

Speak up for democracy? “Value-foundation’s” discontinuous history

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In an academic report from 2012 called “How to realize the value-foundation?” (Hur realiseras värdegrunden?), two Swedish pedagogues, Tomas Englund and Anna-Lena Englund, present an extensive examination of what has been the outcome of twenty years of existence of the concept of “value-foundation” (värdegrund)¹ and the so-called “value-foundation work” in the Swedish school. They are not quite content. What emerged in the years 1992-1994 as a policy-concept to organize the school’s new mission to foster democratic citizens in a context of increasing heterogeneity and neoliberal demands on the young citizens, has today become a discourse of its own spanning across multiple fields. For example, it increasingly takes the place of what in English would be called a company’s or organization’s “policies & values”, and it has created a genre of its own in organizations (Nyström Höög 2015). Discursively, “value-foundation” is now used as a reference to some form of taken for granted cluster of fundamental or structuring values, which themselves are rarely developed. Instead, there is a foundation, a thing or guarding entity. A shared feature between the school and these other environments is that a “value-foundation” always seeks to regulate the behaviour of individuals in a collective setting. In Sweden, it today overlaps with reforms that regulate the behaviour of the organizations themselves, such as New Public Management (ibid.). With Michel Foucault, we could call it a “transactional reality” (Foucault 2008).² In policy-contexts and within Government agencies, the Englunds describe the word as, “a word of honour”, that, “hindsight has assumed a linguistically positive, rhetorical position that many want to adhere to...” (Englund & Englund 2012: 7). Part of this history is how the Government’s ambitious calls to make the school into a space for deliberative democracy quickly got marginalized (in 2003-2010) by various behaviourist “programs” and “modules”, that in name of fostering “good” behaviour, preventing mental ill-health and bullying, managed to be casted as “democracy fostering”. For Tomas Englund, who was a promoter of deliberative democracy during the build-up of the “value-foundation work” in

¹ I deliberately keep the strangeness of this concept by translating it literally; “värdegrund” is composed by “värde” (value) and “grund” (foundation, ground, fundament). Marking it out with an in English even stranger concept, “value-foundation” is done to eschew a translation of it as referring to any obvious notion of fundamental values, and open for an inquiry of the discursive practices through which it comes into being as well as the strategic relations that it is implicated in.

² Foucault talks about “transactional realities” (*réalités de transaction*) in the context of the emergence of “civil society”. The realities of civil society, madness and sexuality (Foucault’s examples), “although they have not always existed are nonetheless real, are born precisely from the interplay of relations of power and everything which constantly eludes them, at the interface, so to speak, of governors and governed.” (Foucault 2008: 297) The concept is fruitful to study the kind of reality that “value-foundation” with time denotes, a reality that always-already presupposes a certain regulation of human behaviour.

the school, such a discursive migration and hollowing out of the school's democracy fostering potential is a disappointment, one set in a larger political field of contending positions on what type of democracy, citizens and regulations of behaviour that should be fostered. Today, the direction of how these elements shall be balanced has tilted somewhat back towards the emphasis on communicative democracy. In 2017, on the homepage of the Swedish National Agency for Education, "value-foundation work" is described as an integrated framework to secure "democratic competence":

The value-foundation work can be described by using the perspectives about, through and for. Children and pupils shall have gotten knowledges **about** human rights and democracy. These knowledges they get **through** a democratic mode of working and when children's and pupils' influence and implication are central. Their democratic competence is then developed **for** our common future democracy.³

In this paper, by starting from the discontinuities that characterize this ambitious effort to produce democratic citizens, I want to map a larger apparatus to govern social relations in Sweden from the viewpoint of how it is at once productive and yet "weak", wrought with internal contradictions. By writing a brief history of the "value-foundation" project in the Swedish school as a history of discontinuity and contradictions in governmental strategies to intervene into the population, I thereby want to contribute to a larger Foucault-inspired field to study modern forms of government. However, contrary to most approaches of governmentality, instead of being content with identifying forms of governmentality and assuming large-scale interventions and increasing power relations, I want to keep the topography of failures and cracks in these strategies visible. By introducing the Foucauldian concept "apparatus" into the context of how relations are increasingly governed in Sweden, the paper shows how the power relations that are produced through these governmental interventions can be thought both in terms of their totalizing and robust character, and from the viewpoint of how they are displaced, inverted and eventually break down (Foucault 1980, Deleuze 1992). Instead of producing more and more thorough subjections, the concept of apparatus enables to focus on how speech and visibility are induced to produce a certain form of circulation within the spaces and relations it regulates. With this co-existence of "weakness" and "strength", the paper aims to re-introduces pockets of resistance and incompleteness into the study of forms of governmentality.

In 2000, at the peak of the development of the venture into the larger integrated apparatus that value-foundation work in the school constitutes today, the school's "work with the value-foundation" had thorough and very specific strategic focuses. In the tradition of Swedish

³ <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/vardegrund>, the author's translation from Swedish into English.

social engineering, the project – for which the Swedish National Agency of Education was primarily responsible – consisted in transforming the school into a deliberative democratic *milieu*, through which it was thought possible to foster democratic citizens, mainly by making pupils train ethical capacities and learn about fundamental values. The main idea was that by supporting conditions for deliberations on values to take place, the “fundamental values of the democracy” could be strengthened in both individuals and collectives. Through deliberation, children and youth were thought to develop an “ethical preparation to act” (Skolverket 2000: 10). To counteract effects of increasing heterogeneity, and racism and to bridge neoliberal demands on both increased autonomy, mobility and responsibility with some form of collective orientations (“the individual in a context”), the project envisioned the build-up of a democratic resilience in the young population (*ibid.*). Acting upon relations and group dynamic was deemed central (11). As a “foundation”, the “value-foundation” marked an ethical turn that sought to engender an approach of non-indifference, and a sense of democracy not primarily related to democratic freedoms and rights, but rather to “democratic values”. Around 2000, the “foundation” therefore marked a non-toleration approach when it comes to which values and opinions that shall be tolerated. The goal of the project was then to engender a “democratic approach” in the individual pupils and citizen-to-be, based on a reflexive self-awareness of how one approaches, communicates and values one another in the school environment (as a miniature of the society at large). In the strategy of the Swedish National Agency of Education, two dimensions were primarily considered; the school as a governmental environment (*milieu*), and the function of deliberation as a main strategy and indicator of how “democratic” the environment was. In terms of an environment and field of intervention, the school was thought as a space of approaches, interaction, meeting places and “working relations”. By focusing on deliberation, the actual outcomes and how to secure/evaluate them were considered in terms of “ethical preparation to act”, “democratic competence”, and more generally an understanding of democracy as procedural (not related to form), individual yet collective, and foremost effect-oriented (*ibid.* 9). As has been noted (Dahlstedt 2009, Dahlstedt & Fejes 2013), the “value-foundation” project is a good example of what Foucault conceptualizes as “governmentality”, a form of environmental governmental interventions that through forms of knowledge, act upon dispositions, motivations and relations, seeking to engender certain forms of beneficial behaviour in the population (Krassman et al. 2011).⁴ The overview just presented makes clear that as an example of governmentality, it is thorough. However, as an ambitious project and history, what above

⁴ In a somewhat broader description of governmentality, Bröckling, Krasmann & Lemke call it “a range of forms of action and fields of practice aimed in a complex way at steering individuals and collectives” (Bröckling, Krasmann & Lemke 2011: 1)

appears as robust, is also vulnerable and wrought with internal contradictions. In a report from 2012, the School Inspectorate describes the school's "work with the value-foundation" as insufficient. Both teachers and pupils lack critical approaches and the school's capacity to foster democratic citizens and work as a space for deliberation and value-training is fragile and varies in quality and scope (Skolinspektionen, 2012).

Foucault's work is particularly helpful "both to construct and to elucidate problematics" (Chambers 2006: 12), in this case to highlight what is both important and difficult about the efforts to secure a democratic regeneration in youth and how it relates to a larger field of regulation of behaviour. With Foucault, we must not participate in a given notion of fundamental values and any existing "value-foundation", as a thing, but rather, with an archaeological approach, study the discursive practices on relations, behaviour and values in which it emerges in the first place. Discourses, in this view, are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1972: 54). The discourse on value-foundation is therefore taken not to be a mere prolongation of the school's fostering of children and a concern with supporting the democracy, but rather the emergence of something new; a new way of making power relations function, with novel possible gains and strategic functions. We can therefore not trace any history of "value-foundation" *before* its emergence, but only *after* it. The archaeological approach, through its rejection of constants, enables to trace discontinuities and ongoing transformations (Foucault 1972). Foucault's genealogical tactic, on the other hand, by tracing the dispersed origins of that which appears as given and familiar in the present, enables to render the present strange, hence opening for us to become otherwise. I take both of these tactics as ways of re-opening discontinuity in a context in which knowledge, science and power relations produce continuity and coherence to something which at its heart is already different from itself. As mentioned above, such an approach produces a different account from ways in which governmentality has been interpreted and used in "governmentality studies". William Walters points out that approaches that have turned governmentality into a analytics of power often overlook Foucault's genealogical tactics, which rejected universals and sought to render contingent that which appears as given in the present (Walters 2012). As a consequence, they render strategies of power and control and forms of subjectification—that the very governmentality approach seeks to criticize—robust and intact. I will not engage extensively with this problem here, but take two examples of conceptualization and identification of governmentality that are relevant to the ethical regulation of behaviour in Sweden; Nikolas Rose's (2000) theorization of *ethopolitics* and how Magnus Dahlstedt's account of "value-foundation" in the context of his conceptualization of a *politics of activation* (a concept he takes from Rose).

Rose claims that in the turn to ethics and values with the Third Way in Britain, which in many ways resembles the political changes in Sweden, a new type of politics and diagram of power emerges (Rose 2000: 1397). By relying on Foucault, with “ethopolitics”, Rose tries to develop Foucault’s conceptualization of “the ways in which subjects of government are collectivized” in the context of the Third Way in Britain (ibid.). Parallel to how Foucault conceptualized discipline as a diagram⁵ of power, Rose views ethopolitics as a diagram that supersedes previously existing forms of citizen-formation and nation-building that existed in the 19th and 20th century. Comparable to the ethical turn in Sweden, by aiming to reconcile values the strategic aim of ethopolitics is to foster the recreation of civic society (1404). This power, ethopower, with Rose:

works through the values, beliefs, and sentiments thought to underpin the techniques of responsible self-government and the management of one’s obligations to others. In ethopolitics, life itself, in its everyday manifestations, is the object of adjudication. I think that this political deployment is related to a new diagram of power or a new game of power: the community-civility game. It involves new conceptions of those who are to be governed and the proper relations between governors and governed (Rose 2000: 1399).

Rose’s account is powerful in many respects, not least in view of how what he claims in 2000 is a new diagram of power has remained in vogue throughout Europe and elsewhere (also in Canada, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand, Hulse & Stone 2007, as well as Norway, Nykänen 2010). The account alerts us to identify new fields of governmental interventions that seek to act upon communal ties, sense of belonging and responsibility that have been predominant ways of addressing or managing problems constituted through what broadly could be called neoliberal discourses on social exclusion and social cohesion (Hulse & Stone 2007). However, the critical emphasis on power and strategies, even if it is not the intention, also tends to evacuate the nuances on exactly how manipulative, productive or resilient this diagram of power is and how it produces a new reality. Contrary to Deleuze’s account of a diagram, *ethopower* is not conceptualized from the viewpoint of its internal transformation and possibilities that it might breaking down and turn into something else (Deleuze 1988).

In Magnus Dahlstedt’s adoption of Rose’s work, that addresses “value-foundation” as a form of governmentality, the robustness and coherence of power relations in acting upon communal ties is even more accentuated in the effort to identify a clear cut and path-breaking new form of governmental intervention. Dahlstedt notes that in the turn to values in Sweden, what seems essential for the “survival” of democracy to the Government and the reports by

⁵ A diagram of power is according to Deleuze’s reading of Foucault characterized by how it produces a new reality: “every diagram is intersocial and constantly evolving. It never functions in order to represent a persisting world but produces a new kind of reality, a new model of truth” (Deleuze 1988: 35).

agencies that are take part in securing it, is “the capacity to discourse” (Dahlstedt 2009: 85-86). Such a capacity, Dahlstedt adds, is strategically deemed to engender not only democracy but also individual development and health. The capacity is indexed (a concept he does not use) through the concept of “democratic competence”, and, thus, both parents and personnel must be “activated” to increase their awareness and knowledge about how “learning, democratic competence and health relate” (Skolverket quoted by Dahlstedt, 87). The account shows us the main strategy and technique (deliberation) and the form of knowledge and concept through which its outcome or effect can be monitored (democratic competence), as well as the relations that this form of intervention acts upon (children-parents-personnel-society). In resonance with Rose’s account, we can contend that this approach, nicely *identifies* new ways in which power relations operate through governmental interventions into social relations. However, the identification without a genealogical tactic assumes increased domination and more intense power relations. In this account, we cannot know what the outcome of the strategies are, and Dahlstedt eschews giving examples of contradictions. In the next phase of Dahlstedt’s account of “value-foundation”, when tracing another important aspect of governmentality—the problematizations or urgency that prompted the governmental program—Dahlstedt identifies how “other cultures” were deemed a challenge to the regeneration of the values. Dahlstedt here refers to how “value-foundation” emerged with a reference to Western humanist values and Christian ethics, and as something in singular (*the* value-foundation). Dahlstedt’s conclusion from his account is that there was a clear division between Western and non-Western, the former the norm and the latter the deviant “in need of adaptation” (93). The problem with this account is that it is oriented towards confirming a singly type of fairly constant motive for the programs of democratic fostering.⁶ The critical model, instead of seeking to pluralize contradictions, discontinuities and fractions, render the form of governmentality at stake coherent, constant and intact, Dahlstedt concludes in broad terms: “the efforts to fix a ‘value-foundation of the democracy’ enables a series of interventions that to some degree shape the citizen as a subject, on the premise of a set of non-political, seemingly natural and undiscussable values. Herewith, ethnicity also becomes a central question” (95). The account produces a generality instead of several singularities. Contra this focus on subjection and a single origin for a dominant type of

⁶ When turning to the main document in that evaluated the venture to implement a strategy for “value-foundation work” in the school, the Value-foundation Book (*Värdegrundsboken*, 2000), Dahlstedt accentuates the image of how “immigrants” were problematized, as if it is a mere continuation of the bill’s (1992) reference to a Western and Christian ethics. The only problem is that the reference to Western and Christian ethics was *erased* already in the updated school policy in 1998, and could thus be considered “a parenthesis in the history of the Swedish school” (Hedin & Lahdenperä 2007: 18). However, Dahlstedt has rightly noted that “immigrant” cultures are problematized, and that such a problematization reproduces distinctions (in plural) between “immigrants” and “Swedes”. He does not mention it, but we can assume (Dahlstedt seems to do it) that this distinction enables the proliferation of racist practices. What we cannot see in Dahlstedt’s account is the difference between the problematization in 1992-1994, the one in 2000 and later ones.

intervention, in the following I want to propose a reading that focuses on how the discourse on “value-foundation” is involved in a production of reality and constant displacements between knowledge, power and subjectifications, whose outcomes in terms of subject-formation cannot be assumed beforehand or taken to be fully efficient.

Apparatus: novelty and displacements

By returning to Foucault’s emphasis on discontinuities (his rejection of ‘constants’ and ‘universals’), we can avoid an analysis of power-relations that is content with identifying them. By tracing the discontinuous history of power relations, knowledge and subjectifications, I propose to read the emergence of “value-foundation” and the regulative function it is part of as an element of a larger “apparatus” (*dispositif*). The concept of apparatus helps me to highlight both the productive character – the “new” – that emerges, while at the same time keeping visible how the production of a new reality, of new connections between knowledge and power and new strategic possibilities, are always-already wrought with internal contradictions and displacements. In his shortest definition, Foucault describes the apparatus as “strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge” (Foucault 1980: 196), or; “a formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need” (194).⁷ In the discourse on value-foundaiton in Sweden, these needs have ranged from the need to secure democratic regeneration to a more general regulation of behaviour to become more predictable for and aligned to the ends of an organization. I use “apparatus” to highlight a system of connection and supports that pluralize strategic possibilities and opens for sciences to get involved in circuits of power relations. Gilles Deleuze description of Foucault’s “apparatus” (he calls it “social apparatus”) is fruitful to highlight the elements and dynamics of the apparatus. To Deleuze, it designates “a tangle, a multilinear ensemble...composed of lines” (Deleuze 1992: 159). These lines are characterized by changes in direction, bifurcations, forks and drifting. Importantly, apparatuses are “machines which make one see and speak” (160). But as power is internal to the apparatus, all apparatuses are also composed of lines of force; “The line of force comes about ‘in any relationship between one point and another’, and passes through every area in the apparatus” (ibid.). This account gives us an image of a productive field of social relations, in which power, knowledge, objects and subjects, play upon one another and produces constant

⁷ In a longer description, Foucault describes it with three elements. First, it is a “thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions - in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault 1980: 194). Second, the apparatus itself, “is the system of relations that can be established between these elements... the nature of the connection that can exist between [them]”.⁷ And third, having a “dominant strategic function”, the apparatus can be characterized as “a formation which has as its major function *at a given historical moment that of responding to an urgent need*” (ibid., emphasis added).

displacements and relations. What is essential here is that this account lets us grasp the fields of social apparatuses as essentially productive, wrought with power relations and yet as something that inevitably breaks down. Or, as Deleuze puts it: “Each apparatus is thus defined in terms of its newness content and its creativity content, this marking at the same time its ability to transform itself, or, indeed to break down in favour of a future apparatus” (163-164). The new is what we are about to become, our “becoming-other”. Hence, contra assumptions of an automatic and homogeneous reinforcement of power-relations as knowledge, power-relations and modes of subjectification are put into play through governmental strategies, the pluralization of possibilities of “go-betweens” that the apparatus produces between these could equally well mean the beginning of the end – or substantial alteration – of something that in the present appears as robust. The apparatus, in my reading, highlights how weakness and robustness are easily exchangeable and sometimes hard to distinguish from one another. Machines are always at risk of breaking down or becoming different from what they were.⁸

In Sweden, the apparatus I am interested in stretches from the ways in which the school’s environment is taken into account in a new way, to how “value-foundation” connects as diverse matters as appropriate behavior in an organization and an organizational space, public health, bullying, critical thinking and willingness to learn, social competence, knowledge on politics, democracy and human rights, engagement, the problems of passivity and silence, to broader principles of conduct and practices of self-assessment and confession, in a play between these or in enabling new elements to be included to its “ensemble”. With Foucault, we can think the strategic function of the apparatus as seeking to guarantee a certain form of *circulation* by the way it fosters a minimum degree of tolerance, capacity and preparedness to act, self-esteem, capacity to listen to others, etc. In short, a certain “competence”.⁹

⁸ In a different account that is also influenced by Foucault’s apparatus, Jacques Rancière for example mentions moments of intervals and interruptions of how time is organized as, “moments when one of the social machines that structure the time of domination break down and stop” (Rancière 2012: 7). A longer quote is: “There are intervals and there are interruptions: moments when one of the social machines that structure the time of domination break down and stop. It may happen with trains and buses; it may happen with the school apparatus, or perhaps with some other form of machine. There are also moments when crowds take to the streets in order to oppose their agenda to that of the state and its temporality of exploitation” (Rancière 2012: 7).

⁹ As shown above, “democratic competence” was a central notion to evaluate the outcome of the project in the school, and it in 2013 figures in accounts of what type of citizens the democracy as a whole needs in the policy domain “democracy policy” (skr. 2013/14:63). Various notions of “competence” were circulating in the documents on the reconfiguration of the school into a democracy-fostering space before “democratic competence” became dominant. Among these were, moral competence, social competence, professional competence and competence to act.

To continue with Foucault, he mentions two things that should draw our attention when studying a apparatus. First, there is the prevalence of a *strategic objective* that is floating around in a crucial moment or in relation to a number of events that call for an urgent response. This is broadly what I have been speaking of above in terms of a new type of circulation and subjectification. Second, the continued existence of the apparatus is related to a “double process”: one of “functional overdetermination” and one of “strategic elaboration”. It is functionally overdetermined because, “each effect – positive or negative, intentional or unintentional – enters into resonance or contradiction with the others and thereby calls for a re-adjustment or a re-working of the heterogeneous elements that surface at various points.” (Foucault 1980: 195) This overdetermination and fluctuation leads to a “strategic elaboration” that enables to re-work the relations between the heterogeneous elements that the apparatus puts into resonance.

The emergence of “value-foundation”: addressing multiple urgencies

To begin mapping how this apparatus is assembled and traversed by discontinuities, we must recall Englund & Englund’s (2012) slight disappointment over the misadventures of “value-foundation”. The marginalization of the more serious deliberative democratic ambitions of “rooting democratic values” in the pupils was coextensive to a more neoliberal priority (with Tomas Östros as new school minister, Englund & Englund 2012) and the take over of the right in the next elections (from 2006-2010). What worries Englund with the marginalization of deliberative democracy in the value-foundation work is the loss of the possibility to foster and maintain a plural “we” that is ethically prepared to regenerate the democracy—a *social* democracy. In contrast to Dahlstedt’s sole focus on “immigrant culture” as a general and constant problematization in the emergence of the integrated framework of value-foundation work, there is also an ongoing political competition on *which* society, democracy and “we” that should be fostered and regenerated. Problematizing immigrant cultures and heterogeneity has different functions and emphasis in such a context. Depending on how they are played out, the emphasis varies in how cultural conflicts, individualism and the need common values, or issues between how pluralism and a common set of values relate, as well as what this implies for how to act upon relations between parents, children, teachers and society at large.

To reconstruct and understand this issue, we must return to the context of the emergence of “value-foundation” and to the problems and urgencies that the school’s “value-foundation work” was supposed to address. What one finds, in brief, is this: the school has at least since the Second World War (WWII) been an institution endowed with some sort of mandate to strengthen democracy and foster democratic citizens. However, this mandate has varied quite substantially (Englund & Englund 2012). After the WWII, the emphasis was on “neutral”, non-authoritarian and non-doctrinal teaching founded in scientific objectivity, and in supporting possibilities for students to themselves take on democracy-strengthening activities (such as school magazines, various committees and forms of community, cooperation and socialization across cultural and class-bound boundaries). However in the new school policy in 1980 (Lgr 80, under a Social Democratic government), the school’s “neutral” position on moral-political education is abandoned in favour of a clear stance for fostering:

the school shall actively and consciously affect and stimulate children’s and youth’s will to embrace our democracy’s fundamental values and let these be expressed in viable, everyday

Through the process of strategic elaboration, a *strategic completion (remplissement)* of the apparatus comes about, in which one measure or outcome from the apparatus is put to use or migrates to a different domain.

Foucault takes the example of the apparatus of imprisonment to illustrate how the negative measures of locking people up and exposing them to a number of intricate disciplinary measures, engendered a number of positive possibilities (behaviors, subjectivities, modes of production, etc.) that were “re-utilised for diverse political and economic ends” (Foucault 1980: 196).

practice. The school shall therefore develop such capacities in the pupils that can sustain and strengthen the democracy's principles of tolerance, collaboration and equal treatment between the humans. (Lgr 1980: 16f)

As part of this new mandate, the policy adds that the school shall also try to actively seek to include the "immigrants in our country" into the societal community (17). There is a clear reference to fundamental values, but not yet any "value-foundation". In 1992, in the context of right-party coalition government's ambition to renew the school, this mandate to explicitly foster was reinforced in several ways. Here, fostering is a matter of securing the very foundations of the society, in a context of intense change and new demands on the citizens:

The basic values that our society rests upon are not once and for all given. They must be understood, rooted, explained, defended and developed. The norms that the school's activity should build upon, as the respect for the human dignity, individual freedom and integrity, gender equality between men and women, the care of the one who is in hardships, the personal responsibility, have a deep rooting in our land and our culture (prop. 1992/93:220, 18-19).

One reason for an increased mandate to foster was the adoption of a goal and result oriented governance through which the goals of fostering would now have to not only be ideals and formulas, but have concrete, evaluable consequences (Värdegrundsboken, 2000). And as the authors who first coined the concept value-foundation in 1999 described the process of crafting the concept, since the school [as an "authoritarian" institution] in any case would foster, with the higher ambitions on the outcomes of this fostering and without any guarantee that the actual fostering would yield the desired outcome in terms of values, it needed something that could strategically organize the policy document to secure this "non-authoritarian" outcome (Ständigt. Alltid! 1999: 12). The mission was to "create an agency [read: a form of teaching] in which the value-foundation engenders practical consequences and in which a living discussion is held on the values and the consequences of values with and between the school's personnel, the pupils and the parents." (14). As this quote indicates, the thing or reality that could organize this and stand in as an obvious reference for how these in fact new relations would be articulated, became "value-foundation". "Value-foundation" emerges in a moment of alterations of relations of forces and through discursive practices that have social relations as their object. There are two main focuses or "urgencies"; the challenge that other cultures pose to the school as an institution that seeks to reproduce a certain society and the challenge or pressure that a new, market-oriented and internationalized politics put on what types of citizens that the school shall form (a more flexible, responsible and mobile one than had existed before) (Skolvardagens komplexitet,

2011, see also Olson 2008).¹⁰ In the earlier phase of the venture, as Dahlstedt rightly noted, it was deemed essential to assure the “continuance of the culture” and the basic values by seeking to develop an “ethical compass” and a moral and social “competence” in the pupils. The context of this issue of regeneration was what was perceived as a two-faceted challenge: on the one hand, increased expressions of xenophobia and racism, and on the other hand how immigration, now quite large in Sweden, was perceived as posing challenges to the transmission of values and culture, and thus also to the school *to remain efficient* as central institution for such a transmission. “Immigrants”, the bill contended, are “from cultures that have a different view on many societal questions than most Swedes” (19). While there were cultural problems as such (gender-related and with regards to “authoritarian parents”), it was in particular this idea of a single, efficient school that was challenged in a conflict in which there was no idea of what this new, heterogeneous “we” would be characterized by. “Value-foundation” was thus a double way of saving/reinforcing the school as a primary institution for social engineering and governmental interventions in population. The urgencies in relation to which “value-foundation” emerges are also surrounded by several neighbouring problems and aims; general discourses on relations, quick changes in society and in the world, new attitudes among children, the new role of the teacher in this context, gender-issues and parent-children relations, to liberate individuals from conformism, taboos and “silences” and the need for more individual responsibility and preparation to act. “Value-foundation” as a transactional reality that responded to all this, and through which it could formulate yet additional domains in need of regulation, was perceived as more relevant than ever (*ibid.*). Once emerged and once the school was assumed to be – or to be in need of becoming – a “democratic space”, the same reality was suddenly confirmed as present everywhere and in need of “permeating” all of the school’s activities, in a play of references where problem and cure mirror each other and confirm a world full of relations in need of being ethically founded (13). The emergence of “value-foundation” in the early 1990s, and the transformation of the school (and later organizations) into a space with clear-cut expectations on how ethical principles and behaviour should correlate in 2000, turn the school into a site from which one—with the help of sciences—can monitor the “democratic competence” of youth. As part of a larger social apparatus to secure a certain type of approach in the citizens, “value-

¹⁰ Maria Olson highlights how the value-foundation efforts in the late 1990s must be seen as a counter-weight to the ever-stronger individualizing forces in school policy, which seek to assure more political influence, rights and autonomy for the individual in order to secure an active citizenship (Olson 2008: 201). The “value-foundation work” here surges as both individual, rights-strengthening and as a more collectivist counter-weight, to secure what I have argued is the conception of an “all-inclusive” vision of society that historically has been associated with Social Democracy, but perhaps more generally with a Swedish consensus culture and a state-centred democracy. It is a strategy to bind individual energies and aspirations into a collective project (in a sense that well reflects what Foucault terms “governmentality”). Olson however contends that this collectivist counter-weight is not strong enough to balance up individualizing forces in the school (such as those preparing the pupil’s to take different forms of individual initiatives and strive for autonomy).

foundation” enable the development of a dispersion of panoptic functions to monitor and guarantee an ethical-democratic minimum in the citizens. In the school, securing this outcome will however prove more difficult than some programmatic declarations seemed to assume.

Discursive and political articulation: the formation of an apparatus

It was not until the late 1990s that “value-foundation” would be articulated in a more ambitious attempt to seek to assure a democratic regeneration through the school, but also in society at large after the perceived “threats” to the foundations of the society had added up considerably (SOU 2000:1). Already during or right after the bill in 1992, a severe financial crisis hit Sweden, which undermined trust and participation in the political system (ibid.). The school now became a primary strategic site for a larger project of democratic regeneration that was organized through the creation of a policy domain called “democracy policy” (prop. 2001/02:80). In this history, in 1997, several urgencies were added to the formation of the problematization of *democratic* regeneration, in contrast to the bill from 1992 that did not centre on democracy specifically, but still understood regeneration in a broader sense; of the society, culture and of “lasting knowledges”.¹¹ The Large City Committee report (SOU 1997:118), a new bill on integration policy (prop. 1997/98:16), and the School Committee report (SOU 1997:121) are some of the reports that add to the formation of a problematization of democratic regeneration in this year. The same year, the directives to the Democracy Commission were written, and Prime Minister Göran Persson decided that there was a need for an information campaign on the Holocaust and the importance for youth to learn not to be ethically indifferent (prepared to act).¹² All of these and yet additional sites of discursive practices weaved their own layer to constitute a problem of democratic regeneration, or how “the foundations of the society” were under pressure. They all, in different ways, formulated their contribution to the constitution of an urgency to safeguard and strengthen the democracy by in particular developing practices targeting youth, but also immigrants, poor and segregated communities. The School Committee for example concluded that the changes on the level of identities and approaches of youth were “substantial”, with no reference in the past as possible point of comparison (SOU 1997:121, 23). The Large City

¹¹ Even if the problematizations are similar, as I noted above, this difference can roughly be said to go back on the different political ideals of what type of society one wanted to “save” or regenerate. But this history also reveals that the differences between the right and the Social Democrats are never substantial, reflecting what is broadly called the tradition of consensus (samförstånd) that characterize much of Swedish political history.

¹² The project, that became part of a larger information campaign initiated by Sweden, but involving the USA and Israel, focused specifically on Sweden’s historical responsibility in the Holocaust. The information campaign, that later was turned into a permanent Forum for workshops on tolerance and exhibitions, was initiated by Göran Persson after he got informed about the poor historical knowledge on the Holocaust of high school children (SOU 2001:5).

Committee described the new urban landscape of segregation in alarmistic terms, as a threat to participation and values – the cornerstones of Swedish democracy:

What is it that makes the segregation a societal problem? It is ultimately about the foundations of society. The society simply needs common values to keep together and work. One must be able to trust each other. One must not need to build fences and walls and hire security guards to be able to go to work or to travel on vacation. One must also be able to trust that it is through general elections that one elects the representatives of the regional and national government. One must be able to trust that all official power emanates from the people. A thirty percent voter turnout (the socially and economically most vulnerable areas are not there yet, but on their way) is not congruent with any of the above mentioned. A thirty percent voter turnout means that one does not trust each other. (SOU 1997: 118: 78)

The “foundations of the society” were hence perceived as under pressure. In the bill that transformed Swedish “immigration policy” into “integration policy” (prop. 1997/98:16), the questions on what could found a new Swedish identity in times of cultural diversity, demands on a flexible work force and worries for the cohesion of the society, were also raised. In the context of the school, “value-foundation” provided the already existing strategic elements to build a larger apparatus in 1997-2001 that could also work as a site of experiment to produce of democratic subjects in the adult world. The School Committee report identified the need to take the project of value-foundation work one step further: “the value-foundation questions must, according to our opinion, get a much larger impact in the evaluation” (SOU 1997:121, 303, meaning that it is the evaluation of the impact that should be the new strategic focus). The existing, but not yet very operative concept of “value-foundation”, would now, from early 1999 onwards, be the object that discursive practices that sought to integrate into a larger strategy of fostering democratic citizens that could address the heterogeneous problematizations that now prevailed. Thus, in 1999, the then school minister Ingegerd Wernersson, inaugurated the so-called “value-foundation year” (February 1 1999-March 31 2000), thereby initiating the “value-foundation project” (under the Ministry of Education) through which the until then rather abstract proclamations of the “value-foundation” were to be converted into actual practices through target group adapted efforts (Zackari & Modigh, 2000: 11). The experiences from the project and the reconfiguration of the school to become an environment in which “the value-foundation must permeate all activities” were summarized in the Value-Foundation Book (*Värdegrundsboken*, Zackari & Modigh, 2000). The project and the new ambitions for democracy fostering that it sought to make real resulted in a largescale knowledge production and several reports by the National Agency for Education on the practical conditions to achieve the desired outcomes, as well several books by mainly pedagogues that sought to translate the “value-foundation” to practical, critical and ethical questions of importance to the school and to

pedagogy (among some of these were; Orlenius 2001, Boström 2000, Hedin & Lahdenperä 2000, Lindgren 2001, and also Matsson 2001—in the committee to establish the Living History Forum).¹³ In addition, two value-foundation centres were founded to be operative at universities in 2000-2003 to produce research on the conditions for value-foundation work, to evaluate it and to produce knowledge that could induce it.¹⁴ From this moment onwards, I argue that “value-foundation” gets implicated in a more regulative and productive complex than was the case prior to it. Resonating with Rose’s concept of ethopolitics, here the ethical nature of people and their relations to community were articulated through various knowledge forms, among which deliberative democracy theory came to play a central role. One of the consequences is an increased discourse on the conditions to reach the goals of democratic value-training in the school in pedagogical research, which had an impact on policy discussions on the fostering function of the school (Olson 2008: 196). The discursive chatter that is the outcome of the new connections between knowledge, lines of force and possible modes of subjectification is notable in several domains, from pedagogical research, to news paper discussions, to the speech of deliberations in the school (between teachers, between teacher and pupils and also with parents). It is from these years onwards that “value-foundation” starts to migrate to other domains (Nyström Höög 2015), and is found in various context that all presuppose some form of regulation of human behaviour.

Producing reality and discourse

The centrality of deliberation and speech to the regulative function of “value-foundation” must therefore be directly linked to the strategic functions of the apparatus. At first, this speech, in pedagogy and in policy documents by the National Agency for Education, produced what I have termed the “transactional reality” of the “value-foundation”. If the concept itself emerged in 1992, as a “thing”, it is not until the years around the Value-foundation year that this “transactional reality” and the proper discourse of value-foundation is born (Englund & Englund 2012). Such pedagogical speech and the complex of connections, the ensemble, that value-foundation constitutes is well-reflected in a summarized description of “it” by the pedagogues Hedin & Lahdenperä:

The value-foundation is about relations between humans and how we treat and value each other as children and adults. The value-foundation is a pedagogical question that concern the whole of the school’s activity. The work with the value-foundation is a permanently ongoing process that comprises everyone in the school and that demands that the school conspire with the rest of the society. The value-foundation must be

¹³ It shall also be noted that the concept has been resisted

¹⁴ The centres were set up at Ersta-Sköndal University College together with Umeå University, and at Göteborg University.

focused to strengthen the democracy in school and society. Only thereby can we prevent and counteract bullying, sexual harassment, violence and other crimes, xenophobia and other expressions of the lack of respect for the equal worth of humans (Hedin & Lahdenperä 2007, from the abstract on the reverse of the book).

Much of this speech was induced by the attempt to translate deliberative democratic theory into the realities on the ground in the Swedish school and elsewhere. Similar to Rose's account of ethopolitics, this meant to cast "empirical" relations, environments and conditions for deliberation in the terms of this form of knowledge. Through deliberative democratic concepts, the government both gained access to possible ways in which the democracy fostering could be tried out (on the basis of how good conditions for deliberation induce speech and trust). This production of a reality of ethical approaches, relations, conditions for differences to be possible, etc. – all of which confirmed the transactional reality of "value-foundation" – was particularly produced in the years 1997-2003. Many pedagogues are here uneasy with the concept, but often proceed to creatively develop what it could be.¹⁵ The title on Kennert Orlenius book, *The Value-Foundation – does it exist?* (2001) reflects an attempt not to reject the notion, but rather to, in a critical vein, produce discourse through it and on it. Other examples of this are found closer to policy. Christer Mattson writes on how the value-foundation as a strategic concept in the context of setting up the Living History Forum. Mattson contends that a value-foundation must be a form of "communicative community".¹⁶ To resist the reductive character of "value-foundation", Mattson proposes (in the context of the establishment of a Living History Forum) to interpret it in Habermasian terms (he cites Karl-Otto Apel):

value-foundation is a foundation for values that is established in temporary communicative communities. The thought that people in a certain contexts and points in time have the capability – against the background of a common language and a mutual understanding – to establish communicative community for shared, if not commonly lived, experiences beyond the strategic action of self-interest. This communicative community, i.e. value-foundation, is in other words dependent on earlier experiences and would look different if large parts of the past had never taken place or would be unknown for the participants in the community...The Holocaust thus becomes the communicative content for the work with the value-foundation...to understand the emergence of our era's values with the experience of the Holocaust (SOU 2001:5: 204).

In other creative developments of the concept, the notion of the *foundation* seems (again) to have made an impression. The "foundation" invites authors to concretize what is abstract and vague.

¹⁵ There is a substantial amount of literature on the value-foundation in the years 1999-2005. Characteristic for the pedagogical literature is its adherence to the reality that the concept denotes (in their respective interpretation).

¹⁶ Mattson's critical account consists of tracing the concepts origin while at once embracing its strategic and pedagogical intentions, and its "reality". For example, Mattson mentions that the concept (in 2001) does not appear "in the Swedish Academy's Wordlist, in the National Encyclopedia, in the Pedagogical reader or in any other kind of wordbook". (SOU 2001:5: 201). The fact that the concept does not exist in any wordbook points per Mattson to the fact that it was "no concept" when it was formulated in Lpo 94 (ibid.). Mattson comments it: "For a concept to at all be able to be called a concept it has to have an explanation value" (ibid.).

Various positions of speech produce discursive chatter on the reality of a regulative foundation of values through which the foundations of the society can be regenerated. In a quote that is later somewhat altered in the Value-Foundation Book (2000)¹⁷, Hedin & Lahdenperä expand the metaphor of the value-foundation as a “house”:

A foundation is something firm. A house usually has a stable foundation [grund] upon which it stands. The society’s value-foundation can therefore be more clearly understood if one compares with a house – the society – that stands on a foundation, i.e. on the firm value-foundation. The “house” is peopled by people who constitute the society. As social constructions, there are *values* in the common conversation, rules of the game, activities and interaction between the tenants of the house. Common values are thus used to mark the belonging between the tenants and to distinguish from people living in other houses – or societies. (Hedin & Lahdenperä 2007: 7).

The discursive production meant that many of the initial problematizations and the centrality of deliberation were reiterated from many different viewpoints, often with critical points but never as a wholesale rejection of the need to foster democratic citizens and induce certain forms of behaviour and speech.¹⁸ Discourses on cultures, identities, relationality, the role of deliberation and pluralism therefore are both induced by the “value-foundation”-discourse and refer or point back to it in a reinforcing fashion. The quotes above also illustrate how ontological claims have a particular function in the production of the new reality that the apparatus make visible and the speech co-produces. This production is also part in naturalizing the relations of force or politically contestable character of it. For example, Hedin & Lahdenperä, in their report *Value-foundation and societal development* (Värdegrund och samhällsutveckling, 2000). cast humans as specifically value-driven creatures and values as fetish-like entities that govern us (“In some way, all we do is governed by values”, 2007: 7). Parallel to values, “cultures” and “ethnicity” are also part in this ontological production of a world in which these govern us and therefore point to a need for a common approach (coordination and regulative principles). Culture, according to Hedin & Lahdenperä, is “the evident and unconscious background to our values”, making

¹⁷ In *Värdegrundsboken*, this quote is developed in the following way: A house usually has a stable foundation [grund] upon which it stands. The society stands upon the foundation. The house is peopled by people who constitute the inhabitants of the society. The values show in relations between those who live in the house, through dialogues [samtal], the rules [spelregler] that pertain, etc. The common value-foundation is used by inhabitants of the house to create meaning, dignity, self-assurance, rules and order. Common values are used by the inhabitants to mark the belonging in the house and to distinguish the house-people from others. The metaphor leads to questions on who can really be considered inhabitants of the house? What is it that constitutes the common foundation and belonging? Who are left outside? Is there any gate-keeper? (*Värdegrundsboken* 2000: 34-35).

The authors in *Värdegrundsboken* claim that the essence of the quote is the emphasis on developing a “democratic mentality” (they refer to the analytical philosopher Alf Ross for this concept). Dahlstedt refers to this quote in the context of the “evident” fact that value-foundation is articulated as a nervousness and fear for the impact of immigrants on the Swedish value-community. (Dahlstedt 2009: 90)

¹⁸ It should be noted however that there have been rejections of the concept “value-foundation” due to its problematic and clunky character. Some pedagogues have instead used “value pedagogics” (värdepedagogik) as a strategy to avoid the concept (Ekman 2012: 28). Also, in the context of a governmental venture to foster social cohesion, the concept “the value-foundation of the society” has been deemed problematic due to how it could be interpreted as something monolithic and thereby inhibiting efforts to generate social cohesion in a plural society (Ungdomsstyrelsen 2010).

“ethnocentrism” a core problem (Hedin & Lahdenperä 2007: 50). We here see a production of a reality that conforms to and is confirmed by the discourses on value-foundation work. Other examples reveal how the school is casted as “evident” and a historically given arena for democratic regeneration (as a reply to claims to the contrary), as if the value-foundation project simply confirms or realizes a teleology of which it already was part of.¹⁹ In a more recent example of the creative role of pedagogy in producing the reality of a value-foundation, the reality of the concept is deduced from actual studies of how value-training takes place in the school. The “value-foundation” is then described as “accepted”, “formalized”, as “pedagogical flow” or as “interaction between school and society” (Skolvårdagens komplexitet, 2011: 32-33). The same report however also describes the “value-foundation” as abstract and contested by teachers. In a positive interpretation, that reiterate its positivity, it is described as “poetry”, endowed with a language that “shapes value-images that one carries with oneself” (14). The production of the reality of the concept thus takes place in several, quite different ways, some of which are more robust than others.

Deliberative democracy as panacea

As a knowledge form, deliberative democracy²⁰, was circulating elsewhere too, in particular in political science from the mid 1990s onwards. In an influential first report by the liberal and political scientific Democracy Council, dialogue/deliberation was described as “the only possible solution” to revitalize the democracy in a context of declining membership and active participation in civic associations and parties. The report also cast deliberation as the core element in a teleological political history (Demokratirådets rapport 1995, in Sweden, this history is characterized by consensus-seeking). In the Democracy Commission report, in 2000, deliberation is at the heart of the report’s recommendations for both the school, the civic society and to foster a more active civic life (SOU 2000:1, it is less emphasized in the policy-outcome, where membership electoral participation and awareness are more emphasized). As mentioned, to create a counterweight to the airy and fluffy character of the value-foundation in the 1990s, in 1998-2000, deliberative democracy theory thus became the predominant strategy to secure a democratic outcome. Dialogues or deliberative situations were in 2000 thought to enable both different conceptions and values to be contrasted, while engaging the individuals to themselves

¹⁹ Hedin & Lahdenperä for example claims that “one cannot think a school without democracy or a democracy without a school”, a spectacular claim, not least since they contradict it in the next phrase by noting that the elementary school was institutionalized in 1842, whereas universal suffrage was not institutionalized until almost 80 years later, in 1921. (Hedin & Lahdenperä 2007: 21). The stake seems to be how to enable a transformation of what will ultimately remain an institution based on coercion into a “deliberative democratic space”.

²⁰ Apart from Jürgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, Karl-Otto Apel and John Dewey are references that are mentioned in material on value-foundation, even if these references tend to disappear the longer the project of fostering democratic citizens exists.

make ethical judgments, to learn to listen, consider, value and develop arguments as well as to gain insights about one's own conceptions (Med demokrati som uppdrag, 2000: 8). Ultimately, deliberation is here a technique to govern, or "strengthen", relations and thereby increase participation and social and moral capacities, but also the pupils' health. By its connective capacity, deliberation is thought, at least in theory, to enable the government to gain access to conditions to induce these heterogeneous factors. It serves not only to imagine the children's development, etc., but is also prescribed as a cure to parents and teachers/staff at the school as a way of reaching agreements and creating conditions for the value-foundation work to yield outcomes. In the context of the ambitious mission to foster democratic citizens through the school, deliberation thus emerges as a panacea that in theory manages to contain and "solve" all those practical issues and challenges that one can find when moving from the policy documents' formulations and hopes down to the classrooms.

In the context of the value-foundation work, how values are inherent to language and to foster us/them distinctions, to make visible power positions and efforts to reach consensus are emphasized in 2000 (Värdegrundsboken 2000: 27-28). In a pragmatist tradition, conditions for deliberation are deemed central to focus (in the group/classroom). The value-foundation is here emphasized as "a democratic and humanist approach that is dependent on social relations and mutual deliberations". These conditions are deemed enabling the development of a "democratic mentality" (ibid. 35) and enabling "differences" (42). Deliberation is here thought to secure a minimum degree of non-conformity, critical mindset and capacity to cooperate with and listen to others, qualities that are in particular valued in 2000 when the problematization of democratic regeneration reached its climax (with the Democracy Commission report, SOU 2000:1).

Making the school into a democratic environment is secured through an inducement of speech. As the short description above of value-foundation work in 2017 illustrate, deliberation becomes a means to learn not only *about* democracy, but *through* and ultimately "for" it.²¹ By learning critical argumentation, deliberation is thought to make the teachers and the pupils *speak up for democracy*, as a speech-inducing mechanism of the apparatus (Olson 2008: 198). Taboos, gross language, silences and cultural traditions are particularly targeted, from the viewpoint of how they inhibit the development of a fruitful environment and silence an ongoing and well-distributed deliberation. In practice, this means that the value-foundation work is set up in the form of different role plays, ways of staging deliberation in teaching situations and other types of exercises to "permeate" all the school's activities with the "value-foundation"—not an easy task. I will now concentrate on how "democratic competence" emerged as a central "check" to seek to

²¹ <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/vardegrund>

assure and control the production of speech as a democratic guarantor. Part of this development is that political scientists in turn invited themselves to scientifically develop “democratic competence”, to measure it and to index the younger population’s status in this regard (overlapping with indexing children’s “authoritarian” tendencies, see Ekman 2012). Through this production of knowledge, a more order-related input to the apparatus comes about.

Democratic competence – a panoptic function?

While notions of “social competence”, “democratic mentality” and later “communicative competence” had floated in the material during the years 1992-1998, in 1998-2000, the concept “democratic competence” surfaces in the National Agency for Education’s texts on the practical consequences of scaling up the value-foundation work in 2000.²² The concept is going to become one of the main concepts to monitor the actual outcome of the project:

Democratic competence implies to be able to reflect on, emotionally process, relate to and act from the basic values (the value-foundation). Democratic competence also includes to be able to participate in and affect democratic decision making processes. The capacity to communicate with others in difficult and complex questions, also when opinions depart, are hereby put at the centre. Children’s and youth’s democratic competence is a part of and a precondition for their lifelong learning, their social development and health (Skolverket 2000c: 3f).

Through this concept, the actual “output” of the value-foundation work can be “operationalized” in political scientific reports that try to assess it. There are at least three dissertations that attempt to measure “democratic competence” in the coming ten year period (Jarl 2004, Almgren 2006, Ekman 2007), and the notion is central in a report to the Future Committee that evaluate 14-years old youth’s capacities to function well in a democracy as future citizens (Ekman 2012).²³ The definitions of democratic competence in political science and in policies (Lpo 2011), vary.²⁴ The concept is centrally involved in serious attempts by the National Agency of Education to produce knowledge on the output of the value-foundation work, to actually know something

²² The concept “civic competence”, that one also encounter in the material on “value-foundation” in the school, has floated for a long period in political scientific writings. According to Robert Dahl, at least since Toqueville. Dahl himself writes a typical article in the social scientific, sceptical tradition in relation to citizens and democracy. Dahl (1992).

²³ These inquiries are done so as to condemn and monitor “authoritarian” tendencies, and hence contrast to the pedagogues and the National Agency for Education’s more development-oriented notions of what “democratic competence” implies and grow.

²⁴ Joakim Ekman defines it as something the school “equips” the pupil with: “To become equipped with democratic competence is about learning to see things from different perspectives and to understand that there is not only *one* truth but different approaches, which ought to be respected” (Joakim Ekman 2012: 69). Tiina Ekman defines democratic competence as something measurable in the pupils in the form of “democracy knowledge” and “political self-esteem” (Ekman 2007: 12). Almgren focuses in particular on political knowledge (Almgren 2006). In a study of school children’s performances in social studies, Henrik Oscarsson defines “democratic competence” with the variables knowledge, attitudes, participation and engagement and deliberative democracy (Oscarsson 2005).

In the school policy from 2011, the concept has clearly been consolidated and is less total than in 2000. It is defined as “knowledge on democracy and the human rights and capacity to together with others communicate on common questions and problems. Deliberations and relations are also a foundation for the open classroom climate and a precondition for a good learning environment” (Förskolan och skolans värdegrund 2011: 64).

about citizen-formation to be able to rectify the measures (Skolverket 2009, Skolverket, 2010). Central to all these reports is that there does not exist any clear knowledge on citizen-formation through the school (Skolverket, 2010). With “democratic competence” another productive element of the apparatus, one of evaluation and checks, emerges, but it is unclear how to estimate its character in terms of power relations. From the viewpoint of how it functions as an entry point for various forms of assessments, from social competence, the degree of acceptability of cultural differences to authoritarian and racist tendencies, and how it connects a surveillance function to the different relations between child-parent-teacher-school-(society) in all varieties between each of these, it could be said to install a panoptic function in the school. In particular the role of the teachers and the parents are targeted to indirectly induce democratic competence in the children (Värdegrundsboken, 2000: 60-62). One consequence of the concept is therefore a strategic concentration on how competence needs to be secured throughout “the chain of command” or the Government-teacher-pupil-parents-complex. The concept first directs the attention to the demands put on “the teacher’s own civic competence”, but also highlights the strategic need to involve parents and confront or involve them if their values are inhibiting the child’s democratic competence (Skolinspektionen, 2012: 8). Clearly, the concept opens for governmental ways of having access to conditions to induce a democratic citizen-formation (and by-pass families), not least in its invitation for various sciences to articulate it. However, the weak means to actually ensure its outcomes, make it today more into an instance of reality-production, induced by sciences (which does not exclude that it might get a different function in the future). Even if these sciences and the government indexes various “competences”, there are no clear mechanisms to ensure them. The mode of subjectification of “democratic competence”, while circulating all sorts of needs for the school to act upon parents, teachers and pupils, still, here, seems to amount more to a discursive production of a social world in need of various regulations of behaviour. Similar to how deliberation became a panacea in document on value-foundation work in 1998-2000, “democratic competence” becomes the name, in discourse, of that which is supposed to fill the gaps between governmental visions and the realities on the ground.

Displacements

As mentioned above, deliberative democracy theory got marginalized by behaviourist knowledge in 2003-2010, changing value-foundation work to be about self-control, impulse-control and on how to behave well in class and be emotionally self-aware (Englund & Englund 2012). This period is one of productive re-connections that also open for a hollowing out of what, from the viewpoint of how to foster democratic citizens, has so far been rather robust. With the emphasis

on health as an aspect of “democratic competence” (quote above), the Public Health Agency of Sweden took interest in value-foundation work as a way of indexing and assuring youth health, psychic health in particular. The apparatus here opens for a biopolitical possibility through the framework of democracy and value training (and vice versa; health and “healthy environments” becomes a strategy to envision democratic outcomes).²⁵ Another reconnection is how the school subject “life knowledge”, and more therapeutic programs and manuals, managed to enter the school’s democracy mission. Contra Dahlstedt & Fejes (2013) and with Englund & Englund (2012), I want to highlight that these did not add themselves on top of the strategy of “communicative democracy” to reinforce existing forms of subjection in name of democracy, but rather marginalized “communicative democracy” and changed entirely the actual practices and possibilities to secure any qualitative outcome (Olson 2008 confirms this image, 217). Where Dahlstedt & Fejes see “deliberations” as homogeneous and constant, the teacher-led and open character of the dialogues in the deliberative democratic period are replaced by manual-based deliberation that focus on preventing bullying, offensive behaviour and that promote disciplination, specifically targeting “disorderly” pupils (Englund & Englund 2012: 39). This replacement neither doubles nor reduces speech; it renders it different. Speech is still induced, but not to seek consensus or to make visible differences, but instead in the form of confessions, self-assessments, declarations of intentions and ambitions (in fact, in a way that is closer to the ways in which “value-foundation” regulates behaviour in organizations from the mid 2000s onwards). This shift seems to pass under the radar of Dahlstedt & Fejes one-directional focus on a continuous deepening of possible subject-formation and interventions. Also, the image of a mere adding up of a behaviourist direction on top of the communicative one, overshadows the neoliberal political changes in political priorities, that were coextensive to the hollowing out of the communicative paradigm. In the context of the utopian function that value-foundation work had around 1998-2000, this turn must be seen as a break and *discontinuity*, rather than a mere continuation (in an interpretative register in which all combinations of knowledge and power are equally intrusive and manipulative). The concept of democratic competence remained, but could easily be inverted by a behaviourist knowledge form that hollowed out the intricate content of a communicative competence in name of a general promotion of “democratic, emphatic and social

²⁵ This line of descent in the history of value-foundation in the present got a particular turn in 2005, when Sven Bremberg from the Public Health Agency of Sweden first wrote a government committee report (SOU 2006:77) that promoted the behaviourist methods in name of how they would have diminished bullying if implemented earlier. A year later, Bremberg launched a “health-economic” method-book directed to the regional level, for them to reduce costs by taking ill-health-preventing aspects into account. There is a direct overlap with the interest of these actors and the hollowing out of the more serious democracy-training (Englund & Englund 2012: 39).

competence” (quote from a report for the Agency for School Development quoted in Englund & Englund 2012: 37).

Another aspect of this discontinuous history is how changes in legislation put new pressures on what the value-foundation work should comprise. Above, we saw how result-orientation in the governance of the school was one such change. In 2009, legislation on preventing bullying changes, which legitimize and strengthen the “program-turn” additionally (ibid.). But already in 2011, the discontinuous history took a yet another turn, after a report by the National Agency for Education concluded that *none* of the behaviourist programs could be recommended (43). By 2012 (and 2017), value-foundation work seems to have settled for communicative democracy with less utopian character, now mixed with “norm-critique” and some remaining influence from the program-period.²⁶ In school policy from 2011 (still actual), deliberative communication, philosophical dialogues and Socratic dialogues are proposed as practical forms to train democratic skills and induce speech (Skolverket, 2011). As a final addition to this bumpy history, that reveals the non-total and discontinuous development of it, in 2012 the Swedish School Inspectorate harshly criticizes the school’s value-foundation work on several points, not least for its weak and shallow implementation (Skolinspektionen, 2012). The report concludes, that neither school leadership, teachers or pupils are enough tainted by a “critical approach”, the schools are badly aware of what the “democratic citizen-fostering mission” implies, the pupils often lack a language and idiom needed for “communicative democracy”²⁷, the exercises connect too little to the experiences of the pupils and often the concentration on the form and strong leadership in these exercises lead to a homogeneous ideal that inhibits plurality and often make invisible racist attitudes (ibid. 6-10).²⁸ The examples display the multitude of forms in which failures, breaks and unintended outcomes are produced, are lingering or displacing the existing practices to new destination, in a fashion that alter intentions, group dynamics and how words are connected to things (“democracy”, “competent”, “relations”, etc.). Contra Dahlstedt & Fejes (2013) description of the behaviourist turn as “a sign of the times”

²⁶ <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/vardegrund>

²⁷ This highlights, contra the assumptions of Dahlstedt & Fejes, that failure can come about through many venues. In the *Queer Art of Failure* (2011), Judith Halberstam highlights how stupidity, failure and forgetfulness can be thought of as productive ways of resistance pressures of normalization. This thought, even if provocative, nevertheless indicates the multiplicity of possible micro-spaces and pockets of resistance in what might appear – or what is assumed in some “critical” approaches – as consistent and entirely dominant.

²⁸ The report also display a good example of the way in which discourse is used as function to, even in this moment of critique and a visibility for all sorts of gaps, patch over gaps. A formulation like the following, concluding formulation of the report’s summary, is telling:

“The Swedish School Inspectorate’s assessment is ultimately that supportive and preventive value-foundation work that permeate the whole of the activities [in the school], are central in all school environments to reach and maintain a study and dialogue climate, in which the pupils are given the possibility to develop their civic competence. This must nevertheless everywhere to a higher degree be complemented with a democracy work that also permeate the teaching in all subjects as well as a critical and self-reflective democratic dialogue among personnel and pupils. (Skolornas arbete med demokrati och värdegrund, Skolinspektionen 2012: 10)

(Dahlstedt & Fejes 2013: 55), and hence as something fairly evident, continuous and centralized, we here, in this “diagnosis”, instead see multiple lines and cross-overs in a history in which stakes, means and ends shift constantly—“time” is different from itself (Foucault 1972: 147).

Conclusion

In this paper I have accounted for the emergence of a discourse on relations, behaviour and values in Sweden in terms of a larger apparatus to regulate conduct. By tracing this regulation to the emergence of “value-foundation” as an object, and later a discourse of its own, I have tried to show how the productive character of the apparatus – its inducement of visibility and speech – enable to study forms of governmentality both in terms of the production of power relations and possible interventions and in terms of structural internal contradictions. Such a reading, I hope, enables to withstand the temptation to confirm the efficiency and totality of power-strategies, to re-open discontinuity and pockets of resistance that are hidden from view when assuming such a totality. What can be assumed to be very powerful in one reading, can in a different reading be something maybe too ambitious and from that point of view, point to weakness or structural limitations. The concept of apparatus, instead of focusing on this dimension, enables to highlight how there is an ongoing production of visibility and speech that is not always possible to understand in terms of intensified subjections, but rather as a displacement of a governmental landscape in constant flux. The paper revealed, that a central element in this development was not the extensive increase of sites of intervention and manipulation, but instead the somewhat enigmatic reliance on inducing speech as a guarantor for democratic regeneration. Instead of subjection, we have a game to enable and maintain a certain form of circulation without any clear guarantee to produce desired outcomes. In 2010-2013, as part of the migration of the “value-foundation” discourse and in a transposition of the value-foundation work in the school to other domains, the government envisions “dialogues on the value-foundation of the society” in ventures in the civic society and on the regional level, as a means to secure “social cohesion” (skr. 2009/10:44, skr. 2013/14:63). The ongoing transformation, and the displacements of sites in which speech is induced, as well as the interchangeability of means, ends, techniques, etc. is here continuously produced towards new destinations. Such an account, in contrast to the critique that is content with identifying and “revealing” new forms of power and subjection, perhaps resonates with Foucault’s call for “curiosity”, as a form of “care”:

the care one takes of what exists and what might exist; a sharpened sense of reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is

disappearing; a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental (Foucault 1997: 325).

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