor movement, and the question of the woman's role in society (p. 73). The religious revival was fueled by the Grundtvigians on one side, a liberal group stemming from Denmark and believing in "general enlightenment" through inspiring a new sense of devotion and democracy in the church, along with a general revival in folk culture. The Pietists, a conservative proponent of Christian studies and advocates of Erik Pontoppidan's *Explanation to Luther's Catechism*, were on the other. The Grundtvigians had been present for some time and had influenced many teacher training seminars with their beliefs; hence, a large number of teachers were also followers of this group. A Grundtvigian pastor, Wilhelm Andreas Wexels, revised the *Explanation*, which was authorized by Royal decree in 1843, and many laypeople found that the modifications were not inline with the fundamental beliefs they had been taught. Their indignation caused the government to reverse its decision in 1852. This marked a turning point for the common people in that they realized they did not have to defer to the official class or the clergy in order to access God's word. The development of an independent lay movement concerned with preaching and prayer houses, the tradition of missionary work, and political organizations grew as a consequence. An additional result was the realization that the church and state should be separate, which further encouraged the secularization of schooling (ibid: 72-75).

The labor movement, led by a young student Markus Thrane, impacted education in that the worker's platform lobbied for the purpose of schooling to be a civic institution and a social-political organ (ibid: 77). While he believed that the common man could influence the political sphere and shared the Grundtvigian belief in the general enlightenment (Høigård and Ruge, 1947, quoted in Rust, 1989: 78), his movement was only successful in granting him and some of his followers prison sentences. The women's movement, which Rust (1989) suggested was perhaps spurred by the publication of *Amtmandens døtre* (The Governor's Daughters) by Camilla Collet (1907), sister of Henrik Wergeland, raised awareness among the population that women had talents to be further developed than the house and home (Jorgenson, 1970, quoted in Rust, 1989: 78). Ole Hartvig Nissen was an advocate of girl's

education and founded *Nissens Pikeskole* (Nissen's girl's school) in 1849, where the basic education for girls was no different than that for boys.

Prior to founding the *Pikeskole*, Nissen and Ole Jacob Broch co-founded *Nissens Latin og realskole*<sup>25</sup> in 1843, based on ideas they had acquired on study trips abroad. With the increasing success of his school, Nissen quickly emerged as a leader of change in the educational sphere. In 1845, he served on a committee exploring financial issues surrounding the higher schools. Nissen took the opportunity to address other pedagogical issues and suggested the consolidation of the lower schools. His suggestion evolved into the establishment of a common, four year program, termed folk school, that was comprised of studies in the mother tongue, basic skills, German and French, singing, gymnastics, religion, geography, history, and natural history, after which students separated into either the Latin track or the *real* track (middle level schooling). Since the Folk School Law of 1848 applied only to schools in towns, Nissen began working towards a similar ordinance for countryside schools which was eventually passed in 1860. Nissen's work as an educator and policy maker led to numerous advancements in the arena of Norwegian education, especially folk school reform, and with the implementation of the 1860 law, he can also be attributed to founding the Norwegian primary school in the "modern democratic sense," (Rust, 1989: 89). Rust expressed that "the school would represent a Christian-civic institution, but possess a degree of social independence, providing the youth with knowledge and the ability to judge while becoming productive citizens of a free, democratic society" (ibid). However, the connection to the church remained, although there was some balance between the church and the state. The schools in each diocese were overseen by a representative of the bishop and the chair of the elected board of each municipality or parish, which was comprised of civil leaders, would be a priest.

### 5.3 The Establishment of the Common School

A significant development stemming from the 1860 law was a revision in the required basic subjects. Christian studies and the introduction of a new reading text replaced the reading of the *Bible* and Bible history (*Lov om almueskolevæsenet paa landet*, 1860; Jensen, 1843; Knutzen, 1836; Grøgaard, 1816, quoted in Rust, 1989: 90). The new text was developed by P.A. Jensen, a diocese priest, in 1863, and was a three volume text consisting of five major

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<sup>25</sup> At that time, the real school was a branch of primary schooling based on the German model.

sections: The Home, The Fatherland, The World, The Church, and a miscellaneous selection (Jensen, 1863; quoted in Rust, 1989: 91). Norwegian heritage, social existence, aesthetic potential, and the Old Norwegian folk tales, songs, and poems became available to Norwegian students (Rust, 1989: 91). The strengthening of the national curriculum was addressed again in the debate leading up to the 1889 school law, which was initiated primarily to promote equal educational opportunities to those in the countryside as well as in the towns. Johan Sverdrup was the leader of the Liberal party that controlled the government beginning in 1884, and his initiative listed eight major points which needed revision in the folk schools. Of these, his second point called for the expansion and regularization of school subjects. Previously, only Christian studies had been regulated in the curriculum, whereas the proposal suggested more civic oriented studies, including the Norwegian language, history, and social studies (ibid: 107).

The passing of the 1889 school law was representative not only of a Liberal party victory, but of “a much broader social, economic and educational transformation that had taken place in the country” (ibid: 111). A change in the name of the common school from *allmueskole* (general school) to *folkeskole* (school for the folk, people) signified that education would be available to all children, regardless of social background, and that it would be run by representatives of the people, not the clergy (ibid). The purpose of the school also shifted to support national development. The curriculum now focused inward on Norwegian-based social studies, history, and geography. Rust (1989) contended:

In Norway, patriotism did not imply a heavy sense of deference to the leaders of state. It did not suggest obedience to leaders and the military, but a sense of national identity, a sense of membership to a democratic tradition worthy of taking pride in. Citizens were not to be simply obedient servants but were to be productive citizens in a free, self-directed nation-state. (p. 115)

This sense of civic spirit continued through the turn of the century.

#### 5.4 A Free State and the Origin of the Modern School

The foundations of a *Norwegian* education system had taken the place of the dominant European system which had been imposed over centuries of foreign governance and the break with Sweden in 1905 solidified this. A new sense of independence and freedom, along with a period of economic prosperity, encouraged another wave of reform in the educational

sphere. Telhaug, Mediås, and Aasen (2004) asserted that the nation-building agenda of the Social Democrats promoted “democratic values and a civic spirit” as “a foundation of the national culture” (p. 142). By 1920, Norway became the first country in Europe to realize a unified, common, folk school for the first seven years of compulsory education (ibid: 173). Despite the outbreak of the First World War and the years that followed, Norway continued to operate on a “consensual democracy” (Elder et al., 1982; quoted in Rust, 1989: 175) and the social improvement agenda of the welfare state provided the necessary sustenance to see the country through. The social agenda was evident in the rhetoric of educational policy as well. Telhaug et al. (2004) commented that references to “good citizens” or “good members of society” were not a coincidence (p. 143).

## 5.5 World War II and Post-War Education

Norway vowed to remain neutral during the occupation by Germany during the Second World War, but seemingly with little struggle, succumbed to the intentions of the new government, which was “to alter the very nature of Norwegian cultural life,” (Rust, 1989: 193). Education was a natural target. A notice called “*Den nye skolen og lærerstanden*” (The New School and the Teacher’s Role) circulated by the newly created Department of Culture and Folk-Enlightenment claimed that the school system and youth education “stand as a focus of these interests and will become one of the most important spheres of endeavor in creating this culture,” (*Vårskole*, 1940; quoted in Rust, 1989: 193). Mandates soon required that teachers participate actively in the new “Reich-culture”; but instead, Norwegian teachers joined forces and actively protested, becoming part of the resistance movement.

In 1939, just prior to the occupation, the *Normal Plan* was passed. Inspired by progressive ideas from educational philosophers such as John Dewey, Georg Kerchensteiner and Elsa Køhler, this was an “optimistic” and extensive 541 page document detailing the framework of instructional and curricular reform which was to be carried out in order to unify the entire educational system (Hansen, 2005: 180; Rust, 1989: 189). From the time it was introduced, the document had critics from all sides. In an article entitled “*Grunnsyn i oppdragelsen*” (Fundamental Thoughts on Development), Orvar Sæther (1942) expressed that the plan was not in-line with “humanistic, liberal impulses” of progressive educational thinking and should incorporate more history into the core studies (quoted in Rust, 1989: 198). The chief critic of the plan was teacher J. Eldal, who claimed that the plan was self-serving, individualistic, and allowed too much freedom of choice to children. Furthermore, the plan

suggested that reading programs shift from silent reading to “dramatizations of material” and he criticized the plan for turning learning into a game instead of exerting proper control and maintaining the “isolated activity” of silent reading (Eldal, 1942; quoted in Rust, 1989: 199). The Normal Plan represented a central authority in curricular policy and reflected the student-centered ideals of Progressivism (Telhaug et al., 2004: 145). However, Rust noted that due to this central approach, the Normal Plan became the ideal instrument for “the cultural transformation” that the Occupation government intended (Rust, 1989: 197). Soon, German was adopted as the first foreign language and a new time table reduced the number of hours for religious instruction from six to four hours per week (*Den Norske Skole*, 1942, quoted in Rust, 1989: 197). Aside from these changes, however, the changes that schools and local administration experienced in Reich control or interference were minimal. Post-war adjustments were difficult and trying, especially in the first years. A divide remained between the teachers who were part of the resistance movement and those who stayed in the classroom and were considered traitors.

Norway held a general election immediately following the return of the former government in the fall of 1945, being the first nation to do so following the war. A quick return to the educational agenda that was halted during the Occupation can be attributed to the election of the Liberal Party as the parliamentary majority, who joined together with the Right to tackle the previous educational program. This new found “political unity” aided in Norwegian post-war prosperity (Rust, 1989: 207; Telhaug, 1994: 77), but also contributed to a shift in Norwegian ideology. Internationally, Norway became aligned with the North Atlantic Treaty countries, while domestically, the Labor Party, sans Marxist ideology, maintained nearly half of the seats in the *Storting* from 1945 until 1961 (Derry, 1973; quoted in Rust, 1989: 207) and the Conservative Party also shifted more towards the center. On the educational front, the questions which had been tabled due to the war surrounding the criticized introduction of the Normal Plan found their way back on to the agenda. What were the functions, tasks, goals, and values of the education system? Was the main purpose to look after the interests of society as a whole or individual’s needs? Which primary values were to form the structure and content of the schools? (Telhaug, 1994: 37).

In 1945, just as in the rest of the post-war period, there was a dual foundation in the existence of the school’s functionality and development. Partially, we needed schools to look after the development of attitudes and characteristics of the single individual and provide individual oriented legitimacy. On the other hand, the foundation of school was to be responsible for



society and the needs of the collective. These were to provide the individual a rich, human, and fulfilling life, yet at the same time solve the assignment in relation to culture, working life, and class structure. (my translation, *ibid*: 38)

It seemed imperative that the education system incorporate values in-line with both concepts. Political platforms were put aside when all parties reached a consensus in their general platform of 1945 that all children and youth should have the same right to education, regardless of geographic location or financial background. The parallel concept to promotion of Christian values was the philosophy of a democratic education, which was also included in the conception of the general post-war platform (*ibid*).

A leading principle of the school's work must be to educate citizens in a free, democratic society. School must therefore build character, wake the responsibility of children and youth, and teach respect for one another, the value of humanity, tolerance, and the concepts of work and cooperation. (my translation, *ibid*: 40)

Based upon this description in the general platform, as well as ideologically neutral terms such as "*dugande menneske*" (capable human being), "*karakteren*" (person of character), "*viljelivet*" (inner-willingness), and "*sund og harmonisk utvikling*" (healthy and harmonious development) used to describe specific school subjects, Telhaug suggested this was included to perhaps demonstrate a desire to remain politically neutral (my translation, *ibid*).

Culturally, intellectually, and economically, Norwegian society was growing with the support of a liberal government. Norwegians became consumers of cars, televisions, and radios; vacation periods were extended; the aim of families was to have access to a mountain or seaside cabin; the King became a "people's king"; research and development was based on science and technology; and social welfare programs grew and provided new benefits with access to all. The Council for Innovation in Education (*Forsøksrådet*), a well-funded government center comprised of social and behavioral scientists to promote educational research and development, was born out of the Department of Church and Education on 8 July 1954 (Rust, 1989: 209-210). Rust noted that Norway previously had a rich tradition in successfully borrowing and implementing educational policy and programs from foreign environments, which was one of the driving forces behind the initial implementation of the Council (*ibid*).

## 5.6 The 1950s and 1960s: New Influences

One significant contribution to the evolution of the education system is of the Cathedral system of the 1800s and its participation in the experimental process (Rust, 1989). Experimentation in new schooling models was again underway in the new period following the post-war era. On 17 January 1958, the Department of Church and Education submitted a controversial proposal to the *Storting* (ibid). The proposed folk school law was an attempt at reconciling the comprehensive folk school program with a continuation program based on two experiment models that had been enacted. However, the proposal failed for several reasons, mainly due to the fact that the stated purpose of the school and the discussion of these goals which followed were in conflict. The opening paragraph stated that the purpose of the school was “to work to make the pupils become good members of the community” and to “help to give the pupils a Christian and moral upbringing” (ibid: 212). The discussion section which followed suggested that a statement of general goals was unnecessary. This prompted members of the Christian community to object because there was no accountability within the document of the intentions of the institution and it seemed that “broader social goals” were replacing the goals of a Christian and moral upbringing (ibid).

The law passed one year later in 1959, and in Article 1 the goal of the new folk school stated that the home should play a role in assisting students at becoming “good members of society” (*Lov om folkeskolen*, 1959; quoted in Rust, 1989: 212). Now, schools and parents were to be partners in raising children. Article 6 specified mandatory subjects like homemaking “to help instill in the youth a positive attitude toward home and family life,” (ibid). Rust has pointed out that references to citizenship or patriotism, which were characteristic of the modern school in other places, remained absent from the educational laws (Rust, 1989: 212). One critic, Per Lønning, a Right member of the Education Committee in the Department of Church and Education, suggested that the language of the proposal was too “socialistic” in that “schools were not intended to mold the young to be obedient, compliant members of society; their goal ought to be to educate toward free and independent adults,” (Sejersted, 1984; quoted in Rust, 1989: 213). Additionally, promoting a Christian and moral upbringing stayed an aim of the school and a connection to the church; however, administrative duties were turned over to two governing bodies in each community: the general school board and the community school council, plus local councils and committees, and the school became a civic and professional institution (Rust, 1989: 214).

A provision in the 1959 law permitted further experimentation in the folk school model and *enhet* (unity) became a guiding principle. Whereas society accepted the principles of cooperation, unity, and democracy, the tradition of schooling continued to encourage divisions and levels. In this regard, the elective style of American education, as well as the mentality, differed greatly from that present in Europe or Norway (Rust, 1989: 217). After a number of plans had been submitted and deliberated, the Basic School Law of 1969 was passed, which enabled a unified nine year basic school (ibid: 221). The two main points of contention surrounding the new law concerned the subjects to be taught and the qualifications of teachers.

From the 1960s, a so-called new radicalism developed in protest of what some viewed as negative progress in society. Lauglo (1998) has presented a Norwegian variety of populism and contends that the populist movement played a key role in shaping the Norwegian education system. Populist movements originated from the parties of the Left and traditionally worked towards promoting local culture, especially in the smaller, agrarian communities. In line with Lutheranism and Pietism, populism also promoted mass schooling in a common school, which supported “the populist concept of a culturally unified community of ordinary people” (ibid: 39). Populism also stresses informal learning outside of the school and believes in smaller schools to foster a sense of community – ideas that were revived in the 1960s and 1970s in order to reinforce egalitarianism and civic values (ibid).

## 5.7 Revisiting Progressivism and Leftist Radicalism of the 1970s

In the 1970s, populism flourished and policy was caught in the midst of what historians referred to as the “era of leftist radicalism” (Telhaug et al., 2004: 148). Telhaug et al. noted a new struggle surrounding knowledge production based on Positivism and tradition or as a vehicle to gain power in society (ibid). The voice of the New Left continued to speak out for the minority, the individual, and the preservation of tradition among other ideas (ibid). On the educational front, there was a tendency towards decentralization, but with more regulations (ibid). The final version of the Model Plan was accepted in 1974 (M74) by the *Storting*, but not without deliberation and debate stemming from the Left and “equality of opportunity” was the buzz word (ibid). Rust (1989) cited numerous problems faced by the Commission, including trouble resolving the aims set by the school, especially concerning differentiation of student’s interests and abilities, and the course on religious instruction (p.

223). Other proposals were calling for a five day week, reduced from six days, and 40 minute class periods, shortened from 45 minutes, and the discussion over the number of hours of religious instruction was a susceptible target. 16 hours to 21 hours were recommended and eventually 18 hours (or two hours a week in each of the nine grade levels) was agreed upon (Dokka, 1979; quoted in Rust, 1989: 224-226). The actual content of religious education also shifted to include a discussion around ethical problems and the differentiation between Christian and humanist ethics (*Utdanningsdirektoratet* [UDIR]: L97). Regarding differentiation, streaming was abolished, special needs education was included, and teachers would be prepared to deal with individual differences as necessary (Telhaug et al., 2004: 148; Rust, 1989: 225).

In contrast to the 1939 Plan, M74 provided a “maximum plan, or a framework plan, within which the teachers were to work,” (Hansen, 2005: 181). Rust (1989) stated that the Model Plan reflected ideas of “progressive education and activity school orientation” as illustrated in the 1939 Normal Plan and that the School was viewed as a community and part of the larger society (p. 225). The aim of schooling stressed individually oriented values, including “the need for ‘well-being’ and a ‘full-life’” and “creativity, self-reliance, freedom, tolerance, learning how to learn, cooperation, etc.,” (Telhaug et al., 2004: 148; Rust, 1989: 225). Students were encouraged to make choices, be active learners, and engage themselves.

## 5.8 The 1980s and 1990s: Challenges for the Contemporary Learning Environment

Similar to the issues that Japanese educational system was faced with in the 1980s and 1990s, Norway, too, met challenges. While it seemed that the Norwegian system had successfully created a democratic education policy, rapid societal changes seemed to present new demands on the system (Tjeldvoll, 1998). Tjeldvoll sited decreasing motivation to attend school coupled with a rise in unemployment, which possibly created the overall lack of interest in academics among young people (ibid: xii). The ideological shift experienced around the world when the Berlin Wall fell was also felt in Norway.

A more rugged individualism and less concern for collective values and interests are observed in Scandinavia...The change in values from socialism, social democracy, collectivism, and solidaric cooperation to liberalism, individualism, and competition seems to have had a direct effect upon economic reasoning. (ibid: xiii)

Tjeldvoll continued that the impact this values shift had on Norwegian education was reflected in a quest for quality in education, not the process (ibid: xiv). With the introduction of the term “knowledge economy”, the Norwegian government recognized that education was “the key to economic, social, and cultural development” (KD: EDSYS20). The Ministry noted:

Generally speaking, the reforms undertaken in Norway during the 1990s are based on a broad concept of knowledge, where ethical values and attitudes, theoretical and practical knowledge and the promotion of creativity, initiative, entrepreneurship, cooperation and social skills are all part of a whole. (ibid)

A new educational strategy illustrated the transition into the knowledge economy. First, in 1987, a new national curriculum was introduced called *Mønsterplan 1987* (M87), which allowed more autonomy to local schools and teachers, promoted student participation in the school and community, and emphasized teaching students in accordance with their abilities (Bjørndal, 1987: 2). While content and quality were seen as two factors which could improve the educational standard, educational equality “to ensure *equal rights to education for all* independent of gender and social, geographical and cultural background” was prioritized (KD: EDSYS20).

A number of reforms occurred in the 1990s, targeting each educational sector. In 1997, a curriculum reform called *Lærplan 1997* (L97) replaced M87 with a more comprehensive, subject-based approach. It also aimed to strengthen the cooperation between the school and home and stressed the importance of a relationship to the community to demonstrate learning at a local level (ibid). In 1998, the Education Act was adopted, replacing the 1969 Act, which made compulsory school ten years, instead of nine (ibid). Christian values remain a fundamental aspect of the curriculum and in 1997, the subject of Christian knowledge and religious and ethical education was introduced at the primary and lower levels (ibid). Today, the core curriculum generated in conjunction with L97 has been retained as the introduction to the latest reform, *Kunnskapsløftet* (Knowledge Promotion), which was implemented in the autumn of 2006. L97 will be examined further in the next chapter.

## 5.9 Summary

The evolution of moral values education in Norway can be characterized first and foremost as occurring within the framework of democratic learning. The democratic spirit, paired with

the earliest conception of “education for all”, encouraged the foundation of schooling for religious piety. As schooling evolved, the Church remained an active and influential factor and Christian values were promoted. The emergence of romantic nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century prompted a religious revival which heightened tensions between the Church and the State, while new ideas were introduced into the educational arena surrounding labor politics and the role of women in society. With the passing of the 1889 school law, common schooling for the *folk* established that all children had the opportunity to attend school, regardless of background, and the curriculum incorporated a broader range of subjects with a Norwegian focus. The curricular shift encouraged the development of a Norwegian identity and of a citizen, which remained evident when Norway gained independence from Sweden in 1905. With the passing of the Normal Plan in 1939, an attempt at unifying the entire education system was made; however, critics found it to be too individualistic and not in-line with the humanist approach. Occupation interrupted the critique, but with the election of a liberal and more unified government in 1945, the central questions surrounding the role of education in relation to the individual and society were finally addressed. New tendencies became apparent in the curricular rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s when the discussion surrounding the fostering of Christian versus Social values in school grew. While there was little talk of citizenship or patriotism within the curriculum, “unity” became a popular phrase and in 1969, a unified nine year compulsory school was enabled. Under the influence of the Left, the 1970s were occupied with ideals of progressive education and individually oriented goals. The ideological shift experienced around the world in the 1980s brought challenges and change, including the introduction of the knowledge economy. Education for all, integration, participation, and decentralization characterized Norwegian education in the 1990s and remain fundamental values of the Norwegian education system.

## Chapter 6: At the Heart of the Matter: The Rhetoric of the Core Curriculum

Understanding the course that moral values education has chartered in each society has set the stage for an examination of the curricular rhetoric used today. The curriculum is integral in the planning of learning. It is a document crafted by educationalists and policy makers to tell who teaches what to whom for what purpose, and it is laden with values (Lawton, 2000). This chapter gets at the heart of the matter of moral values education by assessing the rhetoric of the current primary school core curriculum and the most recent reforms, with an in-depth look at the curricular objectives in relation to moral values education policy.

### 6.1 Who is responsible for education?

In Japan, the Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) is the national body which oversees all aspects of the education system. MEXT is chaired by the Minister of Education and a cabinet. The Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau is situated within MEXT and is responsible for establishing curriculum standards in kindergartens, elementary schools, lower and upper secondary schools, and schools for children with special needs. The Bureau is accountable for the overall system of local education, systems related to government employees working in education, class composition and staffing of schools, payment of teaching staff, and maintenance of school facilities. Other responsibilities include the enhancement of student guidance and career guidance, the promotion of education of Japanese children living overseas, and the free provision of textbooks (MEXT: ELEM). In terms of authority, elementary schools are overseen by local town or city Board of Education and secondary schools are governed by the Prefectural<sup>26</sup> Board of Education.

The Norwegian education system is operated in a similar manner. Norwegian Parliament and the national government define the goals and budget, and it is the task of the Ministry of Education and Research to administer these policies. Each county has a National Education Office, which serves as a link between the national and local authorities, and oversees reporting, inspection and supervision of existing legislation; administration; quality development; and information and guidance. Responsibility and decision-making has been

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<sup>26</sup> Japan is divided into 47 Prefectures (*ken*). Similarly, Norway consists of 20 administrative counties referred to as *fylker*.

decentralized in recent years and as in Japan, local municipalities oversee primary and lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools are managed at a county level. All schools operate within the framework of the national core curriculum; however, schools and teachers are able to choose individual teaching materials and methods (KD: EDNOR).

## 6.2 The Education Reform Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

As was previously mentioned in Chapter 4, The Fundamental Law of Education was enacted in 1947 and the spirit of Japanese education has been carried out in accordance with this policy. This was a significant step by the government in that it was the first time democratic principles of equality in education and compulsory education were declared constitutional. Soon, education became the driving force behind Japan's economic development (MEXT: REFORM21). However, in light of the vast changes which have occurred in society in the past fifty years, the Ministry revealed an imbalance between the state of educational affairs and the confidence of the public in education (ibid). Education was declared a "top priority" item on the national agenda in 2000, and again in 2001 (Yoneyama, 2002: 192). The Ministry cited three fundamental issues at the heart of a proposed reform in 2000:

1. Urbanization: The decline in the educational function of the home and society is leading to more violence among youth and overall disregard for the community. There is also a "tendency to over emphasize respect for individual rights".
2. Standardization: As a result of "excessive egalitarianism" and cramming, individual oriented education focusing on each child's competence has been neglected.
3. Marginalization: Rapid progress in technology and other areas affected by globalization have decreased traditional educational systems. (ibid)

Based on a final report submitted to the National Commission on Education Reform in December 2000, two things occurred. First, in January 2001, The Education Reform Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2001)<sup>27</sup> was devised to "elaborate(s) the overall image of future approaches to education reform" in the context of lifelong learning (ibid). Second, revisions to The Fundamental Law of Education underwent deliberation in 2001, and in 2003, a report entitled "The New Fundamental Law of Education and Basic Promotional Plan for

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<sup>27</sup> These documents are available in English translation on-line and are illustrated with several colorful diagrams and photographs of Japanese students participating in school activities; however, it should be noted that the English translations are not as detailed as the original Japanese versions.



Education Befitting to the New Times” was submitted to the Ministry. The Ministry realized that the ultimate goals of the plan could not be fulfilled unless the basic concepts and principles of the Fundamental Law of Education were also revised. A five year time period was proposed in order to reformulate the Law, while other policy goals would be simultaneously clarified and improved (ibid).

### **6.2.1 Cultivating the Self**

The aim of the reform plan was very much concerned with “cultivating” the self and developing a person who is capable of managing new challenges. Five objectives were listed in order to “cultivate the spirit of Japanese people to carve out the 21<sup>st</sup> century with richness in mind”:

- Cultivate people who are independent-minded and seek personal development;
- Cultivate people who are warm-hearted and enjoy physical well-being;
- Cultivate people to become creative leaders of a Century of Knowledge;
- Cultivate Japanese who are civic-minded and who will actively participate in the formation of a state and society befitting the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- Cultivate Japanese people based on the traditions and culture of Japan to live in a globalized world. (ibid)

The reform was divided into two stages. The first stage included actions which were to be implemented in 2001, while the second stage included a review of The Fundamental Law of Education. According to the reform paper published by the Ministry, terms alluding to the development of self and character, and the furthering of Japan as a peaceful nation, should remain in the law (ibid). Additionally, principles which are relevant in today’s society and in the future must be implemented to realize new educational goals. The new principles are to include: “establishment of reliable school education,” “promotion of university reforms,” “restoration of the ability of the home to educate children,” and fostering a “sense of civic responsibility,” “respect for tradition and culture, and a sense of love and respect of the country and home and internationalism” (ibid).

### 6.2.2 The Rainbow Plan and Warm-Hearted Japanese

“The Rainbow Plan”, which has outlined seven priority strategies of the reform, endorses the motto: “Revitalizing schools, family and communities – Schools will improve and education will change” (MEXT: RAINBOW). While all of the strategies are based on concepts deemed important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Strategy 2 focused specifically on the importance of a moral education program. The strategy stated: “Foster youth into becoming open and warm-hearted Japanese through participating in community services and various programs.” The suggested actions included:

- Encouraging youth to participate in community services and various programs and establishing the ‘Children’s Dream Fund’;
- Improving moral education, for example, through the development and distribution of the *Kokoro no Noto* (the notebook used by students in moral education);
- Taking actions for educational revitalization in the home and in the community. (ibid)

### 6.2.3 New Courses of Study and “A Zest for Living”

In 2002, the New Courses of Study was implemented and established standards for educational courses in all schools. The school week was also reduced from six to five days in efforts to increase motivation among students. One component of the plan, “enhancement of student guidance and moral education” is to foster “zest for living” in children (MEXT: MAJPOL). MEXT defined this as “the ability to learn and think independently by and for oneself” (MEXT: FORMAL). This concept has drawn upon cooperation of the school, family, and local community to confront the social and behavioral problems that youth are facing. It stated:

MEXT works to ensure that children firmly acquire moral norms such as recognition of the importance of life and compassion for others, as well as the ability to judge right from wrong...MEXT is also striving to enhance moral education through hands-on activities. (MEXT: MAJPOL)

The enrichment of a moral values program is a strong focus of the reform. The action plan of the New Courses of Study entailed the following goals:

1. Root the rudiments and basics surely by enriched and elaborate instruction responding to an individual as well as the careful and strict selection of educational content;
2. Enrich education to develop personalities by widening the scope of selective courses;
3. Enrich the experiential and problem-solving learning of each course subject to cultivate the ability to learn and think voluntarily;
4. Create a “Period of Integrated Study” to cultivate ways of learning and thinking and an attitude of trying to solve or pursue problems independently and creatively;
5. Upgrade ethical education to strongly equip children with the judgment of good and evil and norm consciousness. (MEXT: FORMAL)

“The Survey on Children’s Experience Activities”<sup>28</sup>, a study carried out by MEXT in 1998, found that the sense of morality and justice was greater among children who participated in “daily life experiences” or “nature-oriented experiences” (MEXT: REFORM21). As a result, the “Action Plan for Improving Academic Ability” was implemented in April 2003, to enhance “the growth of character and ability” through experienced-based learning, among other academic goals (MEXT: FORMAL). It encourages experiential learning and reflection among all elementary and lower secondary students with the aid of the *kokoro no noto*. “The booklet plainly explains the morals to be acquired by children and gives them a chance to think and deepen their understanding of morals and values by themselves” (ibid). The children’s experiences are to be enriched through conversations and activities with community members or teachers.

#### **6.2.4 Compulsory Education as the Basis for Character Development**

These reform efforts are part of an overall goal of MEXT to reform the compulsory education system. In August 2004, MEXT Minister Takeo Kawamura published a document reiterating the fundamentals of the reform. He stressed the importance of compulsory education because it provides “the basis for character development and equips students with the skills necessary for becoming a valuable member of society” (MEXT: REFORMCOMP).

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<sup>28</sup> Examples of daily life experiences included “carried small children on their backs or played with them; used knives to peel fruits and cut vegetables”; examples of nature-oriented experiences included “caught insects..., picked shellfish and fished in the sea and river” (MEXT: REFORM21). I do not know the statistical correlation between these activities and obtaining a sense of morality and justice.

The focus was on establishing a flexible, compulsory education system with clarified attainment goals (including the introduction of combined nine-year schools); improved teacher training, strengthened management of schools and boards of education; and continued responsibility of the central government in ensuring these goals are met (ibid).

His proposal was followed up by the Central Council for Education and in October 2005, a report was published called “Redesigning Compulsory Education” which summarized the recommendations (MEXT: REDESIGN). The report illustrated that the central government should provide a better framework for the educational process to occur within so that the responsibility of the process can be decentralized and realized by the individual municipalities and schools. At the same time, the central government would take responsibility for examining the outcomes of education, which prompted a revision of the mission of compulsory education (ibid: 1). The first strategic point articulated “a balance between academic achievement in ‘richness of mind’ and ‘physical development’” (ibid: 3). Furthermore, it addresses a guarantee in curricular content through a review of courses of study. The points stressed here include: increasing motivation to learn through establish good study habits, implementation of achievement based instruction and small-group instruction, and expanding experiential learning and integrated studies activities (ibid).

### 6.3 The Core Curriculum for Primary, Secondary, and Adult Education in Norway (L97)

Today, education for all remains the basic principle of Norwegian educational policy, which is organized within the framework of lifelong learning. All young people are to share in a common framework of objectives and principles, knowledge, culture and values outlined in the national curriculum (KD: EDNOR). The core curriculum of the 1990s has developed in several stages. In the early stages, the entire education system, from primary through adult education, was linked together through the identification of common goals: “moral outlook, creative abilities, work, general education, cooperation, and natural environment” (KD: EDSYS20). The first core curriculum in 1993 was formulated bearing in mind the concept of “the human personality in its various characteristics, all of which should be stimulated and encouraged by the educational process” (ibid). These characteristics of the human being included: the spiritual, the creative, the working, the liberally-educated, the social, the

environmentally aware, and the integrated (ibid). The Core Curriculum: For Primary, Secondary, and Adult Education in Norway (L97)<sup>29</sup> was passed by the *Storting* in 1996 to become effective in 1997, and also reflects policy from the EU Commission. In reference to the new curriculum, devised for the 10-year compulsory school, the Ministry stated that "... [it] implies significant renewal of the content of primary and lower secondary education. It is based on and consolidates the principle of an all-inclusive school, 'one school for all' (ibid).

### 6.3.1 "The Essence" of Education

The Education Act appears on the first page of the curriculum and outlines the aims of each level of schooling. According to the Act, the principal aims of primary and lower secondary school are:

Primary and lower secondary education shall, with the understanding of and in cooperation with the home, assist in providing pupils with a Christian and ethical upbringing, develop their mental and physical abilities, and give them a broad general education so that they can become useful and independent persons in their private lives and in society.

Schools shall promote intellectual freedom and tolerance, and emphasize the establishment of cooperative climate between teachers and pupils and between school and home. (Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1997: foreword)

Gudmund Hernes, Minister during the time, cited changes including "the living conditions of the young", "the impact of international mass media", and "increasingly multicultural" schools as reasons leading to the revision (ibid: 1). The following page defines the common goals, or the "essence", as stipulated in the Education Act in relation to each level of education. The aims<sup>30</sup> for primary and lower secondary include:

- Moral Outlook: Christian and ethical upbringing; Intellectual freedom and tolerance (human equality and equal rights, intellectual freedom and tolerance are introduced in upper secondary);
- Creative Abilities: Develop mental and physical abilities;

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<sup>29</sup> L97 is available in English translation in a booklet format, accessible in person and as a PDF on-line. It is a thoughtful document illustrated with a variety of photographs depicting Norwegian landscapes, events, art and architecture, and world icons. In my opinion, it is comprehensive and easy to read.

<sup>30</sup> The document defines aims as "a) something to work towards, b) something one can know whether one approaches or not" (L97: 4).

- General Education: Give a broad basic knowledge so that pupils can become useful and independent in home and society;
- Cooperation: With the understanding of and in cooperation with the home...establish good modes of cooperation between teachers and pupils, and between school and home (democratic ideals are introduced in upper secondary). (ibid: 2)

### **6.3.2 The Aim of Education and the Individual**

The Introduction of L97 begins by stating the aim of education:

The aim of education is to furnish children, young people and adults with the tools they need to face the tasks of life and surmount its challenges together with others. Education shall provide learners with the capability to take charge of themselves and their lives, as well as with the vigor and will to stand by others. (ibid: 5)

It establishes the importance of a lifelong learning framework to provide the same educational opportunities for adult learners. The next section emphasizes the “pursuit of common goals”, the promotion of “democracy”, “national identity”, and “international awareness”, and the furthering of “solidarity with other peoples and with mankind’s common living environment, so that our country can remain a creative member of the global community” (ibid). The concluding paragraph summarizes the aim in terms of “expand[ing] the individual’s capacity to perceive and to participate, to experience, to empathize and to excel” (ibid).

### **6.3.3 Six Characteristics to Develop the Integrated Human Being**

The core of the curriculum utilizes the metaphor of the integrated human being to express the components of education in terms of personal characteristics which will be developed in the educational process. Each characteristic extensively details the basis, rationale, and objective it intends. “The integrated human being” acknowledges that “education has a number of seemingly contradictory aims” so the goal of the curriculum is to find a balance between the “dual aims” in order to develop a well-rounded individual (ibid: 39-40). These qualities and abilities include “to conduct oneself morally, to create and to act, to work with others and in harmony with nature” (ibid: 40). The concluding paragraph reiterates that “the ultimate aim of education is to inspire individual to realize their potential in ways that serve the common good; to nurture humaneness in a society in development” (ibid). All of the characteristics are defined through similar themes which are based upon the democratic conception of

education and will be discussed further in Chapter 7. Moreover, the themes within each of these characteristics overlap throughout the curriculum. They are inter-woven together in new ways to reflect the multi-dimensional aspect of an educational program. For example, “The Working Human Being” begins by stating that working is more than a profession, but to work is also actively participating in society to learn skills and knowledge, and to learn the value of this contribution (ibid: 16-24). This section continues by pointing out the relationship between “technology and culture”, and then moves into topics including “learning and work habits”, “teaching and personal initiative”, and “the role of teacher and educator” (ibid). “Learning as teamwork” is the culminating paragraph of the section and brings the reader full circle in an understanding of “working” in education (ibid).

### **6.3.4 Culture for Innovation and Creativity**

In 2004, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development jointly launched a strategy called “See opportunities and make them work! – Strategy for entrepreneurship in education 2004-2008”. Based upon the government’s innovation policy *Fra idé til verdi* (From Idea to Value), as well as EU business, industry, and entrepreneurship programs, the strategy aims to develop human capital through “entrepreneurship as an educational objective and training strategy” (ibid: 5). The concept builds on the philosophy already put forth in the core curriculum, stating:

Entrepreneurship is a dynamic and social process where individuals, alone or in collaboration, identify opportunities for innovation and acts upon these by transforming ideas into practical and targeted activities, whether in a social, cultural, or financial context. (ibid: 6)

Furthermore, it seeks to foster qualities and attitudes that will encourage people to identify opportunities and take advantage of them. These qualities include: “creativity, self-confidence, resourcefulness, willingness to take risks, the ability to see the consequences of one’s own actions, and the willingness and ability to come up with new solutions” (ibid). At the primary level, this means building confidence, recognizing responsibility, and encouraging creativity through the “trial and error method” (ibid).

### **6.3.5 Kunnskapsløftet (2006)**

Kunnskapsløftet (Knowledge Promotion), implemented in August 2006, attempts to understand and account for the changes that have occurred since L97 through “deepen[ing] appreciation for basic values and the perspective on human life reflected in the teaching,” (KD: KNOW). The core of Knowledge Promotion is based upon L97 and it reiterates those themes. Emphasis is placed on the Norwegian school system as “inclusive” and that it will provide a place for everyone, at every ability level (KD: KUNN). It also calls on parents and guardians to share responsibility with the school (ibid). According to the Ministry, the goal of Knowledge Promotion is, “to help all pupils to develop fundamental skills that will enable them to participate actively in our society of knowledge” (KD: KNOW). Fundamental skills refer to a strengthening of the basics and aims are explicitly outlined in subject syllabi. It is meant to be inclusive and provide an equal opportunity for all to learn, yet provide education to students based on individual ability.

## **6.4 My Impressions of the Learning Environment in Today’s Context**

My impressions from personal experiences as a teacher and a student in Japan and Norway are an additional component of my data. I have included these here to create a better-rounded image of the learning environment in today’s context.

### **6.4.1 East**

I lived in rural eastern Japan in Furukawa City, Miyagi Prefecture from 2002-2004, and was surrounded by lush rice fields and a city of one million, mountains and concrete, the sea and highway systems, dilapidated buildings and high-speed trains, and numerous towns and villages brimming with infrastructure. Due to the geographic variety, a range of schools, from one-room school houses in remote mountainous areas and islands, to commerce to agricultural schools teaching vocational subjects, to “super” English schools focusing intensively on high-level English, can be found in urban and rural areas which cater to the needs of local students. As a foreign teacher of English, my role encompassed much more than teaching: I was a member of the teaching staff and together we sat under the supervision of the vice principal and head teacher; we interacted during school hours and after-hours parties; I was involved in day-to-day activities in the student’s lives, their sports teams, the planting of the rice crop, every school festival; I was an active member in my community and involved in volunteer groups to engage the locals in international friendship and



communication; I participated and I asked questions. I was very welcome, but not always understood.

The interior and exterior of Japanese schools are generally similar, regardless of kindergarten, primary, or secondary, or location. The structure is reminiscent of the old *terakoya* schools and one can still see the element of the temple in some of them. They are constructed as large, white boxes, often in three levels, with the front flanking a garden or small courtyard. The playing and practicing fields, gymnasium, and *dojo* for traditional sports are situated to the sides and back. A row of cherry trees will line the main drive and when the school year begins in April, they will welcome the children and teachers back in full bloom as a sign of renewal. The classrooms are smaller boxes with a chalkboard in the front. Some older, more traditional schools have a small elevated platform in the front to add height and importance to the teacher. Desks and chairs fill the classrooms, which are generally been filled with 30-40 students.<sup>31</sup> In the older schools, there is no air conditioning in the summer to combat the heat and high humidity, and in the winter, large kerosene burning stoves are secured to the floor of each classroom to provide some heat. The hallways and toilets do not have heating and leaving the confines of the classrooms becomes a very unpleasant experience. Students have one classroom as their home room, as well as a home room teacher, and they shift classrooms for subjects that require special materials (i.e. science, music, art, etc.). All secondary school students (grades 6-12) are required to wear school uniforms.<sup>32</sup> According to school rules, the individual is not allowed to stand out, but boys and girls are generally very creative in personalizing their looks with make-up, jewelry, accessories, and hairstyles. Kindergarten and primary school students often wear special hats, vests, or name tags identifying them as belonging to a certain school and class, but they are allowed to “be children” and wear everyday clothes until they reach the sixth grade. The teachers, who sit together in rows determined by the academic year they teach, are under the watchful eye of the *kyotō sensei* (Vice Principal) and the Head Teacher. Each day begins with a greeting and a meeting to brief the staff on the events of the day. *Kōchō sensei* (Principal) sits in an office near the main entrance of the school adjacent to the

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<sup>31</sup> The birthrate has decreased significantly and as a result, many elementary schools have consolidated classrooms in grade levels. Instead of six classes in the second grade, there will be five, for example.

<sup>32</sup> All schools which receive government support require students to wear uniforms. Some schools with special tracks, such as “Super English”, music and performing arts, etc., elect not to wear uniforms and therefore receive less of a government subsidy. Private schools operate nearly the same as public schools, but they rely less on government support because they charge tuition and are therefore able to determine on their own whether students will wear uniforms.

administrative office. At the end of each day, the children and teachers take part in cleaning the school. The focus on learning over other activities depends upon the school; however, the overall atmosphere in a Japanese school is formal and strict, yet fun.

#### **6.4.2 West**

After two years, I re-located to Norway, and my role was reversed. In urban Oslo, I became a member of the student body. Out of personal interest, I began to speak with educators, primary and secondary school students, parents, and I also visited a local primary school. I am unable to describe the Norwegian learning environment to the same extent due to my limited experience<sup>33</sup>, which is also specific to Oslo and environs; however, a few details stand out. The exterior of the Norwegian school is not necessarily different than that of any other European or American school and many are large, brick structures. They have several stories, many windows, and the school grounds have a variety of play equipment ranging from traditional to modern climbing walls. The particular primary school I visited is situated approximately 25 kilometers north of Oslo in a rural setting near the forest, surrounded by fields, hills, and nature. The school itself consists of several buildings: one which housed the youngest students, as well as small rooms used for art, music, and extra-curricular activities; the main building; and a gymnasium. A banner with the school manifest, which had been drafted by the students themselves, hangs adjacent to the main entrance of the school. Six points are listed, including friendship, participation, and respect. The staff room was on the second floor, but was more of a social and dining area than a formal meeting room or office. The classrooms were set up much in the same way as in Japan, with desks and chairs, a blackboard in the front, and personalized walls filled with posters and projects.

I spent the first part of my visit with the youngest students, where we attempted to read a story in Norwegian, color some pictures, and had a fruit snack break. I visited a fifth grade class and spoke about my home and my experience living in Japan. The kids were attentive and enthusiastic. I also participated in the sixth grade English class who was working on a creative writing project. It was winter during the occasion of my visit, so following the lunch break, the children were taking advantage of the snow by strapping on their cross country

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<sup>33</sup> I would not classify the school I visited as a “typical” Norwegian school. I have learned from speaking informally with Norwegian friends, parents, and educators that there is much diversity in the schools due to availability of resources, rural versus urban location, and make-up of the student population, among other factors.

skis to *gå på tur* (take an excursion). The younger children practiced going in a straight line, then down a small hill, while the older students were darting in and out of the forest. Skiing is one of the most common shared experiences among Norwegians and is part of the school curriculum. In order to ensure that all children can participate, the school collects old skis to have on hand for children who come from families who are not used to winter sport. It seemed to me that the students were very much in control of the atmosphere of the school and their learning environment; the teachers were there to guide them through the days.

## 6.5 Summary

Both Japan and Norway have implemented curricular reform with regard to the changes society has been faced with entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Japan, motivating students to attend school and participate more led to a curriculum focused on “cultivating the self”. Similar concepts are evident in the Norwegian curriculum and whole person development is the emphasis. The presentation of this data culminates in an analysis and discussion of the characteristics of moral values education in both curricula in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 7: Analysis and Discussion: A Comparative Perspective**

This chapter aims to dialogue between broad themes and ideas as presented in the data of the previous chapters, and the literature which supports or challenges them, in order to answer my research objectives. The research strategy I have employed is based upon the interpretivist paradigm, which is holistic in nature and aims to show relationships within a contextual understanding, not as single terms or ideas. Since this study is also comparative in nature, the analysis and discussion consider the data both separately and in relation to the other. The foundational framework presented in Chapter 3, as well as additional supporting literature, serve as the point of reference.

In terms of answering my research objectives, I have reached two conclusions: 1) elements of Japanese and Norwegian moral values education can be characterized within the framework of Dewey's moral and democratic educational philosophy; 2) there are indeed distinctly Japanese and Norwegian elements of moral values education. The analysis and discussion which follow is organized in two sections, based upon these conclusions. The focus of the first section characterizes moral values education in light of Chazan's categories and Dewey's framework. The second section utilizes Triandis' cultural concepts in understanding and explaining the differences and similarities in the distinctly Japanese and Norwegian elements of moral values education.

### **7.1 Characterization of Moral Values Education in a Democratic Learning Framework**

As I was analyzing my data, it became apparent that numerous approaches to the characterization of moral values education in Japan and Norway were available. However, the constructs used by Dewey in his philosophy of democratic learning applied to the development of moral values education in both contexts. With Dewey's voice in mind, my aim was to determine whether historical developments in moral values education as posed in the curricular rhetoric have exemplified the components of his democratic educational philosophy.

I organized the historical and curricular data into three chronological periods: early foundations, post World War II, and today (from the 1980s). As illustrated in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, both sets of data demonstrate some similar developments during these time periods, so

it made sense to establish this chronology. I contextualized each of these periods through the identification of the significant concepts and themes and presented them in a comparative perspective. I extracted specific characteristics, or curricular implications, which demonstrate the relationship of the curriculum to Dewey's philosophy. These characteristics are also evident within Chazan's categorization of moral values education: the philosophic, the educational, and the practical. Figure 5 (refer to the following page) summarizes the data in these terms. I selected three fundamental aspects of Dewey's democratic philosophy in education to discuss within Chazan's categories: the development of and the relationship between the individual and the social; the notion of freedom versus indoctrination in teaching and learning; and the notion of teaching and learning, among other practical matters associated with pedagogy, methodology, and curriculum. The coding categorizes the curricular implications into one of the three key concepts or general moral values. It is possible for some of the implications to be categorized into two or more concepts, but for discussion purposes I have limited this. This is my interpretation of the data and I recognize that other categorizations of data are available.

**Figure 5: Characterization of Moral Values Education in a Democratic Learning Framework**

Key: Ph-The Philosophic E-The Educational Pr-The Practical MV-Moral Values

Chronology	Context: Concepts and Themes		Characteristics: Curricular Implications	
	Japan	Norway	Japan	Norway
<i>Early Foundations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Civilization and Enlightenment to build the modern state</li> <li>-Traditional belief system fused with borrowed Western ideas</li> <li>-Democracy and progressivism under Taishō</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Struggle for independence until 1905, democratic spirit</li> <li>-Enlightenment for all, education for all</li> <li>-Compulsory education, establishment of common/folk school</li> <li>- National development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(MV) Education for morals, (E) citizens, (Pr) skills and knowledge</li> <li>(E) Indoctrination; nationalism, patriotism</li> <li>(E) Pledge of loyalty to the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(E) Christian values, Lutheranism, piety; (Ph) inspired goals of education for all</li> <li>(E) Some secularization of schooling, (Pr) civic oriented studies in addition to Christian studies</li> <li>(E) "good citizens"</li> </ul>
<i>Post World War II</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Western instilled demilitarization and democratization</li> <li>-Education for social change, as an economic tool, to foster nation building</li> <li>-Resurgence of patriotism, nationalistic attitudes</li> <li>-Competition in education and economic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Political Unity</li> <li>-Progressivism continues</li> <li>-Growth in R&amp;D, innovation, social welfare programs</li> <li>-Unity in the folk school</li> <li>-Broader social goals in conflict with goals of Christian, moral upbringing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(MV) Aim of education: perfection of character: truth, justice, individual value, respect for labor, responsibility, independent spirit, build peaceful state and society</li> <li>(Pr) Introduction of moral education as separate subject</li> <li>(Ph) Suggested development of the individual, cooperation, creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(E) Education for renewing national identity</li> <li>(E) Christian values parallel to democratic education</li> <li>(E) Educate citizens in a free, democratic society;(MV) build character, responsibility, value of humanity, tolerance, concept of work, (Ph) cooperation</li> <li>(Ph) Egalitarianism, civic values</li> </ul>
<i>Today (1980s-)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economic prosperity, rise in social problems</li> <li>-Liberalization, individualization, diversification, decentralization in education</li> <li>-Imbalance in education and public confidence, seek a new balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Less concern for collective values, more individualism</li> <li>-Knowledge Economy</li> <li>-Culture for Innovation</li> <li>-Culture for Knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Pr) Moral education to combat decline in educational welfare, increase motivation</li> <li>(MV) Cultivate morality as foundation: perseverance, kind-hearted, strong and healthy, diligent</li> <li>(E) Education of the heart, (Pr) kokoro no noto</li> <li>(Pr) Inter-disciplinary approach, (Ph) lifelong learning framework</li> <li>(Ph) Cooperation between family, community, classroom</li> <li>(Ph) Cultivate the self, create a zest for living; (Pr) back to basics</li> <li>(MV) Education as basis for character development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Pr) Concept of knowledge is broadened</li> <li>(Ph) Strengthen cooperation between the school and the home, relationship to the community</li> <li>(Ph) Lifelong learning framework to develop all aspects of the human being: spiritual, creative, working, liberally-educated, social, environmentally aware = integrated human being</li> <li>(MV) Essence of education includes developing a moral outlook(E) including Christian and ethical upbringing, (Ph) creativity, (Pr) basic knowledge, (Ph) cooperation</li> </ul>

## 7.2 The Relationship of Culture to Democratic Education

As outlined in Chapter 3, society is bound to culture. A core of common ideas and beliefs stems from culture and these values are transmitted via informal and formal educational systems. The role of culture to democratic education is like that of a driving manual to a car. The traditions, history, and unique aspects of the cultural fabric provide an indispensable foundation in which society needs to interpret and implement democratic education. Louis (2004), reflecting on democratic values and democratic schools, agreed that "...culture is important as a partial determinant of the structure and outcomes of schooling. But culture has a meaning and use as messy as democracy," (Firestone and Louis, 2000; quoted in Louis, p. 75). Both Japan and Norway utilized the educational philosophy of John Dewey to promote the ideals of democratic education, yet the understanding and implementation of these ideals varied and two diverse models evolved. I am of the opinion that the existence and influence of culture is a significant reason for this development for the simple reason that cultural values, in addition to historical progress, have contributed to differing understandings of democratic education.

The concepts central to effective democratic education rely on a certain understanding of the values which enable democracy to occur. Culture is a source of identity and just as culture influences our value perceptions, different cultures also have differing views of morality (Triandis, 1994). The concept of morality is connected to democracy in that it shapes our understanding of the democratic system and the ways in which it is applied in our every day lives. A specific cultural understanding of democracy influences the manner in which the mechanisms enabling a democratic learning environment are developed. Culture and democracy have a multi-faceted and complex relationship, so utilizing cultural analysis to examine whether there are distinctive Eastern and Western values is often misinterpreted. Pye (1985) stated:

Questions about the role of culture have led to another major misunderstanding about development theories. This is the charge that only certain cultural values can produce positive development – such as Protestantism for economic development and Anglo-American values for democracy – and that any identification of cultural variables means that an attempt is being made to explain everything psychologically. (p. 12)

Cultural values and traditions must be taken into account in order to determine what kind of relationship the conception of democracy has in a local context.

## 7.2.1 Perspectives on Democratic Theory

Often, the Western tradition of democracy is associated with liberalism. It assumes:

...commonality within a diverse population; respect for individuality and individual participation within a willingness to abide by majority decisions; and the rights of minority groups coupled with “a widespread system of free education” that is largely determined by the majority. (Teachers College Faculty Manifesto, 1940; quoted in Louis, 2004: 77)

When the Japanese government “borrowed” US educational policy at the turn of the century, or when the US Education Mission implemented a US-bred strategy following the Second World War, it is presumed to stem from this democratic understanding. One Japanese professor suggested:

We Japanese aren't concerned with democracy. It is natural. We are all Japanese, not a multi-cultural society like in the West, so we don't have to talk to each other about things like democracy. We don't need a common slogan to bring us together. (C sensei, informal interview, 5 December, 2005)

Shields (1989) concluded: “What the Japanese model clarifies is that the concept of democratic education has different meanings in different cultural contexts” (p. 221).

An alternative to liberal democratic theory is democratic socialism, which is prominent in Europe and Norway, specifically, and emphasizes social rights and equality. Louis (2004) clarified:

...While often identified with a ‘welfare state’, social democratic principles are present in most countries in movements that emphasise the cohesive presence of groups and stress the importance of redistributing social good – including education – to benefit the working, or otherwise disenfranchised, classes. (p. 77)

Social democratic theory guides educational policy in Norway and her Scandinavian neighbors. According to Dr. Elisabeth Buk-Berge, Senior Adviser at the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, “Norwegian people are very social democratic in their thinking. For this reason, the values of the welfare state remain strong,” (informal interview, 29 September, 2006). The values of social justice, democracy, and egalitarianism were present in the social and political atmosphere when the Norwegian modern school was conceived and continued to influence the evolution of the system.



A third theory is participatory democracy, based upon the Greek ideal of citizenship and the importance of participation and ownership (Louis, 2004). However, Louis pointed out that in terms of education, participatory democracy has generally been reduced to “parent participation,” which is a far cry from the kind of participation that Aristotle or Dewey had in mind (ibid: 78). She suggested that the main challenge to effective participatory democracy at the local level is the lack of “reasonable congruence” between local and national values due to the increase in immigration and less homogeneous populations (ibid: 78-79). Holmesland (1998) has referenced this hurdle in relation to the Norwegian common school:

Besides the growing academic demands, another challenge to be faced by the Norwegian comprehensive school in the next years will be the transmission of a set of cultural values to a society becoming gradually more pluralistic. This, in fact, might be its greatest challenge due to the abstractness of the concept and the difficulty in defining what in reality is a cultural value. (p. 257)

Pluralism. Enter the aforementioned “cultural and democratic messiness”. I am of the opinion that Dewey, in his formative years, demonstrated some idealistic tendencies; however, despite the fact that “pluralism” did not exist to the same extent in Dewey’s earlier days as it does today. Caspary (2000) asserted that Dewey himself was a pluralist: “The fact that diversity in a complex society presents challenges to democracy does not tempt Dewey to seek a homogeneous community” (p. 14). Dewey and the implications of democratic learning in pluralistic societies are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Are all perspectives of democracy based on Western theories? Alternatively, a unique Asian or Japanese style of democracy must exist. Kim (1994) stated that in fact Asia has a rich democracy-oriented heritage (quoted in Kennedy, 2004). However, Grant (1985) contended that the foundation for the Asian tradition of democracy is not based upon Western liberalism, which in turn has influenced a different version of modernization (quoted in Kennedy, 2004). Kennedy (2004) explained that because “nation-states whose history, culture and social mores derive from other sources, Western democratic values are neither natural nor necessarily consistent with local values and cultures” (p. 10). In other words, the suggestion is that the key issue in the values debate is determining “the role for Western democratic values (is) in non-Western countries” (ibid).

### 7.2.2 Emic and Etic Voices: A Cross-Cultural Check

The relationship of culture to democratic education reveals several points which require clarification. The first is that despite the diversity of culture, we must keep in mind that "...humans are more similar to one another than they are different," (Brown, 1991; quoted in Triandis, 1994: 5). However, meaning, as defined by culture, cannot be understood across the board, as noted in Chapter 3. For this reason, the findings must be checked cross-culturally before generality can be assumed by separating the emic voices, the cultural specific elements, from the etic voices, the universal cultural elements. Triandis clarified:

Many categories are universal and have fairly similar meanings – e.g., incest taboos, myths (as a category, not the content), human suffering (is bad everywhere), predictability and order (are generally good everywhere). Our job, then, is to sort out what is universal from what is culture specific. (ibid: 6)

In this regard, it is necessary to distinguish between our own preconceived notions, labels designated by social theorists, and culture as it exists naturally.

### 7.3 The Philosophic: The Individual and the Social

Chazan's (1985) examination of the philosophical sphere of the practice of moral education probes whether moral values education is an individual or social experience. This relationship is the central component of Dewey's philosophy of education. Specifically, he was concerned with the role of the individual and the collective (social) and its relativity to the aim of education. After assessing the evolution of the democratic conception in education, he concluded that individual and social conceptions of education must be understood in relation to one another. Bearing in mind that this research attempts to understand both Western and Eastern educational philosophy, exploring Chazan's inquiry must also consider the concepts of the Japanese sense of self and the relationship to the social before characterizing an Eastern philosophy of moral values education in a Western paradigm.

Rosenberger (1992) has pointed out that rooted in the dichotomy of individual versus social is a dichotomy of Western "us" versus non-Western "them" (p. 2). Despite this opposition, she continued that "self attains meaning in embodied relations to other people, things, and ideas," (Rosaldo, 1984; see also Geertz, 1973; Shore, 1982; Keeler, 1987; White and Kirkpatrick, 1985; Heelas and Lock, 1981; DeVos, 1985; Shweder and Levine, 1984; quoted

in Rosenberger, 1992: 3). This echoes Dewey's (1916) notion of the individual as previously discussed in Chapter 3. He related that the individual is inherently a social being, dependent upon a mutual relationship and experience with others in order to foster growth. He stated that, "The human being is an individual because of and in relation with others," (Dewey, 1960: 80; quoted in Chazan, 1985: 104). The process of social interaction is ultimately how individuals acquire moral values. Chazan (1985) noted that Durkheim is generally associated with this idea, but that Dewey would concur with this "interactionist thesis" which conceives of morality "as a social phenomenon and moral education as social learning by the individual (p. 103-104). Rosenberger (1992) has agreed that it is possible to understand the Japanese individual, or the self, and the social "as interactive rather than opposing processes" (p. 1).

The Japanese sense of self is psychologically complex and an abundance of literature explores the multifaceted Japanese identity. While the concept of the "Western individual" is "rooted in culturally constructed and historically changing perceptions, social relations, and ideologies," (Weedon, 1987; quoted in Rosenberger, 1992: 3) so, too, is the concept of the "Japanese individual" embedded in a parallel set of relationships. Although culture can be deconstructed, as illustrated by Triandis' attributes of individualistic and collectivist cultures, it is within these very parameters of culture that specific meanings are designated to the experiences which define and diversify the individual and the social. It is based upon this inter-cultural relationship that the concept of self gains meaning. In her examination of the Japanese individual and relationships, Rosenberger (1992) looked at the Japanese term for self, *jibun*, which "implies that self is not an essentiality apart from the social realm. *Jibun* literally means 'self part' – a part of a larger whole that consists of groups and relationships. *Jibun* is always valued in relation to that larger whole," (Dumont, 1970; quoted in Rosenberger, 1992: 4). Ohnuki-Tierney (1987) has argued that the Japanese "define themselves reflexively, that is, in relation to the outside or the other" (quoted in Rosenberger, 1992: 11). She explained that the Japanese see their universe as divided in two: the inside of Japanese society and the outside. Things and ideas from the outside which permeate the border are "purified" for use within the inside of Japanese society (ibid: 12). This idea was popularized during the Meiji restoration and helps explain the psychology behind how and why the Japanese were able to import and adapt from the West (ibid).

Dewey (1916) maintained that "establishing of character is a comprehensive aim of school instruction and discipline" (p. 346). Cummings (2003a) has proposed that, "The concept of the ideal person is the core of an educational system" (p. 36). Both the Japanese and

Norwegian curricula identify these aims in the past and present rhetoric. Ideological, political, and economic change has contributed to new ways of thinking about educational systems which has influenced the conception of the ideal person (Cummings, 2003a; Dewey, 1916). Furthermore, Cummings (2003a) emphasized that, “Notions of who should be taught, what they should be taught, how people learn, and how education should be organized follow from a society’s conception(s) of the ideal person” (p. 37). Society’s conception of the ideal person reflects the cultural syndromes present in that particular society. Triandis (1994) used the example that children who are raised in collectivist cultures are more aware of duty, self-sacrifice for the group, and obedience of authority than children in individualistic cultures, who are conversely more exploratory, creative, and self-sufficient (p. 176). However, he pointed out that, “Many modern, complex cultures that used to be quite collectivist are shifting toward individualism in some of their cultural patterns” (ibid: 177), which provides some explanation for a paradigm shift in values education in schools.

### **7.3.1 Early Foundations**

The modern educational system in Japan is a result of the Meiji restoration. Eager to catch up to the West, the typical “small classes, individual tutorials, hands-on training, and learning through apprenticeship,” all strategies for promoting the traditional Japanese value of “groupism,” (Dore, 1965; Rubinger, 1982; quoted in Tobin, Wu, and Davidson, 1989: 220), were replaced and the first primary schools were based on borrowed concepts from Europe and the United States. Yet, traditional Confucian, Shinto, and Buddhist values were deeply ingrained in the culture. Generally associated with collectivism, the moral ideology places emphasis on the personal over the public, in relation to the group (Lee, 2004). Development of the self was evident in the scope of the earliest curricula which stressed whole person development through the incorporation of a wide range of subjects, while emphasizing the tradition of moral values education (Cummings, 2003a).

The conception of early modern Norwegian education was based upon Lutheranism and developing the capacity to have an individual relationship with God through the ability to read the Bible. The notion of equality and an understanding of citizenship further evolved in the period of romantic nationalism (Hansen, 2005). In addition to its spiritual aims, compulsory education stressed the democratic principle of education for all by ensuring that all people had an opportunity to learn and grow regardless of social background. While education for all in this early stage was a far cry from equality as we conceive of it today, it

was the precursor for liberal progress, especially when considered in relation to the Japanese system.

### 7.3.2 Post World War II

Moral values education in both post World War II Japan and Norway exemplified democratic learning principles, probably in an attempt to resolve conflicting ideas which had been distributed during the war and unify the population under a renewed sense of democracy. Hook (1995) reiterated Dewey's perspective on the importance of education to drawing on a common values base:

Insofar as individuals are different from each other, the educational process should provide possibilities for individualized growth. At the same time it should make available, as the basis of such growth, the common knowledge, disciplines, and techniques which are part of our collective cultural heritage and which are necessary not merely for growth but for sheer survival wherever individuals live together. (p. 180)

For the first time in Japan, the concept of the self took precedence over the collective, and values expressing the development of the individual, cooperation, and creativity were written into the curriculum, replacing nationalistic ideology and patriotism. Hendry (2003) attributed the ensuing economic success to “cultural nationalism” – the Japanese learned how to draw strength and pride from their cultural uniqueness (p. 19), as opposed to the patriotic nationalism imposed by the government leading up to and during the war.

Following the German Occupation, Norwegian post war education was also based on renewal of national identity and ideals of cooperation, egalitarianism, and civic values were promoted. Historically, Norwegian society has always placed great emphasis on equality and social justice, with emphasis placed on the collective rather than the interests of the individual, and these values have been deeply rooted in the educational system. Nevertheless, it is only since World War II and the establishment of the modern welfare state that the idea of equality has become a predominant feature (Holmesland, 1998). Rust (1989) noted that the term “equality of educational opportunity” was popular during this period. Equality could be achieved through the implementation of the common school which would ensure that all children would participate in a similar course of basic studies. Dokka, in his commentary of the time, asserted that “...equality, in this respect, had a special meaning: *sameness*. Everyone was to receive the same basic education” (quoted in Hansen, 2005: 177). Telhaug (1994) raised an important question in light of the 1945 educational platform:

After equalizing education among those with differing economic and geographic situations, who was the target of equal education? Would this ideal be comprehensive enough to deal with children of varying abilities, talents, and interests, especially when the practical and the theoretical aspects of education were to be deemed equal? (pp. 39).

### 7.3.3 Today

Important lessons regarding the incorporation of moral values education into a democratic learning framework can be learned by examining the contemporary curricula in Japan and Norway. Both exhibit a strong emphasis on cooperation between the school and the home and a relationship to the community, as well as promoting education in a lifelong learning framework. Cultivating the self through a holistic, integrated approach to learning by increasing motivation and building up confidence is also a shared value in these curricula. However, theory and practice are not necessarily the same.

Yoneyama (2002) criticized the Japanese approach of the most recent reform. She argued that creating a “zest for living” and fostering “open and warm hearted Japanese” could not be viewed as a “remedy” the “moral collapse” which became more apparent following the decline in economic prosperity (p. 194). The Japanese culture continues to be at odds with the concept of individuality, perhaps because it is too abstract and Japanese continue to identify with the collective. Saito and Imai (2004) commented:

The quest for the ‘true self’ or self-realization has been a key idea in educational policy and practice. In a situation, however, where there is no positive vision of the individuality, what it means to be an authentic self is very uncertain, and this is the condition of contemporary Japanese culture and education. (p. 590)

Rohlen (1976) suggested that the rationale for this kind of rhetoric lies in the learning principle of building spirit, or *seishin*, which stresses effort over ability in learning and is culminated in “final unity of non-self rather than individualism in a sense of essentialism and consistent identity,” (quoted in Rosenberger, 1992: 13). In demonstration of this, children support one another by shouting *gambaru* (endure) to one another during activities which require strenuous physical or mental effort.

Despite the abstract nature of Japanese value orientations, the current curriculum exhibits progress in resolving the conflict between traditional and modern. In a study regarding values related to citizenship quality in the Pacific Rim<sup>34</sup>, Lee (2004) and his colleagues learned from the Asian leaders whom they interviewed that the most important reasons for values education related to individual character development. They ranked among the top three reasons: 1) providing a foundation for spiritual development, 2) increasing a sense of individual responsibility, and 3) helping young persons develop a reflective and autonomous personality (p. 140). This further supports the idea that individualism and collectivism “do not need to be competing concepts, and can actually be complementary to each other” (ibid: 141).

This is definitely the case in Norwegian moral values education. Tjeldvoll (1998) stated that, “A democratically organized school has been seen as a means for achieving the optimal self-realization of the individual, as well as of specific social groups, and for further democratization of the whole society” (p. 6). This progressivism is apparent in the learner-centered pedagogy of the 1987 core curriculum which demonstrates the democratic and humanistic value of group work (ibid). International ideological changes have also encouraged a shift from the collective concept of equal education for all, to individualized education. Tjeldvoll has claimed that, “...such an educational policy is expected to function as a socially equalizing policy; thus class distinction should be gradually wiped out” (ibid: 9-10). Nilsen (2005) has argued that despite individualized education, Norwegian children still share common frames of reference, in part due to their shared experience at the *enhetsskolen*, but also due to daily public television broadcasts of children’s programs.

#### 7.4 The Educational: Freedom or Indoctrination?

Chazan is interested in the difference between the “morally educated person” and “indoctrination”. Dewey elucidated between these concepts through the notion of intellectual freedom and self-interest in terms of social control. Chazan (1985) suggested:

Dewey follows the general pattern of regarding ‘indoctrination’ as an undesirable activity which is opposed to “education”. “Education” for Dewey refers to the aim and attempt to advance growth; mis-education or “indoctrination” would refer to activities whose intent

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<sup>34</sup> The project was entitled “Building Bridges of Understanding and Belief in the Pacific Rim” and involved research carried out in 12 countries/cities in Asia, Russia, and North America.

and/or effect is to thwart growth...What characterizes education for Dewey is the dynamic relationship between a student and contents and experiences – where the intention is to help the student in his/her ability to further growth...” (p. 114)

This notion implies that the development of the “morally educated person” occurs within the individual and without impediment by external forces. Chazan theorized that, “According to such an approach, societies create morality and transmit it to their young through education; such transmission is not external imposition, but rather legitimate education, for without it, morality would not exist” (ibid: 103-104). The task of the teacher is to provide the materials and encourage the experiences, but it is the task of the student to make the connections between them, resulting in moral growth.

Conflict resolution and ethical deliberation are other aspects of self-realization, combining discourse with individuality to overcome disagreements. Dewey (1908) pointed out that, “Mutual self-realization does not require the elimination of opposition; indeed, it is through working out conflicts with one another that citizens contribute to each other’s learning and development (p. 227, quoted in Caspary, 2000: 13). According to Caspary (2000), it is the “creative interaction and tension between individual and society” that Dewey proposed which draws on a “distinctive individuality” instead of “sacrifice,” (Dewey, 1908: 348; quoted in Caspary, ibid). Rather, conflict resolution allows for intellectual freedom. Dewey (1916) affirmed:

A progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth. Hence a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in its educational measures. (p. 305)

The democratic conception is clear: the concepts of inquiry and discourse, free and equal participation, and the utilization of democratic methods in all relationships lead to a sense of community. More importantly, the school demonstrates the democratic conception by encouraging the development of personality and creativity, valuing uniqueness and individuality, personal and mutual interest, and voluntary interaction.



### 7.4.1 Early Foundations

The historical underpinnings of Nationalism and Enlightenment as seen in Japan and Norway impacted the school in the development of the individual and the relationship to intellectual freedom. Tu (2000) has described these values:

...Surely, Enlightenment values such as instrumental rationality, liberty, rights consciousness, due process of law, privacy, and individualism are all universalizable modern values, but as the Confucian example suggests, “Asian values” such as sympathy, distributive justice, duty consciousness, ritual, public-spiritedness, and group orientation are also universalizable modern values... (p. 264)

Traditionally, nation states have incorporated civic programs as a means of building national identity or strengthening national unity (Kennedy, 2004; Cummings, 2003a). Indoctrination, nationalism, and patriotism were evident in the Japanese program during this time, and children were taught early the importance of pledging their loyalty to the State. While there was no State religion, Shinto, Confucian, and Buddhist belief systems encouraged ethics of respect, loyalty, and group mentality.

On the other hand, Christianity always played a central role in the organization of the goals within the Norwegian curriculum. While there was some secularization of schooling beginning in the early 1800s, “a Christian and moral upbringing” included Christianity as a formal school subject, as well as utilizing Christian teaching methodology in the classroom (Telhaug, 1994: 39).

### 7.4.2 Post World War II

Occupation and post war education represent a very specific paradigm. Established patterns in society are forced to change in order to accommodate new visions and ideas that are implemented from the top down and not necessarily representative of the populous. Over night, new systems are put into place and people are expected to act, not react, accordingly. Whether during the 1940s or today, despite governmental motivation, this ideology attempts to drastically alter the identity of a nation from the inside out. How has it been possible for such ideology to permeate the world? Giddens (2002) noted the unique strength of tradition:

It is a myth to think of traditions as impervious to change. Traditions evolve over time, but also can be quite suddenly altered or transformed. If I can put it this way, they are invented and reinvented...What is distinctive about tradition is that it defines a kind of truth. For

someone following a traditional practice, questions don't have to be asked about alternatives. However much it may change, tradition provides a framework for action that can go largely unquestioned. (p. 40-41)

In the case of Japan, Western occupation quickly implemented home grown ideas and the educational focus shifted from the nationalistic to the democratic. Compton (2000) detailed:

Democratizing Japan, as a social engineering experiment, involved the transplantation of American constitutionalism and values to a nation whose elite core possessed a very different view of democracy. The Japanese elites operated under a very different belief; they believed that they could manufacture the consent of the governed through traditional culture. (p. 121; quoted in Helgesen, 2006: 192-193)

The replacement of the nationalistic agenda in favor of the development of the individual, cooperation, and creativity demonstrated a desire to account for more intellectual freedom, but to what extent was this only a Western imperative?

The German occupation in Norway interrupted the beginning of a progressive period. Nearly as quickly as the nation had been overcome by national socialistic ideology, a liberal government who was interested in uniting the country under positive pretenses was successfully elected and education became number one on the agenda. In opposition to the Occupation ideology, democratic education was the order of the day. Educating citizens in a free, democratic society was parallel to traditional Christian values. Considering that these democratic values had always been present in the Norwegian educational tradition, this rhetoric only reiterated the deeply rooted sense of democracy in Norwegians.

### **7.4.3 Today**

The transition from post war education programs to the contemporary curricula of the 1980s through today reflects a general move towards a more liberal policy concerning moral values education. Yoneyama (2002) has indicated that the discussion surrounding resurgent nationalism in Japan has more or less ceased, although South Korea and China continue to protest censorship issues. What remains more controversial is the methodology of "education of the heart" and the implementation of the *kokoro no noto*. It is worth noting that there is limited information available in English which discusses the actual use of these notebooks in the classroom. On field work in Tokyo in 2005, one colleague noted that it was nearly impossible to locate the notebooks in local bookstores and when she inquired where they

were available, the bookstores indicated that few schools in the greater Tokyo area were actually using the books (personal communication, 1 April, 2005).

Christianity remains an important feature of the current curriculum in Norway; however, the teachings of other religions and beliefs are represented in schools based on the L97 reform. Norway has demonstrated more ease and open-mindedness in dealing with multiculturalism in this regard than Japan.

## 7.5 The Practical: From Teaching to Learning

The practical encompasses a range of elements which allow teaching and learning to occur. As stated in Chapter 3, this research does not fully explore the practical element in moral values education; however, several points can be addressed in relation to the findings.

In terms of teaching, the role of the teacher and teacher training are essential in a classroom which aims to dialogue with children about “moral” experiences. The pedagogy and methodology used in the classroom, including concepts of motivation and interest, impact reasons why children attend school and how they learn. Hook (1995) reiterated the democratic conception in that “interest, capacities, and a range of life experience of the developing child,” as opposed to “fixed ends” imposed by adults should structure the curriculum (p. 183). He continued that educational methods should focus on learning by doing and experimentation rather than “drilling in skills” which would only succeed in lack decreasing motivation of children and that the “spirit of the classroom” should foster cooperation (ibid). Naturally, this methodology was encapsulated in Dewey’s concept of lifelong learning that education was not limited to formal schooling. Hook discussed that simply the attainment of knowledge does not demonstrate growth, but the knowledge must be examined and reflected upon, it must be questioned why it is being shared, in order to demonstrate an understanding of the social relationship between fact and growth (ibid: 181).

### 7.5.1 Early Foundations

The practical side of basic Japanese education advocated the teaching of skills and knowledge. Schooling was teacher-centered, students were taught as groups rather than individuals, and effort versus aptitude was the “learning theory” (Cummings, 2003a: 35). Early Norwegian education focused on Christian studies but also included an element of civic-oriented studies. Christianity and religion were taught instead of specified moral

education, as opposed to the Japanese program which educated students in moral and social education, ethics, and good behavior.

### **7.5.2 Post World War II**

One of the biggest problems that plagued Japanese postwar education was textbook censorship. While educational governance was becoming more decentralized, a central textbook authority remained. Horio (1988) noted that prior to 1958, all teaching materials were subject to the line of questioning: “Does the text in question violate the Fundamental Law of Education, for example its insistence upon the spirit of peace and respect for truth and justice?” (p. 172-173). However, after 1958, when the Ministry of Education published the revised course of study, the second part of the question was deleted. A screening campaign ensued, affecting history, social studies, Japanese, math, physical sciences, music, and art textbooks. Obviously, this presented a variety of ideological issues, especially for teachers, who were obligated to teach using the required materials or risk losing their jobs.

Norwegian teachers demonstrated a different kind of character and a strong resolve in their protest of the NS Youth Company, a mandate by Quisling as Prime Minister that all youth were to be inducted into the National Unification Youth Service (*Nasjonal Samlings Ungdomstjeneste*) in 1942 (Rust, 1989: 194-195). They actively resisted joining the organization and dedicated themselves to the democratic ideals of a free Norway. Approximately 6-7,000 teachers signed a statement stating that it was a conflict of conscience for them to join and they could no longer be regarded as a member of the Teachers Union, and another 1,100, or one-tenth of all teachers, were arrested and sent to work camps in the far north for several months (ibid: 195). It was not easy for teachers to return to school following the war due to negative feelings which had occurred.

### **7.5.3 Today**

Back to the basics approaches are suggested in both curricula and moral education is no longer limited to a single subject, rather it occurs in an inter-disciplinary manner across several subject areas.

Ikemoto (1996) noted that moral education in Japan “ideally permeates all school activities and has priority over all other subjects” (p. 11; quoted in Helgesen, 2006: 193). Helgesen (2006) agreed with the notion that moral education can be viewed as a learning tool “to transmit traditional culture with its values and knowledge from generation to generation” (p.

193). In this way, the new approach of incorporating moral values education and other related topics through the period of integrated study is intended to reduce the traditional vertical hierarchy between students and teachers, “but also making organization of knowledge less hierarchical, more learner-centered, and more interactive and cooperative,” (Yoneyama, 1999: 61-118, 133-154; quoted in Yoneyama, 2002: 209). Yoneyama (2002) stated that in fact, children and learning have been missing from the education discourse and alluded to the potential of a paradigm shift in Japanese education if learner-centered learning is successfully managed. Additionally, the incorporation of government produced *kokoro no noto* encourage children to reflect on themes that are introduced to children by teachers or community members.

Sato (1999) has noted the significance of the new period of integrated study in developing student’s citizenship skills and abilities at global, national, and local levels, as well as teaching students how to learn (quoted in Ostu, 2002). However, the success of this kind of subject largely depends on the teacher and the school. One interviewee felt the moral values education (*dotoku*) in school was “ambiguous”, indicating that students can learn more in a straightforward manner from the subject of social studies and being involved in the community (A san, informal interview, 5 December, 2005). Despite this feeling, Lee’s (2004) survey results indicated that Asian leaders were in favor of integrating values education across the curriculum rather than instating it as a separate subject. Interviewees stated that an integrated curriculum is more flexible and avoids “reducing values education to knowledge-based transmission” as compared to adding another subject to the already packed curriculum (p. 148)

In Norway, the introduction of a “knowledge economy” has prompted policy makers to broaden the concept of knowledge to incorporate topics youth are faced with outside of the classroom, including building entrepreneurial and inter-cultural skills while motivating students through the learning by doing approach. At the same time, international test scores have shown that Norwegian students are lacking in basic skills competencies, demonstrating a need to emphasize the acquisition of reading, writing, and math skills.

Buk-Berge indicated the importance of incorporating hands-on activities in the curriculum:

“School as society”, as an organization, prepares students to participate in democracy and also learn about representative democracy through activities like student council, which teaches that the ‘spirit of schooling’ is intended to be democratic. Civics textbooks teach

good dialogue, communication skills, conflict resolution, cooperation, solidarity, and environment. (informal interview, 29 September, 2006)

## 7.6 What Values and on Whose Terms?

A re-examination of the definition of values offered in Chapter 3 tells that values transcend specific situations and are ordered by relative importance. Yet, values are inherently connected to a cultural interpretation, and the relationship of values to democratic ideals is dependent on this interpretation. Triandis (1994) emphasized that we value things “situationally and in culturally specific ways,” depending upon the influences of our own culture (p. 53). Educational and curricular reform, due to the nature of its design, exists to respond to changes in society, thus, it is dependent on a cultural perspective to account for changes due to internationalization and globalization.

The preceding section highlighted some values which are esteemed in each respective society and reflected in both curricula. Within the democratic learning paradigm, these values promote the fundamental concepts of democracy: the value of participation; the value placed on self-development; the value of freedom of choice over indoctrination or other demands forced upon the individual; the value of pluralism in dialogue; the value of diversity in learning opportunities. At the same time, the discussion surrounding moral values education reveals a dichotomy between local and global values. In the case of Japan, it can be concerned with reconciliation between the tradition of the collective and the influence of Western ideals of democratic learning. In the case of Norway, it is involved with dual social democratic and Christian values at the intersection of the new aims of a knowledge society. Regardless of the society, the values which underpin the aim of education must be determined and inherent in the curriculum. There must also be equal access by all participants in determining the terms or conditions in which these values can exist in order to insure accountability in a democratic framework.

### 7.6.1 Aims and Outcomes

As Dewey expressed, growth is based on experience. He remarked that, “The conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind” (1916: 97). Kobayashi (1997) articulated that Dewey recognized as individuals participated in the continual formation of a social order so that its culture was in synchronization with human nature, and thus conducive to the happiness of the

community, education was conceived as empowering the individual to participate in an evolving democratic order (p. 667).

In line with the philosophy of Dewey and Piaget, Kohlberg (1980) agreed that the fundamental aim of education is development, and that “development requires action or active experience in order to participate in society in the direction of making it a better or more just society” (p. 464). Furthermore, his theory argued that “if sociomoral development is the aim of social education, the central means of social education is the creation of opportunities and experiences for social role-taking and participation” (ibid). He referred to Dewey’s day when town meetings created democratic participatory experiences. He stated that “the school was a necessary bridge between the family and the outside society in providing individuals with experiences of democratic community” and suggested that it remains the responsibility of the school to continue to create these possibilities (ibid: 467). Kohlberg referenced Fred Newmann (1977): “Education must authenticate these central principles of democracy and apply them to the educational process,” (quoted in Kohlberg, 1980: 468). In this way, individualism is linked with democracy (Triandis, 1994). Kohlberg (1980) cited the rationale for participatory democracy as best “protect[ing] justice or individual human rights,” continuing that participation in society results in a sense of community (p. 459).

The objective of the curriculum is to specify the aim of education. Both of the current primary school curricula in this study state that character development, including moral education, is the foundation for education. In terms of democratic education, Dewey (1916) stipulated this relationship:

Moral education in school is practically hopeless when we set up the development of character as a supreme end, and at the same time treat the acquiring of knowledge and the development of understanding, which of necessity occupy the chief part of school time, as having nothing to do with character. (p. 354)

We must consider both knowledge acquisition and character development as dual aims in educational growth in a democratic learning environment.

Where does that leave the acquisition of knowledge in today’s competitive, test-score-driven environment? Ball (1994) claimed that, “insofar as students are influenced and affected by their institutional environment, then the system of morality ‘taught’ by schools is

increasingly well accommodated to the values complex of the enterprise culture” (p. 146). Power and Whitty (1999) elaborated on Ball’s claim that a changing social context is permeating the foundation of the comprehensive education system and replacing “old values of community, co-operation, individual need, and equal worth” with values of “individualism, competition, performativity, and differentiation” (p. 133). According to Triandis (1994) the value of the relationship to the market is exemplified in individualist cultures, while collectivist cultures place more emphasis on the relationship to the family; however, there is a trend for collectivist cultures to become more individualistic. Despite the fact that both curricula continue to stress these “old values”, the trend to incorporate the “new values” is more apparent in the Norwegian curriculum than in the Japanese, as indicated by the new entrepreneurial course work. Never the less, both curricula continue to acknowledge the “old values” and have also signified a return to the “basics” in competence building.

The figure of the conceptual building blocks of the school house in Chapter 3 denotes the term “outcomes” at the top. Outcomes can be perceived and measured in a variety of ways and since the aim of this thesis was not to measure educational output, but to characterize educational values, I opted to keep a general concept to avoid the complexity of the educational process. Educational policy has encouraged and responded to social change in both contexts. On the other hand, society can also be viewed as a product of education, or as a reflection of education. To some extent, this is only a matter of semantics; however, my model attempts to show that outcomes are a goal or result of this process and reflected in society, but there are other calculations dependent upon the direction of the process, the arrangement of the building blocks, and the period in time which is being discussed.

### **7.6.2 Japan: Moral Education for Individuality, Creativity, Internationalism, and Liberalization**

Goodman (2003) has characterized the rhetoric of the moral education debate into four categories: individuality (*kosei*), creativity (*sōzōsei*), internationalism (*kokusaika*), and liberalization (*jiyūka*). Individuality and creativity first appeared in the curricular rhetoric alongside Dewey’s progressive ideology in the early 1900s. However, it wasn’t until the post war period under US restructuring that the Fundamental Law of Education reflected an effort to change to course of moral education. Nakasone introduced the concepts of internationalism and liberalization in the reforms of the 1980s, which go hand-in-hand with



the globalization discourse. Recent objectives of the reforms resemble broad concepts, much like kanji characters that illustrate an idea rather than a single word. The 1998 and 2002 reforms, which centered around a five-day school week, encouraged a relaxed school atmosphere to foster a “zest for living”, which in Goodman’s opinion, implies that “enjoyment improves learning” (ibid: 9). He noted this ethic is based on the Confucian concept “that hard work is the basis of educational success” (ibid). Perseverance and hardship are indeed emphasized in elementary school classrooms. These concepts seem far from pleasant, yet they illustrate another valuable moral – ability to perform and produce results. Clearly, the terms are also defined in terms of the state and the collective.

The current reforms indicate that MEXT is challenging the Japanese to become more involved citizens and participate in democracy to a certain extent. The Japanese business community has allegedly endorsed the values agenda, citing a “lack of creativity” as one of the pressing employment issues (Yoneyama, 2002: 200). However, Yoneyama has claimed that individuality and creativity, internationalism and liberation, were contrived as part of the nationalist agenda of elite education in partnership with the business community. In other words, the stratification of education would promote creativity and individuality among the elite, and conversely build up cheap and obedient labor among the less academically talented students (p. 200-204). Beauchamp and Vardaman (1994) have referenced scholars (including Rohlen and Amano) who have supported the argument that social mobility and egalitarianism that was built up after the war started to become limited beginning with the oil crisis in the 1970s; thus, reflecting a decrease in the number of students who can enter higher education because only the elites can afford the expense of extra curricular schooling such as *juku* (cram school). As Apple and Beane (1999) stated, “if we want students to learn democratic citizenship we need to put in place structures of learning which embody those principles,” for example, by creating more democratic schools and building an environment in which democratic principles can flourish (quoted in Power and Whitty, 1999: 137).

Moral education, exercised with caution, can foster national pride and traditional values. A 1970 OECD Review of National Policies for Education recognized the concept that different groups have different conceptions of what moral education should entail.

For some it implies discipline, a respect for national values and for heroes of the past; for others it signifies the development in individuals of strength of mind and of a critical independence of national symbols; yet others see it as conformity to an antiestablishment

critique of national heroes and values, and for a further group it has the traditional, liberal arts connotation of enriching oneself by becoming a skilled consumer (and even an amateur producer) of aesthetic values (quoted in Beauchamp and Vardaman, 1994: 203).

Decisions regarding moral values education have been at the hands of the Liberal Democratic Party, who is conservative in ideology despite their name (Otsu, 2002). They have been in control since the 1960s and with the recent appointment of the new Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe and his conservative cabinet in the fall of 2006 (*The New York Times* online edition, 26 September, 2006), it seems that this trend in educational policy will continue to be asserted from the top down, further marginalizing democratic concepts in moral values education and learning in general.

### **7.6.3 Norway: Values Education for Equality, Social Justice, and Solidarity**

When asked about distinctive Norwegian moral values in the context of today, Buk-Berge suggested the following:

Democratic values are emphasized today. The core of basic values is equality, a just society, and solidarity. Equality between the sexes is very much emphasized, which became the responsibility of schooling to teach in the 1970s, but equality of education is also meant. People in Norway think in a very social democratic way. (informal interview, 29 September, 2006).

Indeed, the strong social-democratic tradition stands out when distinguishing Norwegian moral values and this theme is found throughout the curricular rhetoric. Historically, some of these distinctive values have included piety and Christian-based values, responsibility, to value humanity, tolerance, to value work, and cooperation. The origin of schooling was rooted in a Christian value system, which remains one of the fundamental concepts in the Norwegian curriculum.

Kohlberg (1980) cited the rationale for participatory democracy as best “protect[ing] justice or individual human rights,” continuing that participation in society results in a sense of community (p. 459). In Norway, Holmesland (1998) indicated that “...the interests of the collectivity [are] considered above the interests of the individual” (p. 251). Much value is placed on learning to think in a democratic way which simultaneously emphasizes equality and social justice, and this starts from an early age. Nilsen (2005) suggested that parents

“appreciate child participation and tend to encourage their children to adopt democratic behaviour” (p. 168). She listed the ability to reflect, to make personal judgments, and to develop personal opinions as positive traits of democratic behavior (ibid: 169). Rather than directly telling children what to do, enacting “the cardamom law” of suggesting what you “shall do” is promoted among Norwegians, as exemplified in popular children’s stories<sup>35</sup> (ibid). Similarly, the *janteloven*<sup>36</sup> (Jante Law) is a Scandinavian principle of humility and perhaps the root of egalitarianism.

The same appreciation of reflectivity and democratic behavior can be found in the Norwegian core curriculum (L97), in which the promotion of holistic education, reflection and self-consciousness is emphasized. The can be illustrated by the following extract:

Education has a number of seemingly contradictory aims: (...) – to overcome self-centeredness and a belief in the right of the strongest – and to inspire strength to stand alone, to stand up, to dissent and not to knuckle under or cave in to the opinions of others. (p. 39-40)

The educational objective is to encourage individual thinking, in addition to social adjustment. Democratic practices, such as in school-democracy, are regarded as significant in order for children to learn hands-on democratic behavior.

Telhaug et al (2004) have described that “the school was seen as an extension of society or, perhaps more accurately, as the apparatus of government, which assumed the role of a force for progress in relation to the educational community” (p. 144). Some critics of Norwegian education have argued that the values of have been too progressive. For example, Sandmo (1995) criticized the value of equality in the comprehensive school, arguing that it promotes sameness to the extent that all students are merely “average” and “ordinary” (quoted in Holmesland, 1998: 254). In spite of this, Tjeldvoll (1998) has described: “A democratically organized school has been seen as a means for achieving the optimal self-realization of the individual, as well as of specific social groups, and for further democratization of the whole society” (p. 6).

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<sup>35</sup> See also the Norwegian children’s author, Torbjørn Egner, for his version of the cardamom law.

<sup>36</sup> This concept was first popularized by the writer Aksel Sandemose in the 1930s.

## 7.7 Consensus: A Common Core of Moral Values

In light of this comparison, which is based on two societies woven of very different cultural fabric, and the fact that as citizens of the world, we are continuously facing the effects of an evolving civilization, is it possible to reach a consensus on a common core of moral values? My response is an emphatic yes. Whether due to the influence of global educationalist discourse or simply two governmental bodies responding to the needs of their respective societies, curricular reforms since the 1990s in both Japan and Norway illustrate more commonalities in the resulting rhetoric. At the same time, there should be concern for distinctive Japanese or Norwegian values which exemplify their unique cultural traditions. As reflected in the current primary school curricula in Japan and Norway, I offer this core of concepts promoting moral values education in a democratic framework:

- 1) Integrate moral values education into other school subjects and activities;
- 2) Promote education within a lifelong learning framework;
- 3) Maintain a back-to-the-basics approach to learning, with some innovative twists to motivate students and keep them interested in learning;
- 4) Foster cooperation between the school, home, and community.

Both primary school curricula currently convey all four of these points in their programs. In Japan, the new courses of study aim to strengthen moral values education both inside and outside of the classroom through promoting hands-on learning, targeting the development of the individual through a wider variety of new course offerings, and incorporating time for reflection and writing in a period of integrated study. Strengthening cooperation between the school, home, and community is the goal of the “The Rainbow Plan”, which utilizes a community-based approach to draw on the strengths of community members and foster compassion in children through applied experiences. In addition, Japanese grow up participating in the cleaning and care of the school, and also contribute to the upkeep of local community areas (apartment blocks, parks, streets, recycling areas, etc.), exemplifying a hands-on approach to conveying a multitude of values, including respect, cooperation, and the simple value of work for the common good. Participation in school clubs, student council, and school lunch programs also gives children a first-hand look at democracy in action.

The Norwegian strategy focuses on the development of the “integrated human being” through a multi-tiered approach, which is outlined in the two most recent curricula for primary school: L97 and Knowledge Promotion. The Norwegian classroom does not teach moral values education as such; however a course on Christian and humanist ethics is taught, and as outlined in the curriculum, an integrated approach to teaching and learning is incorporated into the rest of the subjects. By implementing additional education programs such as “Culture for Innovation and Creativity”, children learn entrepreneurial values including leadership, team work, creativity, and risk through their own unique experiences outside of the classroom in preparation for employment in a globalizing business culture. Similar to Japan, Norway also has a strong tradition of *dugnad*, which is a group of people coming together in the spirit of community volunteerism to repair or clean up local spaces. Whether cleaning up a children’s playground or landscaping the common garden of an apartment block, nearly every Norwegian has participated in *dugnad*, connecting them through this common activity. Norwegian children also participate in student council activities and direct governance of their schools.

Researchers and policy makers in Europe and the Asia Pacific region, including Norway and Japan, have already begun to expand upon these themes of moral values, civic, citizenship, and human rights education in their respective reform agendas. Buk-Berge alluded to a European-wide curricular discussion scheduled in the winter of 2006, which will influence Norwegian directives. She stated that the forthcoming Norwegian educational policy will reflect an increased multicultural focus with attention paid to equality, Sami<sup>37</sup> and ethnic minorities, and youth and the environment (informal interview, 29 September, 2006). Centers in the Asia-Pacific region are also strengthening alliances to explore Asia-Pacific traditions and perspectives to further develop moral education and citizenship programs locally, as well as to contribute to the global dialogue (Lee, Grossman, Kennedy, and Fairbrother, 2004). Continuing phases of the IEA Civics Study support the international interest in assessing and improving the situation of moral values education in relation to democracy, citizenship, and civic values.

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<sup>37</sup> Sami are the indigenous inhabitants of northern Scandinavia. Previously, they exhibited a nomadic lifestyle following reindeer herds, but due to decreased numbers of reindeer, many have opted to move to towns or cities and settle.

## 7.8 Summary

It is evident that Dewey's framework has provided the pre-requisites for democratic learning in both of these educational systems, despite the fact that some historical periods demonstrated a stronger tendency to incorporate the values of a democratic philosophy with moral values education. Just as individuals are unique based upon distinctive experiences, so too are the educational philosophies and systems of Japan and Norway. Bridges (1994) made the point that, "citizenship education must draw on civic culture and it must reflect that culture" (quoted in Kennedy, 2004: 17). In other words, Japanese or Norwegian democracy "is part the local value set" and frames the kind of moral values in line with this civic culture (ibid). Goodman (2003) has argued that reform rhetoric is similar in the East and West, although the actual language of the debates is used in different ways. Clearly, each borrowed model must be evaluated in terms of appropriateness to the debate. Policy makers often transport models designed in one context without realizing the "distinctive historical and cultural dimension of policies is to risk 'false universalism' whereby similarities are spotted without reference to the context in which they were developed," (Power and Whitty, 1999: 124). As Dewey and others have alluded to, we can learn from history and social evolution; however, we must be mindful of the cultural and historical influences which have shaped a specific society before mixing and matching social constructs from dissimilar models.

## **Chapter 8: Reconsidering the Role of Moral Values Education in the Twenty-First Century**

The principle objective of this thesis was to characterize moral values education as it is conceived in the primary school curricula of Japan and Norway. The scope of my inquiry reflected upon the evolving role and aims of moral values education in the school and society as narrated in Chapters 4 and 5. I also explored the conception of moral values education within the framework of democratic learning in terms of the curricular rhetoric in Chapter 6. Drawing upon the foundational framework presented in Chapter 3, it was possible to characterize Japanese and Norwegian moral values education within a democratic learning framework and to distinguish distinctly Japanese and Norwegian characteristics of moral values education, as discussed in Chapter 7. This chapter presents the conclusions of the thesis and provides a look forward in this area of research.

### **8.1 Dewey Revisited: Moral Values Education and Democratic Learning in Pluralistic Societies**

The writings of John Dewey have been steering educationalists for over a century, and still today, his philosophy continues to provide relevant lessons and guidance. As his philosophy suggests, the environment in which we live today is a result of the growth of previous generations and new experiences should continue contributing to the growth of individuals and society. As the study on moral values education in the Japanese and Norwegian primary school curricula illustrates, moral values education is most effectively incorporated in the framework of democratic education. These two approaches can function mutually in order to promote democratic and cultural understanding, national and civic values, respect between individuals and social values, and tolerance in the school and the society. As the communities in which we live become increasingly more pluralistic, it is essential that civic culture adapts positively to these changes. Tu (2000) suggested:

Education ought to be the civil religion of society. The primary purpose of education is character building. Intent on the cultivation of the full person, school should emphasize ethical as well as cognitive intelligence. Schools should teach the art of accumulating “social capital” through communication. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, schooling must be congenial to the development of cultural competence and the appreciation of spiritual values. (p. 262)

Buk-Berge agreed that it is the responsibility of schools to help meet the challenges of a diversifying society in terms of values education by developing social and cultural competencies, inter-cultural communication, and respect, among others (informal interview, 29 September, 2006). Interviewees in Lee's (2004) study also responded positively to integrated moral values education programs in schools, citing that the understanding of traditions, culture, and customs of society can help in strengthening identity and personal pride and that "teachers are expected to help students understand their unique origins and heritages and treat other's differences with respect" (p. 147).

## 8.2 The Importance of Alternative Approaches to Moral Values Education

Rather than reach a consensus on specific moral values which are imbedded in culture, it seems more sensible to agree on a platform of general principles that are simultaneously supported by a philosophy of democratic learning and can contribute to the global education discourse on moral values education. Nussbaum (1997) has endorsed "cosmopolitan education" which spans borders and encourages the value of equal worth among all people (quoted in Kennedy, 2004: 18). Kennedy's (2004) exploration of the Asian values question concluded that while tension and conflict between a global humanity and local cultural traditions remain, at the very least, valuing a common humanity must be agreed upon. Brunn and Jacobsen (2000) have suggested an alternative point of departure in terms of centralizing the curriculum of values education, basing content on a global understanding of values, with human rights as the focal point.

Instead of using the dissimilarities of historically determined value systems as a point of departure for defining the normative content of contemporary human rights, we should concentrate on how globalisation, understood as global economic integration, global environmental issues, rising prominence of international organizations, revolutionising development in military and communications technology, etc. affects human beings, regardless of the differences in terms of cultures, values or religion. (p. 11; quoted in Kennedy, 2004: 19).

In fact, moral values education is interdependent on the understanding of democracy to human rights. In 1989, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ratified the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, which expressed the relationship between democracy



and human rights, and the right to schooling under these conditions. The UNESCO approach is defined as:

A comprehensive human rights education takes account of citizenship, and considers that good citizenship is connected with human rights as a whole. Conversely, citizenship education which trains citizens aware of the human and political issues at stake in their society or nation, requires from each citizen ethical and moral qualities. All forms of citizenship education aim at shaping respect for others by fostering a spirit of tolerance and peace. (UNESCO: *Human Rights Education*)

A human rights-based approach to moral values education shifts the ultimate aim from that of individual development to defining a collective goal for all of humanity. The importance of school rules and regulations also ensures that when children attend school, they are learning in a safe environment.

### 8.3 Alignment of Values between the School, the Curriculum, and the Society

The moral values discussion should also consider a back-to-the-basics approach. The reality of schooling means that children and young people spend 35-40 hours per week participating in formal education, not to mention the additional hours devoted to homework and extra-curricular activities, and a large portion of the national expenditure is devoted to this cause.<sup>38</sup> Schooling contributes to development of student's moral, spiritual, social, and cultural growth, yet according to the rhetoric in both curricula, cooperation between the home, the school, and society must be fostered in order to provide a solid foundation for the development of children. In the face of a more pluralistic society, the challenges of today arise when there are conflicting aims of education, or other issues such as socio-economic background, contributing to the values conflict. An alignment of values between the school, the curriculum and the society can only occur when there is a commitment to realizing a common aim of education. The role of each of these actors must also be clear in order to achieve this. I suggest the following recommendations:

- Promote a school culture that fosters a democratic learning environment. Lawton (2000) has noted a lack of analysis in this are, in part due to the complexity and

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<sup>38</sup> Refer to Appendix 3

multi-dimensionality of the school as an organization. There are a variety of beliefs, values, attitudes, and expectations which exist but not all on the same level, so coming to terms with these contradictions is a step forward in determining a school's vision (ibid). Encourage participation and discourse among children and teachers. Respect of others stems from an understanding of respect for one's self.

- Broaden the approach to moral values education in formal education by incorporating the discussion of values into all subjects and extra-curricular activities and taking into account the informal influences in values development among young people. From foreign language to mathematics to sport, all school subjects can provide a vehicle for developing awareness about the diversity of moral, ethical, religious, civic, and political values. Moral values education should be considered a part of continuing education; it doesn't stop once we complete formal schooling.
- From training, to approach, to teaching materials, educators should be better equipped in order to deliver the aims of the curriculum. The aim of education must be clearly conceptualized and outlined at the national level in the core curriculum. State-approved textbooks enable some semblance of uniformity in ensuring that all children are provided a common point of reference. On the other hand, teachers should be permitted some flexibility in how to best utilize the teaching materials and adapt them to individual student's needs and abilities.
- Students and parents, educators and policy makers, the local community and society must be committed to a set of common values that are evident in both educational and political rhetoric. Consider where policy has come from before considering where it is headed. School and society should reflect one another and cooperate to grow together.

## 8.4 Looking Forward

I recently perused the headlines of *The New York Times* online edition (6 May, 2006) and learned that 9 million overweight U.S. children are now being encouraged to take responsibility of their own weight and health; that according to a personal letter from the President of Iraq, President Bush cannot reconcile peace through Christian values; and that, as opinion-editorial columnist Thomas L. Friedman, wrote, "This world is full of bad guys getting rich, not by building decent societies, but by simply drilling oil wells." What is

blatantly obvious to me in these headlines alone is that throughout the world, individuals, governments, and societies struggle with making ethically-orientated choices. The global environment is uncertain, so there is indeed no better time than the present for citizens to participate, become informed, and demonstrate accountability - concepts learned through a comprehensive moral values curriculum.

The role of education is a two way street. It must encourage the evolution of society, as well as respond to the changes in society (Beauchamp, 1986: 19; Nagai, 1985: 17; quoted in Hood, 1991: 16). Social environments are changing due to the overall effects of globalization: urbanization and democratization; scientific and technological progress; mass media and terrorism; higher levels of education and the continuing struggle to provide basic education. These are but a few concepts in an evolving list which affect the values structure of our everyday lives, and in turn, affect the issues surrounding values education in school systems. Civilization survives because we learn to adapt over time and we need to continue to develop among diverse environments. Yet, as the world expands and contracts aren't the democracies we live in strengthened by the coming together of people from diverse backgrounds who share their knowledge and perspective? Giddens (2002: 5) has suggested:

Tolerance of cultural diversity and democracy are closely connected, and democracy is currently spreading world-wide. Globalisation lies behind the expansion of democracy. At the same time, paradoxically, it exposes the limits of the democratic structures which are most familiar, namely the structures of parliamentary democracy. We need to further democratise existing institutions, and to do so in ways that respond to the demands of the global age. We shall never be able to become the masters of our own history, but we can and must find ways of bringing our runaway world to heel.

The foundation of education varies from country to country, democracy to democracy. While educationalists need *models* to compare beliefs and traditions that come from an earlier time, or borrowed concepts from other places (Goodman, 2003), it is equally important to consider the *process* involved in creating educational strategies which are appropriate. Arthur (2003) agreed that, "From Rousseau through Dewey to Piaget and Kohlberg, all reject metaphysics and subordinate it to method. Process is more important than content" (p. 69). Dewey's criteria for democratic learning should be considered: participation, shared values and mutual interests, and free interaction and discourse between social groups. When this process occurs within a community, it enables the aims of education, the role of schooling, and the

cultural values of the society to be discussed freely and educational and social policies can be constructed based upon a consensus.

The conclusion of this thesis is that despite contrasting educational foundations, a unique philosophy of education inspired by different cultural traditions has evolved in both Japan and Norway. From the early foundations of the educational system through today, this philosophy of education has enabled a distinctive approach to the development and implementation of ideas surrounding moral values education. However, as populations diversify and geographical borders change, multiple modernities must be considered. Grossman (2004) shared Tu's (1998) perspective that modernization is not "homogenizing and linear," rather "a process that can assume different cultural forms" and the potential for hybrid democratic systems to form, based on local, regional, and global patterns, is the result (quoted in Grossman, p. 1). Education remains one of the fundamental tools in fostering democracy in the nation state. One of the aims of education is to develop character or promote a moral outlook and the curriculum should adequately reflect the philosophical, educational, and practical components of this foundation. Culture matters, too, by influencing the attributes of the individual and the collective and distinguishing the diversity in values among societies. Moral values education simply cannot be effective without considering this point. Culture shapes the manner in which we communicate, our relationships, the way we see ourselves and the way we view others. It influences the direction of nations and the people driving them, the understanding of democratic principles and their implementation. Culture characterizes the source of our character.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Guide – Japan

Informal interview conducted with two Japanese university students (A san, B san)<sup>39</sup> and two Japanese university professors (C sensei, D sensei) during a visit to Oslo; 5 December, 2005.

1. How do you understand the term “moral values education” (*dotoku*)?
2. Where do you learn moral values? In school, at home, from the community, etc.?
3. How is the subject of moral values different than other subjects like social studies?
4. In your opinion, is it “good” to have moral values education as a subject at school?
5. How do you understand “democracy”?
6. Do you learn about democracy in school or elsewhere?
7. Do you think there is a Japanese version of democracy? Where is it present? How do you identify with it?

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<sup>39</sup> The interviewees asked to remain anonymous. *San* is used at the end of a name when addressing another person. *Sensei* refers to teachers, doctors, and generally anyone who is trained to teach something to someone.

## **Appendix 2: Interview Guide – Norway**

Informal interview conducted with Dr. Elisabeth Buk-Berge, Senior Adviser at the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research; 29 September, 2006.

1. Please share some of your initial thoughts on moral values education and democratic education in schools from a personal and policy maker's perspective.
2. As a Norwegian, how do you conceptualize moral values education? Democratic education?
3. In your opinion, what are the "core" values taught in Norwegian schools?
4. Dewey's philosophy of democratic learning has been influential in the development of the Norwegian education system. However, are there other ideas, philosophies, or approaches from other countries which have been considered?
5. What you say that "Scandinavian" education follows a similar approach or model in these terms?
6. What are the values of the "welfare state"? Are considerations made first for the collective, then the individual?
7. How are Norwegian schools meeting the challenges of a diversifying society in terms of values education?
8. Do you think the values of the welfare state will withstand the test of time?
9. What do kids in school learn about democracy? How do they participate in democracy? Is it easy to get them to participate in democracy?

### Appendix 3: Japan and Norway in Figures

	Japan	Norway
<b>Population</b>	127 687 million	4 592 million
<b>Total Area</b>	378 000 sq km	324 000 sq km
<b>Population per sq km</b>	338 per sq km	14 per sq km
<b>Government</b>	Constitutional Monarchy	Constitutional Monarchy
<b>Expenditure on Educational Institutions (% of public and private GDP)</b>	4.63 %	6.37 %
<b>Compulsory Schooling</b>	9 years, beginning at age 6 (6+3)	10 years, beginning at age 6 (4+3+3)
<b>School Year</b>	From April, lasts 230 days	From August, lasts 187 days

*Source: Based on data from OECD in Figures (2005).*