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# Beyond Education and Society

*On the Political Life of Education for Sustainable  
Development*

STEFAN L. BENGTSSON



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### **Abstract**

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The objective of this dissertation is to develop a theoretical and analytical framework for understanding the political in education from a social and global perspective. With this objective in mind, it employs an empirical engagement and theoretical reflection on how this political can be seen to emerge in policy making on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Policy making on ESD is interpreted as engaging in the constitution of the social and globalisation, where the non-determination of this practice is seen to require political acts of identification with particular perspectives on what education, society and, as a result, ESD should be. Book I constitutes a theoretical and analytical framework that outlines central concepts, such as antagonism, temporality, space and rhizomic globalisation, in order to conceive of how the political in education can be understood and analysed in concrete articulations, such as policy making on ESD. The findings of the empirical analysis underlying this dissertation and that address the political in policy making on ESD are presented in the papers that are incorporated into this dissertation as part of Book II. Paper I discusses how we can conceive of the relation between ESD and globalisation and makes an argument that this relation should be seen to be political and characterised by conflicting perspectives on what ESD is. Paper II presents the findings from a comparative study of policy making on ESD that engages with concrete policy on ESD in order to reflect on how globalisation can be seen to emerge in these instances of policy making. Paper III presents the findings of a comprehensive discourse analysis of Vietnamese policy making and shows how the concepts of ESD and Sustainable Development are contested among different perspectives of how Vietnamese society should be constituted. The dissertation as a whole makes an argument for the inescapable political condition for education and how this condition necessitates the articulation of concepts such as ESD that name an inaccessible state beyond conflict and social antagonisms that is to be achieved through education.

*Keywords:* education, ESD, environmental education, Education for Sustainable Development, sustainability, policy, education policy, globalisation, globalization, hegemony, discourse, space, antagonism, political, politics, temporality, beyond, mutation, rhizome, rhizomic, play, Laclau

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*Für das Kindliche in uns*



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Stockholm, August 2014

*Stefan Bengtsson*

# List of Papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

- I Bengtsson, S. L. and Östman, L. O. (2013) Globalisation and education for sustainable development: Emancipation from context and meaning. *Environmental Education Research*, 19(4):477–498
- II Bengtsson, S. L. and Östman, L O. (in revision) Globalisation and education for sustainable development: Exploring the global in motion. *Environmental Education Research*
- III Bengtsson, S. L. (in revision) Status Quo, Hegemony and Education: On the politics of policy making for Education for Sustainable Development in Vietnam. *Journal of Environmental Education*

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While Book I will be ordered around a discussion of a number of central concepts, some concepts will be continuously appealed to. Hence, the reader might utilise this table of concepts in order to familiarise himself/herself with these concepts as they are addressed throughout Book I.

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# Prologue

The beginning and the end of all philosophy is freedom

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling

Freeplay is always the interplay of absence and presence, but if it is to be radically conceived freeplay must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence; being must be conceived of as presence or absence beginning with the possibility of freeplay and not the other way round.

Jacques Derrida

At the beginning of the project of writing a dissertation there are commonly a number of questions. What shall the dissertation be about? How shall I approach that which I want to, or have to, generate knowledge about? For this dissertation the seeming infinity of possible questions to be raised, and hopefully to be answered, was limited. It was limited in the way that the doctoral position that the author applied to, and subsequently was accepted to, had to deal with a thing the author had very limited knowledge of. This thing that is the dissertation had to, in one way or another, to deal with is Education for Sustainable Development or ESD. Hence, one of the central first questions that came to shape the process of writing was the question: What is ESD?

As one might hope to be the practice for a PhD student, the attempt to find answers to this question turned the author to existing literature on the subject matter. The initial readings of these documents called forward a feeling of insufficiency, as these works often mentioned and inserted the concept ESD with such confidence, suggesting that there seems to be a settled definition and meaning of the concept somewhere that was the general point of reference and that the author did not know about. However, when reading scholarly work or policies on the subject matter it became apparent that ESD attained often paradox meanings as it was given meaning to in a number of divergent ways. This apparent dissonance came to provoke a deeper reflection on how the question of “What is ESD?” should be answered. Thus, the

question of “What is ESD?” translated into a reflection on the question: How can we answer the question “What is ESD”?

This dissertation can be seen to provide an answer to the latter question within the first book and to provide entry points for approaching the prior question in the second book. This separation into two books is a result of the author’s engagement with the question of the Being of ESD. Being in this sense concerns the way in and logics by which the identity of things is constituted. That is, the more the author aimed to provide answers to what ESD is, the more the attempts at answering were forced to reflect upon the premises for giving these answers. We might here speak of how the empirical engagement with the question of the Being of ESD called for a reconsideration of the theoretical premises that constitute the basis for the answer to the initial question concerning the identity of ESD. What is meant by this is that the empirical engagement with ESD did not provoke the contention of having unravelled something through these inquires, but rather the empirical engagement provoked a questioning and dissatisfaction with the initial attempts at approaching the object of study. It is possible to say that the engagement with the object of study provoked a reconsideration of how the object of knowledge can be conceived, or rather it provoked a reflection on the logics that allow for a conception of the object of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The second book of the dissertation, that is the papers incorporated into the thesis, presents some of the findings of an empirical engagement with the question of the Being of ESD. This engagement came to be focused on how ESD can be understood as a policy concept and how its meaning in and among a number of national contexts is constituted. In order to get a closer look at the national policy development process of ESD, the author choose to take up an internship at the Regional Office to the UNESCO in Bangkok, Thailand. As regional and sub-regional office, the UNESCO Bangkok acts as lead agency for the implementation of the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development within the Asia-Pacific and the Mekong sub-region. The initial focus of the empirical engagement consequently moved to ambitions to integrate ESD in education system within the Mekong sub-region. Hence, the author engaged with the question: What is ESD in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam? What became consequently apparent was that in contrast to the UNECE countries in Europe, the UNESCO member states of Asia-Pacific and the Mekong region did not share a common implementation framework. Potentially as a consequence of this absence of a framework, the articulation of the meaning of ESD in policy documents and in exploratory inception papers from the Mekong region showed a high degree of divergence. The divergence in conceptions of ESD in the national context of these countries could in a number of instances be seen as

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<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of what is meant by logics see the explanation of the term figures of reasoning in the reader’s guide to the dissertation below.

so significant that seemingly the only thing these articulations shared was the articulation of the signifier of ESD.

This engagement with ESD in the Mekong region provoked a number of reflections. Foremost, the encountered divergence and numerous paradoxes in the ways that meaning was given to ESD and the acceptance of a certain fluidity that the policy concept was treated with was by the author perceived to stand in contrast to the apparent conformity and consensus, in the sense of *general* agreement, with which the concept was associated with in Sweden. How come that in Sweden ESD was so closely associated with democracy, while countries within the Mekong region did not mention democracy at all? Thus, the seeming general agreement with which the meaning of ESD was associated with within the Swedish literature was contrasted by the diversity of ways in which meaning was given to ESD in other countries. These discrepancies and the seeming infinity of possibilities to give meaning to ESD as a global policy concept provoked a reflection on the possibility of answering the question of the Being of ESD through an empirical engagement. Wouldn't the answer have to include an infinite adding of a variety of meanings of ESD?

As a result of this engagement with ESD and its articulation in different national contexts, the author became increasingly aware of the need of clarifying the way the initial question of the Being of ESD should be answered. We might here say that the empirical engagement's primary consequence for this dissertation was not the uncovering of ESD's true meaning behind its diversity of appearances, but rather the empirical engagement provoked an experience of an elusiveness of the Being of ESD that problematises the generality of agreement on what ESD is or should be. This experience and the subsequent reflections can be seen to have been the point of departure for the first book of this dissertation, which does not primarily deal with ESD but instead aims to provide a particular way of conceiving the elusive Being of an education policy concept. We might say this way of conceiving the Being of an education policy concept can be seen to take the experienced elusiveness as a theoretical point of departure, rather than attempting to subdue the experience of elusiveness to the greater task of uncovering the true Being of ESD. It might even be suggested that the first book does not confine itself to policy, but rather aims to provide a way of conceiving Being as discursive identity in education and in relation to the beyond. To continue this line of thought, we might say that the first book deals with the relation between Being and the beyond. As with the experience of an alterity beyond the meaning that was given to ESD in the Swedish context, the first book of this dissertation can be seen to deal with the role of the beyond for Being.

The engagement of the author with the Mekong Region and national policy making within it, can thus be portrayed as an engagement with the beyond. This beyond can be seen as to relate to the issue of elusiveness that is experienced as the generality of agreement on meaning is shown to have not

been exclusive or general in the most inclusive sense of the word. This beyond, as this dissertation will argue, is not something that works at a distance or something that we can keep outside, instead, this beyond is seen as to provoke an uneasiness with which the general, the confident and the givenness of Being of ESD is perceived. The beyond, in this understanding, provokes a subversion of the perceived givenness of Being. What we might say is that the beyond-Sweden-experience problematised for the author the perceived Being of ESD-within-Sweden, that is the apparent givenness of and general agreement on the meaning and role of ESD in the Swedish context. With this beyond in mind, we might say that the first book in a number of ways aims to approach the beyond, or the issue of how to perceive it. In this approximation of the beyond, it will be treated as partially synonymous with the concepts of antagonism, temporality and rhizome.

While the dissertation argues for an *elusiveness* of Being, it does not deny ESD a partial and elusive *identity*. Thus, while aiming to approximate the beyond, the dissertation also provide a conception of the Being of ESD, at least in its elusive sense. Hence, it provides a conception of the social and space as that which provides Being with a certain stability and continuity. To put Being and beyond in to relation we might say that Being relates to continuity while the beyond relates to change and difference. As with previous Swedish curriculum theory, the question of change and continuity in education is perceived as inseparably connected with change and continuity in the social. With social conflict in mind, the battle over the future of society is portrayed as a battle over the meaning that is given to education and *vice versa*. This is seen to be also the case for ESD. The meaning of ESD is understood as to relate to the battle over education and society. What ESD should be and how it is articulated depends on the concrete formations and configurations that the social as a form of battlefield represents. The diversity of Beings of ESD that are encountered by the author and portrayed in the second book of this dissertation is understood to be expressions of the specificity of the battlefields that specific national education politics represent. If we depart from this line of reasoning, which sees the Being of ESD as relative to the specific battles over the meanings of society and education, we might raise the question: When is the battle over? When is the point of victory?

To come back to the initial question that lies at the bottom of the writing process of this dissertation, that is the question of the Being of ESD, it seems, based on the line of thought above, that an answer has to consider both the specificity of place and the point of reference in time that is drawn upon in order to specify the identity of the concept of ESD. To put it differently, we have to specify the place and the moment of the coming into presence of ESD as it is part of the relational configuration that the battlefield of the social represents. One of the central arguments that shapes this dissertation is that the moment of the coming into presence is ambiguous, or to put it

differently the moment of the end of the battle and the emergence of the determining force in that place might already have been preceded by another struggle which that battle has been a part of. The argument that the author would like to make is that there is no event of the end of the battle over society and education. As of this appeal to a continuity of struggle, the point of reference in relation to which an answer to the Being of ESD could be provided can be seen as to be infinitely deferred. The Being of ESD can, according to this line of reasoning, always be shown to have been contested.

The answer to the question of the Being of ESD can thus be seen to centre around a line of thought that highlights the continuity of politics, which sees education and the social as to be characterised by dynamics. These dynamics can be seen to be result of antagonism, where any group of social actors aiming to determine the Being of ESD is faced with the elusiveness of the battlefield. The arena, or the battlefield, that education and society can be seen to represent is understood as to be subverted by the possibility of play. The potential for play, that is the possibility to change the game that is to be played, is resulting in a subversion of the frames, or borders, that social actors aim to set for education and society and thereby aim to determine them. Thus, the answer to the question of Being of ESD is perceived to need to address that play.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As it might become apparent, play is a central concept to this dissertation. In a number of recurring instances we will appeal to play. Hence, it needs to be pointed out here how we conceive of this play. Play attains, as in the quote from Derrida at the beginning of this prologue, a quasi-ontological status for us. Play is quasi-ontological for us as it is an effect of antagonism. Play in this sense is at play in the “disruption of presence” (Derrida, 1978a). Hence, our appeal to play follows a critique of the metaphysics of presence, as has been put forward by Heidegger and Derrida. For a conception of this critique, see the section on temporality in Section 3. For us, play is associated with the political, since play precedes absence and presence and withholds ground. This abyss or absence of a ground that becomes seemingly apparent in experience forces us to engage in political action as a form of grounding that is itself exposed to play. To put this argument into relation to our concepts of trace of the trace and the Other, we might say that play is due to the fact that the Other that as a difference between the concrete other and Other opens up a possibility for play. This otherness in its generality produces a variation between the concrete other that is articulated and that is to grant me identity and the Other as that which would provide me with a full identity. Stavrakakis (1999, p. 34, original emphasis) describes this effect of the Other: “What belongs to the socio-symbolic Other can never be totally ours; it can never become us; it will *always* be a source of ambivalence and alienation and this gap can never be bridged”. With regards to this ambivalence that is an effect of the Other, we argue that it can be seen to share similarities with the play that is characterised by Derrida as that which precedes presence and absence that he addresses in his conception of *différance*. Derrida (1981, p. 27) states with regards to *différance* that this concept refers to “the systematic play of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements relate to each other”. We argue the Lacanian Other can be seen to share the feature of the traces of differences in the sense that, while the trace by which identity is constituted in writing is in relation to a concrete other (element), the trace will be ambivalent or split and be a trace to a diversity of concrete others (elements). In its ambiguity, the trace or the trace of the trace will not correspond to the Other, but will be caught up in an infinite spacing. It is due to this infinite deferral of arrival of the Other or the

In the perspective that is to be put forward, there is always a possibility to change the pattern according to which meaning is given to the concept. A determinate answer to the question of the Being of ESD would have to conceive of a form of stasis as a system of relations that would provide the stable system of relations that would determine the position of the concept. Yet, as pointed out, this dissertation aims to approach a conception of education and society that focuses on dynamics and aims to take the consequences of this appeal to dynamics by paying heed to temporality.

With these dynamics in mind, antagonism is conceived as a subverting force in terms of temporality. Temporality is in this reasoning synonymous with dynamics, where temporality subverts any attempt at providing a determinate Being to ESD. To put it differently, an answer to the question of the Being of ESD can be countered by the question of that point of its Being in time. As the formulation of point of Being in time suggests, the answer will remain committed to Being's spatial character, as an attempt at reducing it to a point, yet, where the temporal aspect can be seen to be at play in this answer but remains elusive.

This somewhat mind-bending argument for the relevance of considering temporality in relation to Being, which so to speak shapes the conception of the relation between education and society that can become possible, is made in relation to evolutionary theory. As the first chapter of the first book will argue, evolutionary theory has been influential for how the continuity and change of Being has been conceived in education theory. By engaging in a dialogical reading of scholars in the field of Swedish curriculum theory, it will be argued that Durkheim's and Dewey's evolution theoretical approach to conceiving of Being and change shaped figures of reasoning in the work of these scholars. Their evolution theoretical approach to conceiving Being in terms of continuity and change is challenged by questioning the point in time at which meaningful change occurs.

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deferral of the arrival of the finite trace of the trace that the ambiguity or split of the trace will lead to the possibility of an experience difference-to-self of any identity of an element. To foreshadow the discussion of Marxist dialectics in Section 1, we state that this difference-to-self is seen to relate to the absence of a determining instance that would be beyond that what Marxists label the ideological. We might say that such a determining instance is barred and the subject has in discursive practice to provide surrogate reference points that in their plurality will lead to variation and political contestation. Or to put it back into a Lacanian perspective, "Something is missing in the Other; there is no Other of the Other. [...] As [Lacan] further points out in *Anxiety*, the structure of the Other is revealed as a certain void, the void is the lack of guarantee in the real" (Stavrakakis, 1999, p. 39). It is in this sense that play relates to a seeming void at the centre of the structure of language. However, in articulation, we play along as if there would be the Other and instead of articulating the Other we are in articulation providing substitute others that are to stand in for that void or that absent Other. Is not this *ad hoc* action that is seemingly creating its own rules that which characterises play or an excellent player?

The figures of reasoning that we characterise to have been influential for conceiving of continuity and change in Swedish curriculum theory are interpreted to have been primarily informed by a notion of adaptation and are confronted by us with a notion of mutation. Mutation as a form of synchronic difference-to-self renders the environment diverse and renders adaptation an afterwards construct of a contingent process of change. Further, mutation is portrayed as to trouble the idiosyncrasy of Being and to trouble the possibility of adaptation as a form of reasonable alignment to a singular determinable environment. Mutation is interpreted to highlight a notion of temporal Being that is always somewhat elusive, that is where it is not possible to fully determine Being at point in time.

By appealing to this concept of mutation, it is suggested that things can or will always have already been different. This possibility of alterity is interpreted as a condition for Being. This is to underline that an appeal to dynamics is portrayed as to derive from a fundamental logic of the contingency of Being.

To return to the initial question of the Being of ESD, mutation as a form of synchronic difference-to-self can be seen to put Being into movement, where its dynamics are not primarily perceived in terms of diachronic variation but in terms of an irreducible synchronic variation as change. This underlying logic by which Being is conceived is interpreted to render an exclusive answer impossible. Instead the first book can be interpreted to highlight that the understanding of the Being of education policy concepts as well as conceptions of the relation between education and to society has to acknowledge that any exploration of these concepts has to take account an irreducible variation.

As it will be argued, while every constitutive act aiming to give meaning to ESD will be characterised by a certain continuity it will also be different to itself. This difference of the act to itself emerges in the relation of the act to the dynamics of the social that is in movement. To put it differently, an answer to the question of the Being of ESD has to adhere to the principle that there probably will not be a singular consistent meaning of ESD. Instead, with social antagonism in mind, different social groups and their particular rationales will constitute ESD differently.

As the second book and some of the findings of the empirical analysis of policy configurations in Vietnam highlight, within a social configuration there is a multitude of different ways of giving meaning to the present and what needs to be done about it. We might say, different social groups provide different reference points in relation to which the Being of ESD might be constituted. However, the plurality of these centres is according to this perspective not reducible to a singular determining point that unveils the true identity of the concept. Instead, the figures of reasoning that are to be brought forward are to acknowledge constitutive differences. We argue that the first book of this dissertation aims to conceive of the consequences of

this plurality of centres, or to put it into the context of our later discussion, the first book is to explore the consequences of overdetermination.

To address the relationship between education and society, the consequences of a plurality of centres is interpreted to highlight the impossibility of a consensus on or common-sense understanding of concepts such as ESD that are to determine what education and society should become. We might say, there is always a beyond common sense or beyond consensus. The point that is to be made is that there is always a potential disagreement over what education or society should be like. This possible beyond is interpreted as to render invalid not only an all-inclusive common sense as that which is shared and the single reference point for understanding, but also, as a consequence, society as a point of departure for understanding education. What is meant by this is that society does not provide the foundation or determinate structure in relation to which education and its function is to be understood.

What ESD is, or should be, is in this perspective not given by society, but rather the social provides means of giving meaning to it. It is important to highlight that it is a plurality of means by which we can give meaning to ESD and consequently education and the role of education in realising society. This plurality, so to say, subverts the idea of a common. According to the figures of reasoning that are to be brought forward, a plurality of centres leads to that the constitution of the social entails divergence.

The beyond in this understanding is not that which has been external to the social all along, as something that is radically different to that which is perceived as common, but rather it is the troubling moment of discovery of a difference-to-self that highlights that the common has not been common after all.<sup>3</sup> In this understanding, the beyond points out the dissensus in the consensus and the peculiar in that which is common. Further, the beyond is not external but rather a beyond that disturbs that which is treated as self-evident, such as the internality of society, the borders of education or the spatiality of space. What is argued is that a conception of the relation between education and society has, in one way or the other, to take into account or account for this moment of subversion.

As a consequence of the argument, our focus moves to the politics of education that aim to constitute society. It is argued that in the conception of

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<sup>3</sup> “Difference-to-self” is referring to a notion of mutative synchronic difference, as is elaborated in the remarks at the end of Section 1. To be precise, difference-to-self relates to our utilisation of Derridian concepts of *différance*, as it is characteristic for writing in its passive and active dimension. In a broader sense, difference-to-self relates to Derrida’s critique of a metaphysics of presence, which he shares with and partially derives from Heidegger. To oversimplify this critique, it primarily consists of the argument that in ontology the present as a form of presence present has been highlighted, neglecting the past and the future in the context of this present presence. What Derrida (*e.g.*, 1981) can be seen to highlight with the notion of difference to self is, as we will specify it in the concept of iterability, that that which is present in the presence is never simply present, instead the past and future can be seen to undermine this present presence.

antagonism and radical temporality, the beyond opens up an understanding of the relationship between education and society that does not confine this relationship to a closed system or a confined space.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the beyond, as a subverting moment that disrupts the very distinction of what is internal and external to society and education, allows us for conceiving the Being of elements in educational spaces, such as ESD, in their dynamics. It is argued that this possibility of a beyond, for example in the form of a discovery of alterity in Vietnamese policy making and its consequences for the common-sense understanding of ESD in Sweden, puts into movement again, or rather shows that apparent stasis or parity has never been the case.

In this understanding the beyond can be seen to highlight that a-political consensus on the meaning of ESD has been political, that is there are apparent antagonistic perspectives on what sustainable development is and what education should do to realise it. It is argued, this conception of Being and its dynamics approaches the political in education.

Book II of this dissertation gives an insight into how the Being of ESD is political, that is it portrays how the meaning of the concept is articulated in paradoxical and exclusionary ways both within national spaces and among national spaces. A look beyond that which is common, so to say, highlights, in these engagements with how ESD is given meaning to, the political moment that subverts consensus. This subversion of consensus and common sense is non-orientable, as we might say, it is not something purely external, for example the effect of Vietnamese policy making on Swedish consensus on ESD, but rather it is in the perspective to be put forward the condition for sense-making.

Thus, the in Book II encountered beyond is perceived as to render the perceived consensus illusory, and at the same time to the act of asking question of “What is ESD?” possible. That is, would true consensus or common sense, in the meaning of that which is shared or generally agreed upon, not make redundant the act of raising the question? Would true consensus, as *general* agreement, on the Being of ESD not entail that an alternate constitution would be impossible and hence its meaning would be given? The first book of this dissertation can be read as to aim for a constitution of an understanding of the conditions that render the questioning of the Being of ESD possible. The second book of the dissertation can be read as to account for how the Being of ESD is constituted in a number of different answers that, however, do not exhaust the possibility of questioning the Being of ESD once again. Thus, the acknowledgment of a seeming freedom with which the question of the Being of ESD can be answered is the concluding answer regarding the Being of ESD that this dissertation can provide.

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<sup>4</sup> The use of the concept of antagonism will be elaborated in Section 2, while the concept of temporality will be explored in Section 3.

The reader might ask himself/herself: Where does this leave us with regards to how we should perceive ESD? Why is ESD important to be studied? Why should I care about how ESD is articulated?

It is argued that the relative emptiness of ESD and the seeming freedom of articulating ESD in an infinite number of possible combinations is not a shortcoming of the concept, but it is seen to point out the conditions that require its articulation.

While policy making but also broader dialogue on the current state of affairs in the world can be seen to take for granted that there is something wrong in the world and that we have to do something about it, the relative freedom of articulating ESD is interpreted to highlight that that what is wrong and what should be done is not a given. The paradoxes and aporiae that are described in the papers to emerge once we compare different articulations of ESD and sustainable development highlight, according to our understanding, the political condition of engaging in the world as a subject. In this sense, what is wrong or problematic in the world is not a given as something that we have to uncover through an objective description of society or the global, but rather requires us as subjects to identify with certain positions. Hence, what is just, good or needs to be done is grounded in this act of identification that will provide particular notions of what is problematic.

Due to existing social antagonisms and antagonism as a limit for acts of identification the articulation of ESD is required to create “myths” of that which is shared. Gender inequalities, poverty and environmental degradation are in this sense not expressions of the same underlying problematic, but these problems are relative to particular positions that constitute these issues as problems of concern.

Hence, as it is argued in the conception of ESD as an empty signifier in Paper I, the relative emptiness of ESD is perceived to be a requisite for articulating a shared myth of sustainability. In this sense, ESD provides possibilities for the creation of equivalences among a number of “problems”. As we will argue in contrast to existing critiques that are put forward against ESD, the seeming openness, vagueness and paradoxes with which the concept of ESD is associated is not a defect of that concept, but that which allows for the articulation of particular demands to stand in for the realisation of the myth of sustainability. What this means is that through the association between ESD and gender equality, strategic repeated articulation of this association in combination with suggested equivalences to other demands can elevate the demand of gender equality as to stand in for the realisation of that sustainability.

The emptiness and paradoxes associated with ESD are interpreted by us to highlight the political aspects of ESD. Yet, it is not only the political aspects of ESD that are highlighted, but rather the conditions that are seemingly requiring the articulation of ESD. As we will argue, due to the absence of society as determining instance that determines *a priori* to acts of articula-

tion what ESD is, we can perceive articulations of ESD as to reflect on the political condition that provides the basis for and necessitates education as a form of “socialisation”. However, there is in our understanding neither the possibility of, nor the danger of singular socialisation according to the principles of ESD or sustainable development, as the precondition for socialisation is political diversity.

Hence, we argue that an analysis of policy making for ESD provides us with insights into social antagonisms that aim to shape what ESD and sustainable development (SD) is supposed to become. A study of ESD shows us what is at stake, which demands are to be realised and what particular visions for society are put forward as guarantees for sustainability and progress in general.

# Objectives

So now the sadness comes—the revelation. There is a depression after an answer is given. It was almost fun not knowing. Yes, now we know. At least we know what we sought in the beginning. But there is still the question: why? And this question will go on and on until the final answer comes. Then the knowing is so full, there is no room for questions.

Log Lady, *Twin Peaks*

The ambition of this thesis is to contribute to existing research on the political in environmental education (EE) and ESD.

In order to facilitate this ambition the dissertation has three main objectives:

- (1) To develop a theoretical framework that allows for an understanding of the political in education from a social and a global perspective, that is to say:
  - (a) To develop a theoretical framework for understanding the political in the relationship between education and the social.
  - (b) To develop a theoretical framework for understanding the political aspects of the relationship between the social and globalisation in the context of education.
- (2) To develop an analytical framework for analysing how policy making on ESD as political practice engages in the production of the social and globalisation.
- (3) To empirically investigate how the political, global and social emerges in articulations of ESD.
  - (a) To map how the political and social antagonisms emerges in Vietnamese policy making.
  - (b) To map how policy making as a political practice on ESD in Thailand, Vietnam and as part of the DESD framework is constitutive for the social, as well as for globalisation.

## First main objective

With regards to the first main objective and its first sub-objective (Objective 1a) that focuses on the relation between education, the social and the political, the dissertation will in Section 1 identify central figures of reasoning within the field of Swedish curriculum theory that historically shaped how the relation between education and society has been conceived. The objective is not to depict the field of curriculum theory, but rather to highlight how the introduction of a dynamical perspective that focused on conflict by Englund (1986) provided an alternate figure of reasoning that allowed the political to enter the relationship between education and society.

Hence, we utilise the analysis of figures of reasoning by which seemingly the relationship between education and society has been constituted in Swedish curriculum theory in order to contribute to the field of environmental education (EE) and ESD research with a substantiated discussion of how different figures of reasoning allow for different understandings of the relation between education and society. In this sense, the analysis is to provide a horizon of orientation that is to allow for a discussion of how different figures of reasoning allow for an understanding of change and continuity. With regards to this potential for change, we see the political as being involved. Hence, the first Section will introduce Englund as an event that allows for an entrance of the political in the conception of the relationship between education and society.

The argument that we will be putting forward is that Englund's conception of social conflict provides an entry point for reconceiving how structure relates to change and social antagonism. As it will be argued, these social antagonisms, as a form of conflict, are not perceived to emanate out of determined social positions, that is to say, historically-determined identities, but are conceived to result out of the openness or non-closure of the structure that is invoked in processes of identification.

In Section 2 of this dissertation, this notion of the political will be developed further and radicalised through conceiving the relationship between education, the social and the political by drawing on the work of Laclau. Laclau's concepts of antagonism, the political, the social, as well as a focus on articulations are central conceptual means that are to feed into the first objective of this dissertation as they provide alternative conceptual means to constitute this relationship between education and society.

In order to allow for a conception of this openness and non-closure of the social, this dissertation aims to introduce the concept of antagonism as the source of dynamism and that which prevents the social structure from closure and from fully constituting itself. Through this introduction of antagonism, as the limit of every social structure, it is envisioned to allow for a conception of play within the structure as an overdetermined social in

movement. As a result of antagonism, the social is not seen as a determining or determinate point of reference that, so to speak, puts social actors and groups into position as in the case of society as a social whole. Hence, as antagonism is seen as producing a synchronic difference, the concept is interpreted as a call for a shift of the conceptual focus in the relationship between society and education. In this sense, antagonism is a limit that keeps dynamics alive and prevents society from being established.

Due to antagonism as a limit for the construction of society, our focus moves from a primary focus on the relative determination by the structure to a focus on the contingent instances of the constitution of that structure through articulation. This shift of focus on the contingent instances of constitution of the structure is in our understanding equivalent to a focus on the political in action, where this political moment is interpreted as the instituting moment of the social.

Political actions, including articulation that aims to give meaning to education and society, are not perceived to be fully determined by historical conditions, but are seen to emerge out of the experience of an undecidability, that is, a non-determination of subject position. In the face of this undecidability, the subject as political subject has to engage in practices of identification.<sup>5</sup> This means, for example, that education policy is not perceived as determined by diachronic historical conditions, but is seen as active in a field that is fluid and hence political. Education policy is in this understanding aiming to provide meaning and stability to politically contested key-concepts.

With regards to the second sub-objective of the first main objective (Objective 1b) that addresses the relation between education, the social, globalisation and the political, Section 4 of this dissertation will introduce a conception of rhizomic globalisation as a form of connection among socials that is established as a result of globalising articulation. In order to conceive of this rhizomic globalisation, Section 3 will introduce a theoretical framework for understanding the social and antagonism in spatio-temporal terms. This metaphorisation is to provide the means for a visualisation of the relationship between education, the social, globalisation and the political in terms of spaces, layers of space and the role of temporality as that which is subverting space and opening up the emergence of the political. This spatio-temporal metaphorisation in Section 3 is to provide a basis for the conception of globalisation as rhizome that is provided in Section 4.

Rhizomic globalisation is understood as to be the result of the creation of connections among spaces or plateaus that as part of that connection form an assemblage of layers of space. The concepts of rhizome, space, layers of

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<sup>5</sup> See Section 2 (The Subject and Decision) for an explication of undecidability and the constitutive role of decision.

space, plateau and temporality are to provide central conceptual means to conceive of globalisation in education.

In accordance with the introduced conception of antagonism, globalisation will not be conceptualised by an appeal to closed structures or spaces, nor will there be appeals to determinable structures or points of orientation beyond space, as we might envision finding these in the “global”. Instead, it is the ambition of the dissertation to provide a conception of globalisation in education, where globalisation is understood to be the result of the creation of connections among spaces or plateaus as a collection or assemblage of layers of space. These connections are interpreted to emerge as results of the repeated articulation of shared signifiers. In the context of education policy making, globalisation is seen to result out of the articulation of internationally travelling policy concepts, such as sustainable development (SD) or education for sustainable development (ESD), which we interpret to create connections among spaces.

The objective with this ambition of reimagining globalisation is to shift away from a focus on the mechanisms and universal forces that globalisation is commonly associated with in education research and instead to allow for both theoretical conceptualisations of globalisation and empirical studies engaging with globalisation to focus on the political that is interpreted to be at play in the heterogeneous, contingent and multi-directional movement that globalising articulation as political action is seen to produce.

## Second main objective

With regards to the second main objective to develop an analytical framework for analysing how policy making as political practice engages in the production of the social and globalisation, this framework is mainly provided in Section 3.

This analytical framework is derived from the discourse theoretical work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985). In order to specify the ontological positioning and epistemological claims that the analytical framework puts forward, Section 3 will engage in a digression and outlines how the discursive relates to and conceives of Being.

In order to delineate this perspective on Being, Section 3 engages in an exploration of the relation between Being and time or, to put it differently, how Being as related to spatiality can be understood to stand in relation to a radical temporality. This exploration of the relationship between time and space is one of the recurring themes of this dissertation and closely related to our conception of antagonism. In order to conceive of this relation, Section 3 draws on Heidegger, Derrida and Laclau in order to conceive of the relationship between spatiality and temporality. The objective of this discussion of the relationship between spatiality, Being and temporality is to specify how

our theoretical and analytical framework is perceived to relate to the object of knowledge, which is the relation between the education, social, globalisation and the political.

To simplify, we might say that temporality and antagonism as synonymous with a certain form of negativity are the premises for conceiving of the political in education that is our object of knowledge. Antagonism and temporality conflate in our introduced notion of the Event, where the Event puts into movement the social as space and requires of the subject to overcome these dislocatory effects.

Articulation will be perceived as discursive practice that engages in the spatialisation of temporality. This means that articulation engages in the ordering of the social by aiming to stabilise discursive elements by relating them to particular nodal points. It is though this elaboration of concepts such as articulation, discourse, discursive formation, elements and moments that Section 3 aims to provide analytical, conceptual means for studying education policy making that as political practice strategically invests in policy concepts such as ESD in order to stabilise the social and to promote particular political demands. The elaboration of such discourse theoretical terms is envisioned to feed into the second main objective (Objective 2) to develop an analytical framework for understanding the relationship between education, the social, globalisation and the political.

The spatio-temporal metaphorisation provided in Section 3 and developed further in Section 4 is to provide an alteration of the discourse theoretical framework provided in Section 3, where that alteration that is to allow for an analysis of the *globalising* aspects of articulation as political practice (Objective 2). While Section 4 elaborates a broader theoretical framework for the understanding of the relationship between education, the social, globalisation and the political, Papers I and II of Book II develop further this theoretical framework and illuminate this relationship in concrete instances of policy making.

## Third main objective

With regards to the third main objective (Objective 3) to empirically investigate how the political, global and social emerges in the articulation of ESD, this investigation and its results are summarised in Papers II and III.

This summary in the two papers is focused on “how” the political can be conceived in concrete instances of policy making rather than comprehensively depicting the specific Being that ESD attains as part of these articulations. This is not to say that the underlying analysis of national policy documents from Vietnam and Thailand, as well as the UNDESD framework have not focused on the “what” aspects of the Being of ESD. On the contrary, the investigation and the resulting depiction of “how” the political emerges only

becomes possible as a secondary step based on a primary analysis and interpretation of “what” particular meanings of ESD have been articulated. Hence, the argumentation of the “how” builds on a comprehensive discourse analysis of policy documents, where the analysis focused on the identification of regularities or seeming rule-following in the articulation of ESD and SD.

The point of departure in this discourse analysis has been the particular Vietnamese context, where the objective has been to portray how the political can be seen to be at play in the articulation of ESD and SD and how particular social antagonism can be interpreted to emerge in the articulation of these policy concepts. A discussion of these political aspects of “what” particular meanings ESD and SD attain in Vietnamese policy making is provided in Paper III. Paper III relates therefore to the first sub-objective of the third main objective (Objective 3a). We might say that Paper III portrays how the political can be seen to be characteristic for articulations of ESD and how this political is at play in the paradoxes and aporia that characterise ESD and SD policy making. These paradoxes and aporia are interpreted as to characterise the social, where due to social antagonism a plurality of perspectives and positions are drawn upon in order to give meaning to ESD and SD.

Hence, while Paper III investigates how the political relates to the social, Paper II investigates how this relationship between the political and the social relates to globalisation. Paper II, therefore, relates to the second sub-objective of the third main objective (Objective 3b). This investigation can be seen to highlight that globalisation is not political *per se*, but that globalisation allows for additional political encounters. In this sense, globalisation as resulting out of the establishment of connections among socials can be seen to produce a supplementary or an increase of aporia and paradoxes, once a number of articulations of ESD are compared. This increase in the possibility of experiences of social antagonisms is interpreted to highlight that, in contrast assumed hegemonising effects of globalisation, our investigation of globalisation highlights that globalisation provides possibilities for a surplus of political encounters. The argument of Paper II and the findings of its analysis highlight that an engagement with “what” ESD is shows that globalisation according to our understanding does not result into a subduing of diversity, but on the contrary highlights diversity. As a result, this diversity in globalisation is interpreted by us to highlight the limit that antagonism for hegemony represents, where antagonism renders necessary the articulation of policy concepts such as ESD, as they promote notions of equivalence and societal cohesion.

# A Reader's Guide to the Dissertation

Don't panic!

Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

In many ways this reader's guide is counter to its intention. What is to be underlined by this declarative statement is that the guide is not to define how this dissertation is to be read. On the contrary, the author would like to encourage a variety of readings, uses and abuses of the lines of argument and figures of reasoning that are put forward. These figures of reasoning are of course to be understood as to stand in relation to the objectives set for this dissertation, yet, the point to be made is that there is an excess in the figures of reasoning that are played with and that in readings might supplement the objectives. We might say there is always an excess in figures of reasoning, an excess that we aim to put into constructive use.

This dissertation is written with a particular notion of writing and authoring in mind, notions that the reader might not be familiar with. Hence, this guide is written in order to allow the reader to familiarise him/herself with the style that the thesis was intended to be written in. The intention is that the guide is to clarify certain underlying notions, such as that of the "author" that is to become a "we", which might confuse or irritate the reader. While the reader will approach this dissertation with a set of expectations, it is this guide's ambition to allow for a partial approximation of these expectations and to offer an invitation to read the dissertation with the particular style in mind that it can be seen to be characterised by.

The style it is written in is a combination of *dialectic reasoning* and rhizomic structure of the organisation of the different sections. The dissertation's style is dialectic in the sense that it follows a Marxist/Hegelian practice of an exchange of opposing logical arguments. However, it is not truly dialectic, as the exchanges of opposing logical arguments do not claim to provide a coherent synthesis or to negate the negation. More specifically, the dialectical engagement in this dissertation does not claim to uncover the true understanding that the dialogical other misses. Instead, the dialectical approach creates points of orientation, where we might say that a number of central paradoxes are to provide points of departure for opening up perspectives on these paradoxes or to create an argumentation *around* these para-

doxes. These paradoxes, for example, in how the relation between education and society relates to change, are not overcome, but rather provide an impasse that can be approached in a number of equally valid ways. This means that we do not show our other as being wrong and we are, as a result, right, but instead we aim to provoke logical somersaults that can be seen to emerge once we let our dialogical partner engage with our foci of interest. We, so to speak, lead our dialogical partner to an impasse due to our provoked change of direction of conversation. The idea is that this impasse entails a creative and non-determined tension that the dialectical reasoning nurtures in order to argue for a particular way to give meaning to that impasse. This form of dialectical reasoning is particularly predominant in the first section of the first book that engages with Swedish curriculum theory, while the other sections of the first book can be seen to point out a particular way of approaching the impasses that are addressed. In a sense, the first section can be described as an imposition of the perspectives and foci that Section 2 can be seen to put forward.

The structure of the layout and the organisation of sections of this dissertation can be described as *rhizomic*. While the concept of rhizome is explored in greater detail and put into use in the fourth section of the dissertation, it might be commented here that what is meant by the rhizomatic structure of the dissertation is a certain organisation of sections as a form of plateaus, planes or layering.<sup>6</sup> The choice of wording of sections, rather than chapters, is to highlight a certain separability and autonomy of the sections. That is not to say that the sections are hermetic, but rather that they have intensities on their own. To specify what is meant by specific intensities, we

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<sup>6</sup> Concepts will in this dissertation be referred to as a signifier that has attained a partial meaning as it is articulated as part of a particular set of language games or figures of reasoning. As such, the meaning of the signifier might differ from articulation to articulation and the seeming figure of reasoning that is drawn. We argue that in some sense our notion of concept acknowledges Deleuze's (1968, p. xx) depiction of concepts as being a part an unfolding of drama: "A book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science fiction. By detective novel we mean that concepts, with their zones of presence, should intervene to resolve local situations. They themselves change along with the problems. They have spheres of influence where, as we shall see, they operate in relation to 'dramas' and by means of a certain 'cruelty'. They must have a coherence among themselves, but that coherence must not come from themselves. They must receive their coherence from elsewhere". We argue in the context of our depiction of conceptual personae that this coherence is problematic, as we might say the cogito that would provide concepts with coherence in this dissertation would have to be detached from the dialogue with its conceptual personae, but this is not what we argue. Hence, we might say that our concepts could be understood as being part of the TV series "The Wire", where the concepts are involved in a number of seemingly isolated local situations. However, once the reader/observer puts them into relation these local situations become seemingly connected into a bigger unfolding narrative. Yet, this meta-narrative cannot reduce or fully absorb the local situations without a form of violence. What we argue is that concepts will help us to solve issues in dialogues with particular conceptual personae and particular figures of reasoning in mind. Yet, the use of concepts in a number of dialogues will not be congruent, but are partially embedded in these dialogues.

might say that they relate concepts to different contexts or reconfigure them in relation to other concepts and thereby change the concepts themselves. For example, the notion of play is a repeating theme of this dissertation, yet, play becomes different concepts, or is caught up with different semiotic traces, in the different sections of the dissertation thereby partially becoming multiple concepts. We might say that play becomes different things in our engagement with the notion of play in Althusser and Derrida; a difference of play that is not reducible to a singular overreaching meaning of play. We argue, we take play seriously, that is we are not subjecting it to the notion of an absolute play or final play that necessarily dictates or prefigures the different notions of play in the different sections of the dissertation.

In line with this argumentation, the different sections and sub-sections are to some extent engaged in a multitude of dialogues. For the reader, this means that not all sections or sub-sections might be of interest to him/her or the intentions of reading this dissertation. In order to guide the reader, some of the sections should be interpreted to represent digressions that engage in the discussion of particular figures of reasoning or argument and hence can be seen to represent an indentation in a bigger dialogue or argument. In order to facilitate the understanding of the overarching argument that is to be made, some of the subsections are marked as digressions, allowing for the reader to decide if he/she wants to engage with the indentation or to continue with another section or sub-section.

In this above-mentioned playing with concepts, we will refer to *figures of reasoning*. Figures of reasoning can be seen to be the patterns that are established as the part of writing. As with the case of figures in figure-skating, figures can be seen as rules or recurring patterns, yet, where recurrence and the overall performance is not determined *a priori*. Instead, figures have, both, this recurring aspect, as well as a uniqueness to them as they are combined and arranged in a seemingly infinite number of configurations and performed with what we might call a personal style. For example, we might say that while we hope that our writing is consistent and coherent with regards to the objectives set for this dissertation, we acknowledge that this writing attains different personal styles throughout our dissertation as it engages with conceptual personae and reconfigures figures of reasoning.<sup>7</sup>

In certain aspects, figures of reasoning is synonymous to the use of the term *logic*. To clarify, logics and figures of reasoning do not transcend language, but are always context dependent and vary with the particular language games that are played (Laclau, 2000a, p. 283). Figures of reasoning in this understanding are ontological in the sense that they constitute logics for reasoning.

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<sup>7</sup> For a description of what we mean by conceptual persona see our clarification of the concept below.

However, figures of reasoning should not be understood as being fixed or determined. As in the Wittgensteinian notion of language *game* and our recurrent theme of play, the apparent regularity of figures of reasoning coincides with variation and a particularity of the performance that suggests that every seemingly established figure of reasoning has a unique character.

To come back to the notion of “author”, or the “we” that the reader by now might have already become aware of, we might say that the ontological character of the figures of reasoning not only relates to the reasoning that is discerned and dissected, but is also understood to entangle the very cogito by which or in relation to which reasoning is done. That is, the notion of author—this author writing—, so to speak, emerges in the process of writing, yet, it is not only the author that emerges, but also *the conceptual personae*, the Durkheims, Deweys, etc. that allow an author to emerge.

We might say that in the engagement with figures of reasoning of his conceptual personae, both the personae and the author emerge, where the argumentation and play with figures, that is their rearrangement and interlinkage, produces potentialities, thereby changing author and personae. This perspective on the author and its conceptual personae entails a particular perspective on writing, as well as the work that is accomplished through writing. Due to the process of entwinement and splitting, the result of the role of the conceptual persona, the author is no longer the “I” that is a singular isolated “I” that announces or writes, but is a cogito that emerges *only* through its personae. That is, “[c]onceptual personae are [...] the true agents of enunciation. ‘Who is I?’ It is always a third person” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 65).

It is with regards to this “I” as a third person that the dissertation utilises a peculiar “we” that speaks and is spoken to. We might say that this “we” is an inclusive we, or rather an amiable we, where the author would like to highlight that despite the questioning and repudiating way conceptual personae in this dissertation are occasionally treated with, these acts are not disdainful towards the arguments and positions held. As it hopefully becomes clear, the positions and arguments that are to be brought forward in this dissertation can only emerge *owing* to its conceptual personae. The resulting Bengtsson (2014) is therefore in debt and inextricably entwined with the conceptual personae of Durkheim, Dewey, Englund, Lundgren, etc. Further, the conceptual personae are to highlight that there is no such persona as a singular author, but rather that the persona of Dewey becomes different Deweys in, for example, its assemblage with Bengtsson, Östman or Lundgren. As a result, the author, as well as the conceptual personae are from this perspective never the same, they shift as they enter dialogues and rearrange figures of reasoning. The author is in this perspective not the unified cogito that is producing a coming into presence, but this constitutive act is always multiple and takes place in the articulation of conceptual personae. A consequence of this reasoning for this dissertation is, for example, that while it might claim to utilise

Laclau, this Laclau will differ within the dissertation as Laclau is used to explain different aspects of education and society. However, we dare to claim that this dissertation appeals to the work of Laclau.

It is in this way that “the author” might rather be seen as a form of reduction, as the appeal to a particular logic of figure of reasoning that momentarily is realised, or to put it into the words of Foucault (1984, p. 118): “The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning.” The author in this understanding is the reduction of possibilities, or rather the choice of realising a particular potentiality that excluded equally possible potentialities. Thus, the author that emerges in relation to its conceptual personae is never given in a work, but can be seen as an appeal to a constitutive erasure of play.

The truth is quite the contrary: the author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. (Foucault, 1984, p. 119)

Thus, in the context of Foucault’s clarification, we might say that the author is always prefigured by a play, for example in a text or writing, where there is not an underlying, unifying rationality—*cogito*—that governs or determines this play.<sup>8</sup> To exemplify this statement in the context of this dissertation, it is not the objective to define concepts in the sense of putting them into place. Instead, concepts such as the beyond and especially the concept of play are let loose in order to be active and to allow for a constructive playing with conceptual personae that at best are creative. Further, this appeal to a creative play acknowledges a temporal displacement of the author as this belonging of an utterance would suggest an original belonging of an utterance to an author that is preceding the reading or meaning making. Instead, the author, the reader, as well as the conceptual personae can in their meeting be seen as ephemeral, that is, living to an extent for and in the moment (*cf.* Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 71).

It is with this momentary aspect of the author in mind that the different sections, papers and books of this dissertation can be seen to be characterised by a partial uniqueness.<sup>9</sup> To clarify the consequences of this perspective for

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<sup>8</sup> For an elaboration of this notion of play see the footnote on play in the Prologue.

<sup>9</sup> To utilise the conception of plateau, as articulated in Section 4, we might instead of partial uniqueness state that the different sections, papers and books have self-vibrating intensities, where that self-vibration is not cumulative and does not merge into a whole. Instead, we see the different sections, papers and books as partially characterised by specific vectors that are created once we supplement concepts and engage in dialogues with varying conceptual personae.

the objective of this dissertation, it needs to be pointed out that while the dissertation has a primary ambition to highlight and engage with the political in the relationship between education, the social and globalisation, this singular point of departure breaks into specific discussions or several lines of flight that are pursued in the different sections and books of this dissertation. However, at the same time this underlying ambition is aimed to be accomplished by approaching it from different angles through realising the set of objectives that are to follow below.



# Book I

# The Sections of Book I

## Section 1. Education and Society: Towards a theory of the political curriculum

This section aims to dissect and discuss common figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory. This analysis of figures of reasoning that shape the relationship between education and society is to contribute to existing research dealing with EE and ESD by showing to what an extent these figures of reasoning allow for a conception of change and dynamism. With this focus on central figures of reasoning in mind, the section is not aimed at portraying the field as a whole, but portrays how these figures of reasoning allow us to address the political, as well as the social in education.

With the political in mind we interpret Englund (1986) as an event in Swedish curriculum theory.<sup>10</sup> We create this event with regards to his introduction of a conflict perspective on the political processes on curriculum formation.

With this introduction of a conflict and dynamic perspective by Englund in mind, we are in our analysis of figures of reasoning primarily concerned with how these figures allow for a conception of change and the political in the relation between education and society. Figures that will be particularly of interest and that will be discussed will be figures that constitute how stability, continuity, change and temporality are conceived with regards to the role of education. With the creation of Englund as an event in mind, the ambition is to show how prior and later conceptions of education and society draw on similar, as well as differing figures of reasoning in order to conceive the relation between education and society. Yet, the conception of the relationship between education and society is seen as informed by works of authors outside the field of curriculum theory.

Hence, the dissected figures of reasoning within Swedish curriculum theory are interpreted to be inspired and lend from works of other authors, especially from the work of Durkheim and Dewey. Following these trajectories, the section will explore how figures of reasoning in the work of Durk-

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<sup>10</sup> Observe that the use of the term event should be understood as it will be elaborated in Section 3, that is, as an active form of making an event in order to help the argumentation of this thesis to progress and to give meaning to the field of Swedish educational research. Englund in this sense helps us to spatialise the field of Swedish curriculum theory.

heim and Dewey that constitute how stability and change can be seen to have influenced the conception of the relation of society and education in Swedish curriculum theory. This exploration and the section as a whole highlights the role of evolutionary theory and highlights how the notion of evolution and adaptation have provided reference points for the field of Swedish curriculum theory.

## Section 2. Beyond Society: Education and the political

Building on and relating to the problematisations of the figures of reasoning in the preceding section, this section aims to provide a *reconception* of the relation between education and society, where the notion of society will be replaced by that of the social.

By building on the problematisation of notions of equilibrium, determination and society in the first section, this second section aims to provide a conceptual framework for approaching both stability and change in and through education by providing a conception of the social as an open and undecidable structure. The figure of reasoning that this conception of the social relies upon is seeing change as a constant and not as a rare event. The possibilities for identity and identification that this social as structure provides are following the argumentation of the section not conceived in terms of determination, but seen as to require political acts of decision and identification. As a result of the contingency involved in these acts of constitution of identity and meaning, where these acts ultimately constitute the social, the political emerges as a primary moment.

Our introduced primacy of the political is seen by us to stand in contrast to figures of reasoning discerned in the first section, which emanate from the primacy of society. As a result of this openness and the primary moment of decision, which becomes apparent in the experience in the need for decision, the social is perceived as open. This non-closure of the social, that is to say, its inability to determine, necessitates the emergence of the subject and requires of it through political action to attempt to close it, that is to say, to provide reference points and, as a result, an identity for it that the subject is to establish for itself and in a second instance would constitute that absent fullness that we might call “society”. Yet, as a result of this non-determination or non-closure of society, there will be a divergence and incommensurability among attempts to constitute society.<sup>11</sup> This incommen-

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<sup>11</sup> We use incommensurability to refer to the dialectical logic where the particular negates the universal (Laclau, 2000b, p. 61). With regards to discourses we state that they stand in an incommensurable position to another, as the demands they put forward are presented as universal, where their particularity of these discourses and associated demands are shown once they are articulated as to stand in antagonistic relation to other demands. Antagonism negates in this sense the hegemonic link articulated between two discursive demands showing the

surability and divergence among forces that aim to constitute society is understood by us to be at play in social antagonism, which are due to the ineradicable moment of politics and dissension.

With this perspective in mind, education policy making as central to educational politics is perceived as to give evidence to social antagonism. The political moment becomes thus central to the conception of the relationship between education and the social, where our perspective moves from the determination of social relations in the last instance to the need for identification in the absence of ultimate determination and structurally determined identity; we might say our focus moves to the political moment that is involved in the constitution of identities such as learners, citizens that emerges as a result of the elusiveness of the Other that is preventing the full constitution of these identities once and for all.

### Section 3. Discourse and the Social: Spatiality and temporality

This section aims to translate the broader theoretical framework and its terminology that was introduced in Section 2 to an analytical framework and terminology. This analytical framework is to conceive how concrete instances of meaning making in practice, that is to say articulation, can be analysed as discursive practices and explain how these practices can be seen to engage in the constitution of the social as space. Thereby, this section aims to provide entry points for translating the conceptions of the first book, which aims to approach the object of knowledge, into an analytical terminology that allows for approaching the object of study in the second book of this dissertation.

The second main ambition of this section is to elaborate the presented discourse-analytical framework in order to allow for a clarification of the spatial character of Being. This elaboration of spatiality in relation to temporality aims to provide a basis for a geometrical visualisation of the relationship between the political and the social, where the contingency of the political act of constituting the social as space prevents the social as being a level or slate space.<sup>12</sup> The multiple or symbolic character of certain policy concepts is seen as to provoke a floating or over-determined character of these concepts and result in a multiplicity of their Being within space. In a second instance, the elaboration of the spatial dimension of discursive formations is aimed to provide a theoretical bridge for visualising globalisation in educa-

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contingency of their articulation in relation to particular demands and the incommensurability among these articulations, as they draw on different demands in order to constitute identity.

<sup>12</sup> What we mean by “visualisation” is a metaphorical re-articulation that is to illustrate how the social and political can be seen to relate to space and time.

tion as a connection among spaces. Further, the theoretical bridge is to explain how space can be seen to stand in relation to the social and the political. In this context, Laclau's conception of spatialisation will be elaborated in relation to temporality—a conception which is briefly addressed in Laclau's work. This conception of temporality can, as the section argues, be interpreted to have emerged against the background of the work of Heidegger and Derrida and their notion of Event.

## Section 4. Beyond Space: Globalisation, education and rhizome

This section aims to combine the conceptualisation of the relation between the social and education, which can be seen as to relate to the historicity in practice or space, with a conceptualisation of globalisation as rhizome. This approach to globalisation is drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome in order to conceive of the relationship among spaces or plateaus. The ambition will be to create a theoretical bridge between Laclau's perspective on the relationship between space/time and Deleuze and Guattari's conceptions of plateaus and becoming. It is put forward that such a theoretical bridge will allow for a reconceptualisation of the Being of education policy concepts in and *among* spaces that acknowledges the political. The objective of such a reconceptualisation is to highlight that in the context of constant change or the effects of temporality the question of the ultimate Being or meaning of a policy concept becomes meaningless.

As a central argument of this dissertation, the section puts forward that it is only meaningful to discuss the meaning or alignment of globally travelling education policy concepts associated with a particular space or spaces and particular articulations in mind. Further, it is argued, this meaning and affiliation is not permanent; instead, this meaning is *becoming* and characterised by space-specific historic trajectories that, however, do not determine that process of becoming. To put it more simply, the section aims to provide a reconceptualisation of continuity and change in the practices that characterise and constitute the meaning of education policy making in the context of globalisation. Change is not seen to be aligned with "global" structural changes, but rather as contingent. Practices of globalisation, including practices such as education policy making, are interpreted to entail mutative changes and seen to be made against historic formations that are specific to a particular space and aim to engage in the spatialisation of space. It is in such globalising articulations that a permeabilisation or interfusion of space can be seen to occur.

# 1. Education and Society: Towards a theory of the political curriculum

But also when I am active scientifically, etc.—an activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others—then my activity is social, because I perform it as a man. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as it is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being.

Karl Marx, *Private Property and Communism*

Society has always seemed to demand a little more from human beings than it will get in practice.

George Orwell

## Objectives of this Section

This section aims to provide a background for the next section. With this ambition in mind, it provides points of reference and departure for the attempt to introduce alternative entry points for studying the relation between education, the social and the political in EE and ESD research. Hence, to some extent, it represents a digression, as it can be seen to be separate from the concepts to be introduced in Sections 2, 3 and 4. In case the reader is simply interested in the theoretical and analytical framework that is to be introduced in these later sections, he/she might continue with a reading of Section 2. However, there are connections between this and the later sections, as we will continuously return to our analysis of figures of reasoning in this section, as the figures of reasoning to be analysed represent a horizon

of orientation against which the development of a theoretical and analytical framework will take place and where that horizon is envisioned to be introduced to readers associating themselves with other fields, with environmental education researchers in particular.

As such, a horizon of orientation, this section will engage in an analysis and portrayal of figures of reasoning that can be seen to be characterise the sub-field of curriculum theory. It needs to be pointed out that while these figures of reasoning are in some ways characteristic for the Swedish context of curriculum theory, these figure can be seen to belong to a shared repertoire within social theory and, as such, are located beyond the boundaries of the Swedish traditions and education research. These figures of reasoning are seen to shape Swedish curriculum theory in the sense that they are constitutive for the relations between society, education and the political that can become possible or impossible according to their logics.

As this section will argue, this engagement with an existing discourse within Swedish curriculum theory should not be understood as a linear progression or successive “refinement” of figures of reasoning. What is meant is that we do not understand the debate in curriculum theory to build on a successive conciliation of “present” social challenges or demands of the present with the findings from cumulative knowledge within the field. Instead, the discourse that is taking place in the field is understood as being continuously negotiated, where continuity and novelty are constantly constituted. This act of negotiation is seen by us to be due to a reconfiguration of figures of reasoning and a re-reading of scholars that have been drawn upon in order to conceive of the relation between education and society.<sup>13</sup> However, there can be seen to exist a certain historicity of central logics and narratives, which are captured in the notion of “figures of reasoning”, that are commonly appealed to in order to constitute the cohesiveness or historicity of the field.<sup>14</sup> This historicity as a form of consistency of appeal to particular figures of reasoning will be depicted to produce a limited number of ways in which the relationship between education and society is conceived.

Yet, occasionally certain contributions to the field can be seen to rupture this narrative of continuity, by prying into the narratives and logics that are appealed to. These forceful interventions are seen to “problematise”, or rather to dissolve, an assumed consensus on how to, for example, understand the relation between education and society and thereby threaten the appeal to conformity and successive knowledge production through discourse. The prying intervention is in this sense a move of unnerving. Instead of seeing it

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<sup>13</sup> As an example of this re-reading of influential scholars, we might see Dewey and Wittgenstein to have been read differently. Here, we might compare the readings of these two authors in pragmatist inspired approaches in Swedish curriculum theory with the readings that are put forward in frame-factor theory.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed explanation of what is meant by figures of reasoning, see the readers guide to this dissertation.

as a form of hindrance or of negativity, the prying move is interpreted by us as an act of *Destruktion*, to use the words of Heidegger.

As Heidegger (1921) can be seen to suggest, *Destruktion* is, as an unnerving or prying move, concerned with the possibilities that are provided when we tear up tradition for critical investigation.<sup>15</sup> What the prying move then can be seen to accomplish is not a hindrance in knowledge production, but, on the contrary, an opening up of possibilities for reconstitution of that very relationship between education and society and consequently a reconstitution of the understanding of what education and society “are”.

This section, as a whole, aims to highlight a particular prying move that has been accomplished within the field of Swedish curriculum theory and that is interpreted as having far-reaching implications for the ability to reconstitute the relationship between education and society. This move is seen to have been provided by Englund (1986) in the form of the introduction of *a dynamic conflict perspective on political formation processes in education*. We argue, this introduction allowed for the possibility of the political to enter into the relationship between society and education.

What this section then envisions is to position Englund’s attempt at reconstitution in relation to the traditional uses of certain figures of reasoning that are characteristic for the field of Swedish curriculum theory. Further, the section is to denote the ways in which studies after Englund’s intervention can be seen to have responded to his intervention and to examine if they have taken the consequences of this intervention further.

The section will not focus solely on a reconstitution of the implications of Englund’s prying move, but aims to take it a step further. In this additional step, we engage with argumentative force the cracks that Englund’s work can be seen to have created.

It will be argued that this additional step of *Destruktion* that we, in this section, will engage in should be taken to its extreme. Consequently, the *Destruktion* in this section is to provide an entry point for the consolidation of *the logical consequences of a conflict perspective* and, subsequently, to allow for the introduction of the political moment that is at the heart of this conflict perspective in the relationship between education and society. While it might seem that this section centres on Englund’s contribution, it is suggested that this contribution is taken hostage in order to portray or portend the limits of the figures of reasoning by which the Being of education and society are constituted within Swedish curriculum theory. We will, therefore, *constitute* Englund (1986) as an event in Swedish curriculum theory in order to approach the constitution of a background against which the theoretico-constructive intervention or construction in the next section will take place.

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<sup>15</sup> *Destruktion* in the context of philosophy can be understood as engagement with traditions in ontology that concern the question of Being or how Being is constituted.

To briefly summarise the depicted objectives of this section, this section engages in an analysis of figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory by which the relation between education and society is conceived. This analysis will put into relation the identified figures of reasoning to a conflict perspective, as we see it to have been introduced by Englund (1986). This imposition of a focus on conflict on figures of reasoning imposes a particular focus of interest on the conceptual personae whose work is to be analysed. The imposition of a conflictual perspective raises a number of questions that we ask our conceptual personae in order to reflect upon if and how their figures of reasoning that constitute the relation between education and society allow for conflict and the political to emerge.

As it will be argued, an appeal to determinate society can be seen to subordinate the dynamics of conflict and the political as an opening for change to a determinate state of Being, thereby theoretically subverting the dynamics of the social in movement. In order to approach the conflictual and the consequences of appeals to determination by the structure, we will raise the issue of the temporality of determination. By raising the issue of the time of determination, it is envisioned to provoke an explanatory void, where the elusiveness of this time of determination is held hostage by us in order to portray the explanatory limit of figures of reasoning that appeal to structural determination.

It needs to be pointed out that in this dialogue with our conceptual personae we are imposing a particular direction of dialogue; a direction that our dialogical other might not have pursued in the text that is analysed. As certain figures of reasoning are not fully articulated, yet, concepts are seemingly used in accordance to particular figures of reasoning as they have been provided by other conceptual personae, our analysis will in a number of instances pull in these other conceptual personae in order to make an argument for our analytical interpretation. Hence, what we want to point out is that the depicted figures of reasoning might not be explicitly or fully articulated by our conceptual personae, we make the *active* step of bringing in other personae that we interpret to have informed these figures of reasoning.

## The “Context” of Emergence of Swedish Curriculum Theory

When we approach central figures of reasoning that constitute the relation between education and society in Swedish curriculum studies, it is important to highlight that we see the field to have developed in relation to the specificity of the visions of the re-modelling of the Swedish state, the Swedish education system and attempts at engaging in the constitution of Swedish society through and in education. As a result of this close entwinement

with attempts at social formation, it is argued that Swedish education research initially emerged as a distinct field due to the school reforms that took place within the post-war period.

It is, however, noteworthy to mention that in the pre-war period the field of “pedagogik”, as dealing with what we might call the educational, in Swedish research can, according to Kroksmark (1991, p. 161), be seen to be subdivided into pedagogy, as relating to the study of fostering [*uppfostran*], and didactics, as relating to the study of instruction [*undervisning*]. While didactics [*didaktik*] has been treated as a relatively separate field of study, both fields of pedagogy and didactics have been historically closely intertwined and should according to our perspective not be understood as closed. Instead, it will be argued that both fields have often been influenced by and have borrowed from other fields, such as psychology or sociology.

Accordingly, this section will draw on research from both fields. However, it will become apparent that a number of the central narratives that frame “the educational”, as that which is at the core of these fields, differs from another. Säfström (1994) portrays in his study of the history of the educational in Swedish education research how both fields, that is to say pedagogy and didactics, have historically produced a fragmented notion of the educational. As a consequence of this fragmented sense of the role and place of the educational, it has to be highlighted that education and society will become partially different things within particular traditions within these two fields. Nevertheless, we will argue for a certain recurrence of central figures of reasoning that are drawn upon in Swedish curriculum theory and as a consequence shape the relation between education and society.

The emergence of the field of educational research, that is to say both pedagogy and didactics, are seen to have emerged against the background of the reformation of the education system during the post-war period. These education reforms and consequently also the emergence of the field of educational research are understood by us to have taken shape against the background of political changes that were taking place in the 1930s and that came to shape politics and the visions for Swedish society during the pre-war and post-war periods. In the context of the demand of “social equality”, which can be seen to have been a central demand for the workers’ unions and consequently of the Social Democratic Party in Swedish politics, the differentiated education system that was largely influenced by the German education system became an object of scrutiny and revision (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000, p. 44ff).<sup>16</sup> This revision of the Swedish education system took place in parallel to a realignment of the cultural reference model, that is to say, a shift from a predominant German cultural orientation to an American orientation (Lundgren, 1972, 2002; Myrdal & Myrdal, 1941). This is not so say that the

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<sup>16</sup> The then existent, differential education system came to be criticised for maintaining class-inequalities within Swedish society.

revision of the vision for Swedish society was in full alignment with foreign notions of state and society during that period. Instead, the argument to be made is that the visions for Swedish society that existed during that period should be seen as an amalgamation of different influences that attain a particular configuration and different trajectories in the Swedish context.

However, the argument that will be made in this portrayal of a “historic background” is that a central imaginary (Anderson, 1983) for the conception of society, state and education during the period of the formation of Swedish education and Swedish educational research was the conception of *folkhemmet* [people’s home]. *Folkhemmet* provided a unifying reference point for nationhood, state reformation and cultural identity (Frykman, 1998). What *folkhemmet* initially allowed for was a portrayal of an organicistic, national unity and the notion of state as people. Kjellén (1917), whose work has been accredited a central role in the development of the concept of *folkhemmet*, utilises the notion of *demopolitik*, in order to portray the intertwined ethnic/racial character of people as an organism and organism as state. Thus, *folkhemmet* can be seen to have traces to an organicistic notion of people and as a result also an organicistic notion of governance (Karlsson, 2001, p. 459ff).<sup>17</sup>

While this historical trajectory of the concept of *folkhemmet* cannot explain why or how education research developed as it did, it is envisioned to allow for an understanding of how the historicity of educational research in Sweden, as it invests implicitly or explicitly in the notion of *folkhemmet*, is closely linked to an imaginary of national cohesion and state as proxy for the people (*cf.* Dahlqvist, 2002). The argument is made is that *folkhemmet* provides a shared imaginary that came to shape the development of the field of educational research that emerged during the 1950s and that traces of this imaginary are still prevalent in Swedish educational research, even though the name of *folkhemmet* has been partially abandoned and replaced by “democratic society”. The reform ambitions that took shape during the 1940s and the following decades aimed at creating *folkhemmet* through the alignment of the education system to the imaginary associated notion of organicistic national unity. This organicistic notion of national unity has been conceived in terms of a classless society by the Social Democrats.<sup>18</sup> It is in this

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<sup>17</sup> We might comment here that in this appeal to a form of organicistic national unity an interesting parallel exists to the underlying notion of society as it will be discussed with regards to the figures of reasoning of Dewey. It might be of interest to point out that the appropriation of the term *folkhemmet* by the social democratic leader of Per Albin Hansson invested in the originally nationalist right wing concept of *folkhemmet*, where the notion of nation as people in an organic sense was supplemented with a notion of social justice that would lead to greater social cohesion among the people as an organic unity (Karlsson, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> As the footnote above already mentions, the notion of *folkhemmet* invested in a notion of people as an organic whole, where the concept of *folkhemmet* is seen by us to have been strategically invested in by Per Albin Hansson in order to tone down the class conflict rhetoric pursued by other social democrats that Hansson saw to alienate voters in the political middle

context of *folkhemmet*, as a classless society, that education reform aimed at transforming the differentiated education system into a comprehensive education system [*enhetsskola*] (cf. Frykman, 1998; Husén, 1977).

## The Emergence of Swedish Curriculum Theory

The education research that was carried out during this period of comprehensive education reform can in many ways be seen as a means for informing governance about the objective effects of state intervention on its body. The effects on the body was during this constitutive period of Swedish education research field measured, as Lundgren (1984, p. 69) points out, in knowledge effects. Education research in this period engaged primarily in the evaluation of the effects of educational interference, as it was centred on the issue of students' performances. Central to such approaches to educational research was the issue of the potential effects on student performances if the state were to interfere with educational delivery and modes of education (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000, p. 44ff). With regards to the realisation of a classless society, these studies were particularly interested in the mode of educational provision, that is to say if comprehensive classes as part of non-differentiated forms of educational provision affected negatively students' performances (e.g., Svensson, 1962).

As it is interpreted by us, education research was at that time utilised in order to gain support for political ambitions, that is, to provide a *legitimatising* knowledge basis for the realisation of the social imaginary of *folkhemmet* and functioned as authoritative voice against remaining opposition against the vision of comprehensive education. The problem to be addressed in educational reform during this period was, thus, primarily conceived in the form of the efficiency of education, which was to be assured through informed decision-making (e.g., Svensson, 1962). With this problem in mind, education research set itself the task to identify mechanisms in teaching and education system organisation that produced the most beneficial outcomes (e.g., Dahllöf, 1967a, p. 276). However, benefits were related to *overall* societal benefits (Dahllöf, 1967b; Husén, 1977).

## The Emergence of Frame-Factor Theory

In this emergent phase of Swedish education research, education research was still very much influenced by the individualist centrality of psychologi-

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spectrum (Karlsson, 2001). Hence, instead of highlighting class conflicts, *folkhemmet* came to underline the increase in social cohesion resulting out of greater social justice, or as we argue goal of classless society.

cal models of explanation and measurement. Psychological models of “stimulus → observation → response” were utilised in order to measure the suitability of educational reformation attempts (*cf.* Dahllöf, 1967b). However, what remained a challenge was the inability to explain why certain effects were or were not accomplished through certain policy interventions (Dahllöf, 1999; Lundgren, 1984). While, the key ambition with the early studies was to provide information for informed policy making based on “micro-level” observations by utilising pedagogical-psychological models of empirical analysis (Dahllöf, 1967b), it became apparent that a need existed for a macro-theoretical model that would provide the theoretical basis for comparability and synthesis of findings generated at the micro-level (Dahllöf, 1967a). It is in this context of the creation of such a macro-theoretical model of explanation that we may say that a distinct theoretical field emerges within Swedish educational research.

This theoretical gap came to be filled by frame-factor theory. A frame [*ram*] is an explanatory construct that denotes “specifications of fundamental structural conditions [that set] limits for pedagogical action” (Lundgren, 1984, p. 74, author’s translation). A frame, in this understanding, allows for comparison of observations at the “micro-level” and is itself allocated at the abstract “system-level” (Dahllöf, 1999, p. 9). As such, frame-factor theory represented a defining momentum for didactics [*didaktik*] and pedagogy [*pedagogik*] and allowed them to develop from a theoretical relation of dependence on psychological theory into a distinct theory of the curriculum [*läroplansteori*], that is to say curriculum theory, that aims at providing explanatory means for conceiving regulatory forces that shape patterns *among* interactions at the classroom level. This early form of frame-factor theory was significantly influenced by the *classic sociology of education*, which provided the conceptual means for the external *forces* that shape patterns among interactions at the classroom level; in other words, the classic sociology of education was drawn upon in the theoretical construction of the “system-level”, yet, frame-factor theory continued to be closely related to policy making and governance (Englund, 1990, p. 25).

The argument to be made is that the emergence of a Swedish theory of the curriculum [*läroplansteori*], that in the following shall be called curriculum theory, is fundamentally shaped by figures of reasoning that classical sociology of education has put forward and that in many instances aligns with the broader imaginary of *folkhemmet*, as this imaginary entails an appeal to a primary or essential relationship of solidarity as a synthesising bond among people. More specifically, Swedish curriculum theory in parallel with the development of broader imaginaries of Swedish society are interpreted to have in a number of defining instances been shaped against common figures of reasoning that are constitutive for the relation between education and society. While some of them are seen by us to have been challenged and reconfigured, some are interpreted to still be appealed to. These common figures

of reasoning provide in our understanding a repertoire by which the relationship between education and society is constituted.

In order to understand the contribution that this thesis aims to make and to conceptualise the radical aspect of the prying intervention it sees Englund (1986) to have made, it will be necessary to briefly characterise these figures of reasoning that came to shape the relation between education and society. The characterisation of these figures of reasoning is envisioned to allow for the creation of points of reference in relation to which it becomes possible to contribute to existing research on environmental education and ESD by allowing for the inception of a conception of the political into the relationship between education and society. In the conception of how the political can be seen to enter this relationship, we will focus our analysis upon how figures of reasoning conceive of continuity and change of Being. To be precise, we are interested in how continuity and change are conceived to relate to education and society.

## Figures of Reasoning in Swedish Curriculum Theory before Englund

### Functionalist explanations of education

As earlier mentioned, frame-factor theory emerged out of a theoretical need for a macro or systems explanation of implications of micro-level observations (*cf.* Dahllöf, 1967a). These explanatory efforts in Swedish education research were at that time further closely linked to existing attempts at educational reform and expected to inform policy making regarding what works and to explain why it works. Frames were in this way closely entwined with both an engagement in remodelling and explanation of interaction between external organisational frameworks and teaching processes (Östman, 1995).

As such, frames were early on conceived in terms of how purposeful interventions both in the form of restrictions and provision of opportunities by the state can affect broader structural changes. These structural changes are in frame-factor theory understood to relate primarily to the education system and in a secondary instance to bring about changes in broader society. The manipulation of frames that set the limits for action at the micro-level are in this perspective understood as capable of determining the space for action within the classroom.

It is with regards to this reasoning that frame-factor theory, as it is central for the emergence of Swedish curriculum theory, can be seen to be informed by figures of reasoning that are lend from the classical sociology of education. With regards to these figures, we can see Durkheim's functionalism (*cf.* Pope, 1975; Radcliffe-Brown, 1935), as well as the idea of efficiency to be coherent with figures in frame-factor theory. As a theoretical framework,

early frame-factor theory became in its theoretical ambitions not solely concerned with the question “Do schools work?”, but also aimed to provide a theory for *why* they do work (or do not work) (Lundgren, 1984, p. 70).

Durkheim’s functionalism can be interpreted to have informed this reasoning as the functioning of school is understood in terms of a functional relationship to social structure (*cf.* Kallós & Lundgren, 1979). With this theoretical ambition in mind, a frame, as bridge between the macro and micro levels, is to denote a separation between the internal and external of different institutional levels, where the external configurations of the structure have an impact on the possible actions within the internal (Lundgren, 1984, p. 74).

### Critical theory: Durkheim meets Marx

However, it was first in the second generation that frame-factor theory was developed into a distinct theoretical framework (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979; Lundgren, 1977) that established frame-factor theory as a theory of the curriculum. One of the main characteristics of this theoretical evolution is the influence of the new educational sociology with its prominent representatives of Bourdieu and Bernstein. This evolutionary development can, with regards to a number of constitutive theoretical appeals, be described as an inception of Marxist reasoning into classical sociology of education and frame-factor theory.

In the case of Bourdieu, the result can be seen to consist of an amalgamation of Durkheim, Weber and Marx (*cf.* Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970, p. 4). In line with the resulting perspective on society, the theoretical focus of second generation frame-factor theory shifts away from issues of efficiency towards issues of legitimacy and social control (Englund, 1990; Östman, 1995). The somewhat static depiction of the education system in terms of functionality that can be seen to shape earlier frame-factor theory was in this theoretical evolution remodelled around a highlighted historic dimension, where this historic dimension was to explain the development and change of the relationship between education and society *over time* (*cf.* Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 32).

### A Marxist notion of history and temporality

It is in regard to the absence of a historical dimension in earlier conceptions that the second generation of frame-factor theory criticises the flatness of a-historic functionalist explanations. This flatness prevents, according to the critique by frame-factor theory, curriculum theory from grasping how the demands on curriculum are *determined* by particular configurations or “a certain set of circumstance” *at a given point in time* (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 82f).

If we try to point out some of the consequences of the perspective on the relations between schooling and society that we have referred to for curriculum research and development on the macro level it becomes obvious that such work cannot be primarily normative in character. Curriculum studies cannot primarily be focused on *how* a curriculum should be constructed or developed, but must primarily explain the determinants of the curriculum. The first issue thus concerns the question of why a certain type of curriculum becomes necessary under a certain set of circumstances. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 82f, original emphasis)

What this insertion of a historic dimension is interpreted to counter is the temporal flatness of a purely functionalist explanation of the relation between education and society by introducing a temporal relativity of the functional system.

As the quote below is interpreted to reflect, temporal flatness can be seen to be a problem in Durkheim's sociology as his conception of society is primarily understood in terms of equilibrium (Durkheim, 1893). While we will address the potential problematic conception of society as in a normal state of equilibrium in greater detail below, the critique put forward by second generation frame-factor theory against such a conception of society can primarily be seen to be concerned with the a-temporality or a-historicity of the explanation of the relation between society, education and curriculum. This means that the relation between education and society should, according to the inserted Marxist conception of history in second generation frame-factor theory, be understood to stand in a relation to the determinants that characterise a specific period or stage.

What is implied here is the task of not only registering various influences and seek technological solutions to meet them, but rather an analysis of the various pressures and their political and economic implications and background. In our views this would mean a break with *equilibrium theories* as a basis for attempted reforms of changes (*cf.* Paulston, 1975). The problem is thus why certain particular demands are important at *a certain stage in history* and what mechanisms that allow these demands to become influential in the educational sector, and finally how that influence is exerted and *legitimized*. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 83, author's emphasis)

What the quote above is interpreted to suggest is that the a-temporality of society as equilibrium in Durkheim is in this theoretical evolution of frame-theory supplemented by a Marxist/Hegelian notion of time, which is characterised by stagism and cohesive shifts in the structure.

From this perspective, the Durkheimian notion of function is not understood in an a-temporal or final sense, but is put in relation to the dominant forces, which derive out of the modes of production at a particular stage of history. To put it into the words of the quote above, the function of curricu-

lum and education is to be understood in relation to “a certain historical stage in history” that is characteristic for a particular type of society. It is in relation to this notion of periodical time, as characterised by historical stages, that society is conceived.<sup>19</sup> Within this notion of time, which defines society as an expression of a certain historic stage, education’s function is conceived as being determined by the historical stage that defines the particular type of historical society, for example, “capitalist society”.

## A supplemented notion of history and change

The supplementation of Durkheimian inspired functionalist notion of society with Marxist notion of history and time results also in an alteration of the notion of change. The alteration of the notion of change can be seen to supplement the equilibrium theory of society in Durkheim with a Marxist notion of history, where the historic conditions determine the type of society and the function of education.

Education together with state intervention in economic life have been major correctives in the capitalist societies as *e.g.* Gintis and Bowles (1975, p. 95ff) point out. It should be reemphasised, however, that educational reforms do not profoundly alter inequalities within the capitalist system (*cf.* also Bowles and Gintis, 1976). (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 75)

This Marxist notion of history is based on historical materialism, where, as the quote above highlights, the specific modes of production characterise a particular historic stage and its equivalent type of society, for example, capitalist society. Change is accordingly not something that is brought about by interventions and educational reforms. Instead, change as structural change occurs only in relation to shifts in the mode of production.

In contrast to a notion of society as equilibrium, a Marxist notion of history allows for a bracketed notion of structural change. Change in this understanding is a shift from one historical stage to another, where the new stage introduces a new form of society.

The supplementation of society as equilibrium with the notion of Marxist history allows, hence, for an alternate notion of society. Here, society and, as a result, education is perceived in historically relative terms, where the historical determinants specify the functions of education. As the quote above is interpreted to highlight, change is in this sense not something that can

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<sup>19</sup> This notion of periodical or rather stagist time in the second generation of frame-factor theory is interpreted by us to be informed by a Marxist/Hegelian notion of time. The particularity of the moment in its divergence and spontaneity is in this notion of time seen as already part of a greater movement of history. While Marxist holism has distinct features and differentiates itself from the Hegelian holism, it shares the feature that particularity is inevitably understood in relation to the whole or the Absolute (*cf.* Althusser, 1965, p. 161ff).

emerge from within the education system or by actors reforming education. Change is cohesive temporal change of society, where education changes once it is its time to change.

The recognition of the fact that schooling exists within a social context has already been made explicit in the earlier chapters (*e.g.*, pp. 9Ff, pp. 29ff). This notion is neither new nor abstract. It allows us, however, to refute among other things the rather common *misunderstanding that schools and schooling are main forces in bringing about structural changes in society*. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 74, author's emphasis)

Change is, as the quote indirectly seen to suggest, conceived as cohesive or “structural” change. Change is in this understanding *a priori* to *a posteriori* efforts to give meaning to change. As the quote below highlights, change is not something that actors bring about based on *a priori* held ideals, but instead change is seen as beyond such interventions.

In our view, the schools of a society serve to reproduce the economic, social, and political relations, and the only way that school can change those relations is through their *unforeseen* consequences rather than through planned and deliberate change. In this sense we argue that a society based on largely unequal positions of power, income, and social status among adults, will *not be able to alter those relations* through the schools. To the contrary, the *schools will tend to reproduce* the inequalities in order to contribute to the legitimation of adult society. (Carnoy & Levin, 1976, p. 4, cited in Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 75, author's emphasis)

The role of efforts in education research and curriculum study is, following this perspective on reproduction, then to uncover the “unforeseen consequences” as they emerge in structural and objective terms as forms of societal change. However, while change is seen to happen, it is, as the quote above indicates, at same time bracketed to limited instances of periodic structural shifts, since the major ambition of the second generation of frame-factor theory is to uncover and objectively describe the ways in which functional education “*reproduces*” economic, social and political relations and “inequalities”. With this focus on reproduction in mind, we might suggest that the focus of second-generation frame-factor theory is on societal continuity within a given historical period or historical stage. We argue that the notion of structural and historic determination renders the insertion of the political into the relation between education and society an impossibility, as political struggle is to be understood in relation to what society already is. Society in this understanding ascribes power and the ability to dominate *a priori* to certain actors within society thereby reproducing itself, bracketing the notion of change as to emanate out of political action fully from the conception of education and society.

## Historical materialism

To come back to the earlier observation that the new sociology of education represented an amalgamation between Durkheim, Weber and Marx, it should be pointed out that the objectivity of the theoretical constitution of reproduction and the *a priori* character of social, economic and political “power” relations is grounded in Marxist historical materialism. In this Marxist figure of reasoning, the material base assumes the grounding function.

Societal reproduction is those processes that recreate both the material base, as well as culture: recreation of knowledge, abilities and values, and recreation of societal power in a broader understanding. Nurturing [*uppfostran*] and education [*undervisning*] are the processes by which culture is recreated from one generation to the next or to use the words of the American educationalist [*pedagogen*] John Dewey: “Society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive.” (Dewey, 1916, s. 3) (Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983, p. 11, author’s translation)

As we can see, Dewey becomes in his absorption in frame-factor theory entwined with historical materialism, where the reproductive function of education is grounded in the “material” and economical practices of societal production. Further, Dewey’s naturalism and pragmatism are by frame-factor theory interpreted as an appeal to productive primacy understood in terms of material modes of production.<sup>20</sup>

To address the issue of objectivity, it can be argued that it is with regards to this grounding move in a material base, which entails a division between cultural or ideological superstructure and material productive base, that the function of education in objective terms can be maintained by relating educational knowledge, content and values back to a primary societal ground. In this sense of ground, the particular mode of production defines *a priori* the type of society and the functional relation of education as primarily concerned with cultural reproduction (Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983, p. 23).

We put forward that the theoretical function of this material base in frame-factor theory is to provide a stabilising point of reference in relation to which both objectivity, as a form of underlying uniformity, can be guaranteed. It is in relation to this ground, or base, that knowledge both with regards to reproduction in education and production in education research be-

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<sup>20</sup> What is meant by this comment is that Dewey’s metaphysical position of nature and his pragmatism are interpreted in a Marxist theoretical framework, where both the naturalistic and pragmatic aspects of Dewey are interpreted in terms of the primacy of activity in terms of productive action.

comes split in objective and subjective knowledge. As with false class-consciousness in Marxist theory of ideology, the base provides a referent in relation to which knowledge can be judged objective or subjective, that is to say, true or false. Knowledge about the education system can, based on this line of reasoning, be judged in relation to its correspondence to the objective historic function that knowledge captures in relation to a broader, objective societal configuration or the “superordinate structure of society”.

With certain variations all those involved execute functions of which they are not the masters due to the *fact that these functions are determined by the superordinate structures* of the society partly even beyond the scope of the explicit consciousness of those involved and definitely outside their scope of action (Callewaert and Lundgren, 1976). (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 94, author’s emphasis)

It is in regard to the objectivity of knowledge, that frame-factor theory can be seen to share figures of reasoning with Marxist theory of class consciousness and Durkheim’s figure of reasoning.

To return to this issue of politics, the claim of objective depiction of the function of the education system can be seen to extract the political from the conception of the relation between education and society, as the political as a form of divergence of ideological representation of education and its role is sublated with regards to its objective function, as determined by a particular mode of production.

### Durkheimian aspects and the problematic account of change

It is argued by us that, in the appeal to Bourdieu’s work, an indirect lending of figures of reasoning takes place that constitute of society in a similar fashion to Durkheim. As the earlier quote highlighted, society is for second-generation frame-factor theory an *a priori* or a primary.

In this sense we argue that a society based on largely unequal positions of power, income, and social status among adults, will *not be able to alter those relations* through the schools. To the contrary, the *schools will tend to reproduce* the inequalities in order to contribute to the legitimation of adult society. (Carnoy & Levin, 1976, p. 4, cited in Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 75, author’s emphasis)

In this understanding of the role of education, society reproduces itself through education. We argue this figure of reasoning is in line with Durkheim’s notion of society. Society is for Durkheim a primary, the fundamental, the reality in relation to which we all as individuals have to relate. Yet, at

the same time, society entails a surplus; it is more than just an aggregate of individual members of a society.

We believe this is sufficient to answer those who think that they can prove that in social life everything is individual, because society is made up only of individuals. Undoubtedly no other substratum exists. But because individuals form a society, new phenomena occur whose cause is association, and which, reacting upon the consciousness of individuals, for the most part shapes them. This is why, although society is nothing without individuals, each one of them is more a product of society than he is the author. (Durkheim, 1893, p. 288)

As we can see in the quote above, society is something more than the sum of all individuals; it is the author of individuals. As society is the primary in Durkheim's understanding the individual might not be aware of what he/she really is. As in the description of "unforeseen" structural changes (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 75), the insight of what society is is an afterwards construction, where consciousness becomes aware of what it already has been.

We argue that this figure of reasoning is problematic as it renders the point of change of society opaque. While second-generation frame-factor theory can be seen to relativise change in relation to history, we argue that the point of change in time is rendered paradox. In order to substantiate this argument, we will return to Durkheim and approach his notion of anomie, which we argue is the constitutive other that allows for his notion of society as primary.

Durkheim refers by anomie to a lack of social norms or an absence of social bonds as an indicator of a crisis of society. The crisis of society is due to a change of society. In the state of crisis, then, the individual conscious and the superior conscience of the collective are, so to speak, out of tune and it is only time that can re-establish that harmony of conscience.

Time is required for the public conscience to reclassify men and things. So long as the social forces thus freed have not regained equilibrium, their respective values are unknown and so all regulation is lacking for a time. The limits are unknown between the possible and the impossible, what is just and what is unjust, legitimate claims and hopes and those which are immoderate. (Durkheim, 1897, p. 213)

This transitional period of anomie is in many ways an intermediate phase, an in-between; anomie is inter-individual "temporary" oblivion. Further, the quote shows that society is conceived as both an *a priori* and an *a posteriori*. For Durkheim, society as an author is always potent, even though the individual or inter-individual consciousness might not yet be aware of its *telos*. It is here then that we might say that Durkheim's conception of society renders

the point of change of society opaque and renders his notion of change paradox.

We argue that this paradox haunts the conception of society in second-generation frame-factor theory even though it supplements the Durkheimian notion of society with Marxist historical materialism. It is in the instance of the appeal to *a priori* and *a posteriori* conception of society, that is to say it is a *a priori* material reality and the *a posteriori* objective ideological conception of this primary material reality that Durkheim's explanatory problem can be seen to re-emerge in this conception of society in second generation of frame-factor theory. To specify, the Durkheimian explanatory problem is provoked by us in putting into relation the figures of reasoning that hold that: (a) anomie is a temporary state that will be overcome, and (b) that social functions are *a priori* in a state of equilibrium. The explanatory problem emerges in the logical construction of *how anomie can exist* if the equilibrium is *a priori*, as well as a necessity arriving *a posteriori*. We can ask ourselves: How can anomie exist if the equilibrium is *a priori*, as well as a necessity arriving *a posteriori*?

The problem in this sense is not that there is no explanation of anomie in Durkheim, but rather that the logics by which society is constituted would not allow for the existence of anomie. We argue that at best anomie can be explained as a transitional, as a state between initial and secondary equilibrium. However, this explanation of anomie as transitional is not *reasonable*, as anomie in this understanding would be synonymous with unreasonableness.

Durkheim's metaphorical depiction of anomie as evil can help us to clarify this explanatory problem.

If anomie is an evil it is above all because society suffers through it, since it cannot exist without cohesion and regulation. Thus, moral or legal rules essentially express social needs which society alone can identify. They rest upon a climate of opinion, and all opinion is a collective matter, the result of being worked out collectively. To be shot of anomie a group must thus exist or be formed within which can be drawn up the system of rules that is now lacking. (Durkheim, 1893, p. xxxv)

As with the problem of evil in the philosophy of religion, which raises the issue of how evil can exist if God is omnipotent, we might ask ourselves: How can anomie exist with regards to Durkheim's notion of society? To specify, Durkheim holds: "Here it is indeed rather the form of the whole that determines that of the parts. Society does not find ready-made in individual consciousness the bases on which it rests; it makes them for itself" (Durkheim, 1893, p. 287). If anomie would be due to a form of individualism, where the individual acts without a feeling of dependence or a breaking with the existing body of rules we would have to ask ourselves: How would

this individualism be possible, if the whole *determines* the parts, that is to say society *determines* individual consciousness? To put it differently: How can anomie exist if there is primarily “instincts certainly [that] exhibit one peculiar feature: they adapt the individual to the social and not the physical environment and their causes have arisen from happenings in the common life” (Durkheim, 1893, p. 283)? How can a group *exist* if the system of rules is *now* lacking due to anomie as an absence of social bonds (Durkheim, 1893, p. xxxv)?

We might make the argument that Durkheim’s explanatory focus is not on an explanation of the causes of change, but instead how responses to an externally imposed change aim at overcoming the disruptive effects by reestablishing the equilibrium of society.<sup>21</sup>

### The explanatory problem of change in appeals to determinate society

This explanatory problem of the constitution of anomie and society can be seen to resurface in the conception of the relation between material reality, objective ideological representation and change in second-generation frame-factor theory. This relationship is in a Marxist fashion conceived in the form of *determination of the superstructure by the base in the last instance*.

We have already stated that profound changes in the school system cannot be brought about or even initiated by researchers. We could also quite confidently state that such changes cannot be brought about by individual teachers, although current literature suggests that teachers have almost endless potential resources and possibilities even within the existing framework. The space of options for their work is *in the last instance determined structurally*. It is, however, quite clear that individual teachers for at least a period of time carry out their teaching in a way *that differs from the “normal” patterns*. It is equally clear that a certain space of options exist for teachers (and students) at least in theory. It is also quite evident that the *objective functions of schooling within society may be met by a number of seemingly different strategies*. We, however, strongly suspect that eventual changes that are taking place at the level of curriculum and teaching today do not in any way fundamentally alter the functions of schooling. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 94, author’s emphasis)

The quote highlights that all possible variation will in the last instance have been determined structurally. The above-characterised Durkheimian problem

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<sup>21</sup> We refer by externally imposed change to the adaptive relation between society and environment in Durkheim (1893, p. 272). In this understanding of society’s adaptive relation to a changing environment, change becomes only a necessity if the functioning of the social system is threatened by an external change that has already happened. In such instances, society is forced to adapt in order to return to a state of equilibrium.

of explaining the existence of anomie is interpreted to resurface in second-generation frame-factor theory with regards to the inability to insert change into the very conception of the relationship between superstructure and base. We argue, this inability is a result of the appeal to structural determination. As a result of this inability, we suggest that the conception of change is, as in Durkheim, pushed to the limit of the theoretical construction of society.

This dwelling at the limits, it is argued, is due to the impossibility for temporal change to occur in the *in-between*, where the in-between refers to the “time” in-between *a posteriori* determination in relation to an *a priori* structural formation. This impossibility is linked to the logics by which the relation between the ideal and material is constituted in Marxist philosophy of language. If the superstructure stands in a relative relation to its determination by materiality, this also implies that language, as it essentially belonging to the ideal, is according to this Marxist figure of reasoning conceived as referential to material objects (*cf.* Voloshinov, 1986). As a result of this logic of reference, objects cannot be contradictory in themselves. This means that the determination of the superstructure by the base cannot be logically sound if the base has changed.

What we are addressing is the impossibility of *determination*. This impossibility is due to the logic of change which commands that we cannot explain how ideal objectivity can be guaranteed *a posteriori* to structural, material change, as material change might already have happened *again*. Change refers to a change in which the identity of objects has changed. If we hold that symbol A is equal to object A, yet object A *has* changed and became not object A, then object A cannot determine symbol A *a posteriori*, since it is *already* different. The impossibility of change in the in-between is in this injunction understood to depend on the law of non-contradiction, which is central for the theoretical construction of identity in Aristotelian logics.<sup>22</sup>

Change can be interpreted to problematise the issue of temporality in second-generation frame-factor theory, where the theoretical constitution of change can be seen to be pushed to the limit by the appeal to determination. We argue change is for second-generation frame-factor theory *at* the limit, or *the* limit, of explanation of social (re)production or, to formulate this in a more appeasing way, change is the limit of continuous identity. Real change can, according to this figure of reasoning, only be conceived in terms of structural change. As such, a structural or historic event, change is theoretically constituted as an utterly rare event.

We argue, change is, due the figures of reasoning that are drawn upon in order to conceive of society, theoretically, as well as empirically problematic

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<sup>22</sup> It might be of importance to point out that this is logic only becomes “problematic” when it is conceived in a relation to a referential notion of language. Such a referential notion of language is not appealed to in the intervention of the next section. We argue that the referent or signified in our conception of language is barred (Lacan, 1966).

for second-generation frame-factor theory. As argued above, frequent or constant change would be problematic for a logic of reference that is appealed to in order to claim objectivity. We argue that change is pushed to the limit of theoretisation and kept at bay by appealing to rare historical events as change.

However, the problem of temporality of the rare event is interpreted by us to remain an issue, as we can ask: When did that structural change occur? When was the event of a coming into presence? As we argued in this section, claims to objectivity are troubled by change due to the logic of reference.

### From a focus on efficiency to a focus on legitimacy

The discussed event of *the coming into presence* of a structural difference, that is to say, the coming into being of a different structure, is conceived in terms of structural determinants that determine the function of education and curriculum in society (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979). In this understanding, the functional determinants of education are defined by the “political and economic structures” that are characteristic for a particular historic stage and the modes of production that are characteristic for that stage.

The view adopted by us implies that such theories must start from an analysis of the *determinants* of the school (i.e. its relation to society) and that any discussion of curriculum change must take into account the *actual limits of educational reform set by the political and economic structure*. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 95, author’s emphasis)

It is in this view that structure, as specific to a historical stage, determines Being and in relation to which education and curriculum can be determined functionally *a posteriori*. It is also with regards to these historic, structural determinants that content in Swedish curriculum research becomes of theoretical and analytical interest.

With regards to this historic dimension of structural determination, Lundgren’s (1977) analysis characterised several historical stages and characteristic curriculum codes that embody the functional and structural relationship between education and society. Curriculum codes in this understanding represent a homogeneous set of principles that govern the selection, methods and organisation of the transmission of skills and knowledge as modes of social reproduction (Lundgren, 1983, p. 14). These codes are seen to express particular historical structural attempts at legitimising education and through their enactment these codes are interpreted as means of social reproduction.

As has been commented by others (Östman, 1995, p. 17f), the discovery of similarities as indicators of underlying configurations came to be of primary concern in frame-factor theory’s attempts to approach the issue of le-

gitimacy and to make statements about objective functions education. To put it differently, in order to depict underlying determining structures, it was necessary to depict a unifying determinant that is to govern the rules defining education in terms of curriculum code. In relation to our discussion of the conception of temporality and identity in second-generation frame-theory, we suggest that divergences in curriculum are subdued to the theoretical explanatory focus on functional objectivity that requires the identification of a unified logic of the historical determinants particular for a particular type of society. It is with regards to this attempt at objective depiction of the function of education to reproduce social configurations that the epistemological focus can be interpreted to shift from issues of efficiency to the issue of the legitimacy of the education system (Englund, 1990, p. 27).

The legitimacy of education is interpreted by us to be implicitly criticised with regards to the discrepancy between the ideological goal of assuring classless society and the depicted social reproduction of class relations through education (*cf.* Lundgren, 1979). Hence, the issue or problem of legitimacy emerges in the tension between subjective visions for positive change through education and the objective function of reproduction that education carries out (Englund, 1990, p. 27). This tension between the ideological aims for education and its objective outcomes can be best understood as to emerge in the form of the subjectivity (ideology, hegemony) / objectivity (actual mode of production, society and social consequences) divide. By appealing to this divide, the second generation of frame-factor theory is interpreted by us to aim at transforming curriculum theory from a primarily policy-guiding form of research into a critical curriculum theory that sets itself the objective to uncover objective structural outcomes of education that stand in contrast to the goal of greater social equality through education; a goal that was also promoted as part of the imaginary of *folkhemmet* as a classless society.

What the second generation is interpreted by us to have aimed for at its time of emergence was to confront the imaginary of *folkhemmet* with the depiction of an education system that was the very opposite of producing a classless society. In this effort, frame-factor theory as critical curriculum theory confronts the ideals of social equity in education with the actual production of social strata and classes that are by frame-factor theory perceived to be the outcome of education.

We can here easily differ between two processes of reproduction; a vertical reproduction, which includes reproduction of the knowledge and abilities needed for the reproduction of production, and a horizontal process of reproduction, which traditions in education mediate via texts for pedagogy. In the latter case, it is about how selection of content and objectives for education have emerged in history. Power and control over the content of education is interlinked with *both* how education relates to production, and thereby how power over means of production are exercised, *and* how education has come

into being for different social strata. A reasonable assumption is that education thereby actively contributes to maintain a historically developed social stratification. (Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983, p. 13, author's translation, original emphasis)

As we can see in the quote above, it is this “power and control over the content of education”, as they are embodied in homogeneous codes, that are perceived to shape the very form of education as reproduction of social strata. As a result of this perspective, frame-factor theory as critical curriculum theory became primarily concerned with how power and control can be seen to shape the form of education and to reproduce class relations and class society (*cf.* Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983).

It is at this point that the form of education, as relating to ideological representation, becomes for curriculum theory the locus in relation to which structural formations and power relations in specific historical stages or periods are explained. Curriculum, as text, with a specific content becomes in this perspective a social problem.

From this perspective, where pedagogy as a societal problem or a solution to a societal problem emerges through the separation of production and reproduction, it is of importance to exactly identify how different groups of society are arranging nurturing and education. At the moment when production and reproduction are separated emerges the text-problem [*textproblemet*] (*cf.* Lundgren, 1982). Thing and processes have to be represented in language and pictures, that is to say texts for pedagogy have to be created. These texts in the form of curricula [*läroplaner*] and teaching materials that are produced, codify a notion of what education should incorporate and which objectives it should have (*cf.* Lundgren, 1979). (Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983, p. 12, author's translation)

However, curriculum as text becomes a social problem only in so far as it is the tragic imperative to uncover the structural determination and power relations that determine the curriculum code. Here, we use the term tragic as the act of uncovering structural determination and power at the same time withholds the possibility of addressing the social inequalities that education produces. We make this argument based on the earlier discussed figure of reasoning of structural determination in the last instance. As we argued in the context of the understanding of change, structural change is not something that can be brought about by actors, unless it is their time so to speak (*cf.* Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 94). Following the objective set for curriculum, it became in the study of curriculum as text a central objective to denote how this structural determination takes form. With this objective in mind, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence filled a theoretical void and provided entry points for explanation in frame-factor theory.

## Symbolic violence

The theory of symbolic violence allows according to its own logics for the uncovering of an objective dimension in the curriculum. By uncovering the objective dimension in the curriculum, apparent promises of the legitimising curriculum code are contrasted with its objective meaning. This understanding of curriculum as text builds upon the figure of reasoning that holds that the symbolic, that is to say, ideological, is in the last instance determined by the existing historic structural relationships that society represents as a “functional system”.

It should be recognized that Bourdieu thus defines the functions of educational systems at the political and economic level, and regards the appearances of such systems as ideological. The apparent neutrality of schools is expressed through their manifest functions of transmitting knowledge, skills, and socially accepted values within an apparently neutral organizational framework. These manifest functions are observable in terms of the frame factors in operation. The hidden function may be described as “symbolic violence” (*cf.* also Bourdieu & Passeron 1970). The term “symbolic” is rather similar to what has been called “the ideological level of the superstructure” in classical Marxist writings. It refers to a dimension of social reality different from other dimensions. It has to do with “values”, “meanings”, etc. By “symbolic violence” certain “values”, “meanings”, etc. are forced upon the recipients as legitimate and are accepted as such. This strongly implies that certain social groups can force their values etc. upon other groups due to the power relations at other levels than the symbolic one. The strength and power at the economic and political level is the foundation of the power relation at the symbolical level. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 31)

As it is expressed in the last sentence of the quote, it is not at the ideological level that the possibility of determination is to be sought. Rather, it is at the economic and political level that this “power”, as the ability to determine the symbol and to erase the symbolic variation, is allocated. However, this move of determination is always a peculiar determination, since it renders the act of determination, as an act of power, “concealed” *a posteriori*.

Every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e., every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate *by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force*, adds to its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970, p. 4, author’s emphasis)

Bourdieu and Passeron acknowledge in the quote below to a certain extent the peculiarity of this act of determination, yet can be seen to conclude that the consequence of the absence of an appeal to structural determination is that of a return to humanism. This return to humanism is conceived by them

in terms of a theoretical point of departure that establishes the subject as autonomous and as ultimately free subject.

The other extreme that is interpreted to have been addressed in the quote above is the potential relapse into a material determinism of the symbolic in the first instance.

To refuse this axiom, which *states simultaneously the relative autonomy and the relative dependence of symbolic relations* with respect to power relations, would amount to denying the possibility of a science of sociology. All the theories implicitly or explicitly constructed on the basis of other axioms lead one either to make the creative freedom of individuals the source of symbolic action, considered as autonomous from the objective conditions in which it is performed, or to annihilate symbolic action as such, by refusing it any autonomy with respect to its material conditions of existence. One is therefore entitled to regard this axiom as a principle of the theory of sociological knowledge. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970, p. 4, author's emphasis)

The middle road for Bourdieu is the appeal to *relative autonomy of the superstructure from the material base*; a middle road that we will problematise in greater detail with regards to Englund (1986) below. At stake in this depicted crossroads for the sociology of education is the objectivity of knowledge, where Swedish curriculum theory leaning on Bourdieu cannot be seen to be willing to abandon appeals to objectivity, possibly in the face of the perceived danger of subjectivity or relativism.

It is this claim of objectivity that is interpreted by us to require the appeal to a ground or base in relation to which the contingency in the social—we might also speak of the symbolic—could be settled. Appeals to objectivity require according to their own logic a *referential determinant* that cannot itself be contaminated by the contingency of the social or we might say the apparent divergence among ideal representations. It is in regard to the contingency of the social that we can be seen to be at the limit of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, in the same understanding of at-the-limit as it was earlier conceived with regards to the temporal problem of change in Durkheim.

The 'choices' which constitute a culture ('choices' which no-one makes) appear as arbitrary when related by the comparative method to the sum of total of present and past cultures or, by imaginary variation, to the universe of possible cultures; they reveal their necessity as soon as they are related to the social conditions of their emergence and perpetuation. Misunderstandings over the notion of arbitrariness (particularly confusion between arbitrariness and gratuitousness) derive, at best, from the fact that a *purely synchronic grasp* of cultural artefacts (such as anthropologists are generally condemned to) necessarily induce neglect of all that these facts owe to their social conditions of existence, i.e., the social conditions of their production and reproduction,

with all the restructurings and reinterpretations connected with their perpetuation in changed social conditions [...]. Thus the genesis amnesia which finds expression in the naïve illusion that things have always been as they are, as well as in the substantialist uses made of the notion of cultural unconscious, can lead to the eternizing and thereby the ‘naturalizing’ of signifying relations which are the product of history. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970, p. 9f, author’s emphasis)

It is interpreted by us that Bourdieu is appealing to a figure of reasoning in Durkheim, where Durkheim holds that true change is diachronic and necessary change, whose *telos* only the study comprehensive changes over time can uncover retrospectively.

What history teaches us is that man does not change arbitrarily; he does not transform himself at will on hearing the voices of inspired prophets. The reason is that all change, in colliding with inherited institutions of the past, is inevitably hard and laborious; consequently it only takes place in response to the demands of necessity. For change to be brought about it is not enough that it should be seen as desirable; it must be the product of changes within the whole network of diverse causal relationships which determine the situation of man. (Durkheim, 1897, p. 329)

What Bourdieu can be seen to suggest is that the seeming spontaneity of the moment and the associated spontaneous plurality of the moment, is the illusion of the arbitrary importance of the moment, where that synchronic illusion of change is to be countered by a diachronic perspective of continuity. History, as relating to the diachronic, is in this understanding to sublimate the apparent diversity in the synchronic and to uncover the demands of necessity that have already been at work.

## Historicity and objectivity

Historicity is in this Durkheimian perspective constituted by a logic of necessity, where history *determines* the social conditions of existence. We argue that second-generation frame-factor theory and Bourdieu share an appeal to such a constitution of history and argue that such a figure of reasoning informs the primacy of the diachronic of frame-factor theory. For example, Lundgren (Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983, p. 14, author’s translation, author’s emphasis) puts forward that:

[...] certain strata of society [*samhällsskikt*] have, in a *historic perspective*, symbolic power over the tradition that shapes the practices of school and an economic, juridical-political power to decide the terms [*villkoren*] for the frames and rules for that practice.

Bernstein (Bernstein & Lundgren, 1983, p. 23, author's translation, author's emphasis) can be seen to specify Lundgren's characterisation of the historic in power relations by stating that:

Social class is the fundamental and dominating cultural category. It is constituted and maintained by the modes of production. Class differentiation is therefore the founding classification that shapes the premises for social production. But the way in which this dominating cultural category is realised *varies over time*. In other words, the form of the production of social conditions and production the form for the social conditions of the education system *change over time* [*under tidens lopp*] [...]. In the following presentation, we shall use the term classification and framing [*inramning*] to delineate the codes of education and the codes of production. Variations in these codes are *different historical realisations of the dominating cultural category* (that is to say 'class').

As these two quotes are interpreted to highlight, history defines the conditions of the education system. Society or the form thereof is relative to specific historic stages that are relative to particular modes of production. The diachronic study of the education system is in this understanding denominating what particular form of society determines the function of education.

It should finally be explicit[ly] stated that the educational system as such is changing over time. A proper understanding of that system must accordingly also rest upon a historical analysis. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 32)

The quote above is seen by us to highlight the logic that historical analysis is to identify the *a priori* conditions of the education system.

However, as the historical analysis is *a posteriori* to changes over time and, according to Marxist reasoning, the content of analysis might be diffuse due to ideological overdetermination and false understanding of the historical conditions, the analysis will to a certain extent to have to deal with a diversity in analysis that can be seen to result out of the possibility of change and ideological overdetermination. We argue that it is in relation to this understanding of historicity that the peculiarity of the act of determination, and as a result power, takes the form of a promise. This promise can also be seen to relate to the temporally problematic notion of change, where the promise entails that determination will be shown. Hence, the promise holds that the arbitrary importance of the moment will be unveiled as an already determined instance of historic and structural necessity.

Thus, structural determination can be seen to be characterised by a certain afterwardness [*Nachträglichkeit*], where the deferred-action is to uncover the initial causal force, that is, the *telos* that is at work behind structural changes. To put this into the discussion of the temporally problematic notion of change, the afterwardness character of the appeal to structural determination

is captured in the observation that *a posteriori* historical analysis is to uncover *a priori* conditions that determine education and are specific for a particular form of education. *It is due to the deferring moment of the act of identification of the determining conditions that change can only take place at the limits of or after the fact, where we must understand the fact to refer to the actual insight of the determination.* If real change would take place constantly, that is to say, at any moment, objective knowledge would become impossible at a theoretical level and as a result also at the empirical level. The consequence for second-generation frame-factor theory would be that the legitimacy of the education system and its function in society could not be criticised in objective terms. It is in the context of this danger of a limit of objectivity that change can be seen to be placed at the limit of theorisation of frame-factor theory.

## Change

We argue that with regards to this line of reasoning second-generation frame-factor theory conceives of change by a figure of reasoning that can be seen to be compatible with figures of reasoning in Durkheim. It is in the face of the line of reasoning above that highlights the theoretical positioning of change at the limit, that we should remind us that Durkheim holds that change is “hard”.

What history teaches us is that man does not change arbitrarily; he does not transform himself at will on hearing the voices of inspired prophets. The reason is that all change, in colliding with inherited institutions of the past, is inevitably hard and laborious; consequently it only takes place in response to the demands of necessity. For change to be brought about it is not enough that it should be seen as desirable; it must be the product of changes within the whole network of diverse causal relationships which determine the situation of man. (Durkheim, 1897, p. 329)

We argue that this Durkheimian notion of change as hard informs frame-factor theory.<sup>23</sup> For Durkheim, real change is seldom a historical event. To put it differently, real change cannot be isolated, it cannot be an arbitrary aspect of the moment, but must be limited to a structural and historical change. We argue, change must be handled by limiting it to a rare and seldom event. In line with this reasoning on the rarity of change, we hold that frame-factor theory is primarily concerned with “reproduction”, since this conception handles the threat of spontaneous change by theoretically limiting it. Furthermore, we argue that the issue of change can be seen to prob-

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<sup>23</sup> For example, Lundgren (1983) identifies five different periods that shape specific pedagogical and curriculum codes. We might say that change in this conception of periods can be seen to be limited to four instances.

lematise the notion of frame, where we might say the possibility of change as it might already have happened might undermine the frame's ability to show its "determinable effects".

What has been started here also implies that the concept of frame must be understood *dialectally*. It should in this context be noted that decisions about frames may be altered, *e.g.*, as a result of practice. The exact influence exerted by a certain frame factor is furthermore contextually dependent. On the other hand this means that a single frame factor must always be studied in conjunction with the other frames imposed at the corresponding level. [...] The actual importance of a set of frames must accordingly be judged in terms of its *objectively definable effects upon subsequent planning and action*. This is then obviously an empirical question, and at a certain level of analysis even an idiosyncratic empirical question. It should finally be explicit[t]ly stated that the educational system as such is changing over time. A proper understanding of that system must accordingly also rest upon a historical analysis. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 32, author's emphasis)

We put forward that the quote above can be seen to allow for the constitution of "dialectics" in accordance to two different figures of reasoning.

In the first sentence, the claim is made that frames must be understood dialectically. This appeal can be understood as to relate to Marxist or Hegelian dialectics, both entailing particular figures of reasoning and as a result providing different notions of frames. While we can see the appeal to dialectics in the quote above to be primarily an appeal to Marxist dialectics, that is to say dialectical materialism, this figure of reasoning can also be seen to bring back into question the issue of Being as it is central to Hegelian dialectics.

Thus, we might suggest that two different figures of reasoning can be drawn upon to conceive of the traces of "dialectics". What Hegel (1816) in his dialectical logic can be seen to address is the problem of the stasis, or equilibrium, that he sees to be contrary to life as characterised by change. Hegelian dialectics can be interpreted to deal with the tension between Becoming and Being. With this tension in mind, Hegelian dialectics can be seen to address the relation between stasis and change. It is in this sense of Hegelian dialectics that the conception of frames that are to be altered and constituted in practice implicitly addresses the *becoming* of frames. We might say that while this becoming is acknowledged in the conception of frames above by an appeal to dialectics, the second figure of reasoning reduces becoming to a focus on Being.

Here, frame-factor theory can be seen to appeal to a notion of sublation in order to address the issue of "objectively definable effects". Sublation (*Aufhebung*) with its German senses of raising, suspending and to preserve, is in the context of our discussion of frames interpreted as the momentary suspension of the process of change. In this sense, sublation is to create a point of rest in time for Being. It is this notion of sublation that can be seen to be at

play in the promise of determination and the perspective on history that is appealed to in second-generation frame-factor theory.

It is in the context of the trace to a second, Hegelian notion of dialectics that we can see to be a theoretico-constitutive crossroad for the figures of reasoning that is to constitute Being. Either there is a focus on becoming, as process, or dialectics appeals to a figure of stasis, that is to say of Being. We argue, this second figure of stasis is required in order to determine the objectively definable effects of frames. Thus, what we might suggest is that a Hegelian notion of dialectics that embraces life might acknowledge the neutralising intervention required in order to reduce becoming to a determinate Being, and as a result to a certain extent would have to problematise the moment of determination.

The second-generation of frame-factor theory is interpreted by us to have instead taken the theoretico-constitutive road towards a focus on the understanding of *momentary stability of Being*, a focus that particular conceptions of Hegel and in particular Marxist understandings of dialectics can have seen to applied. Rather than acknowledging the relentless fluidity that becoming entails, Marxist dialectics focuses on identifying objective Being.<sup>24</sup> With this choice of direction, we argue that it was the structure as a-temporal configuration of determinate relations that became central to second-generation frame-factor theory. As a consequence of this focus on structure, the fluidity of change was rendered hard, to use Durkheim's words, and we argue tem-

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<sup>24</sup> Some might comment here that Marx (1873) acknowledges fluidity in his dialectics as they might quote Marx's comment in the afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* that states that: "My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea', he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought. [...] The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell. In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary." We comment that, while Marx can be seen to address non-change as it might be appealed to in the Hegelian notion of sublation, he displaces this notion of a-temporal state of things with a notion of historically developed form that is not "fluid", but rather stagist. It is exactly with regards to this notion of historically relative state of the social that we claim that Marxist dialectics, according to our characterisation, remains committed to a focus on Being. This focus of Being can be seen to be the result of a commitment to the task of uncovering "the rational kernel in a mystical shell".

porality was placed at the fringes of theoretical constitution in frame-factor theory.

## A focus on Being

In accordance with a focus on Being rather than becoming, education is, according to our portrayal of frame-factor theory, understood as to stand in relation to a primary society. Society, in the sense of being defined by historic conditions of existence, determines in the last instance what takes place in education and thereby renders momentary variability in curriculum or classroom practices into a momentary deviation. In this appeal to a logic of sublation, frame-factor theory can be seen to also sublimate the role of the political in the relation between education and society, as the variation and alterity that is at play in the political is in the last instance shown to have been structurally determined. Society, as a determinable structure, erases the political in the conception of education. Frame-factor theory needs, according to our line of reasoning, to reduce becoming in the political a determinable state of Being that is provided by society as an *a priori* determining instance.

It is in this appeal to determination that the notion of “level” can be seen to be used in order to synthesise apparent functions, where higher-level functions determine lower-level functions.

We have suggested that any analysis of the educational system must start at a high level in terms of the functions of schooling. [...] It is virtually impossible to derive the objective functions of schooling from an analysis that uses the level of actual teaching as a starting point. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 92)

It can be interpreted that the impossibility to identify objective functions through the analysis of actual teaching is due to the variation or the spontaneity of the moment. We interpret this spontaneity of the moment to relate to play and becoming, as is observable in the diversity of classroom practices. As a result of this theoretical primacy of reproduction, the variation of content and practices at the class-room level can therefore not be taken into account, since variation, as deviation, cannot easily be related back to a primarity without a synthesising intervention.

The Swedish version of the new sociology of education and its critical curriculum theory has thus not seriously approached the content of schools from a didactical perspective with a focus on content that entails that *change and variation in perspective is deemed interesting*—rather, it has been chosen to accentuate which purposes the more and more complicated selection legitimises, as well as the stability of the system and the impossibility of real change in terms of content (perspective of reproduction). (Englund, 1990, p. 27, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

It is in relation to this theoretical impossibility of frame-factor theory to explain change and variation in relation to both content and social formation that Englund (1986) can be seen to make a theoretical intervention. This theoretical intervention, while it builds on the appeal to historic and societal determination of the curriculum, comes in the form of the insertion of a conflict-oriented perspective on societal production that in many instances breaks with the second generation of frame-factor theory and introduces, as we will later argue, a bracketed form of dynamism (*cf.* Englund, 1990, p. 26). We argue that Englund's theoretical intervention allowed for a partial understanding of becoming and the political in the relation between education and society.

## Figures of Reasoning in Englund (1986)

As mentioned earlier, we create Englund (1986) as an event in the development of Swedish curriculum theory. While the second generation of frame-factor theory can also be depicted to have constituted an event—one that introduced historical contextuality into Swedish curriculum study and transformed it into a critical curriculum theory—we perceive Englund to have accomplished a rupture in the discourse of curriculum theory by introducing a dynamic conflict perspective.

Similar to second-generation frame-factor theory, which produced a rupture and transformed the traces of its past into something different, it is put forward that Englund's introduction of a conflict-based perspective on the relationship between education and society opened up an alternate space for reconstituting this relationship by introducing a notion of the political in education. This space came to be filled and ruptured again by a number of scholars within Swedish curriculum theory (Brantefors, 2011; Ljunggren, 1996; Säfström, 1994; Östman, 1995).<sup>25</sup>

The rupture that is interpreted to have been created by Englund (1986) is perceived to have had theoretico-constitutive significance for the ambitions set in this dissertation, as it dealt with the earlier highlighted challenge to address temporality and change in conceptions of education. The conflict perspective introduced by Englund (1986) is therefore understood to address temporality and synchronic difference in the very constitution of the relationship between education and society. It engages with the explanatory means of possibility of change in the in-between, as the possibility of this change has been problematised by us in the second generation of frame-factor theory.

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<sup>25</sup> We argue that these subsequent works can in a number of instances to have provided reconceptions of this political in education.

The radicalising aspects of Englund's introduction of a conflict perspective as a prying move are conceived by us to have in a number of instances been alleviated by appeals to figures of reasoning that Englund can be seen to have inherited from second-generation frame-factor theory. Especially, appeals to historical materialism and Neo-Marxist discourse are interpreted by us to bring back the issue of structural determination in the last instance. This appeal to structural determination in the last instance can be seen to erase the explanatory possibility of change in the in-between and the political as it emerges out of synchronic differences. In this context, we see Englund to draw upon two incompatible figures of reasoning where, on the one hand, he sees society as being characterised by fluidity due to constant political struggle and, on the other, he sees society as being characterised by equilibrium as a determinate state of society as a whole.

In order to conceptualise the radicalness of the prying move, some key figures of reasoning in Englund (1986) will be summarised. Subsequently, certain figures of reasoning in Englund that can be seen to share similarities with frame-factor theory shall be problematised. In an effort to depict continuity and breaks in appeals to central figures of reasoning in Englund, we aim to create a background against which the theoretical intervention of the next section orients itself. This orientation aims to deepen and to take the prying move that has been initiated by Englund a step further. We argue that the introduction of a notion of the political in the relation between education and society by Englund (1986) provides a figure of reasoning that can allow environmental education and ESD research to approach the political aspects of ESD.

### The diverse in the constitution of society

As stated above, Englund (1986, 1990) criticises curriculum theory that focuses on the reproductive functioning of education, since such approaches to curriculum theory are depicted by him to ignore the variation of content and practices at the classroom level and, at the same time, stifle theoretical ambitions to provide explanatory means for change based on empirically observable differences. This critique can be seen to be qualified, since education content is in a curriculum theory of reproduction primarily understood as representations of existing social formations. Social formations as a form of stasis are in this understanding maintained through the provision of education. Englund (1986, p. 69) can, with regard to this shortcoming of curriculum theory that focuses on reproduction, be seen to replace the figure of society as being in stasis with that of a society as a field of force, where with regards to the education system different social groups try to influence in political action the education content and thereby education itself. It is in this way that Englund can be seen to conceptualise citizenship education as an integrative part of all education, where different social groups and interests

try to shape the very notion of citizenship that is to be accomplished through education.

What Englund is interpreted to envision is to break with the conception of education as reproduction and, instead of solely focusing on continuity, to contrast these reproductive capacities of education with a notion of education that is contributing towards change. With regards to the potential of education to accomplish change, Englund stresses the possibility of “positive” change. Education is perceived by Englund to have a progressive capacity for change in addition to an integrative capacity that is related to social reproduction (*cf.* Englund, 1986, p. 69). These two separate potentials of education are presented by Englund as the Janus-faced character of education, where education is located between reproduction and change.

In the context of this dual character of education, Englund (1986, p. 13) holds that two influential educationalists are Dewey and Durkheim, who have constituted this duality differently. Dewey is seen by Englund to stress the notion of progress, where this progress is not a progress that is to be achieved through the orientation of education towards finite social objectives, but instead Dewey is seen by Englund to put forward that education itself is the infinite goal, as life itself (Englund, 1986, p. 14). Durkheim is in this line of reasoning interpreted by Englund (1986, p. 14f) to stress a principal contextual dependency of education, where education has a sustaining function for society. What education “is” and how it functions is, in such a Durkheimian perspective, determined by existing social conditions. Englund, however, criticises Durkheim for neglecting the role of conflict in his theoretical construction of the social conditioning of education.

What Durkheim failed to observe in his analysis, however, was that there are conflicting forces in society with different norm systems and values, and he therefore did not ask how it was to be decided what picture of reality and which norms and values the education system was to transmit, nor what power relations these things implied. It is of course vital to ask such questions as these in a society with conflicting social forces, such as twentieth-century western society. (Englund, 1986, p. 14)

Englund is interpreted to challenge Durkheim’s harmonious picture of society and to confront Durkheim’s notion of homeostasis with a Marxist notion of society as characterised by class division, conflict and relations of domination (*cf.* Englund, 1986, pp. 146–159). The resulting contestation, exclusivity or conflict among “pictures of reality”, that an acknowledgment of conflict entails and are addressed in the quote above, is thereby problematising the relation between reality and society/representation of reality, by introducing a synchronic multiplicity of ways to represent reality, including society, as the quote below highlights.

The way of perceiving reality which the education system conveys in fact results in certain power relations either being consolidated or transformed. This transmission of ideology is, moreover, subject to constant shifts as the balance of power between social forces gradually changes. Ideological conflict exists at all levels, while the nucleus of state power and the state apparatuses, with their role of keeping society together, have to reconcile the political and ideological interests of different social forces and transmit an ideology of cohesion. Thus both a conflict and a consensus perspective must be constantly present in the analysis of role of education in the twentieth-century western society: existing conflicts constantly displace the ideological boundaries within which instruction must operate and providing meaning. (Englund, 1986, p. 14f)

What the quote above is interpreted by us to highlight is the issue of representation, where Englund is seen to problematise a perspective of language that builds on the logic of simple correspondence between the ideal and material reality and to challenge this relation between representation and represented with the potential of variation in representation due to the *constant* “displacement of ideological boundaries”.<sup>26</sup> To put it differently, Englund can be seen to highlight that reality is represented differently and that these different representations stand in relation to configurations of social relations within society. It is with this focus on divergence in mind that this ideological representation becomes of central concern to Englund.<sup>27</sup>

Englund sees the variation in ideology to stand in an antagonistic relationship, where the antagonism is due to constant attempts by social actors at changing and challenging existent hegemonic social relations. Hence, for Englund (1986, p. 146), education is an institution in which students learn to perceive reality in accordance with particular ideology. The ideology to be thought in school is not *uniformly* determined by a structural base, that is to say determined by what society already is, as in Durkheim’s figure of rea-

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<sup>26</sup> It needs to be pointed out here that while Englund does not define or relate explicitly to a philosophy of language, we argue that he implicitly does so through his use of the term “ideology”. Ideology, we argue, has traces to Marxist philosophy of language (Voloshinov, 1986). Englund (1986, p. 147) specifies that ideology encompasses, both, ideas and practices, and that ideology and cannot be restricted to philosophies and attitudes. Further, Englund (Englund, 1986, p. 147) appeals to Poulantzas’ specification that ideologies not only belong to the realm of ideas, but they are concretised in the practices of a social formation. Here, it is critical to point out that it is this material aspect of ideology that provides the possibility of objective determination, or as Englund (1986, p. 148) puts it: “Maintaining a distinction between ideologies and ‘objective class bases’ does not, however, eliminate their material determination. Ideologies are sustained by forces of a more or less marked class nature, in the sense that they are chiefly composed of classes, class alliances etc.”

<sup>27</sup> This is not to suggest that Englund abandons a logic of correspondence. As his appeals to “reality” and the utilisation of historical materialism suggest, Englund (1986) is interpreted by us to remain committed to a logic of correspondence but problematises the simplicity of this correspondence between material base and ideological superstructure in his conception of a diversity of ideological representation and his appeal to a notion of overdetermination.

soning, rather, education, as an institution, can according to Englund (1986, p. 146) be seen to relate to *political* struggle over the constitution of society.

At the same time these synchronic differences are by Englund put in relation to another in the form of power relations. The acts of constitution of society are in this sense the expression of power relations, that is to say the expression of the ability of certain social forces to determine what society should be. Yet, and this is the critical point of deviance from Durkheim, this expression of social forces and constitution of society through education will entail *a diversity* as this diversity is relative to particular class interests and ideological representation. Thus, society is for Englund characterised by a diversity of social forces and their associated ideologies, where that diversity is a force of change. It is with regards to this diversity of perception that we see Englund to have introduced a notion of society that is characterised by synchronic differences that are characteristic of political struggle.

However, we will argue below that in the argumentation for power relations, Englund can be seen to draw on figures of reasoning that sublimate synchronic differences as forces of change in relation a determinate structural positioning that reduces the chances of change to structural diachronic change.

## State, ideological state apparatuses and relative autonomy

State and education, as an ideological state apparatus, are seen by Englund (Englund, 1986, p. 152f) to *reconcile* these differences as part of an “ideology of cohesion” and through “produced unity” over time allow for both continuity and change of existing power relations. To recall, Englund states:

Thus both a conflict and a consensus perspective must be constantly present in the analysis of role of education in the twentieth-century western society: existing conflicts constantly displace the ideological boundaries within which instruction must operate and providing meaning. (Englund, 1986, p. 14f)

In the quote above, the displacement of boundaries in conflict can be seen to denote that it is necessary in curriculum theory, as a theory that explains the relationship between education and society, to take into account of how ideological boundaries are constantly displaced as part of their ideological constitution by different social forces. Ideological boundaries are then, from this perspective, not *a priori* materially/economically-determined specifications of fundamental structural conditions, but can be seen to be dependent on successful ideological determination, that is to say, to *be relatively autonomous ideological constructs* (cf. Englund, 1986, pp. 151f & 156).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Relative autonomy is a commonly shared concept that handles the problem of economism in Marxist theory. It is appealed to in order allow for a relative ideological divergence to be

This appeal to relative autonomy is interpreted by us to be appealed to by Englund in order to mitigate or downplay the appeal to reproduction in critical curriculum theory. This focus on reproduction, as we have discussed with regards to frame-factor theory, is conceived by us to rely upon a figure of reasoning that appeals to determination by the structure that cannot, as we argued, explain change as something that happens. With this explanatory problem of change in frame-factor in mind, Englund (1986) is interpreted by us to provide an theoretical framework that allows for an understanding of how education is constituted in relation to dynamic changes in the superstructure that is “relatively autonomous”.<sup>29</sup>

In this reconception, Englund supplements the figure of reproduction as it emerges in Marx and Durkheim with that of political struggle, where he puts forward a conception of this struggle by an appeal to the work of Gramsci, Poulantzas and Mannheim (Englund, 1986, p. 70). The resulting supplementation of a theory of reproduction with a theory of political struggle as a force of change by Englund is, however, as we argue in the following, not fully breaking free from the logical consequences of historical materialism.

What this supplementation can be seen to aim to come to terms with is the problematic Marxist appeal to “determination by the structure in the last instance”, where Gramsci and Poulantzas can be seen to try to address this problem in appeals of structural determination, through their conceptions of “hegemony” and “relative autonomy of the state” respectively. These attempts at reconception relate to the central ontological split and the relationship between base and superstructure in historical materialism.

However, there is no doubt that Englund remains committed to this dualism, since he, as earlier proponents of critical curriculum theory and frame-factor theory, grounds his theoretical perspective in historical materialism. Englund (1986, p. 143) acknowledges such an appeal to historical materialism, yet concretises that his commitment is to historical materialism as it merges in the writings of Gramsci and Poulantzas. A third source of inspiration that shares an appeal to historical materialism and that can be seen to shape Englund’s theoretical outlook is the work of Althusser.

Englund (1986, p. 144f) primarily derives from Althusser the conception of the relationship between education, ideology and state, where he lends the

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conceived as possible. However, as it will be argued below, this relative autonomy does not overcome the problem of economism, as in the last instance this autonomy is sublated by structural determination. For a more detailed discussion of Englund’s appeal to relative autonomy, see the sub-sections on levels and relative autonomy below.

<sup>29</sup> It might be said here that this appeal to relative autonomy can be seen to be shared by Bourdieu, as our earlier discussion of his conception of symbolic violence highlights; yet, we might suggest that Englund’s conception of relative autonomy is informed by Poulantzas’ work and as a consequence entails conceptual differences. However, as we will argue, it is this appeal to relative autonomy that is perceived to restrain Englund, similarly to Bourdieu, in his attempt to break with the consequences of determination in the last instance, for example, in his conception of the state in relation to broader societal structures.

concept of “ideological state apparatus”. Ideological state apparatuses, that is to say, the state and certain of its institutions, are the focal point for the transmission processes of ideology (Althusser, 1972). Althusser in this conception of the state can be seen to share Durkheim’s structural functionalism and to combine it with a modified version of Marxist totality.

On a number of occasions I have insisted on the revolutionary character of the Marxist conception of the ‘social whole’ insofar as it is distinct from the Hegelian ‘totality’. I said (and this thesis only repeats famous propositions of historical materialism) that Marx conceived the structure of every society as constituted by ‘levels’ or ‘instances’: articulated by a specific determination: the infrastructure, or economic base (the ‘unity’ of the productive forces and the relations of production) and the superstructure, which itself contains two ‘levels’ or ‘instances’: the politico-legal (law and the State) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious, ethical, legal political, etc.). (Althusser, 1972, p. 134)

In the quote above, Althusser describes the Marxist conception of the social structure as characterised by levels. Englund can be seen to be appealed to such a Marxist totality implicitly through his use of Poulantzas’ notion of state that we interpret to be in line with the notion of the Marxist conception of “social whole”.

Levels are in a Marxist understanding conceived in their relation to the “social whole”, as a form of totality, and are interpreted to be constitutive for the perspective on how different levels are seen to shape the ideological function of education from a macro perspective, that is to say, the dominant ideology that is transmitted by education.<sup>30</sup> It is this macro-level conception of the state that is of central concern for frame-factor theory, as well as for Englund.

However, the difference between Englund on the one hand and frame-factor theory and Althusser on the other hand is that, in contrast to the latter, Englund not only perceives the state and its ideological apparatuses to play a reproductive function, but also to allow for societal change.

It is with regards to the reproductive function that Englund (1986, p. 146) turns to Althusser’s conception of ideological state apparatus, while supple-

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<sup>30</sup> Englund (1986, p. 147) can be interpreted to appeal to such a holistic perspective when he states that “Thus I analyse one aspect of an on-going struggle—citizenship and political education in Swedish schools as a complex manifestation of this struggle in relation to overriding conditioning factors—with reference to its total context/the social development of which it forms part (*cf.* Laclau 1977).” The perspective of dominant ideology as being transmitted via education and as being determined by the social whole can be seen to be subscribed to by Englund (1986, p. 149) in the statement “dominant ideology—the ideology transmitted by the ideological apparatus of the state. This ideology changes in pace with constantly shifting equilibrium between different social forces in their struggle for state power and power within the state apparatuses.”

menting the reproductive perspective of Althusser with a perspective of societal change.

To start with, we will have a look at how Englund can be seen to derive a theory of reproduction from Althusser's conception of ideological state apparatus. Althusser specifies that it is the state that plays a central role in the reproduction of class relations.

The state apparatus, which defines the State as a force of repressive execution and intervention 'in the interest of the ruling class' in the class struggle conducted by the bourgeoisie and its allies against the proletariat, is quite certainly the State, and quite certainly defines its basic 'function'. (Althusser, 1972, p. 137)

Social power, as relations between different social forces that are differentiated by the category of class, are then primarily expressed in their ability to exercise power through the state. The battle for class dominance and power is, in this perspective, a battle for the state. Power is, in this understanding, centrally related to the ability to control the state and its institutions.

Let me first clarify one important point: the State (and its existence in its apparatus) has no meaning except as a function of State power. The whole of the political class struggle revolves around the State. By which I mean around the possession, i.e. the seizure and conservation of the State power by a certain class or by an alliance between classes or class fractions. This first clarification obliges me to distinguish between State power (conservation of State power or seizure of State power), the objective and political class struggle on the one hand, and the State apparatus on the other. (Althusser, 1972, p. 140)

It is with regard to the state apparatuses that Althusser (1972, p. 142f) differentiates two types, repressive and ideological state apparatuses, which represent distinct and specialised institutions. These two types of apparatuses can be differentiated by their mode of function, that is to say, the ability to enact state power, where repressive state apparatuses function by the use of violence and ideological state apparatuses function by the use of ideology (Althusser, 1972, p. 145).

It is in this view that ideology or, to use Englund's terminology, dominant ideology allows the state to operate as a unity and that assures the functionality of all state apparatuses as a functional whole and allows for reproduction through education.

Nevertheless, this remark leads us towards an understanding of what constitutes the unity of the apparently disparate body of the ISAs. If the ISAs 'function' massively and predominantly by ideology, *what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning, insofar as the ideology by which they*

*function is always in fact united, despite its diversity and its contradictions, beneath the ruling ideology*, which is the ideology of ‘the ruling class’ in principle holds State power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class fractions), and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept the fact that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses insofar as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses, precisely in its contradictions. (Althusser, 1972, p. 146, author’s emphasis)

The ideology that is transmitted through education, as a central ideological state apparatus, is, following this line of reasoning in the quote above, that which sustains the notion of a dominant ideology. As the quote underlines it is the dominant ideology’s capacity to determine the functioning of the state apparatuses from a societal perspective that unveils its dominance, and consequently defines the social whole that society represents through its ability to reproduce that particular form of society.

Acknowledging that his conception of education, as an institution of the state, is centrally influenced by Althusser’s conception of “ideological state apparatuses”, Englund (1986, p. 144) underlines that he rejects certain aspects of this conception.

To be precise, it is Althusser’s solemn focus on reproduction that Englund (1986, p. 144) wants to distance himself from. What Englund instead wants to highlight is the dynamism and potential of change that emerges out of a conflict perspective.

The overall issue of importance to the present study, however, is not Althusser’s relatively one-sided reproduction metaphor. Rather I locate the question of the role of ideology and the ideological state apparatuses in a perspective of power and change: how are ideological power relations established and changed? i.e. a Gramscian question (*cf.* Therborn 1980, pp. 10f.). Gramsci and representatives of neo-Gramscianism (above all Poulantzas) criticize economism and the idea that the economy is the conditioning factor of final instance (Althusser). This perspective makes room for a view of ideology and politics going beyond automatic economic (capitalist) mechanisms and focuses on ideology and politics both as regards the maintenance and changing of a certain social order and when it comes to class analysis. The significance attached to political and ideological categories assign a primary role to the constant political and ideological struggle at various levels within the ideological state apparatus (Poulantzas 1975, 1978). The need to go beyond Althusser’s reproduction metaphor stems from the fact that there is constant scope for interpretation and hence the potential for different and even opposing interpretations in practice. (Englund, 1986, p. 146)

As the quote above highlights, Englund problematises the tendency of economism in historical materialism, that is to say, the tendency to *a posteriori*

negate variation to an *a priori* unity, as this problematic results out of an appeal to the argument of the determination in the last instance by the economy.

What Englund can instead be seen to highlight is the need to move beyond such attempts at negating variation and to provide a theoretical framework in which ideological variation is taken seriously and variation, as a plurality, characterises *political* conflict in attempts to assure dominance over state power.

It is with regards to this synchronic variation and divergence as a source for change that Englund turns towards Gramsci and his conception of “hegemony” and with regards to the plurality of forces turns towards Poulantzas, who equips Englund with a reconception of the state as a relation, as “a condensation of social forces engaged in struggle” (Englund, 1986, p. 146).

It is with regards to hegemony and the conception of the role of the state and education as an ideological state apparatus that ideology attains a central position for Englund.

Englund (1986, p. 149) differs between three different forms of ideology, that is, political ideologies, dominant ideology and hegemonic ideology. It is important to notice that while Englund uses the *plural* of political ideologies, he uses the *singular* for dominant and hegemonic ideology.

It is in the context of this differentiation between a plurality of politics and a singularity of domination that conceptions of domination and power in Englund are interpreted to draw partially on antithetical figures of reasoning. We argue that this antithetical aspect emerges in Englund as he, on the one hand, acknowledges a constitutive synchronic divergence as a source of change, yet, on the other hand, draws on Marxist appeals of sublation and perceives of society as a whole defined by a singular, determinate centre or ground.

We argue that it is the concepts of hegemony, conflict and overdetermination that allow Englund to conceive of constitutive and dynamic aspects of synchronic divergence and thereof resulting change, while history, state and compromise can be seen to reduce divergence to a singular state of determinate society.

## Hegemony and ideology

According to Englund, it is through successful political struggle that a particular political ideology can establish itself, first, as a dominant ideology, which is the ideology transmitted through the state apparatuses, and subsequently can become hegemonic ideology, where hegemonic ideology and its associated metaphors are seen as “common sense by a majority of the population” (Englund, 1986, p. 149).

The struggle between different political ideologies, between more or less coherent systems of assumptions, theories, political programmes of action, etc. which are manifest and/or latent in character—or more correctly the striving of different ideologies for hegemony—forms a basis for the concrete exercise of power by state apparatuses, including schools, and hence, in the long term, for the development of human consciousness. (Englund, 1986, p. 149f)

As can be seen expressed in the quote above, the state and education as an ideological state apparatus attain an important role in assuring the establishment of power relations and in shaping society, and are the means for creating and maintaining hegemony.<sup>31</sup>

Further, this notion of hegemony, which Englund lends from Gramsci, is to explain domination by a ruling class in terms of “historical necessity”, as the quote below highlights.

The concept of hegemony is closely associated with Gramsci, who saw it in terms of how the domination of a ruling class was accepted as a historical necessity. The consensus which is gradually achieved has to be organized and it is in this process that the intellectuals—a term Gramsci uses in the wider sense of all those performing organizational, technical, educational, or research functions of any kind—play a decisive role as architects of social bloc (Gramsci, 1971). (Englund, 1986, p. 155)

Intellectuals are in this Gramscian notion of Hegemony ascribed the role of representatives of a particular social force/class and are seen to engage in the maintenance and development of a hegemonic ideology (*cf.* Englund, 1986, p. 155). These intellectuals can be seen to function as “historically” and socially determined subjects that through representation create particular ideologies, where these ideologies express their *inherent* class interests (Englund, 1986, p. 156).

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<sup>31</sup> In order to make this claim we have to put the notion of hegemonic ideology that is put forward by Englund into the context of his conception of the state. With regards of the role of education in relation to the state, Englund (1986, p. 153, author’s emphasis) states that: “Institutional public education in Sweden in this century [...] has been and remains one of the ideological state apparatuses. This means it is one element in *the cohesive function* with regard to the *social order as a whole*, a function which is an objective effect of the state being a relationship between conflicting social forces and hence the *maintainer of a social order founded on this relationship*. One part of maintaining this order involves the state via its state apparatuses transmitting ideology a dominant ideology.” As we can see in the quote, Englund holds that it is this cohesive function that maintains a social order based on existing conflicts. Here, it needs to be pointed out that the cohesive function is provided by the transmission of a dominant ideology. As it will be problematised below, we argue that this step from political ideologies to dominant ideology and hegemonic ideology entails a reduction of plurality that political ideologies and conflict is associated with. Here, it remains to be said that we interpret education as a transmitter of dominant ideology for Englund to carry out a cohesive function that is *a posteriori* to the reduction of the political to the dominant.

Englund is seen by us to share such a Marxist notion of intellectual as determined by class-position, when he in addition to these considerations above quotes Gramsci in order to make the argument that every class/social force “creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and awareness of its own function not only in economic but also in the social and political fields” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 5, quoted in Englund, 1986, p. 155). The essentialist Marxist conception of the intellectual, as the enunciating subject of a particular class ideology, is, as already mentioned, by Englund conceived to be functionally and historically determined and hence are expressions of “the relative strength of social forces” (Englund, 1986, p. 156).

We argue that as such historically and functionally determined actors, intellectuals as articulators of political or class ideology are expressions of the configuration that society as a whole represents.

It is in this context of an appeal to functional and historical determination of the subject that economical determinism can be seen to slip back, via Gramsci, into Englund’s attempt to limit the appeal to economism, since it is principally a socially and historically determined *a priori* class/social force that provides, through intellectuals *a posteriori* that force with homogeneity through ideology. This appeal to the role of the material base in relation to hegemonic ideology is expressed in the quote below by Englund.

Hegemony, or hegemonic ideology, expresses the deepest level of ideology, that which leaves its stamp on the day-to-day practices, on people’s modes of thinking and being. However, hegemony and hegemonic ideology cannot and should not be considered in isolation from their material base. Gramsci (1971) insists that hegemony can never be interpreted ‘idealistically’: ‘though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity’ (Englund, 1986, p. 157)

The problem of fundamental class, as it relates to the issue of structural determination, can be seen to re-emerge in Gramsci’s conception of hegemony at this point in the conception of the relation between superstructure and base.<sup>32</sup> In order to specify this problem, we might make the argument that, if the determination by the structure is to be overcome, there cannot be a determined intellectual, which is essentially expressing the position of his/her class in simple economic structural terms. Determination, it is put forward, is antithetical to the logic of hegemony, which highlights variation and divergence that is not to be subsumed to singular original non-variation.

This is not to say that Gramsci’s, or Marxist/Durkheimian, appeals to historicism are to be abandoned. History can, according our understanding of

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<sup>32</sup> For a more detailed discussion and critique of these remainders of the role of the material base in the work of Gramsci, see Laclau and Mouffe (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 75ff).

the irreducible diversity that is characteristic for hegemony, still to be seen to provide the conditions of possibility for ideological construction, but history can in appeals to hegemony not determine ideological construction. Hegemony is in this sense interpreted by us as antithetical to an appeal to the claim of a singular determining instance.

What is at stake in this appeal to a determination of the fundamental class by the structure and our problematisation of it is the very homogeneity of class based on the organic character of the intellectual. If ideology is not primarily determined in relation to “foundational class”, then there is no guarantee that hegemonic ideology exists in a singular sense, since the absence of determination of the intellectual, which is to constitute his class-ideology, cannot rule out variation in the constitution of this class ideology and, as a result, there is not only a possibility of variation among ideologies, but also with *within* a particular ideology. A particular political ideology would, so to say, already be different to itself.

Yet, as it will be argued more thoroughly later, what is at stake in this possibility of variation is also the very notion of society, as the social whole, since as we earlier pointed out hegemonic ideology in England is interpreted to be result of the reduction or unification of a plurality of political ideologies via the intermediary of dominant ideology.

We argue in the context of the discussion below that England draws occasionally and in regards to specific concepts such as dominant ideology and power relations on a figure of reasoning that sees society as equilibrium. Such an equilibrium or stasis can be seen to be a premise for a crystallisation of struggle and condensation of political ideologies into dominant ideology. As we will argue, this figure of reasoning, which is interpreted by us to be similar to the figure of reasoning appealed to in Durkheim and frame-factor theory, limits England’s conflictual perspective.

## History, temporality and materialism

This fundamental issue of, either, determinable singularity or overdetermined plurality is, as we argue, of central importance to England’s conception of historical development and the possibility of change in the context of hegemony.

It is put forward that it is with the focus on the diachronic that his distinction between political ideologies, dominant ideology and hegemonic ideology becomes primarily based on and reinforces the notion of singularity. This is seen to be the case since it is a singular, that is to say, a particular societal constellation (capitalist society), that determines historically and functionally the conditions of existence for the plural (*cf.* England, 1986, p. 156). To specify, this fundamental singularity, as the historic condition of the social-as-a-whole or Marxist holism, as a structural totality, *determines* the possi-

bilities of the divergence in political ideologies, since intellectuals are historically and functionally determined.

As a result, the possibility of fundamental change depends on historic conditions of the production of ideology.<sup>33</sup> These historical conditions of ideological production are determined by the system of power relations that put different ideologies in a temporary fixed position, that is in a state of temporary stasis, “equilibrium”, or to be even more precise into form of *synchronic stasis*. To explore this argument, Englund (1986, p. 149, author’s emphasis) defines dominant ideology as,

the ideology transmitted by the ideological apparatuses of the state. This ideology changes in pace with the *constantly shifting equilibrium between different social forces* in their struggle for state power and power within the state apparatuses. The *dominant ideology is thus one of consensus* constantly forced into existence, representing a compromise between the contending social forces and incorporating the conflicts between forces.

It is important to point out that Englund draws in his argumentation in the quote above on the figure of society as equilibrium, a Durkheimian figure we might add, where Englund can be seen to hold that in spite of constant change—we might here speak of synchronic difference—it is possible to define a fixed state of forces in relation to a point in time.

We argue, this fixed state of forces is entailed in the conception of “consensus” in the quote above, where consensus provides a point of orientation that puts all diverse “social forces” active at a point in time into a determinate relation to another. Equilibrium is provided by dominance, where dominance as a form of power relations can be seen to take the form of a subduing of the potential of antagonistic force. Dominance is in regard to this subduing potential clearly linked to consensus, yet it becomes unclear how we can conceive the limits of and workings of the force of consensus. We might ask ourselves: If dominance is the erasure of the potentiality of an antagonistic force, what are the mechanisms by which consensus or compromise can erase this antagonistic force? To reformulate this question in the context of our discussion: How is hegemony possible in the face of *constant* struggle and conflict?

To approach a possible answer by Englund as a conceptual persona, we will take a closer look at his conception of hegemonic ideology. Hegemonic

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<sup>33</sup> We might with regards to this claim put forward by us keep in mind how Englund conceives of history via Poulantzas. In this context, Englund (1986, p. 152) states, by drawing on Dahlkvist’s discussion of Poulantzas, “This leads us to an approach to history whose ‘value lies in the systematic study of how an element forms part of a whole and what place and significance it has.’” In the context of this clarification by Englund we argue that change can only be defined in holistic terms as a systematic change, as the element is to be understood primarily with regards to the whole of society, that is its significance in a societal perspective, as this meaning is historically relative.

ideology or hegemony is, to follow Englund's (1986, p. 157) reasoning, "the deepest level of ideology, that which leaves its stamp on day-to-day practices, on people's modes of thinking and being" and underlines that, both, hegemony and hegemonic ideology, "cannot and should not be considered in isolation from their material base". We might ask ourselves: Is this appeal to the material base a remainder of economism due to an appeal to Gramsci, where the material base is to provide the centre or the defining factor for the potentiality of the force of consensus in subduing antagonism?

We argue that a remainder of economism can be seen to be involved when Englund draws on Gramsci to make the point that *economy has a decisive function*.

Gramsci (1971) insists that hegemony can never be interpreted 'idealistically': 'though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity' (Gramsci 1971, p. 161). Adam Przeworski clarifies the materiality of a hegemony analysis and the 'room for manoeuvre' at the political level when he claims that certain objective conditions are necessary but not sufficient for the establishing of hegemony: 'objective conditions may be present and yet hegemony may not be established because of autonomous political or ideological reasons' (Przeworski 1980, p. 24). (Englund, 1986, p. 157)

As Englund is seen to underline in the quote above, the conditions for hegemony are always *also* based on an economical premise.

The remark that hegemony must *also* be economic can be interpreted to blur the role of the material base in relation to the ideological superstructure. However, Englund's appeal to history as diachronic time shows how the economically derived aspect of hegemony is to be understood as primary.

How then is hegemony established? Gramsci distinguishes between three stages in the development of hegemonic ideology. The first is *the strictly economic stage, at which organic intellectuals state their interests of their classes*. At the second stage, the political-economic, more or less the whole class supports an economic demand. The third stage involves 'a complete fusion of economic, political and moral objectives which will be brought about by one fundamental group and groups allied to it through the intermediary of ideology when an ideology manages to spread through the whole of society determining not only united economic and political objectives, but also intellectual and moral unity' (Mouffe 1979c, p. 181; cf. Gramsci 1971). For an ideology to become hegemonic, it must be above all be dominant, it must have been transmitted by the state/the state apparatuses *over a period of time*. (Englund, 1986, p. 157, author's emphasis)

As the above quote highlights, hegemony is in the first instance economically determined, where organic intellectuals state objective class interests. The ideological, political and moral stages are consequent sedimentations of this first economic stage, where diachronic time, as captured in the reference to “over a period of” in the last sentence of the quote above, anchors these economically determined interests and perspectives in society as a whole.

In this instance of a Gramscian appeal to a primary economic stage and organic intellectuals, Englund can be seen to return to an appeal to economic determination. As a result, we see Englund as bracketing the autonomy in which intellectuals construct ideology that represents the interests of their classes. In this understanding, class interests are in the last instance, that is to say, with regards to the outside of the ideological, economically determined.

In a second instance, which is a political/economic stage, these ideologies attain support from class representatives. The subduing moment of antagonism is, according to Englund, dependent on political hardening, where this hardening as a gaining of influence in the political sphere is concerned with gaining control over the ideological transmission by the state and its apparatuses. To recall, Englund states that, “For an ideology to have become hegemonic, it must above all be dominant, it must have been transmitted by the state/state apparatuses over a period of time” (Englund, 1986, p. 157).

The subduing of antagonism can therefore be understood to occur at the point in time, or rather level, when it is transmitted by the state and takes place via transmission by ideological state apparatuses, including education. The dominant ideology, which is the ideology transmitted through education, can, as Englund argues below, over time become hegemonic.

An ideology is dominant when it has gained a firm foothold in the state apparatuses, but this does not make it hegemonic. However, if a dominant ideology is allowed to exert its influence over a fairly long period it can gradually attain hegemony. If formal political democracy provides the political conditions for a struggle within the state apparatuses over the design of education etc., democratically arrived at decisions and interpretations of these decisions must also be related to the hegemony existing in society. (Englund, 1986, p. 158)

What, however, remains unspecified is how in this transition from political ideology to dominant ideology plurality is reduced to a singularity. Englund can be seen to acknowledge this theoretical gap in the constitution of the concept of hegemony:

Hegemony can, however, never be total and it is probably more correct to speak, as Williams does, of ‘the hegemonic’ rather than ‘hegemony’: ‘The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. Any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture ex-

ist as significant elements in the society' (Williams 1977, p. 113). (Englund, 1986, p. 158)

It is in the context of this non-specificity of the moment of dominance, we might say the non-specificity of the when or how the irreducible plurality is subdued to the singular, that Englund turns towards the conception of the state in Poulantzas' work, which as we earlier specified plays a predominant role in the Marxist notion of society as social whole.

The state is in this perspective an elevated level, at which, as we will argue, the issue of antagonism is temporary sublated, or better expressed theoretically postponed in hegemonic politics. In this conception of the role of the state, the synchronic is seen to overcome or sublimate antagonism. As we will argue below, the notion of compromise plays a central role in this temporary postponement of antagonism.

### Levels, relative autonomy and compromise

Englund sees Poulantzas to provide not an instrumental conception of the state, as we might assume such a conception to emerge in the Althusserian notion of ideological state apparatus, but instead to highlight the relational character among antagonistic forces.

Poulantzas claims that the state is not an entity which is inherently instrumental in nature, but 'rather a relationship of forces, or more precisely the material condensation of such a relationship among classes and class fractions, such as this is expressed within the State in a necessarily specific form' (Poulantzas 1978, pp. 128f). (Englund, 1986, p. 151)

What Poulantzas can be seen to express in his conception of a material condensation of relationships in a specific form is the notion of state as standing in *relative autonomy in relation to the structure*.

In his denouncement of an instrumental notion of the state, it can be interpreted that Poulantzas tries to mitigate the determination of politics (in the last instance) by the economy. Yet, as we will argue, in the end, this notion of relative autonomy entails the appeal to determination and we might see this material condensation to denote the ultimate subjection of politics to productive relations.

This material condensation of relationships, we might say their return to essential class interests, takes the form of "compromise". In this compromise, as in the Gramscian or Sorelian conception of historic bloc, antagonisms among specific class interests can be seen to be subdued to the goal to influence politics through the formation of class alliances.

This means that ‘the State acts within the *unstable equilibrium of compromises* between the dominant classes and the dominated. The State therefore continually adopts material measures which are of positive significance for the popular masses, even though these measures represent so many concessions imposed by the struggle of the subordinate classes’ (ibid., p. 31; cf. Gramsci 1971, p. 182). (Englund, 1986, p. 151, author’s emphasis)

As the quote highlights, compromise is depicted as an equilibrium, a stasis, where the conception of compromise, or consensus in our earlier argumentation, allows for a sublation of the diversity of forces characteristic to antagonism.<sup>34</sup> Hence, politics, as an expression of the negotiation of ideologically defined class interests and demands at the level of state, can be perceived as a process of sublation, where the particularity and diversity of class demands is synthesised into compromises.

In this synthesis of the political, dominance occurs as a domination of interest by the superior class that imposes a partial concession of subordinate classes to its own class-specific interests. At the same time, there is a need for concession by the superior class to the demands of the subordinate classes and it is in this concession by the superior class that “positive” change becomes a theoretical possibility. However, we have to ask ourselves: Can compromise be seen as an eradication of plurality? Can compromise lead to the eradication of the political as a conflicting plurality of ideology? How can such a reduction of that plurality into singular dominant ideology become possible?

We might suggest that an appeal to a notion of synthesis is made in order to accomplish the reduction of plurality. However, if it would be a true synthesis, the synthesis cannot be a composite of the multiple, but must overcome the antagonistic moment in the political diversity and conflict of class interest in ideology, thereby providing a synthesised unity. Yet, as we see in Englund’s specification, compromise or consensus cannot be synthesised, since it allows for interpretation. This is interpreted to suggest that the ideological plurality inherent in antagonism prevails in consensus.

The equilibrium of compromises which determines the space in which state policy and ideology have to operate means that scope for interpreting the ‘output’ of the state exists at several levels. The existence of scope for interpretation is clear in a field such as that of education. However, there are limits to this scope, specified by existing power relations. State ‘output’ (policy and ideology) is thus dependent on the relative strengths of social forces, but nonetheless has an overriding function: cohesion of the social formation on

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<sup>34</sup> Sublation refers here to the negation of the plurality that antagonism is associated with, where the negation of plurality is seen to take place once the diversity of class interest is subsumed to the notion of popular masses.

the premises defined by the struggle of social forces. (Englund, 1986, p. 151f)

What the reference to limits of the scope of interpretation is seen to suggest is that the compromises at the level of the state are solely made in relative autonomy to the economic structure that *in the last instance* determines existing power relations.

While we have made this argument of the problematic temporal stasis earlier on, the discussion of Englund's notion of compromise is to highlight how compromise and consensus can be seen to allow for the notion of dominance and change, yet, at the same time relapses into an appeal to structural determination in the last instance and thereby reduces the dynamism that is involved in social antagonisms and politics. The dynamism is reduced in the sense that compromise brackets the plurality by reducing it to the level state.

We argue that it is in the context of this relative autonomy to a determining structure that Poulantzas' conception of a relative autonomy of the state relapses into an appeal to the determination in the last instance. Compromise is then not "real" or "structural" compromise, but one that only exists at the level of state and we might suggest that compromise or consensus refers to a *temporarily bracketed synthesis* of the plurality of political ideology. What Poulantzas does not specify is how this consensus as a synthesis of the plurality of ideological demands is transformed into a singular dominant ideology at the level of the state and how this transformation is in politics is theoretically possible.

Thus, it is suggested that the possibility of dominance remains blurred, since it is explained by relying on an appeal to power relations constituted by the structure, from which the State was conceived to be autonomous. As a result, the relativity of autonomy is understood by us to be unable to overcome the problem of determination in the last instance in Poulantzas' conception of the state and politics.

We argue that Poulantzas treats the state as a synthesising force, since he ascribes to it the capacity to produce cohesion as a subordination and compression of the many into the One.

The state is thus a cohesive factor and the hub of transformational/change, rolled into one: "It is from this relation between state as the cohesive factor of a formation's unity and the state as the place in which the various contradictions of the instances are condensed, that we can decipher the problem of the relation between politics and history. This relation designates the structure of the political both as the specific level of a formation and as the place in which its transformations occur: it designates the political struggle as the 'motive power of history' having as its objective the state, the place in which contradictions of instances (dislocated in their own time sequences) are condensed" (Poulantzas 1973, p. 45). (Englund, 1986, p. 152)

What can be seen in the quote to re-emerge is a figure of reasoning where synchronic differences are seen to be resulting in unity over time due to a process of “condensation” of “contradictions”, which is specific for the relation between politics and history. This condensation is interpreted to be involved in the process from dominant to hegemonic ideology.

For an ideology to become hegemonic, it must above all be dominant, it must have been transmitted by the state/the state apparatuses over a period of time. (Englund, 1986, p. 157)

As the quote highlights, the state, as a particular level, allows for condensation of first political ideologies into dominant ideology in the move from other levels to state level, and in a second instance from dominant ideology over time to become hegemonic ideology. We might here speak of two condensation processes.

Further, it is put forward that the state in this perspective is the common nominator in the production of history. Englund acknowledges the apparent lack of theoretical explication of this synthesising process at the level of State in his reference of the critique against Poulantzas by Dahlkvist.

Mats Dahlkvist (1982) criticizes Poulantzas for not providing any other theoretical basis for his cohesion thesis than a vague, general historical concept of unity. Instead of the final unity implied by Poulantzas, Dahlkvist wishes to ‘introduce the concept of produced unity as a fundamental ontological category in the history of societies’ (Dahlkvist 1982, p. 45, tr.) This then leads to an approach to history whose ‘value lies in the systematic study of how an element forms part of a whole and what place and significance it has’ (*ibid.* p. 52, tr.). (Englund, 1986, p. 152)

While Englund is seen by us to address in the quote above is the problematic moment of “cohesion” or synthesis in Poulantzas, where we see Englund to aim to overcome its problematic theoretical conception, we argue that Dahlkvist’s reconception of “produced unity”, that Englund is interpreted by us to appeal to, does not allow Englund to provide a sufficient theoretical explanation of the process of the production of unity.

We make this argument of an explanatory lack as produced unity reconfirms or reinstalls the notion of unity as a primary as a point of departure for cohesion instead of explaining how the production of unity is possible in the face of apparent plurality. The conception of produced unity at the level of the state remains in this figure of reasoning committed to a notion of sublation, as the comments on the “element that forms part of a whole” and its “place and significance” are interpreted to suggest. As sublation is interpreted to appeal to the notion of place and significance in relation to a whole, it is interpreted to require to a point of reference that is beyond the plurality at

work in hegemony. This argument is made by us based on the appeal to “significance” in Dahlkvist, since we might ask Englund, who can be seen, due to a lack of clarification, to concur with Dahlkvist: What is the point of reference this “significance” would be judged against? Would it be the singularity of history or the singular foundation/centre of society?

We argue that the notion of relative autonomy of the state and its special role in the condensation of political struggles does not sufficiently break with the notion of determination by the structure in the last instance, as the state is only relatively autonomous. As we showed in the argument above, the relative strength is seen as, in the last instance, determined structurally. As a result, we argue that there remains an explanatory lack of the moment of when the condensation of politics to dominance takes place. This explanatory lack is interpreted to re-emerge in Englund’s conception of politics and the production of unity.

### Forms of politics, conflict and the production of unity

As a result of this appeal to significance, the attempt at reconception of the production of unity is interpreted by us not allow to overcome the explanatory lack of the moment of produced unity, but this conception is interpreted to simply displace this lack with an appeal to a singularity, which remains unaccounted for. This lack emerges once we take a closer look at the central explanatory means that are put forward as the significant moment in the production of unity, that is to say, universal suffrage.

What [Poulantzas’] analysis can underline, on the basis of this theoretical starting point of the state as a relation, is that universal suffrage is the most important prerequisite of the state as a relation and ‘battleground’ (Poulantzas 1978, pp. 127-139, 251-265). The principle of universal suffrage is of course in direct conflict with the principle of private ownership of the means of production, and the question of the dominant ideology thus becomes crucial. (Englund, 1986, p. 152)

Let us for a moment acknowledge the suggested argumentative point of departure in the quote above that suffrage is truly universal, that suffrage includes all and everyone that are internal to society as a whole. We argue that it still remains unclear in the argumentation of the quote how the action of voting as an expression of identification with particular demands, for example, particular class demands, produces unity.

We make this argument of lack of explanatory clarity as particular class demands can stand in antagonistic relationship to other demands as they are put forward by other parties in representative forms of democracy. Such a plurality of demands would not necessarily create a class alliance or historic

block that includes *all* demands. We argue, there is always the possibility that these demands could be articulated as to stand in contrast to another.

What also remains to be questioned is why for Englund universal suffrage stands in direct conflict with the principle of private ownership of the means of production? A closer look at Dahlkvist's argumentation suggests that this conflict is due to the determination of class interests of intellectuals through the economic structure, which defines the members of the social as a whole, that is to say society. We make this argument based on the line of argumentation in the quote below that "private ownership of means of production" translates into a particular economic structure that the state in its juridical function reproduces and hence reproduces class relations in society that are specific to the capitalist mode of production.

To reconcile the principle of universal suffrage with that of private ownership of means of production, "it is necessary for the bourgeoisie, in the broad sense of the word, to manage to preserve the distinction between society and state, so that the principles of democracy do not reach as far as the 'jurisdiction' staked out for the state ... the socialist parties must challenge and demolish this distinction; transform the role of the state in relation to the economy". (Dahlkvist, 1982, p. 65, quoted in Englund, 1986, p. 152)

What can be seen to emerge in Englund's appeal to Dahlkvist is a paradox. If intellectuals and their ideological production are truly determined by the structure and as a result their ideology is determined by the mode of production, we may ask Dahlkvist as a conceptual persona: How can socialist parties challenge the distinction between state and society? If this possibility of challenge is due to the insight of true class-consciousness of the proletariat as majority of society, then dominant ideology was not dominant of anything, but solely feeding on false class-consciousness. Rather, if it would have been truly dominant, as referring to the ability to control others, this dominance must be due to an economic determination of the superstructure by the material base in the last instance and, as a result, the ability to challenge and demolish the distinction between state and society would become impossible, since capitalist society would determine the state.

What we see at stake in this paradox and what is entering the conception of hegemony in context of the conception of state as relative autonomy is the issue of the ontological assumption of unity. If universal suffrage is not able to produce unity, then the theoretical constitution of the power of the state to produce a singular history is threatened, since the threat and its eradication depends on a theoretical constitution of the process by which the production of unity is possible. A critical theoretico-constitutive question we are putting forward to Englund, as a conceptual persona, is: *How full or exclusive is consensus? To what extent is consensus without an antagonistic rest possible?*

We argue that the answer or the possibility is of central conceptual importance, since we hold that Englund's conception of historical determination (in its uniformity), state, and ultimately society, as form of unified totality depends on it. What we argue is that in order to depict society and the function of education as transmitter of dominant ideology both as a means for change and continuity of society as a whole, it necessary to provide an explanation of the production of unity.

## The production of unity and society

While Englund (1986) functions rather as a dialogical other than someone who is expected to provide us with a response, Englund is interpreted by us to ground his prying move of introducing a conflict-based perspective on the relation between education, state and society in an appeal to ontological unity, which we might say entails an appeal to determination, as in the notion of a state as equilibrium of social forces. This conception of the relation between state and society shapes his perspective on the role of education.

Education then becomes a relatively autonomous apparatus of the state, which in its functional relationship to the state focuses on producing cohesion.

The school as an ideological state apparatus can thus be located in a historically evolved system of state apparatuses, to which the political ideologies and social forces in society have to relate. The cohesive function of schools is manifested by the fact that, in the light of the analysis above, they are bound to propagate an ideology of community. This ideology of community is the fundamental determinant of the content of school citizenship education. It need[s] not, however, assume a fixed form; 'community' can be motivated and legitimized in different ways. (Englund, 1986, p. 153)

As we can see in the quote above, Englund puts forward that education has a cohesive function, as it is to propagate an ideology of unity. However, this ideological cohesion, as an ideology of community, is for him not a misrepresentation of an absence of community, but rather an ideological conception and possible misconception of a primary community, or better formulated "the social order as a whole" as the quote below highlights.

This means that it is one element in the *cohesive function of the state* with regard to the *social order as a whole*, a function which is an objective effect of the state being a relationship between conflicting social forces and hence the maintainer of a social order founded on this relationship. One part of maintaining this order involves the state, via the state apparatuses, *transmitting an ideology, a dominant ideology*. (Englund, 1986, p. 153, author's emphasis)

The ideology of community can be seen to be constitutive for the relationship between social forces that stand in a primary state of antagonism as this state is defined by the economic structure. This conception of the relationships can then (mis)conceive existing relationships within society, as the social whole, where the antagonism among social groups might be obliterated in the presentation of a harmonious social community.

As we have already pointed out, this ideology of community, as an ideology based on an appeal to consensus, constitutes, as a singular ideology, dominant ideology that is transmitted to through the state. We argue that in this reduction of a plurality inherent in antagonistic forces to a singular dominant ideology that Englund appeals to society as “a state of equilibrium”, as the quote below is to exemplify.

Ultimately this dominant ideology is politically defined through the struggle for state power. State output, including the dominant ideology, is thus a manifestation of a relationship which is always fluid, a state of equilibrium dependent on the relative strength of different social forces (Poulantzas 1978). (Englund, 1986, p. 153)

We argue this appeal to “a state of equilibrium” is necessary in order to conceive of power, as Englund makes the remark that state output as an expression of power relations exemplifies the “relative strength of different forces”. This appeal to equilibrium or stasis is seen by us as necessary in order to allow for a conception of power and dominance, otherwise the plurality of forces would render a relativisation of a plurality impossible. In this case, their “fluidity” would not necessarily condense to a solid, static state in which they could be put into relation.

Thus, while being presented as a singularity, a condensation of struggle, the struggle for state power is according to the quote above ultimately an expression of the plurality that is at work in politics. While we might hold that the appeal to dominance and condensation, as a form of synthesis, can be seen to reintroduce an appeal to structural determination in the last instance, Englund can be seen to introduce a perspective on education and its relation to politics and society, which aims to acknowledge the plurality that is synchronically engaging in the political struggle for constituting society.

As a result, Englund is interpreted to problematise the earlier mentioned inability of frame-factor and reproductive theory to conceive of change in the in-between, that is to say societal change as not taking place as a rare event. As part of this problematisation of the inability to conceive of change in frame-factor theory and subsequent reconception, Englund is seen to introduce change as a constant possibility and to see change as to result out of social agency, instead of depicting it as the workings of an external historical spirit or stage.

However, we would like to argue that this problematisation and his re-conceptualisation relapses into appeals to historical stagism, that is to say into appeals to the notion of stasis and equilibrium, where the dynamism of temporality, as it emerges out of conflict, is bracketed in the form of historical stages of periods. We make this argument in the context of our earlier discussion of hegemony, where Englund specifies the three stages of the development of hegemonic ideology.

How then is hegemony established? Gramsci distinguishes three stages in the development of hegemonic ideology. The first is *the strictly economic stage, at which organic intellectuals state their interests of their classes*. At the second stage, the political-economic, more or less the whole class supports an economic demand. The third stage involves “a complete fusion of economic, political and moral objectives which will be brought about by one fundamental group and groups allied to it through the intermediary of ideology when an ideology manages to spread throughout the whole of society determining not only united economic and political objectives but also intellectual and moral unity” (Mouffe 1979c, p. 181; cf. Gramsci 1971). For an ideology to become hegemonic, it must be above all be dominant, it must have been transmitted by the state/the state apparatuses *over a period of time*. (Englund, 1986, p. 157, author’s emphasis)

We argue that if the first stage is a stage that cannot be skipped, then the initiator of a change in hegemony is the economic structure, as it is the economy that determines organic intellectuals and the interests that are to be brought forward. Change in this appeal to the primary economic stage is a structural change of the modes of production.

The metaphorical use of fluidity in order to conceive of society as caught up in a struggle among different social forces, which is interpreted to denote the constant flow of time and change, that can be seen to be a primary point of departure for Englund’s conception of society, can be seen to stand in contrast to the appeal to a figure of reasoning occasionally appealed to by him (*e.g.*, 1986, p. 153) in order to conceive of society as in the state of equilibrium. This figure of reasoning as we argued in relation to Durkheim’s work and in our discussion of frame-factor theory is primarily concerned with the suppression or absence of change and temporality.

What we argue is that the state of equilibrium, as a state of absence of temporality or state of determination, is in Englund’s conception of the relationship between education, state and society utilised in order to conceive of how over time the plurality of synchronic diversity can be reduced in the form of diachronic history as a singular development. Thus, fluidity resulting out of antagonistic struggle is perceived by us in Englund to be sublated by an appeal to the possibility of freezing divergent forces into a state of momentary stasis. This synchronic state of equilibrium is understood as a result

of a figure of reasoning that feeds on the notion of society as an “existing social order”.

One result is that the education system is situated in a field of force pulling it between integration and change. The integrative function of the education system is related to the *existing social order*, which is ultimately guaranteed by the power relations within the state, and its change potential relates primarily to progressive interpretations of the dominant ideology deriving from shifts in the balance of power between social forces, shifts which create political conditions allowing those attending schools to be provided with knowledge which enables them to transcend the dominant ideology. (Englund, 1986, p. 153, author’s emphasis)

As we have already said, power and social order can be seen to rely on the possibility of synchronic unity, that is to say, the necessity that identity in the present can be specified in relation to a fully present structure that determines relational identity. For education, this means that what education produces—in its uniform character—can be derived from society as the existing social order of the moment. To put it differently, the products of education can be identified in relation to society as a social order in time. This process of identification is understood as to be non-contradictory in time. The possibility of *change and temporality, as fluidity, are besides a synchronic notion of plural hegemonic struggle by Englund conceived as to be suspended in relation to the diachronic. In this understanding, the diverse synchronic can be defined in relation to changes in the social order over time and from moment to moment.*

It is in this way that the workings of the education system can according to Englund emerge in a polarity between integration/reproduction (perpetuation) and change, where the possibility of change is reduced to or bracketed at the level of state, which to some extent stands in an autonomous relationship to the perpetuating society. Change at the level of state is primarily to be understood in relation to the output of consensus, which as a singular dominant ideology that, in a somewhat unspecified way, entails the demands and interests of subordinate groups.

## Mannheim

While the conception of state in the depiction above can be seen not to overcome the problem of determination in the last instance and lacks an explanation of how the plurality of antagonistic positions can be subdued to a singular dominant ideology, it is interpreted that Englund’s appeal to Mannheim in his conception of sociology of knowledge much more comprehensively and unrestrictedly explores the role of conflict in society.

What Englund in his appeal to Mannheim is seen to be doing is to challenge Durkheim's earlier discussed appeal to a harmonious society. Instead of grounding the notion of society in the appeal of necessary cooperation, where different members based on a biological installed desire for cooperation, Englund is seen by us to introduce conflict into the very notion of society and knowledge production as the production of collective consciousness. This conflict is according to this Mannheimian perspective due to the variation in how social groups perceive the world (Englund, 1986, p. 168).

The world is known through many different orientations because there are many simultaneous and mutually contradictory trends of thought (by no means equal value) struggling against one another with their different interpretations of 'common' experience. The clue to this conflict, therefore, is not to be found in the 'object in itself' (if it were, it would be impossible to understand why the object should appear in so many different refractions), but in the very different expectations, purposes, and impulses arising out of experience (Mannheim 1968b, p. 241 quoted in Englund, 1986, p. 169)

Arguably, the perspective on ideology that Englund, through his use of Mannheim, provides in the quote above is radically breaking with the historical materialism that forms Englund's conception of ideology that we have so far explored and that Englund can be seen to derive from Althusser.

The radicalism is interpreted to exist in the comment that conflict is not inscribed in the object in itself, but that it is variation in the trajectories, or put differently the non-congruency of trajectories in experience, that is the source of conflict. We argue that this contingency of trajectory of experience opens up the possibility of the emergence of the political.

However, this argument for non-determined divergence is interpreted to stand in a paradox position to the earlier appeal to power and determination by the structure, where the modes of production are to provide the "objective" basis for knowledge about the social whole. This appeal to objective knowledge can be seen to be barred in the quote from Mannheim above, since experience does not determine knowledge about objects in their singularity and at the same time the interpretations of the objects in their plural form do not determine, that is to say exhaust, what they are.

On the contrary, the conflict can be seen to be inscribed in-between the object and experience, since it is questioned to what extent the object can appear in variation. Hence, we might say contradictory interpretations question the possibility of the object being apprehended as a singular. What this Mannheimian perspective on knowledge can be seen to entail is an impossibility of determination. This impossibility is interpreted by us to result out of Mannheim's conception of knowing in the quote above, which we argue is (synchronically) multiple (conflict-ridden) and contingent, due to the non-congruence of experiential trajectories. As a result of this non-congruence of

experience, experience cannot determine knowledge singularly at a point in time (synchronically), nor over time (diachronically), since knowledge can be synchronically multiple (objects/the world can be at any moment be experienced differently) and exclusive (contradictory).

However, the historicity of knowledge becomes somewhat unspecific, since Mannheim can be seen to hold that the conditions of ideological production are provided by history—these conditions are not spontaneous productions of the moment—while Mannheim at the same time holds that new situations necessitate that historic ideas are adapted to them.

Mannheim also stresses that “at no moment in history a social stratum produce its ideas, so to speak out of thin air, as a matter of pure invention. Both conservative and progressive groups of various kinds inherit ideologies which somehow have existed in the past. Conservative groups fall back upon attitudes, methods of thought, ideas of remote epochs and adapt them to new situation; but newly emerging groups also take up at first already existing ideas and methods, so that a cross-section through the rival ideologies combating one another at a given moment also represents a cross-section through the historical past of the society in question” (Mannheim 1968a, p. 187). (Englund, 1986, p. 169)

What we might ask ourselves in relation to earlier discussions of Durkheim (and also looking forward to our discussions also in relation to Foucault and Derrida): To what an extent is the need to adapt to the new a break between the old ideology that is utilised and the new ideology produced? To what extent does this process of adaptation resemble continuity with successive addition or displacement of the past ideology? Does this adaptation relate to the entrance of something radically new (*alternate historical a priori*) or to what extent does the adaptation consist of a continuous addition or supplementation as it would be required by any repetition as mutation (*iterability*)?

Linking these questions to the issue of conflict among social strata, we might ask, for example: Will “conservative” groups remain the same as they are, forced to adapt to the new situation? Or will a “new” group that has to take up already existing ideas be defined by these ideas in terms of ideological determination by that society that existed before its emergence as a historical event? Raising a central question that these questions call for, we might ask: What is the historical trace in ideological constitution? Is it a trace to a fully established structural positioning of ideologies in a past society as this position could be obtained in relation to a particular epoch, period or stage?

It is in this context that we have to raise a related question that is centrally concerned with the possibility of closure, unity or positional fixture of relations among ideologies: How can ideologies be positioned to each other as to present society as a whole and equilibrium? It cannot be the object-in-itself,

nor objectivity in general, since they/it are/is, as Mannheim highlights, essentially over-determined and cannot be reduced to one particular ideology.<sup>35</sup>

We raise these questions as we see them to be concerned with the conception of change and Being that they are to account for. We argue that appeals to historical and societal determination, that are seen to be at stake in certain of the concepts addressed in the questions, draw on a figure of reasoning that is incompatible with the notion of fluidity and synchronic differences that are understood to result out of antagonism and absence of singular determination.

We suggest that in the questions addressed, the possibility of positioning ideological variation to a stable centre is not provided within the field of ideology and that such a fixture could only be accomplished by theoretical constitution of an alternate plane, level or dimension in which the play in ideological representation is erased (sublated) in a retrospect reference to an initial unity (that can be *re*presented). While the depicted perspective on ideology, as a form of giving meaning to the world, in Mannheim can be seen to be rather radical and acknowledges the irreducible character of variation/conflict or the political, it is argued by us that this depiction of the ideological relapses in relation to the conception of social relations and strata to an appeal to determination in the last instance, as an appeal to an external ultimate reference point, as this reference is seen to be involved in the argument by Mannheim in the quote below. As we argued above this appeal to an external reference point is necessary in order to erase the fluidity of conflicting perspectives that are associated with the ideological and to maintain equilibrium in society.

This appeal to a fixed, non-variable, point of reference becomes apparent in the conception of diachronic time in Mannheim. An appeal to a *telos* can be seen to be made by Englund in his utilisation of Mannheim, even though the conception of the field of ideology as essentially over-determined would render such a singular *telos* theoretically impossible.

The attributes of ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive’ are relative and to a more specific definition ‘always depends on the direction in which *social process itself is moving*. As the fundamental trend of economic and intellectual progress moves along, strata which began by being progressive may become conservative after they have achieved their ambition; strata which at a time played a leading role may suddenly feel impelled to go into opposition against the dominant trend’ (Mannheim 1968a, pp. 185). (Englund, 1986, p. 170, author’s emphasis)

Englund can be seen to highlight in the quote above the relative character of specifications of type of ideology, yet it becomes clear, they are not relative

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<sup>35</sup> For a conception of the term “overdetermination” see the sub-section “Englund and overdetermination” below.

to the field of ideology. We argue that they cannot be relative to the field of ideology, since “progressive” and “conservative” would entail a variation and attain different identities or meanings in relation to the various ideologies. Yet, as we see it, Mannheim is not claiming that these labels are relative to ideology, but holds that they are relative *to a uniform direction of social process*. As already pointed out, social process cannot, if it is solely confined to the field of variation, be conceived of as a singular process or direction, since different ideologies will define social process and direction differently and as a result will indicate a number of non-congruent directions or trajectories.<sup>36</sup>

What we might anticipate is that it is the notion of synchronic determination in relation to the social whole that is providing the reference point of direction. *What Englund in his appeal to Mannheim is seen to assume is cohesion/uniformity as a premise, that is to say, they assume cohesion as an a priori. We, however, would like to suggest that the consequence of Mannheim should be to conceive cohesion/uniformity theoretically as a promise, that is to say, that which is still to come, to be assured/constituted in the face of apparent variation and diversity.*

## Determinants and historic determination

If we return to the consequences of the theoretical conception of the relationship between state, education and society, we feel obliged to point out that Englund’s prying move was the introduction of a theoretical possibility of synchronic difference and the conception of education and its content as a field of force—not stasis—where different social groups battle for influence in order to change social formations within society. This opens up a perspective on education as not being functionally determined by society or economic structure, but rather as being primarily characterised by variation and constant change, as we see these characteristics to relate to the political.

Further, Englund’s conception of citizenship education and civic curriculum code renders the content of education and education policy empirically and theoretically significant, since this content is, as the quote below high-

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<sup>36</sup> The reader might comment that progressive and conservative might be understood as to derive from the relations in which ideologies stand to another or in relation to the field of ideology as a whole. With regards to this comment, we put forward that if we do not appeal to an external reference point in relation to which we might position ideologies, as in our conception of antagonism, it is logically impossible for the field of ideology or the social as to be confined to a singular directionality. Instead, the diversity of notions of progressive and conservative highlights that these terms are ideologically over-determined. That is due to their overdetermined character they are not reducible to a determinate meaning or direction. We interpret the diversity that is at play in antagonism to represent the limit of any attempt at constituting the social as a set of relationships. To put it differently, overdetermination is for us not determined in the last instance. For a more detailed discussion of our conception of antagonism, consult the sub-section “Antagonism” in the second section of this dissertation.

lights, primarily the terrain of interpretation and contestation among “different political ideologies”, despite references to “determination”.

The fact that the various political ideologies involve different underlying assumptions about one and the same concept also means that documents drawn up by representatives of different political ideologies carry different political meanings and can be interpreted in different ways. This is a central point in the discussion which will follow. The determinants of citizenship education content which the civic curriculum code embodies thus contain scope for differing interpretations, reflecting compromises between ideologies. As was suggested earlier, this scope for interpretation was used in a specific manner in the era of the rational curriculum code, when science was the internal principle of reproduction and integration within the overriding civic code. (Englund, 1986, p. 170)

We put forward that “determinants” in the quote above does not refer to the singular historically determining instances as we have discussed earlier with regards to frame-factor theory. Instead of using the term “determinants” in the uniform and absolute sense of Marxist appeals to determination in the last instance, Englund (1986, p. 189) points out that determination, is rather to be understood as a scope for interpretation that sets certain limits.

The differing meanings attached to these determinants at different times bear witness to an unremitting struggle over their interpretation, a struggle which has taken place at several levels, those of public debate, syllabuses, teaching materials, and concrete teaching. (Englund, 1986, p. 189)

Thus, the different meanings that are referred to in the quote above are seen to stand in relation to the social conflicts and the plurality of perspectives this conflict entails.

However, determination is, rather than a form of relative determination and as a determination of limits in relation to a multitude of social forces, to be understood as to stand in relation to a singular. That singular can be seen to require and to result out of an appeal to a certain notion of temporality, where diachrony leads to a settlement or victory among ideologies into a singular dominant and hegemonic ideology. While we might understand this settlement as an eradication of variation as a mode of forgetting of the variation that existed, it is rather a forced eradication of variation in terms of structural causality.

It is with regards to determinants that the Marxist appeals to a totality, the social as a whole, re-emerge in relation to the conception of state as relatively autonomous.

[Determinants] have not been constituted uniformly, but have taken shape under the influence of a continuum of levels, from the internal to the external,

where “internal” refers to factors within the school system and “external” to societal conditioning factors outside that system. (Englund, 1986, p. 193)

It is interpreted by us that with regards to the notion of external “societal conditioning factors” in the quote above that the plurality of determinants can be seen to be sublated as the conception of determinants in this instance is clearly linked to the notion of “levels”. We argue that this notion of level associates determinants with a figure of reasoning that appeals to sublation. This argument is made in the context of the earlier discussed problematic notion of relative autonomy as it is constitutive of Poulantzas’ notion of the state.

This argument on the return of relative autonomy in the conception of determinants is made with regards to the comment in the quote above that determinants “have taken shape under the influence of a continuum of levels”, where we argue that the notion of level differentiates in a similar fashion to frame-factor theory between the internal and external. Hence, while we might say that the constitution of the determinants of education by a diversity of political actors is taking place in relative autonomy, within the state and its apparatus, it is in “the last instance” a *relative* autonomy, an autonomy *relative to a determining external*.

In the context of this claim put forward by us, we might assume that the particular ideological affiliation of this plurality of determinants is in the last instance determined by class relations in the specific mode of production that characterises a society. With regards to this relative autonomy, we argue that it becomes unclear to what extent interpretation or reinterpretation is able to alter or to change determinants, which are ultimately standing in relation to external conditioning factors. To reformulate this argument, it becomes unclear to what extent the constitution of determinants of education can alter the class consciousness and class interests as they are determined by the specific type of society.

This unspecificity of the ability to alter and change is interpreted to emerge in the argument of the quote below, where we might ask: How strong is the influence of society on the autonomy of the education system?

The strong influence of society has not, however, totally eliminated the autonomy of the education system: this system and the bearers of its traditions have also proved to have the power to reinterpret the demands of their environment and benefit from the historical situation. (Englund, 1986, p. 194)

This blurring of mentioned “influences” in the quote above that aim to determine the function and content of the education is also conceivable in terms of the subversion of the internal and the external of the education in terms of influence or causality. If determinants are under the influence of, both, internal and external influences or forces, it might be asked: What pro-

vides the basis for the borders between state and society, based on which the differentiation between external and internal might be elaborated?

It is in this context that Englund's insistence on appeals to causality, which can be seen to be inherited from frames as theoretical devices, can be seen to become problematic for Englund, since such reasoning in terms of frame-factors entails a teleological mode of explanation. As a result, the frame, as a specifications of fundamental structural conditions that set limits for pedagogical action (*cf.* Lundgren, 1984) are caught up in a temporal figure of reasoning where a *posteriori* explanation relates observed variation "back" to *a priori* conditions that render the denoted outcomes in an explanation a *necessary* result. The influence of interpretation, as relating to variation and the force of conflict, becomes due to this teleological figure of reasoning "synchronically impotent", that is to say a structural historic power is still to decide *over time* if it is to grant a particular group power *a posteriori*.

However, the appeal to relative autonomy can be seen to render this "power or interpretation" into a somewhat paradox notion of temporal power. This paradox notion of temporal power is due to the *a priori* historical determination of the intellectual. It is suggested that historical power is still (at a future point) to decide what *was* powerful (the success or potency of the force of interpretation). We argue that the appeal to the benefits from the historical situation in the last sentence from the quote above, which holds that agents within the *autonomous* education system have "the power to re-interpret" the structural demands and to "benefit from the historical situation", stands in a paradox relation to the claim that it is the historical situation that *already* determines them with regards to their class identity. Would the *a posteriori* benefit not already have to be inscribed in the historical situation? To put it differently: Would the *a posteriori* benefit not have been inscribed as *a priori* causal necessity in the forces (power) at work, where the *telos* or the final benefit is still to be shown?

## Overdetermination

Leaving these confusing logical implications of the appeal to relative autonomy aside, we will now briefly explore the implications of the concept of "overdetermination" in order to adumbrate some of the by us characterised sources of this vagueness and the chronological non-specificity that we see at play in Englund's argumentation. We argue that the vagueness or chronological non-specificity of the moment of historical determination, which positions the agent and the "*power* of their interpretation", can also be seen to emerge in the Mannheimian conception of historic development or direction of process *as uniform*, that is to say, as relating to a unified *telos*.

With regards to this theoretico-constitutive tension that emerges in the appeal to a uniformity resulting out of, or prefiguring, plurality Englund can be seen to limit "the power to re-interpret" by an appeal to the state of he-

gemony, where we might interpret this limit to be the result of “overdetermination” as it is addressed in the quote below.

The struggle between different ideologies concerning education is thus *overdetermined* by the existing hegemony, both centrally and locally. The latter can in turn best be changed if the state propagates a certain dominant ideology over a long period of time. An existing hegemony can also mean, however, that certain aims which are put forward as part of the dominant ideology are thwarted and never attain hegemony. (Englund, 1986, p. 196, author’s emphasis)

To recall, Englund (1986, p. 151) portrayed this state of hegemony in terms of an equilibrium of compromises between dominant and dominated classes. Dominant ideology, as imposed in the relations existent in this equilibrium, sets (*a priori*) the limits for interpretation through its inter-linkage with state power (*cf.* Englund, 1986, p. 153). Yet, in the quote above it is suggested that hegemony as the accepted domination of principles of a ruling class that has *a priori* penetrated collective consciousness and thereby can be seen to enter, *again*, political ideologies and to subvert them all in order to dominate (*cf.* Englund, 1986, p. 155). The moment of domination becomes vague as a result.

It is with regards to this vagueness argued that it is the very appeal to the term of “overdetermination by the existing hegemony” (Englund, 1986, p. 196) that is problematic in its combination with the notion of domination that is put forward by Englund.

We argue that we, in this double appeal to overdetermination on the one hand and domination by the structure in the last instance on the other hand, have arrived at a theoretical cross-road in Englund’s theoretical contribution, where we have to choose between the “overdetermination of all ideological struggle” or “determination by the structure in the last instance”, since we will argue that the concept of overdetermination renders the point of determination in time impossible or, to put it differently, the chronologic non-specificity will be shown to be the impossibility of determination in time.

Althusser (1965), who Englund can be interpreted to be implicitly appealing to in his reference to overdetermination in the quote above, is seen by us to problematise the very notion of Marxist material dialectics and the notion of an unfolding of a Hegelian totality as a singularity in all its moments. It is this Hegelian totality, seen by us to be haunting materialist dialectics, that Althusser wants to problematise; more specifically, he aims to address how contradiction and dialectical movement are to be interpreted in relation to Marx’ conception of dialectics.

The Hegelian totality is the alienated development of a simple unity, or a simple principle, itself a moment of the development of the Idea; so strictly

speaking, it is the phenomenon, the self-manifestation of this simple principle which persists in all its manifestations, and therefore even in the alienation which prepares its restoration. (Althusser, 1965, p. 203)

What the alienated development of a simple unity can be seen to denote is that beyond the infinite play and variation, there is a single principle that can be identified within the ideal, as part of the movement of sublation, which dissolves the moment of alienation, and shows the Idea behind all its manifestations that has already been there from the beginning.

What Althusser can be seen to be aiming at in his concept of overdetermination, is the very singularity or simplicity of the Idea, or at least to whatever extent it is accessible in its uniformity, beyond its differences in articulation. For Althusser (*cf.* 1965, p. 250), contradiction, as it emerges in the articulation of practice, which occurs in the “play” or variation among ideological practices, is the reflection of the articulatory practice in its condition of existence, where this condition of existence is characterised by being *a complex whole*.

Overdetermination designates the following essential quality of contradiction: the reflection in contradiction itself of its conditions of existence, that is, of its situation in the structure of dominance of the complex whole. (Althusser, 1965, p. 209)

What Althusser’s conception of overdetermination and the quote above is interpreted by us to highlight is that the condition out of which a contradiction, as a variation and multitude, emerges is initially not a simple, we might add single, unity, but a “complex”, that is to say consisting of many *different*, yet *connected* parts.

In other words, the concept of overdetermination problematises the very notion of singular or ultimate determination, since it withholds a unifying point of origin, Idea, or a centre in relation to which a totally sutured structure could be constituted and in which elements of the ideal could be positioned.

Only overdetermination enables us to understand concrete variations and mutations of a structured complexity such as a social formation (the only one that has really been dealt with by Marxist practice up to now), not as the accidental variations and mutations produced by external ‘conditions’ in a fixed structured whole, its categories and their fixed order (this is precisely mechanism)—but as so many concrete restructurations inscribed in the essence, the ‘play’ of each category, in the essence of each contradiction, in essence, the ‘play’ of the articulation of the complex structure in dominance which is reflected in them. (Althusser, 1965, p. 210)

While Althusser can be seen to be eager to limit this play or the consequences of his conception of overdetermination, by an appeal to the determination in the last instance, we argue that the consequences of the concept of overdetermination, as the initial play or indeterminacy in the conditions of articulation, would have far reaching implications for Englund's claim that the political ideologies are over-determined by the existing hegemony.

### At the cross-roads: Overdetermination or determination

What is seen by us to be at stake in Englund's reference to overdetermination is the very impossibility of a singular ideology to be dominant, since its contradictory moments would not be that of an objective, determinable single unity, for example, that of social class and its relations within society, but these conditions themselves would be complex; that is to say, they could be and have been articulated in varying and antagonistic ways.

There is, therefore, in this line of reasoning, in contrast to Englund's claim, no principle, no dominance that limits *a priori* the play in variation due to underlying social conditions, but it is solely the *contingent* actual articulation that may or may not confine itself to a certain variant. We might, following this reasoning, state that the frame is never *a priori* to limiting action limiting, but can solely be partially determined *a posteriori* in a contingent action realising a particular variant among an infinite play. Further, what is at stake is the name for that very possibility of "the equilibrium between different social forces in their struggle for state power and power within the state apparatus", that is to say the very possibility of not only dominant ideology, but also society as that equilibrium of different social forces.

What we are suggesting is that what is at stake in the acknowledgement of "play" is the very impossibility of society as a theoretical concept for a state or reference point of stasis. This impossibility is interpreted by us to emerge out of the abandonment of the appeal to determination in the last instance, since, if we take hegemony seriously, there can, as Althusser's concept of overdetermination highlights, not be a centre that itself is not caught up within the symbolic play of the plane of the ideal. In order to provide such a centre beyond potential variation, it is necessary to distinguish the superstructure and the base, where the centre at the base is to determine the play in the superstructure. However, in such an appeal to the separability between superstructure and base, we fall back into an appeal to determination, that very appeal that Englund can be seen to have identified as problematic if we want to understand change and the political.

With regard to this problem of an appeal to a centre that stabilises the variation in representation, we can return to the conception of symbolic violence. As earlier quoted, Bourdieu and Passeron (1970, p. 4) state that symbolic violence is the power to impose meanings and to conceal power rela-

tions that were able to impose these meanings. Symbolic violence can be seen to be impossible within the realm of representation, since it would require the elimination of the *symbolic character of the ideal* and to reduce representation to a correlationalism with an objective plane, that is to say, to a centre that cannot be within the symbolic, since the symbolic is ultimately a plane characterised by a symbolic play.

This necessity of appealing to an alternate plane in order to allow for the conception of power, has been identified by second-generation frame-factor theorists, as we see this appeal to be involved in the reference to “other levels than the symbolic” in the quote below.

The term “symbolic” is rather similar to what has been called “the ideological level of the superstructure” in classical Marxist writings. It refers to a dimension of social reality different from other dimensions. It has to do with “values”, “meanings”, etc. By “symbolic violence” certain “values”, “meanings”, etc. are forced upon the recipients as legitimate and are accepted as such. This strongly implies that certain social groups can force their values, etc. upon other groups *due to the power relations at other levels than the symbolic one*. The strength and power at the economic and political level is the foundation of the power relation at the symbolical level. (Kallós & Lundgren, 1979, p. 31, author’s emphasis)

Englund (1986) can be seen to stand at a cross-roads where he is partially committed to the appeal to determinism, as it becomes necessary in relation to his conception of society and power, yet, on the other hand, Englund aims to embrace the dynamism and variation that is *at play* in social conflict and how this conflict relates to variation in education.<sup>37</sup>

It is with this focus on dynamism and conflict that Englund turns towards the state as relatively autonomous from the determining influences of the structure and as a centre stage for the battle for change.

The general theoretical perspective in the third stadium is to see education and its content as a field of force that is defined by social forces in battle. The ultimate power centre of this battle is the state, but it is also a ‘battle of interpretation’ that is on-going at all levels (and that becomes more obvious during decentralisation etc.). It is in this way in which the education system manifests how reality should be perceived and educational knowledge is con-

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<sup>37</sup> We argue that an appeal to overdetermination and play would require an acknowledgement of ambiguity in articulation and the undecidability of the discursive (ideological). Such an acknowledgement we aim to introduce in the next section, where we appeal to notions of trace, iterability and difference-to-self are provided in order conceive of the social as an open and undecidable structure. Further, an acknowledgement of overdetermination and play provides the basis for the conceptions of the trace of the trace and a differentiation between other and Other.

structed, it amounts to that certain power relations are consolidated or transformed. (Englund, 1990, p. 28, author's translation)

In the context of our discussion of the ineradicable symbolic character of what Englund calls "the battle of interpretation", we ask ourselves: How is it possible that this battle could be settled? To put it into the earlier discussion of temporality, we might ask ourselves: How is it possible that synchronic differences, as a plurality of social antagonisms, can become eradicated over time and produce diachronic unity, where different forces and different trajectories can be unified in relation to a centre that positions them in differing relations to each other? Or to return to the discussion of the chronological non-specificity of the moment of determination, we might ask: When is the time that "play" takes a rest?

In the context of these questions, we interpret Englund to draw on a figure of reasoning, where in an understanding of society as equilibrium, power relations crystallise at the level of state. This crystallisation, as a fixture of the diverse political and ideological interests in relation to the function of the state, allows the state to exercise coherent power, as the quote below is interpreted to suggest.

This transmission of ideology is thus exposed to continuous shifts in accordance with successively changing power relations. Continuous ideological conflicts take place at all levels, while simultaneously a coherent state power and state apparatus has the task to unite the differing social forces diverse political and ideological interests and to let the whole appear as 'rational' (for example, through national evaluation programmes). (Englund, 1990, p. 28f, author's translation)

In the context of this appeal to coherent state power in the quote above, we would like to ask: How is this coherence in state power possible? How is the task to unite the different social forces in the form of a unity possible?

The possibility of such a task, which is basically that of creating consensus in the form of compromise, seems to be undermined by Englund's claim in the quote below that there is *always* the possibility of interpretation.

Education policy documents as curricula and syllabuses are thus analysed within this perspective as (political) compromises that can be interpreted. The space for interpretation that these documents express shifts over time in accordance with the field of forces that has been outlined and provides different prerequisites for the concrete choice of content which can be mapped via different types of theoretically impregnated empirical studies. (Englund, 1990, p. 29, author's translation)

First, we would like to ask in the context of the coherence of state power and the remarks on interpretation in the quote above: Are compromises uniform?

Do they attain internal coherence or do they maintain their political character, that is to say, bear evidence to their conditions of articulation that are shaped by a multiplicity of forces? Related to this question, where Englund (1986) would have to show this possibility of condensation and eradication in order to denote an internally coherent diachronic movement of the field of forces, we would like to ask: What is the mode by which the field of forces confines the space for interpretation? Is this space limited *a priori* by the existing social relations, where that limitation is structurally determined? Or is it limited *a posteriori* by the actual interpretations that are carried out?

With regards to the former question, we might assume that the limit could be conceived in relation to the underlying Idea in its process of self-unfolding in all its particularities. In such an appeal, it would be a centre in relation to which the possibility of interpretation could be defined in its alienation.<sup>38</sup> With regards to the latter question, it could be an appeal to a particular force that is deemed to have been maintained through the contingent act of interpretation, yet, this force would have its own direction due to its antagonistic and exclusive position to other possible interpretations that would not be *a priori* determined by a *unified* directionality.

What is at stake in these two directions of potential theoretical intervention is the issue *to what extent education policy is an expression of a singular dominant ideology, created through compromise and consensus, or to what extent it remains political*, that is to say to what extent the content of education policy is characterised by paradoxes that can be seen to be the result out of the incomprehensibility between different ideologies that are articulated in it. If we are to embrace the play and the irreducible variation in interpretation and their irreducible multiplicity, we should ask ourselves: To what extent can curriculum theory remain teleological, that is to say, to remain within the Durkheimian tradition of aiming to uncover a singular *telos*, as an end or purpose behind a cause, that is *a priori* to the forces at work in change?

If we would abandon the appeal to a *telos* that would relate and unite different trajectories and forces, it is suggested that a consequence would have to be that any practice cannot any longer be seen to “consolidate” or change “power relations”, since it is no longer assumed that the diverse trajectories can be seen to stand in relation to an essential centre as a fixed point of reference. It is suggested that the introduction of a dynamic perspective on education—one that acknowledges the incommensurability of alternative world-views and the political inherent in this incommensurability—would have

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<sup>38</sup> In this reference to alienation, we aim to show the potential influence of Hegelian thought on the figures of reasoning by which Englund might have constituted an answer to this question. Alienation takes a central role in Hegel’s dialectic, where the term refers to “the stage of disunion which emerges from a simple unity and is subsequently reconciled in a higher, differentiated unity” (Inwood, 1992, p. 36). In this understanding, alienation [*Entfremdung*] is closely related to sublation [*Aufhebung*].

more far reaching consequences than the delimitation of or erasure of the “reproduction” metaphor. It is argued that if dynamism, as resulting out of conflict, is to be acknowledged, it renders the “production” of society, as a whole or as an equilibrium, impossible.

It is with regards to this notion of societal production, that critical Swedish curriculum theory, as it is confined to the next generation of critical curriculum theory to be discussed below, is interpreted to not yet have come to terms with the radicality of the prying move of introducing the dynamic and conflict perspective that was accomplished by Englund.

## Figures of Reasoning in Swedish Curriculum Theory after Englund

The legacy of Englund, interpreted to be the problematisation of appeals to economism (determinism in the last instance) and the introduction of a dynamic approach to studies of social formation, can be seen to have been kept alive and explored in different directions by a number of scholars within Swedish curriculum theory (*e.g.*, Ljunggren, 1996; Säfström, 1994; Östman, 1995).

What needs to be pointed out is that, while sharing figures of reasoning and other similarities with Englund, the work of scholars of the next generation is, of course, also characterised by different theoretical approaches, different foci of interest, as well as different empirical foci. As a result of these differences, the work of the next generation cannot be assumed to fully relate to the figures of reasoning we discussed and problematised in Englund (1986).

However, our discussion of the next generation will be to a large extent be focused on those figures of reasoning that we see to be shared with Englund. We maintain this focus as the seeming recurrence of certain figures of reasoning, as a form of historicity, is seen by us to provide the field of Swedish curriculum theory with a form of continuity. Yet, in order to approach the contribution of the next generation to a radicalisation of the prying move of Englund, we will also in the context of our reconstruction in the next section focus on a number of productive concepts that the next generation can be seen to have provided.<sup>39</sup>

To return to the way in that the next generation of Swedish curriculum theory can be seen to break with the historicity of the field, a common nominator to this next generation of curriculum theory is that, while remaining critical, it is seen by us to dissociate itself more explicitly from appeals to structural determination. This dissociation has mainly taken the form of self-

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<sup>39</sup> The productive capacity of these concepts is to be understood as relative to the constructive intervention of the next section.

confessed affiliation with post-structuralism and pragmatism. In parallel, this next generation of critical curriculum theory abandoned in the move of dissociation appeals to earlier commonly shared Marxist tradition within Swedish curriculum theory.

Another common nominator and a legacy of Englund in this new generation of curriculum scholarship can be seen to be a shared “positive” or “reformatory” perspective on education, which distances itself from an earlier “negative” view on education and its outcomes that highlighted the reproductive aspects of education with regards to the maintenance of class society. As part of this “positive” perspective, democratic aspects of negotiation, compromise, as well as the notion of “society” were sustained.

As we will argue, this passionate commitment to a positive perspective on the social outcomes of education came to subdue in varying degrees the conflict perspective in Englund, which we might say is partially a result of Englund’s commitment to a Marxist tradition. This central focus on conflicts of interests in Marxist tradition came in the next generation of curriculum theory to be subdued with a perspective of “positive” social development of society as a whole, as it can be seen to be sustained by appeals to pragmatism, communicative communitarianism and the imaginary of *folkhemmet* as a classless society, which came to be replaced by the imaginary of Swedish society as democracy.

While these studies can be seen to remain critical, the argument to be made is that this critical perspective, which entails an acknowledgment of conflict and power-relations, at a theoretical level remained committed to the theoretical imperative of providing a uniform directionality, which we have earlier pointed out can also be seen to be a legacy of certain figures of reasoning in Englund. To put it differently, the theoretical role of conflict is seen to be restrained by the commitment to normative appeals to the potential for “positive” outcomes of education.

These constrains on the centrality of conflict can, to a certain degree, be seen to emanate out of the rediscovery of pragmatism and Dewey’s work, where, as we will argue below, identified problematic figures of reasoning in Dewey that appeal to a dialogism and organicism are interpreted by us to subdue conflict to the primacy of uniform growth of society as a whole and progress.

What is put forward is that, in spite of self-confessed abandonment of structuralism, this next generation of curriculum theory can be seen to maintain appeals to “modern” notions of society. Such notions of society are interpreted to be sustained in appeals to hegemonic imaginaries of society, as was done in the Swedish context in the notion of *folkhemmet*, where *folkhemmet* came in critical curriculum theory and especially in the next generation of curriculum theory to be replaced by the notion of society as “democratic society”.

While this imaginary of “democratic society” is interpreted to provide a centre for theoretical and political orientation of Swedish next-generation curriculum theory, the very notion of “society” can be seen to have been *overcome* with the abandonment of appeals to structural determination. The particular ways, in which the history of Swedish curriculum in this next generation has been articulated, shows how the imaginary of democratic society came to provide a central point of orientation, where this point of orientation might be interpreted to have been rendered obsolete, if we read Englund (1986) in the particular way we have suggested above.

Östman (1995) can be seen to articulate this enmeshment of dynamic and pre-dynamic conception of the curriculum in an illuminating way.

The introduction of a democratic mode of governance entails that education’s primary objective became to form the citizens of tomorrow (*cf.* Englund 1986, Chap. 4). This perspective expresses a different type of sociology of education which Englund (1990) calls citizenship based. The basis in this sociology of education is that the western education system has to be seen in relation to two aspects that are always present, which are social integration and change. These aspects are *per se* related to the form in which citizenship education is provided, that is to say education of a specific citizen in a democratic society. A society must always assure social integration that keeps it united. At the same time there exists always a battle over which values that are supposed to be the kit that keeps society together. The content of social integration shifts in accordance to shifts in power within society. The terms social integration and change shall therefore be understood in relation to the battle between social groups regarding the formation of education. This thesis relates to the citizenship based sociology of education and curriculum theory. (Östman, 1995, p. 18, author’s translation)

Based on our earlier discussion, we could ask Östman (1995), as a representative of this (by us) characterised next generation of post-Englundian curriculum theory: How is it possible that society is realised as a unity, that is to say, all citizens are integrated, if there is a constant battle over the values that represent the unifying kit? How is a consistent power-relation possible if we abandon the appeal to a structure that would allow for a determination of elements within the social?

In order to denote the suggested enmeshment of pre-dynamic and dynamic conceptions of the curriculum, we will explore how the concept of society can be seen to haunt figures of reasoning in Ljunggren (1996), Säfström (1994) and Östman (1995) in the following section.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> As mentioned earlier, the reference to “haunting” is to be understood within the context of our conception of trace and (arche-)writing, as we derive these concepts and the notion of haunting from Derrida. The haunting aspect of this figure of reasoning refers in the context of our discussion to the way in which traces to earlier articulations of curriculum theory can be

## Figures of reasoning in Östman (1995)

Östman (1995, p. 23) can be seen to partially share a focus of interest with Englund as his ambition is to analyse which discourses can be discerned to shape the curriculum for the natural sciences, as well as to outline a theory of action upon and consequences of these discourses. The focus of interest can be seen to conflate with Englund with regards to the issue how a historicity of the education system can be seen to provide constraining premises for actions that can become possible within the education system. While Östman in this focus can be seen to share a partial focus on ‘reproduction’ in education, he is interpreted by us to challenge certain figures of reasoning in the conception of reproduction by problematising the instance of determination of action by the structure through his conception of decision, which we identify to be at the heart of his notion of “offering of meaning” in education.

### Reminders of determination

To start with our analysis of Östman (1995), we can in the quote above discern an assumed relation between power and the content of social integration. This relation between power and social integration is seen by Östman to surface in the content of education, where changes in content are related to shifts of power in society.

This notion of power in society, which necessitates something as a unified society, can be seen in Östman to be primarily informed by a figure of reasoning that entails a logic of necessity as this logic is seen to be constitutive for the conception of “necessary cooperation”, as the quote below is interpreted to highlight.

When education is perceived in this way, its primary objective is seen to be the fostering [*fostran*] of citizens, and therefore it is formulated in Englund as a comprehensive curriculum code, the civic curriculum code: “The civic curriculum code includes a variety of perceptions of the relation between individual and society, but it is kept united in relation to some specific points. It is *necessary cooperation between humans that keeps society united* and which should not be disturbed. Since every student in school learns to work [*arbeta*] and is fostered to become a citizen, he/she does learn his/her responsibilities regarding labour [*arbete*] and is *subordinated to the laws that are stipulated by the state for school and society*. Students learn also their democratic rights as political beings, that is to say to vote and to participate in political life. The points of connection are therefore affinity [*samhörighet*], democracy and labour [*arbete*]” (Englund 1991, p. 12.). (Östman, 1995, p. 37, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

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seen to exist and that, while not fully articulated, can be seen to shape the articulations of Ljunggren (1996), Säfström (1994) and Östman (1995).

In the quote above, Poulantzas' conception of state power can be seen to resurface in appeal to the subordination of students to the laws by the state, as this conception is put forward by Englund and referred to by Östman in order to provide a conception of the relation between education, state and society.<sup>41</sup>

While we might problematise this notion of power with regards to the relative autonomy that it appeals to, as well as the remains of appeals to structural determination, we will instead turn our focus to the notion of "necessary cooperation" that is also appealed to in the quote above and that is, as we might argue, in the quote inscribed into the subject as an ultimate feature. It is put forward that this appeal to necessity is incommensurable with the ambitions of "*post*"-structuralism, Foucault's and Derrida's conception of the subject in particular, that Östman can be seen to associate with.

The basis for this incommensurability can be seen to emerge in Foucault's (1966) early structuralist work, where he reduces the subject to an enunciative function of discourse, where the task of "necessary cooperation" can through a decentering of the subject no longer primarily be seen to be the task of the subject, but instead the focus moves away from the subject as the essential social link to discourse, which is spoken through the subject. Foucault (1984, p. 102) can in his conception of the "author" be seen to go a bit further and to withdraw the possibility of necessary cooperation, since the subject as "author" in the process of writing engages in a game, we might add "a play", who in this process of writing goes beyond his/her own rules.

Necessary cooperation can, based on these considerations on the author as a meaning making subject, be understood as an impossible imperative since the products of cooperation, for example, the law, on which the subject is to act is characterised by a certain excess, or a play, that renders the societal responsibilities in accordance to which the subject is to relate opaque and requires the subject to play along *as if*.

We would also like to question if necessary cooperation is compatible with a perspective that highlights the role of conflict, since we might ask ourselves: To what extent does the necessity of cooperation reduce conflict, the play or variation in the *variety* of perceptions to a secondary status? This last question can be seen to attain particular urgency in the face of the rela-

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<sup>41</sup> While this conception is not of central empirical concern to Östman (1995), nor is a central foci of his work, we claim that this association with Englund's conception of state power via Poulantzas to a certain extent shapes the perspective on education that Östman can provide. This is not to say that it determines Östman's perspective on the relation between education and society, but the notion of state power is interpreted to draw upon one of a number of different figures of reasoning by which the relation between education and society is concerned. With regards to the discussion above and the discussion that is to follow, the objective is, as already mentioned, to identify remainders of appeals to determination and then in a second instance to portray concepts and figures of reasoning in Östman (1995) that highlight the contingency involved in the relationship between education and society.

tive autonomy of the state, where society in contrast to the state, is characterised by class divisions.

If education, as an ideological state apparatus, is only relatively autonomous and not fully autonomous from the social as a whole, which is divided into classes based on labour and modes of production, would this division not surface as incompatible class-interests in education and as antagonism among perspectives on citizenship and society? Based on Östman's assurance that besides social integration students also learn to participate in political life, we might ask ourselves: To what extent is political life possible in the face of necessary cooperation? Would the necessity of cooperation eliminate the political moment, as a moment of diversity of perspectives and purposes, in order to denote a unified *telos* and denote the resulting "citizen" in its singularity as an *eidos*?

We argue that this possibility of the eradication of the political hinges on the underlying ontological claims that are to substantiate how power and the political are to be understood. The possibility of the eradication of the political thereby hinges on implicit ontological intervention that provides a conception of "citizenship" as a full positivity and through his provision eradicates the variation among alternative conceptions of this "citizen". The question that we see to emerge in our engagement with this figure of reasoning in Östman is: Can this fully constituted citizen be possible, or is it undermined by the overdetermination of "citizen" and "citizenship"?

To return to the potential traces of a pre-dynamic curriculum analysis, we could ask ourselves: To what extent can the state, as relating to "levels", maintain a privileged position with regards to the conception of the exercise of power through the curriculum?

We would like to suggest that the explanatory function of the state, as was appealed to in Englund (1986), to some extent haunts Östman's (1995) dynamical perspective on the curriculum, as such an appeal to a dynamical perspective by Östman is interpreted to be at play in his reference to Englund's conception of "the potential for change", as referred to in the quote below, that results out of the influence of different interest groups on the forming of education.<sup>42</sup>

Further, Englund holds, that the introduction of political democracy leads to that education was re-equipped with a potential for change; different interest groups attained the capacity to influence the forming of education. If a shift

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<sup>42</sup> The haunting aspect in this sentence and the remarks on the ghost below are here and in other parts of the dissertation referring to a terminology used by Derrida. As is specified in greater detail in Section 3 and our remarks on temporality, Derrida addresses in his remarks on spectrality the issue of presence at a point in time. The remarks on the haunting aspects of Englund are to highlight that the reference to "state" produces a trace and, in our understanding, the trace blurs the line between what is present and what is non-present in the figure of reasoning that is discussed (*cf.* Derrida, 1993, p. 90).

in power between the state-incorporated forces takes place, this shift that will lead to those conceptions of what right citizenship education should consist of will also change. It is necessary to also take the integrative functions into account, even if such changes can take place. It is the common interest of those involved [*parterna*] to keep society unified through presenting [*föra ut*] an integrated ideology to the coming [*uppväxande*] generation. Differences can be found in groups' particular perceptions of what should constitute the unifying ideology. While these differences might exist, those who are involved [*ingående parterna*] are also interested in coming to a shared agreement—to create a political compromise—due to the shared objective of keeping society unified. (Östman, 1995, p. 38, author's translation)

The ghost of the Marxist theoretical construct of “level” in the notion of state and “integrative function” in the quote above can be seen to haunt Östman (1995) with regards to the earlier discussion entailing problematic conception of “limits of change” or “limited dynamism”.

What we are trying to get at is that the possibility of change is in the quote above limited to the level of “state” and as a result we might assume that in the conception of state in Östman the space of “society” lacks the potential of self-movement.<sup>43</sup> It is in relation to this conception of state that figures of reasoning that we identified as characteristic for pre-dynamic curriculum theory can be seen to re-emerge in the form of traces to, for example, Kallós and Lundgren's (1979) focus on “higher levels” that as centres frame “lower levels”. It might be commented that in such appeals to state as a higher level, the next generation of dynamic curriculum theory, at least in the conceptual persona of Östman emerging in relation to this figure of reasoning, remained faithful to earlier traditions within Swedish curriculum theory with its concern with education reform through state intervention.

### **The introduction of the decision**

However, it is in the context of such an appeal to level that Östman can be seen to indirectly counter this shared affinity with higher levels' determinative effects on lower levels with his conception of how educational organisation at “lower levels”, that is say at the classroom level, is characterised by *decisions*, for example, of the teacher.

Every instance of teaching [*undervisningstillfälle*] is *preceded by decisions* [*val*]: decisions on content and method of instruction. These decisions always include specific values, criteria etc.—an ideology. The decision of content implies that particular things will be said while other things are to be exclud-

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<sup>43</sup> We should point out that his lack of self-movement of society and the impossibility of societal change outside of the level of state in Östman is relative to this figure of reasoning. However, as we will argue below, there is also a different Östman emerging in Östman (1995) as that Östman is interpreted to put forward an alternative perspective on the possibility of change and societal movement in the conception of decision and the latching of meaning.

ed. If the same decision is made by different teachers, educational decision-makers [*politiker*], etc., or put differently, if many teachers, educational decision-makers, etc. represent a tradition during a specified time the exchange of ideas in the classroom can be seen to be governed by a rule [*regelstyrd*]. A way to conceptualise this relation is to say that a discourse has emerged or been reproduced; the term discourse means simply a rule governed [*regelstyrd*] exchange of ideas. (Östman, 1995, p. 27f, author's translation, author's emphasis)

Östman highlights in the quote above the relationship between decision and the governing hand of a rule. To be precise, Östman uses the formulation of *val* in Swedish, which has the connotations of both “choice” and “decision”. The translation of decision that is used by us in the quote above is intended to highlight the particular moment involved in the face of various possible choices that can be pursued—that moment where a decision has to be made—and where this moment is interpreted by us to problematise the conception of an integrated ideology that is to be presented to students by the teacher.

The possibility of decision is, at the theoretical level, interpreted to highlight that there cannot be something as a dominant ideology, at least in the notion where “dominant” is to suggest an external imposition on the subject's decision and action. Such an imposition of an external will is interpreted to be incompatible with decision. It is in relation to this conception of decision that a different Östman (1995) is interpreted to emerge, one that highlights the contingency of the act of constitution of society.

In line with the reasoning of this Östman that we derive from the conception of decision in Östman (1995), we argue a true decision cannot be *a priori* determined, but requires of the subject a decision of how to proceed. What we refer to by *true* decision is the contingency that is involved in the act of making a decision, where the act of deciding cannot be reduced to a decision that is determined *a priori* by a rationality, but the true moment of decision entails, according to our understanding of decision, an impasse where the act of decision has to overcome that impasse.<sup>44</sup> A true decision is, thus, made against a horizon of *equally possible choices* or ways to proceed.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The adjective of “true” is used in order to differentiate this conception of decision from other conceptions that reduce the act of decision to a structural necessity, where the decision is understood to be in the last instance determined by a particular *a priori* rationality. An explication of this relation between decision and preceding rationality according to which this decision is made is provided further below on this page with regards to the temporal paradox in rule following that is addressed by Wittgenstein.

<sup>45</sup> While we might argue that Östman does not theoretically explore the consequences of his notion of decision, we argue that it shares a number of features that are compatible with our notion of decision, as it will be put forward in the sub-section on the subject and decision in the Section 2.

The central contribution of Östman to the development of the next generation of curriculum theory is according to us with regards to this conception of the relation between education, state as level and society interpreted to be the introduction of a rupturing of the distinction between levels and the possibility to impose frames that regulate the practices at lower levels. With regards to this possibility of imposition of frames, we interpret Östman's rupturing gesture to emerge out of his appeal to the *primacy of the decision*.<sup>46</sup>

The primacy of decision is understood as to denote the *contingency of practice*—we might speak of an essential play—where the decision denotes the moment that cannot be reduced or related back to a horizon of possibility that would dictate how to proceed. *The primacy of decision can be seen to break with the appeal to determination and at the same time with any necessity of action (including the necessity of cooperation) as this conception of the primacy of decision can be seen to draw on a figure of reasoning that builds upon a logic of contingency and hence is antithetical to a figure of reasoning that builds upon a logic of necessity.*

Yet, we argue that the Östman that highlights the primacy of decision is to some extent incompatible with the Östman that is concerned with the identification of traditions. We argue that this incompatibility can be seen to relate to the issue of contingency of decision as the founding instance of tradition. To make this claim, we need to return to a central passage in the quote above. Östman (1995, p. 27f, author's translation, author's emphasis) states: "Only once the same decision is made by different [persons], or put differently if many [persons] represent a tradition *during a specified time, can the exchange of ideas in the classroom be seen to be governed by a rule [regelstyrtd]*".

What seems to emerge in Östman's claim is a temporal paradox, since the rule can be established only *a posteriori*, that is to say, after the decision has been actually made in the form of a particular presentation or action. However, Östman uses the term "represent", where the prefix of "re-" suggests the presentation of something that already existed. We argue that what is at stake in this temporal paradox is the relation between the decision by the subject and a seeming regularity or rationality of the action of a subject acting upon a decision made.

This seeming temporal paradox in Östman's formulation can also be seen to be addressed by Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 1953, §200) in his remarks on following a rule, who states that there exists a paradox in such a *posteriori* identification of the rule since,

[...] no course of action could be determined by a rule, because any course of action can be made out to accord with the rule [*in Übereinstimmung zu*

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<sup>46</sup> This primacy is assumed by us to emerge out of the comment that "every instance of teaching is *preceded* by decisions" (Östman, 1995, p. 27, author's translation, author's emphasis).

*bringen*]. The answer was: if an action can be made out to accord [*in Übereinstimmung zu bringen*] to the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord, nor conflict here.

The original German formulation in the quotation above is inserted in order to highlight that “can be made out to accord” [*in Übereinstimmung zu bringen*] denotes in German a practice of making accord that has not yet been carried out and at the same time is entailing a promise that it will be done. This temporal connotation of deferral and promise is interpreted to be also at play in Wittgenstein’s (1953, §201) comment on the grasping of a rule as a practice of interpretation [*Deutung*].

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after [*nach*] another; as if each one contended us at least for a moment [*Augenblick*], until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases [*von Fall zu Fall*]. Hence, there is an inclination to say; any action according to the rule [*nach der Regel*] is an interpretation. But we ought to restrict the term “interpretation” to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another [*einen Ausdruck der Regel durch einen anderen ersetzen*].

What Wittgenstein’s explication of interpretation is interpreted by us to suggest is that action according to a rule [*nach der Regel*] is not the actualisation of a rule that existed *a priori*. Instead, the practice of “making out in order to accord” [*in Übereinstimmung bringen*] is *a posteriori* [*nach*] and in relation to a different case [*Fall*] thereby adding *a posteriori* something in order to substitute [*ersetzen*]. Hence, Wittgenstein’s remarks are interpreted to highlight a temporal afterwardsness of the act of identification of a rule seemingly at work, as well as a difference between that which is compared in that act of identification of a rule.

To return to our exploration of Östman’s temporal paradox, we might reconsider his (1995, p. 27, author’s translation) conception of discourse, which he describes in the following way: “A way to conceptualise this relation is to say that a discourse has emerged or been reproduced; the term ‘discourse’ means simply a rule governed [*regelstyrd*] exchange of ideas”. We might in the context of Wittgenstein’s rule paradox erase the “or” between the emergence and reproduction of a discourse in Östman’s conception of discourse, since we might say that discourse as traditions “can be made out” solely *a posteriori* and this “making out”, as a bringing into accord, entails a moment of substitution, where the particularity or differences of actual cases [*Fall zu Fall*] is subdued to the attempt to make them, that is to say, both cases and moments accord [*in Übereinstimmung bringen*]. However, we might deem this need to “make them accord” to emerge out of, or on

the basis of the primacy of decision, since the way that the action will turn out cannot be seen to be *a priori* determined by a rule, but can only *a posteriori* be interpreted to be in accordance with a rule.

To return to our observation that Östman uses the term “represent” to refer to traditions based on decisions, we put forward that Östman does not explore theoretically the *difference* of cases that are made out to concur, nor the afterwardsness of the apparent rule that can be seen to be enacted based on the *primary contingent act of decision*. While Östman does not explore the theoretical implication of the need for the act of *decision*, he can be seen to rather focus on the conditions of possibility for the way of action, that is to say, the *choices* that were decided upon and carried out than the contingency involved in the act of decision as the quote below highlights.

Rules are always intimately associated with some activity (practice). Educational practices are a *result of choices [val]* and those ‘cannot be made without reference to a value, set of values, criteria(on), or interests. Values and interests are sedimented, to use a metaphor from archaeology, in the constitutive rules of practice’ (Cherryholmes 1988, p. 4). (Östman, 1995, p. 65, partial translation, author’s emphasis)

The argument that shall be made is that the focus on “choices” in the quote above addresses the issue of *val* [decision/choice] as that which is decided upon, rather than a focus on the condition of the need for decision, leads Östman to a focus of “continuity” which he, as earlier pointed out, conceives in terms of partial *reproduction*.<sup>47</sup>

Hence, it interpreted by us that in Östman (1995) a second Östman can be discerned who privileges a focus on the conditions of necessity of choice as this necessity relates to “power relations”, while the Östman who highlights the contingency of the act of decision can be seen as incompatible with this perspective that highlights necessity.<sup>48</sup>

We make this claim as we argue that in order for Östman to appeal to power as defined by a define set of relations among individuals that determine asymmetries among social actors, as the quote below suggests, the contingency of act decision needs to be limited. This theoretical limiting of the contingency involved is interpreted to be a logical necessity of a focus on power, as the contingency of the act as enacted by the subject can be seen to stand in contrast to the claim that the act of decision needs to be understood

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<sup>47</sup> We might comment here that this focus on continuity in terms of reproduction can be seen to be of particular concern to the Östman that is interested in issues of power. Meanwhile, the Östman that is concerned with contingency can be seen to limit this notion of reproduction through the conception of “offering of meaning”, where, instead of seeing power to determine decision, continuity is seen him as to be based on the primacy of student’s decision to accept or reject the offered meaning in education (*cf.* Östman, 1995, p. 29)

<sup>48</sup> This is not to say that this other Östman, who highlights contingency, does not address the issue of decision with regards to this empirical analysis.

in the context of the influence of power (external) that is *a priori* to the decision that is to be taken by the subject (internal).

In which way are then traditions, social practices, maintained, if there is no absolute certain ground to stand upon? [...] One answer is, that [teachers] have *internalized* and accepted those perspectives that characterize the selective tradition. A complicated explanation to why traditions are maintained is that social practices are supported by *power* [*understödda av makt*]. Cherryholmes explains the term to [...]”... refer to relations among individuals or groups based on social, political, and material *asymmetries* by which people are indulged and rewarded and others negatively sanctioned and deprived. These asymmetries are based in differences in *possessions* or *characteristics*, and power is constituted by relationship among those differences“ (1988, p. 5). (Östman, 1995, p. 65, partial translation, original emphasis )

In the context of our earlier discussion, it might become obvious that it is Östman’s less complicated explanation that we might prefer, since we might ask Östman or Cherryholmes as an assemblage of conceptual personae: To what extent it is possible to conceive stable relationships as asymmetries, if we have withdrawn the reference to an absolute stable ground?

In the absence of such a ground, it is put forward, we would need to provide substitute centres in their *plurality* as they are constituted by and appealed to in contingent practices. If we take this abandonment of conceptual grounding in a transcendental centre as a premise, we might ask Cherryholmes: How do we conceive the referent point for appeals to differences in possessions or characteristics?

If we abandon an appeal to a transcendental centre as point of reference the possibility emerges that “relationships of power” might emerge constitutively different, as we have to substitute the transcendental reference point with a number of referential centres as they would be characteristic for different discourses and the role of antagonism that puts discourses into an incommensurable relation to another.

We argue that the appeal to power as being defined by a fixed and equivalent set of relations needs to appeal to a determined reference point that is external and which would put these relations into a determinate position to another. In the potential reference to such a point, we argue that Östman who appeals to power can be seen to draw on figures of reasoning that we problematised with regards to Englund and frame-factor theory.

### **Between appeals to decision and power**

We would like to suggest that Östman’s appeal to power, erases the theoretical gains of the primacy of decision, since power can be seen to enter through the back door the contingent moment of decision and to reduce it to a necessary choice.

To summarise, we can establish that power implicates *two effects with regards to choice* [val] of content: depending on the existing power-relations, certain information regarding the world [omvärlden] *is going to be chosen*, while other is excluded, and solely certain strategies for reasoning about one self in relation other people are chosen while others are excluded. *Both effects* can have consequences for how students *will* perceive themselves, both, in relation to the physical and the social world. (Östman, 1995, p. 64, author's translation, author's emphasis)

Power, can, based on the quote above that conceives of power *a priori* to action on which it has “effects”, be seen as action in accordance to a rule. According to this perspective of power, the choice of action can be seen to be determined *a priori* by the rule, that is to say to determine what “is going to be chose” and what is “excluded”.

In the context of this conception of power we would like to ask Östman as a conceptual persona: How can the choice carried out have entailed a true decision, if power relations can be seen to sublimate the illusion of that moment of decision and to have determined the “choice” and transformed it into a rule following?

The other Östman that we have characterised in the conception of decision can be interpreted to problematise this appeal to the formulation of “effects of power”, where *a priori power* is seen to have *a posteriori effects* on decisions. The Östman of the concept of decision is by us seen to highlight contingent decision as a primary, while the Östman of the concept of power can be seen to reduce the decision to a secondary status in relation to power that determines what gets chosen. With regards to the Östman that appeals to power, we would like to comment that the language of “effects” and “power”, similar to our discussion of Englund's use of frame, entails a teleological language that is incompatible with the contingency that is involved in the others Östman's appeal to decision.

Thus, the argument that we would like to make is that what emerges in this appeal to “power effects” is a teleological language that is incommensurable with a notion of true decision, that is to say the need for a decision in the encounter of a diversity of equally possible ways to proceed, where the decision taken cannot have been *a priori* determined as it would not be a decision.

We argue, what is at stake in the theoretical need for, or absence of, true decision is the *closure of the structure*, where the subject as in earlier Foucault is fully absorbed or determined by the structure, and where it becomes reduced to an enunciative function of the structure. Such a fully closed or sutured structure erases the theoretical need for enunciation and decision, since meaning would predetermine the action of the enunciative subject, and erases the theoretical possibility of “play” and contingency in decision in meaning making.

## The latching of meaning

It is put forward that our preferred Östman, that is, the Östman of the decision, provides an entry point for conceiving the theoretical possibility of, both, relative stability and essential play in his conception of “latching of meaning” that we interpret to supplement his notion of the “primacy of decision”.

One has in other words to teach a person the scientific use of language in which the word is placed and which gives it its scientific significance [*innebörd*]; a latching of meaning [*läsning av mening*] is needed. The latching is brought about through the rules that govern and constitute the use of language, and these rules help to create a discourse. Cherryholmes (1998) formulates the relationship in the following way: “Discourses are not composed by random choosing words and statements. Instead, rules constitute and regulate language use (Wittgenstein, 1953). ... Such rules help shape a discursive practice that produces a specific discourse” (Cherryholmes 1988, p. 3). It is important to note that this *latching is grounded in choices* [*val*], which in turn are governed by values, interests etc. (Östman, 1995, p. 71, partial translation, author’s emphasis)

We interpret Östman’s clarification in the last sentence of the quote to be central to the conception of the play and dynamism we can see him to have introduced to the next generation of curriculum theory through the conception of decision.

Östman highlights in the quote above that the attempt at stabilisation or latching, as the erasure of variation in possible other meanings, is *grounded in decision*. With regards to this latching as stabilisation, we would like to emphasise the distinction between *the resulting choice*, as the course of action that is decided upon and *the moment of decision*, which cannot be governed by something determining it *a priori*, but where that moment of decision is the name for the total absence of governance, determination, etc.

We argue that it is this moment of decision that *calls for the emergence of the subject due to the absence of a ground that dictates how to proceed*. The moment of the decision is in this understanding a moment at which the limits of meaning as a form of continuity in action emerges. We might say that the moment of the need for decision is the limit of power in the sense that Östman is interpreted to have conceived through appeals to Cherryholmes.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> In our understanding of decision and the subject, we claim the opposite. Decision by the subject is in our understanding synonymous with power. Based on the discussion of the decision that is to follow in the next section, we might argue that for both us and the Östman of the concept of decision, decision is powerful, as it is constitutive for the social and a primary. We might argue that for the Östman interested in power, the decision is secondary to a primary structural power, while for us the subject is associated with power due to a failure of the structure to determine it.

This moment of decision and the urgency with which it is called for has in our understanding to do with the play within the structure. We suggest that this play in the structure has to do with the absence of an ultimate ground that would determine how to proceed.

This problematic duality of groundedness and the co-existence of play is also commented on by Östman who, in the quote below, addresses the danger of relativism in face of play and the absence of such an ultimate ground.

This play can be conceived in a simplified fashion as humans being forced to take sides [*ta ställning*], as they are to live in a world where either everything is possibly both true/untrue or they are to live in a world where there are true narratives to be sided with, both with regards to the self and one's actions. This choice is a very much limited choice [*val*] and builds upon the formula created by Descartes: 'Either there is a support for our existence, a stable ground for our knowledge, or so can we not evade the forces of the dark that surround us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos' (Bernstein 1991, p. 39). (Östman, 1995, p. 77, author's translation)

The consequence of a by Östman proclaimed "post-structuralist" perspective can according to him not be the return to an appeal to a stability or claim to a ground, but to take the "play" seriously without falling into a theoretical chaos where everything is equally true and where nihilism threatens all epistemological and moral claims.

However, what we might want to add is that the necessity or possibility to take sides, the moment of decision, is already a consequence of how we cannot "purify" our world of the "dark that surrounds us". We might, with reference to the theoretical constitution in the next sections, acknowledge that the by Descartes described madness enters the decision/choice and thereby our world.

Hence, we argue that the Östman concerned with decision can be seen to have introduced this madness into the attempt to give meaning to the world through his conception of the latching of meaning. As the decision is the point of departure and this decision is not determined *a priori*, we might argue that for this Östman the premise for a somewhat stable ground is a certain madness. The act of latching of meaning is an act of madness as it is based on a decision on what stability the world is to be associated with. Hence, this act of latching entails a contingency and exclusion of other possible choices that can be seen problematise the notion of society as a whole, as is appealed to by Östman (1995).

### **Pragmatism and the fetish of society**

The question is then, how to conceptualise this madness and the absence of an ultimate stable ground. The argument that shall be made is that Östman as a representative for the next generation of Swedish curriculum theory can be

seen to evade this need for theoretical conceptualisation of the role or place of madness, through an appeal to a “pragmatist perspective”.

This either/or is according to pragmatists enticing/separating [*fördelande*] and creates only mistrust to our possibilities and bereaves humans [*människan*] of the responsibility to judge different practices applicability [*användbarhet*] without re-invoking [*återberopa*] transcendental [*övervärldsliga*] and a-historical foundations. The pragmatist strategy is to try to give up [*från gå*] this play [*spelrum*] by consequently changing the direction of dialogue [*samtalsriktning*]: To instead ask us what we want to achieve, *what society we want and therefore judge different narratives and theories consequences and adequateness*. (Östman, 1995, p. 77, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

This “change of direction in dialogue” that Östman describes as the pragmatist strategy in the quote above and the evasion of the question of play, or madness, with regards to the theoretical ontological constitution of play that is calling for a decision, is seen by us to have consequences for the constitutive basis for the topic that is to be pursued by pragmatist curriculum theory, that is, the topic of societal constitution.

That is to say, in the context of the possibility of realising the society of our dreams as pragmatists can be seen to focus upon according to the quote above, we might ask ourselves: To what extent does the theoretical possibility of a true decision allow for that which pragmatists want to constitute, that is to say, society?

It is with this intended change of direction of dialogue that we might see the “pragmatist strategy” as a form of fetishism, where we might argue with Freud that society “should normally have been given up, but the fetish is precisely designed to preserve it from distinction” (Freud, 1961, p. 152). The fetish of the pragmatist strategy in curriculum theory is interpreted by us to be “society”.

The argument that society should have given up is based on two prying gestures that Swedish curriculum theory is interpreted by us to have made in the analysis so far, the turn of abandoning an absolute ground or the abandonment to an appeal to structural determination, and the introduction of the primacy of decision. If society as a whole and singularly is not determined by an essential glue or determinate singular structure that keeps individuals in a fixed relation to another, that is to say not an *a priori*, but a result out of action, we argue that the primacy of the decision, as a moment of true decision, is also the moment when society as something that can be produced becomes impossible.

This impossibility is interpreted to result out of the relationship between decision and choice made, where the choice made will put the subject into an alternative stance, that is to say constitute it differently in relation, to the excluded possibilities of equally valid choices. The path decided upon puts

the choice into a privileged value position, privileged in that way that the subject judges or values a particular choice to be “better” or more preferable than another, where the action of choice positions the subject. As a result of this decision the subject stands in exclusive relation to those choices that could have been pursued. To put it differently, the decision made, for example, regarding how society should be constituted, will produce a notion of society that radically differs from alternatives that have been excluded and that are actually pursued by others. To return to the quote from Östman (1995, p. 77, author’s translation) above that calls for us to take sides regarding “what society we want and therefore judge different narratives and theories consequences and adequateness”, we argue that the resulting notion of society, as well as the “we” that is addressed in the quote, will be relative to the particular choice decided upon and will be exclusive of a plurality of other “we”. However, we argue that the Östman emerging in his appeal to pragmatism can be seen to reduce that plurality to a singular notion of society as this singularity is interpreted articulate in the quote below.

It is in the simultaneous appeal to a diversity of choices and the singularity of society that the pragmatist strategy, as it is portrayed by Östman in the quote above, is interpreted by us impose an impossible fetish. To clarify this declarative statement, Östman states that the consequence of this (neo)pragmatist perspective is that the responsibility for society’s continuity, which is interpreted to entail a notion of unity, is imposed on the subject.

For curriculum theory research there are three consequences that can be concluded out of the neopragmatic perspective. The first consequence is a shift of basis for valuation of research to the existing practices of society and thereby to evade the effects of the either/or-trap; the trap that leads to responsibility is withheld from humans to judge for themselves the suitability of a practice and thereby also their responsibility for the continuity of society’s forming [*utforming*]. By ordaining normativity—objectives that are agreed upon and desirable within society—it shall constitute the basis for judging research, which entails that curriculum theoretical research should address the normative dimension of education [*undervisning*], that is to say, education’s fostering [*fostrande*] character. It is impossible to shift the basis for evaluation to societal consensus/agreement [*överenskommelser*], unless research addresses such aspects that relate exactly to the societal [*samhälleliga*]; it has to exist within a dimension of comparability between results of research and the basis for judgement. (Östman, 1995, p. 78, author’s translation)

The normative imperative mentioned in the quote above is interpreted by us to stand in a paradox relationship to the imperative of making the decision of what is desirable.

The imperative to relate back to the decision on what is desirable to society is understood to be impossible, since this society would be not the unified comparative reference point in relation to which relations within the societal

could be compared, but society would consist of a multitude of substitute reference points and the comparability would not take place against a basis for judgment, which would be in relation to a particular and exclusionary reference point of society. Society is, so to speak, overdetermined.<sup>50</sup> What is agreed upon and what is desirable is thus relative to the particular decision that has to be taken and is not determined by a singular society. As this normative aspect is relative to the particular vision for society, the ordained normativity can be seen to become tautological in the sense that what is ordained is taken as a basis for valuation.<sup>51</sup>

Further, we suggest in the context of our earlier discussion of England (1986) that the notion of the societal in the quote above would leave space for interpretation. This possibility of interpretation, as relating to the issue of symbolic overdetermination of the societal, renders the singularity of the reference point of comparability impossible.

The introduction of the primacy of the decision by Östman, with its plurality of choices that is to be decided upon, is as a result interpreted by us to lead to that the appeal to society, as a name for a singularity, is something that should have given up. A focus on the contingent and exclusive aspect of decision as the other Östman is interpreted by us to have put forward should acknowledge a plurality as part of departure where the diversity of choices that can be decided upon are not reducible to a singular.

It is this sense that we speak of a fetish of society, as the appeal to society in the quote above can be seen to reinstall a singular as point of departure even though the stable ground is withheld and the other Östman can be seen to acknowledge a contingency of any stability and diversity.

Further, we argue that it is this fetish of society, as related to the singularity of consensus or “public good”, that installs an impossible imperative for education. This fetish of society is interpreted to appeal to figures of reasoning in pre-dynamic in dynamic curriculum theory, as we will show in our discussion of Ljunggren (1996) that it is the conception of society as “democratic society” that is interpreted by us to *sublate* the dynamic variety and incommensurability of play and the resulting need for decision.

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<sup>50</sup> This overdetermination is also valid for the subject. As we have abandoned the reference to a stable ground, or have abandoned appeals to structural determination, the identity of the social actor is no longer determined. We can recall how in Gramsci the intellectual remains determined in terms of class by the structure. As a result of the abandonment of an appeal to a determining instance, the subject is no longer determined but will also be overdetermined in relation to a diversity of decisions that it makes. The exclusivity of decision problematises the continuity that Östman appeals to, as well as the possibility to compare the results of research in relation to society as a singular.

<sup>51</sup> Further, the comparability can then only be guaranteed when that which is compared is relative to that which is ordained.

## Consequences of pragmatism

What the pragmatist normativity, which is to realise that which is agreed upon and desirable, according to our understanding accompanies or prefigures is the acceptance or primacy of that which is agreed upon and desirable. We argue this pragmatist notion of society, as an expression of a societal singular, imposes the impossible imperative of agreement on the subject as part of its task to constitute society. We argue that this imperative is impossible due to the role of antagonism in the social. Hence, there exists in this ordained normativity, both a pragmatic, as well as a theoretical need for the sublation of plurality, antagonism and play in order to realise the pragmatist imperative since, as Östman highlights, a need for comparability is required between results of inquiry and to function as a basis for judgment in the ordained normativity. What we would like to add is that this comparability is not constituted in relation to a closed system or defined set of relations of the societal, that is to say, society, but will be in relation to various reference points or centres that provide different values as imperatives for societal constitution.<sup>52</sup>

It is in relation to the dynamic perspective on education, curriculum and the societal, as it emerges for us out of a conflict perspective, as well as the acknowledgement of the contingent act of decision, that we might challenge the possibility of comparability. Further, we would like to question to what extent the imposed normativity can be “societal” in its relevance, where this societal denotes a comprehensive inclusiveness. Earlier we asked Östman, as a representative of a critical neo-pragmatic approach, in relation to his conception of power: To what extent it is possible to conceive of stable relationships of asymmetries if we have withdrawn the reference to an absolute stable ground? In the context of the discussion above, we might add another question: To what extent, or to what degree, is it possible to claim societal normativity, or how is it possible to claim something as societally desirable if we have withdrawn the reference to an absolute stable ground?

Both questions are understood to relate to the possibility of references to society as a singular referential point of departure. This possibility, we argue, becomes problematic once we take temporality, here understood as to relate to difference and dynamism, as well as conflict, into account not as something that is built upon a singular, but as a primary that renders the arrival at a singular impossible.

What we would like to suggest is that, while being compatible with a conception of diachronic dynamism, a pragmatist approach, as has been pre-

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<sup>52</sup> Such a fixed notion of set of relations is interpreted to appeal to Östman in his notion of power.

sented within the new generation of Swedish curriculum theory, is not compatible with a conflict perspective that centres on synchronic antagonisms.<sup>53</sup>

It is put forward that the possibility of society in pragmatist figures of reasoning hinges on the possibility of ordained normativity, a normativity that, as we interpret the quote below to suggest, is not confined to a relative normativity, but a societal normativity, as Östman points out.

The neopragmatic stance entails that the basis for judgement [*bedömningsgrunden*] for social action, *e.g.*, science and education, is shifted to the *existing society*. The ground for citizenship-based curriculum theory is democracy as a mode of governance [*styrelseform*], which infers that the moral and political relation is put into focus. We are living in a democracy where a number of such forms of relations are of importance and are currently debated: The relation between masculinity and femininity, between individual and society, between different groups (*e.g.* classes), between different social groups' perspective on individual-nature, individual-technology, etc. Through the focusing on such relations can the citizenship-based curriculum theory create knowledge [*kunskaper*] about the political and moral character of education. The citizenship-based curriculum theory has therefore the ambition to participate in and create knowledge about the role of education in the societal community that we call democracy. (Östman, 1995, p. 176, author's translation, author's emphasis)

It is in the context of this “neo-pragmatic stance” that the argument is made that, while normativity is related to a non-final notion of society, in a neo-pragmatic stance an appeal is made to a *comprehensive normativity* that is to be maintained, as the quote utilises a notion of “we” that is not relative to the particular perspectives that are debated, but a comprehensive “we” as referring to those living in a society characterised by democracy.

Nevertheless, what the next generation of curriculum theory is seen by us to problematise and partially overcome are the traces of structuralism and determinism within Swedish curriculum theory. This attempted erasure of structuralist traces can be seen in Östman (1995) to consist of the attempt to erase privileged planes in relation to which objectivity and theories of correspondence can be maintained.

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<sup>53</sup> This claim is made in the context of certain figures of reasoning in Dewey, where Dewey's notion of communication is seen as being essentially focused on a “concerted consensus of action” (Dewey, 1928, p. 183f) and Dewey's notion of history that we interpret as a history that brings the present into synchrony and that ties together past and future (*cf.* Dewey, 1928, p. 100 and 352). Such a Deweyan notion of communication and history, and as we argue a pragmatist perspective as it is argued for by Östman, can be seen to stand in an antithetical relationship to a focus on conflict, momentary dissensus, synchronic plurality and a multi-directionality of movement as caused by the play and incomprehensibility of actions of a diverse social.

This abandonment of a privileged plane is seen to raise the issue of legitimacy of critique and the danger of relativism, where the normativity that is to provide knowledge on how to proceed is reintroduced by relating it not to a-temporal and incontestable points of references, but instead by appealing to social context and consensus as providing the moral and political beacons for what is to be aspired to.

Yet, we might say this normativity *reintroduces a claim of synchronic unity of the social*, which we argue is incompatible with a focus on conflict, contingency and Östman's introduced notion of decision. Further, this shift in the epistemological appeals in Swedish curriculum theory is interpreted to stand in relation to shifts in the social imaginary, where the concept of society as *folkhemmet*, with its traces of essentialism, came to be replaced by the imaginary of Swedish society as *democracy*, which Östman is appealing to in his vision for citizenship-based curriculum theory.

It is with regards to the theoretical constitution of this social imaginary that the new generation of Swedish curriculum theory is centrally appealing to figures of reasoning that are interpreted by us to maintain a perspective that departs from a notion of underlying society as primary determining instance.

### Figures of reasoning in Ljunggren (1996)

Within our characterised next generation of Swedish curriculum theory, Ljunggren (1996) is seen by us to have provided a thorough exploration of the pragmatist conception of the relation between society and education, that is to say, the societal in relation to the citizenship-based curriculum, by engaging in a theoretical conception of the “public sphere” and “public dialogue” [*offentliga samtalet*]. Ljunggren's (1996, p. 19) theoretical foci of interest are to develop a notion of public that can be related to democracy and citizenship and to characterise a curriculum theoretical terminology and a didactical attitude towards teaching as a public dialogue.

Ljunggren's major contribution in the context of our focus on the relationship between education and society is deemed by us to be his abandonment of a conceptual separation of institutional education levels, associated with the state, and configurations within broader societal formations outside the sphere of the state. With regards to this abandonment of the notion of level, Ljunggren (1996) is interpreted to have initiated a flattening of the perspective on the relation between education and society; a perspective that we subscribe to in our theoretical constitution of this dissertation. It is in this flattening that Ljunggren can be seen to break with the conception of “relative autonomy” and instead explores how “the public” is a plane or field where broader institutional and societal arrangements intertwine in the context of media and education.

This conception of “the public” as a sphere of leverage and dynamic formation is in Ljunggren’s (1996) argumentation theoretically aligned to figures of reasoning in the conception of citizenship education and democracy, as shared in pragmatist inspired approaches within Swedish curriculum theory (Säfström, 1994; Östman, 1995) and specifically Englund (1986, 1990). In this conception, Ljunggren (1996) draws on different theoretical influences that highlight the political and moral dimensions in processes of social negotiation and formation, with concrete references to Arendt, Dewey, Habermas and Mouffe.

In our analysis of Ljunggren’s (1996) conception of the relationship between education and society, we will on the one hand highlight how Ljunggren is interpreted by us to open up an understanding of society as characterised by plurality through his conception of “the public sphere” and on the other hand we will problematise traces to notions of society in Dewey that can be seen to attempt to sublimate the synchronic diversity that is characteristic to this public sphere.

The public sphere is conceived by Ljunggren (1996, p. 15) as a public dialogue [*offentliga samtalen*] and as a sphere of social action [*social handlingsfär*], where the social is primarily understood in political and moral terms. The concrete public sphere that Ljunggren turns towards is Swedish society, which he conceives as being primarily characterised by its democratic form of dialogue. As such, the public sphere comes to be associated with a diversity of positions that are characteristic for democracy as a form of dialogue among the different. However, in this conception of society as democratic and deliberative, Ljunggren is seen to draw occasionally on figures of reasoning that can be seen to have traces to a figure of reasoning that sees society as *a priori* and singular.

We shall argue that the conception of Swedish society as democracy in Ljunggren (1996) changes, that is to say, there are potentially different notions of society in Ljunggren, which differ in relation to the figures of reasoning and conceptual personae that are explicitly or implicitly drawn upon in order to illuminate particular aspects of the moral and political dimensions of the public sphere.

In the following, we shall engage the creation of certain tensions in figures of reasoning that we interpret Ljunggren (1996) to articulate. Hence, the objective is to allow us through our engagement with his work to produce entrance points for radicalising the conception of Swedish society as democracy, the role of education, as well as depicting certain limitations in Ljunggren’s engagement with conceptual personae that function as his dialogical counterpart. It is in relation to these entrance points’ radicalisation and limitations that we approach Ljunggren and through an engagement with him aim to provide a background to our theoretical intervention in the next section.

In this context, we will aim to show the implications of certain problematised figures of reasoning in Dewey that we interpret to render opaque the diversity and antagonistic aspects of what Ljunggren labels the public sphere.

### **The pragmatic attitude**

What we will take as an entry point for the exploration of Ljunggren's conception of the relation between education and society is the equation of society with culture in the quote below.

Democracy relates to socialisation. By socialisation I here refer to such processes that contribute to that individuals in a society develop values and patterns of behaviour [*handlingsmönster*] that according to a number of criteria are sufficiently comprehensive and alike in order to be recognised as characteristic [*särdrag*] of that society or the culture that individuals are living in. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 16, author's translation)

We argue that this conception of society as culture breaks with a number of figures of reasoning within the traditions of Swedish curriculum theory, for example, those that we identified earlier in frame-factor theory. What we interpret this conception of society to abandon is the notion of society as determining instance of practice, which instead highlights the performative aspect of society. We claim that this conception of society as culture by Ljunggren shares a number of similarities with the theoretical constitution of the social in the next section, where we might understand society or the social to refer to a "form of life", to use a term coined by Wittgenstein (1953).

However, the argument that we make is that this conception of society, as a form of life, does not necessary entail the comprehensiveness and especially not the cohesion that certain references to Dewey in Ljunggren can be seen to entail.<sup>54</sup> Ljunggren is therefore interpreted to problematise certain aspects in Dewey's conception of society, especially with regards to traces to organicist notions of society and figures of reasoning that appeal to holism. It is through this problematisation of these traces that Ljunggren (1996) is seen by us to try to provide entry points for conceptualising society through his appeals to Dewey's "later" work, as well as other more recent scholars. However, Ljunggren will be depicted by us as partially drawing upon certain figures of reasoning that we, in relation to Östman (1995), have characterised as problematic.

Ljunggren's close relation to Dewey as a central conceptual persona can be seen to emerge in his self-confessed association with a pragmatic attitude:

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<sup>54</sup> For a more detailed argumentation see Section 4 that discusses how agreement and disagreement can be related to a form of life.

[...] which entails [*innebär*] that research is grounded in a critical evaluation [*värdering*] of society's desired and undesired form [*tillstånd*] (cf. Dewey 1916) that thereafter is made to a corrective point of departure for the continued discussion. This entails that the idea [*föreställning*] of 'truth' [*det sanna*] as a point of departure for the study of society is confronted with the idea of 'the good', that is to say that ideas of 'how-it-is' are put in relation to a specific normative 'should'. The point of departure should also be that interpretations of the relation between 'how-it-is', respective 'how-it-should-be', are changed in relation to each other in parallel to [*allteftersom*] the study continues. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 20, author's translation)

The argument that we shall make is that Ljunggren's relation to Dewey as part of his proclaimed pragmatic attitude, in a similar fashion to Östman (1995), can be seen to partially entail figures of reasoning that are interpreted by us to assume and theoretically necessitate the possibility of synchronic unity. This synchronic unity is interpreted by us to result out of a Hegelian notion of reasoning in Dewey that appeals to a notion of synthesis.<sup>55</sup>

An evaluation/valuation [*värdering*] of the contemporary form or formation of society, as appealed to in the quote above, presupposes a form—in its singularity and cohesion—that is to be described and evaluated. In this conception of the pragmatic attitude by Ljunggren, a temporal paradox can be seen to emerge and that we have argued has to do with how synthesis is to be understood to emerge in society. This paradox relates to how Being is conceived in relation to temporality. We shall, in the following, approach this paradox.

Exploring the pragmatic attitude, Ljunggren (1996, p. 20f) states that research as a study of society, as a practice, constitutes a 'bringing to life' of an *a priori* potential that dwells in a past and is through that practice brought into presence in the present.

Argumentation is in this way a perspective on truth which focuses on motivating the specific action that the studying of society represents. It is seen as a part of societal actions, and is therefore seen to be associated with an interest in to connect the own (studying) action with the ongoing society. [...] It is therefore about the bringing into being [*levandegöra*] the emancipating [*frigörande*] potential that lays within the historical experience in order to let

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<sup>55</sup> Some readers might here comment that Dewey can be interpreted to have abandoned his earlier Hegelian influences. However, we will make the argument that Dewey can be interpreted to confess to a remaining influence of Hegel in his personal reflection on his intellectual development in his late reflections in *From Absolutism to Experimentalism*. Here, Dewey expresses that Hegel's thought satisfied Dewey's demand for unification and hence satisfied a strong emotional craving in his theoretical development (Dewey, 1984, p. 153). This aspect of unification as synthesis is interpreted by us to remain a central aspect of Dewey's philosophy, as the recurrent use of the terms "synthesis" and "unification" in the personal reflection are interpreted to highlight.

them fulfil a function in a critical narrating depiction of society [*samhällsbild*]. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 20f, author's translation)

The paradox is interpreted to exist with regards to the possibility of depicting what society is. The paradox in this possibility to depict what society is, in a singular sense of the word, emerges once we consider that there exists a possibility for research to articulate differently what society is. Hence, if we grant this possibility of alternate depiction, society will as a consequence be constituted synchronously differently. This difference would not be a diachronic difference as an alterity that is not a radical new experience of a difference over time, but an alterity that has *already* been inscribed into the historicity of experience, which is ultimately social. Hence, the temporal paradox is interpreted to relate to the singular use of society, as we might ask when this society is?

If that potential alterity has already been inscribed into the form of society, here understood as providing the patterns of behaviour, would society not already have been different to itself and would the “society” in the depiction of “society” only be referring to a particular “society” of a multitude of “societies”? In the context of this plurality, we would need to ask ourselves: How does Ljunggren conceive of “ongoing society” and how can our attempts to connect our actions with it become possible?

We argue here that different Ljunggrens (1996) emerge with regard to the constitution of society. With regards to our discussion of the notion of society in Ljunggren (1996), we might differentiate between two Ljunggrens, one arguing for a singular notion of society and one arguing for a plurality of societies.

With regards to the earlier conceived dynamism emerging out of conflict, we argue in contrast to the Ljunggren who holds a singular notion of society that society will entail a multiplicity and multi-directionality that is resulting out of the conflicts over what society is, where different societies in society will constitute the Being of society differently. As a result, the historical perspective of society will already be different and multiple. Being, for example, that of on-going society, will be constituted in relation to a particular society and exclude others.

It is with regards to the singular use of “on-going society” that Ljunggren can be seen in relation to Östman (1995) to share the depicted fetish of society. To recall, we use the term “fetish” to denote an appeal to that which “should normally have given up, but [where] the fetish is precisely designed to preserve it from distinction” (Freud, 1961, p. 152). In the acknowledgement of plurality of perspectives by Ljunggren, we argue that a singular use of the term “society” should have been given up. However, it is with regards to certain figures of reasoning and certain concepts that Ljunggren can be interpreted to preserve that singular notion of society from distinction. We

argue that one of these concepts is the notion of communication, as Ljunggren is interpreted to derive from Dewey.

### **Communication and the problematic situation**

It is with regards to this notion of singular society that Ljunggren is interpreted by us to turn towards Dewey's notion of communication, which for Dewey is a means and guarantor of cohesion.

Humans [*människan*], according to Dewey (1997), are not primarily an organism and carriers of knowledge, but acting individuals in a specific society. Human experience is not based on the experience of something, but on constant *communication* between individual and his/her environment [(*om*)-*världen*] and that she/he [*hon*] experiences [*genomlever*] the consequences of [his/her] actions. Knowledge is therefore pragmatic in the meaning that it is a link between the different forms of accumulated experiences of the individual, which together create a basis for action and identity. That which normally is called knowledge should from this point of view be labelled as a specific cognitive experience – possibility or even cognitive experience on an intellectual basis. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 22, author's translation, author's emphasis)

What Ljunggren can be seen to be building upon in his explication of Dewey's perspective of knowledge in the quote above, is a notion of communication, as is central to Dewey's metaphysics and the possibility of synthesis.

We argue that this synthetic notion of communication is the result of an absence of antagonism as a form of limit of consensus and agreement in Dewey's conception of communication. This lack of a theory of antagonism in Dewey's theory of communication translates also into a particular notion of society that departs solely from a notion of cooperation and consensus.

Persons do not become a society by living in physical proximity, any more than a man ceases to be socially influenced by being so many feet or miles removed from others. A book or a letter may institute a more intimate association between human beings separated thousands of miles from each other than exists between dwellers under the same roof. Individuals do not even compose a social group because they all work for a common end. The parts of a machine work with a maximum of *cooperativeness for a common result*, but they do not form a community. If, however, they were all cognizant of *the common end and all interested in it* so that they regulated their specific activity in view of it, then they would form a community. But this would involve *communication*. Each would have to know what the other was about and would have to have some way of keeping the other informed as to his own purpose and progress. Consensus demands communication. (Dewey, 1916, p. 9, author's emphasis)

As the quote is interpreted to highlight, communication is understood by Dewey in terms of consensus, where the notion of “common end” referred to translates into a notion of comprehensive common end or social common end due to an absence of a limit of that which is common in communication. It is this notion of singular common end that we interpret to produce a singular notion of society; to be specific, communication as based on cooperation produces in the end “democratic society” as a singular.

Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest; these can be created only by education. But there is a deeper explanation. A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily *a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience*. (Dewey, 1916, p. 91, author’s emphasis)

What becomes unclear in Dewey’s specification that democratic society is “a mode of associated living” is how communication might differ in a non-democratic society. This potential alterity of communication can be seen to be problematic once we take a closer look at Dewey’s remarks on communication.

Such is the essence and import of communication, signs and meaning. Something is literally made common in at least two different centres of behavior. To understand is to anticipate together, it is to make a cross-reference which, when acted upon, brings about a partaking in common, inclusive undertaking. (Dewey, 1928, p. 178f)

We might ask ourselves in the context of the quote above, whether understanding in non-democratic societies would be possible. We suggest that instead of characterising the specific form of communication that is specific for democracy as a mode of living that Dewey grounds his notion of democracy in a specific understanding of communication, a form of communication that allows for the constitution of a comprehensive singular society, that he labels democracy.

We argue that communication has for Dewey a synthesising function, where the potential of a disintegration or collapse of society that would result out of the potential of communicative differences and alternate understandings that are common, yet not equivalent to each other as a form of “cross-reference”, synthesise into a singular point of reference.

It is communication; the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership. *To fail to understand is to fail to come into agreement in action; to misunderstand is to set up action at cross purposes.* [...] Meaning is not indeed a psychic existence; it is primarily a property of behavior, and

secondarily a property of objects. But the behavior of which it is a quality is a distinctive behavior; *cooperative*, in that response to another's act involves contemporaneous response to a thing as entering into the other's behavior, and this upon both sides. (Dewey, 1928, p. 179, author's emphasis)

We interpret the quote above to highlight that, in Dewey's theory of communication, failing of understanding or *misunderstanding* is troublesome for society, a moment that needs to be overcome. In the context of this troublesome moment of misunderstanding, we can be seen arrive at a problematic notion of communication in Dewey that shares certain features of the notion of anomie in Durkheim.

What we argue is that the conception of potential antagonistic positions as *misunderstanding* pushes potential antagonism to the limit of Dewey's theory of communication and, as a result, also the limit of his understanding of society, which as we have argued above hinges on his notion of communication. We argue that for Dewey misunderstanding can only be a temporary problematic aspect of communication that has to be overcome, yet, where misunderstanding cannot be explained, as it is counter to understanding because it is synonymous with an absence of cross-reference and disintegration of common sense.

Similar to Durkheim's notion of society, consensus in communication is for Dewey both a necessary *a priori* and a necessary *a posteriori*. It is an *a priori* in the above-delineated sense of a premise for understanding and an urgent *a posteriori* in the sense of a fulfillment of want, realization of an end, and is rewarding.

Discourse itself is both instrumental and consummatory. Communication is an exchange which procures something wanted; it involves a claim, appeal, order, direction or request, which realizes want at least cost than personal labor exacts, since it *produces cooperative assistance of others*. Communication is also an immediate enhancement of life, enjoyed for its own sake. [...] Language is always a form of action and in its instrumental use is always a means of concerted action for an end, while at the same time it finds in itself all the goods of its possible consequences. *For there is no mode of action as fulfilling and as rewarding as is concerted consensus of action. It brings with it the sense of sharing and merging in a whole.* (Dewey, 1928, p. 183f, author's emphasis)

Yet, while we might interpret consensus and cooperation to be necessary *a priori* in Dewey, we might challenge it as to be a necessary *a posteriori*. We might ask ourselves: Must communication be necessarily consistent?

What we suggest is at stake in this potential consistency of communication is not only the potential for "sharing and merging in a whole" as a moment of constitution of society at a future point in time, but also the possibility of a necessity of consensus as an *a priori* to be the point of departure. What we

are aiming at here in our problematisation of Dewey's communicative theory is the notion of society a point of departure. We argue that Dewey's theory of communication relates closely to Dewey's notion of problematic situation, a concept that Ljunggren draws upon in order to conceive of the public.

Ljunggren (1996, p. 24, author's translation, author's emphasis) states the following with regards to education as a public dialogue, which can be seen to appeal Dewey's notion of democratic society:

While reconstructivists wanted to see, and concretely utilise, education [*skolan*] as a basis for political *change of society*, Dewey highlighted what he called the method of intelligence as a general attitude in order to make students involved in the solving of *societal issues*. This method of intelligence as a general attitude entails [*innebär*] among other things that education should be organised as a *public dialogue [offentlig samtal] with the ongoing society as a point of departure for the content of that dialogue*. The actual dialogue as action, and as a premise for a concrete and alive [*verksam*] democracy, are central points of departure for pragmatist theory of action where most can be related back to what in these circles is called *the problematic situation*.

As we can see, Ljunggren's explication underlines that society, in its singular, provides a reference point for communication, as part of a public dialogue, that addresses problematic situations that are conceived as societal issues. In the context of the quote above, Ljunggren (1996, p. 25, partial translation, original emphasis) provides a specification of how the problematic situation is theoretically constituted:

The meaning of this term defines among other things that all situations have to be understood as *relations* and that they are problematic in the sense that they require a reflection on how *these relations are connected*, or more correctly put, how they *in different ways are connected* according to the *language* we are capable to describe this problematic via. The action that is capable to solve problematic situations via a relational language is called by the pragmatists often *inquiry*—"For Dewey, as for Pierce, inquiry is a process by which doubtful or unsettled situations become settled" Stanish H. Thayer (1981: 171 f.f.) This *doubtful* should not be understood as the doubt of the individual in ontological terms, but as a doubt related to just the situation at hand – see Dewey's comments to George Santayana and Bertrand Russel regarding their misconception regarding this point (Robert Westbrook 1991, 497 f.f.).

With regards to how the problematic situation is constituted, the clarification above does not clearly define why a situation becomes problematic or if that situation could also be constituted as non-problematic. With the becoming present of a presence in mind, we might provocatively ask: Would it, if not

problematic, still be a situation? We might also ask Ljunggren if Dewey's notion of consensus and cooperation is not an *a priori*: Would all situations still be connected? If we might say that misunderstanding as a form of absence of agreement is a synchronic possibility, why is a reflection *necessary* if absence of agreement of what is problematic could render the situation unproblematic?

We might, in the context of these inquiring questions, suggest that the need of theoretical conception of the necessity of reflection and the concept of problematic situation that Ljunggren can be seen to draw upon is a notion of society as singular, where society as a singular reference point for common agreement determines the potentiality of the reflection that can occur. The notion of "language" in the quote above can be seen to draw upon a figure of reasoning that appeals to a cross-reference in understanding or, to use Ljunggren's words, the different ways in which they are connected, and hence we argue this notion of language is similar to Dewey's notion of communication where that cross-reference as a congruence of perspectives in communication determines the problem and its perception.

However, an explanatory problem can be seen to emerge in such a cross-referential perspective on language as we might ask ourselves: To what extent would language as a system of "relations" be able to provoke a need for reflection? This need for reflection would, according to the logic of this argumentation, which puts forward that it is in "*language* we are capable to describe this problematic", have to be inscribed into language or Dewey's understanding of communication. We might ask if language is fully relational, that is, producing an inclusive consensus of understanding as in Dewey's notion of communication; we might ask ourselves: Why would this system of relations require reflection? Would this need for reflection not suggest that there had not been a common understanding and not a full partaking in a common and inclusive undertaking, as Dewey's notion of cross-reference in communication suggests (*cf.* Dewey, 1928, p. 178f)?

We make the argument that this explanatory problem of the need for reflection can also be seen to relate Ljunggren's notion of public and problematic situation since, as we earlier pointed out, the need for argumentation or public dialogue is "about the bringing into being [*levandegöra*] the emancipating [*frigörande*] potential that lays within the historical experience in order to let them fulfil a function in a critical narrating depiction of society [*samhällsbild*]" (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 20f, author's translation).

According to the perspective on language as relational and the appeals to Dewey's notion communication, the problematic aspects of a situation would, according to this line of reasoning, already have been inscribed into society and hence we might ask: How is it that society, as a system of relations that are problematic, would at the same time already have inscribed an emancipating potential? Would that problem potentially already entail the answer to its solution? Would the how-it-should-be then not already be in-

scribed in the depiction of how-it-is? What would be the function of debate or reflection?

Ljunggren provides an entry point for approaching a theoretical constitution of the problematic situation by suggesting that it is with regards to the *different ways* in which the relationship or the connection between situations can be constituted through language that reflection is possible (*cf.* Ljunggren, 1996, p. 20f). We argue that this possibility of different constitution emerges in the Ljunggren who appeals to a figure of reasoning that constitutes society as a plurality.

However, we argue that a conception of the potentiality of a different/varying constitution of the situation is incompatible with an understanding of language that is in line with Dewey's notion of communication. We make this argument, as cooperation and consensus are not limited in this theory of communication and, as a result, meaning and understanding become a closed system of relations and connections. The resulting comprehensiveness or ability to cross-reference is interpreted to eradicate the possibility for constitutive alterity of the situation and synchronic (*re*)flection.

With regards to possible alterity that emerges in communicative reflection, we argue that the Deweyan conception of communication sublates the possibility of constitutive alterity and to subdue this potential and actual alternative synchronic constitution to the assumed diachronic possibility of *collective re-constitution* and *re-vision*. This argument for a problematic trace to Dewey's figures of reasoning that are interpreted to appeal to synthesis and sublation is made in the context of Ljunggren's above-quoted appeal to a Deweyan notion of communication (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 30).

It is in this context that we might interpret pragmatist theory of communication and language as to be primarily collectivist and to allow for a figure of reasoning of society as singular and a whole in Ljunggren (1996), where synchronic unity in the ways that meaning is given to the world and collective action in accordance to that meaning is tantamount to the conception of progress as it relates to a public or shared "good".

For this Ljunggren, who appeals to a singular notion of society, Dewey's notion of communication allows him to conceive of the synchronic unity of the community. This synchronic unity is seen by us to entail a theoretical focus on agreement and consensus, since it will be ultimately agreement and consensus that set the limits for the unity of community, that is to say, the "we" that is to be created.

It is also with this agreement and consensus in mind that Dewey's theory of communication and his notion of democratic society can be seen to associate the normative aspect of social practices, for example, in education, with social regulation of society.

It is the constitution of new values that are the central aspects for these dialogues, and it is the content agreed upon in these values, that creates the basis

for social control. The social control, or integration, is here as a result conceived as a discursive process, where the individual is all the time confronted with a content and communication with the environment that *demand*s action. In such a situation, there exist premises for a *self-regulation*, where individuals precisely through communication's nature define them-selves as community [*sammanhörande*]. The implication of this—which is often labelled a sense of shared community; shared experience, shared meanings, etc.—points towards this, but *has on the other hand no given consensus as a point of departure*. Even if it in multiple contexts is about implications that in the end mean that there is a possible way to connect individual and society to a functioning relation, it is maintained at the same time that the premises for this must be constantly reconsidered, and that the reconsideration that takes place through *communication*, amounts to the essential form of expression [*uttrycksform*] of *democratic life*. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 30f, author's translation, author's emphasis)

Ljunggren's explication that the normative is inscribed in a communitarian constitution in the quote above highlights that consensus is not a state that is given and that it is only the particular action that constitutes individuals as a community in relation to that action. We might say that there are two different theoretical points of departure that can be seen to be opened up by Ljunggren in the quote above.

The Ljunggren who argues for a multiplicity of society can be seen to put forward that “no given consensus” can be the point of departure for the constitution of community—highlighting the contingency of the act of creation of community that entails the possibility of alterity—, while the Ljunggren who promotes a singular notion of society can be seen to allow for the possibility of putting the individual in relation to society due to the synthesising function of communication. With regards to our perceived incommensurability of these two points of departure, we ask Ljunggren as a conceptual persona: How it is possible to claim that an ultimate community is possible, that is to say, a community as having consistent functional relations (society), if there is always the potential for variation in the constitution of such relations in communication?

The discussion of the traces to Dewey's notion of communication and the concept of problematic situation aimed to highlight how the possibility of reflection, as has been appealed to by Ljunggren, can be conceived in two different ways. The first we have problematised above, as this conception seems to withhold a logical need for reflection. However, we argue that there is a second perspective provided by the Ljunggren, who puts forward a plurality of society and who, as a result, allows us to conceive of a possibility of alterity in the constitution of how-it-is, including the possibility to perceive the situation differently and potentially as not problematic at all. In this notion of communication and problematic situation, the community could have been and will have been constituted differently.

We argue that the community, will according to this perspective, have been constituted differently, as the absence of a consensus as departure for the constitution of community entails a diversity, where that diversity cannot *a posteriori* be reduced to something that has been an *a priori* communicative consensus. We might here speak of the need of the subject to decide upon which community is to be created through acts of identification, where these contingent acts are not determined *a priori* by a communicative, communitarian understanding. In this moment of decision, the subject is perceived to experience the absence of a comprehensive community and experiences the need to identify with a particular community.

In this resulting notion of community, Ljunggren is interpreted by us to appeal to a plurality of society. We argue that this potential alterity of community and, in the end, society is not the diachronic possibility of constituting community differently based on a synchronic unity that determines what is problematic, but highlights the *impossibility of an ultimate synchronic unity*. To put it differently, the possibility for the subject to constitute to define itself as part of a community highlights that the individual can constitute itself differently. This difference is not a difference to be constituted with regards to a particular situation, but it is the historicity of constituting that situation differently that highlights that the act of constitution has already been different.

To return to the use of language in Ljunggren in the quote above, the absence of consensus is in this understanding highlighting *a preceding* dynamism that necessitates the imperative for reflection in “open” communication. We argue that the acknowledgement of the absence of consensus as ground for constitution of community acknowledges the premise of constitution of identity and community as a form of play, where these acts will not be determined in their regularity and as a result will entail constitutive differences. We argue that this openness or the play is by Ljunggren acknowledged in the possibility of reflection, while the traces to Dewey’s notion of communication can be seen to appeal to a promise of synthesis as part of a functional relationship between the individual and the ultimate community. The acknowledgement of play, however, is interpreted by us to render this promise an impossibility as the existence of play is perceived by us as incompatible with the possibility of final determination of *a priori* or *a posteriori* functionality.

It is the withdrawal of consensus as a basis that is seen by us to render impossible the demand for “integration” as Ljunggren conceives social control to be characterised by. What we would like to argue is that this withdrawal of consensus as basis, as a radicalising move of Ljunggren, renders impossible the act of constituting community as a social whole, as the necessity of the act of the subject to integrate and define itself highlights that neither society, nor communicative partaking in the collective endeavour was able to constitute me as part of that comprehensive community. We argue, it

is this Ljunggren as a conceptual persona, who withholds the possibility of fully constituted communal identity, who allows for our conception of the social and the subject in the next section.

### **Social action**

However, the figure of reasoning that reintroduces a singular notion of society is interpreted by us to resurface in the constitution of the public sphere in Ljunggren (1996). We argue that this figure of reasoning can be interpreted to emerge in traces to Dewey's theory of communication and Habermas' notion of social action.

The public sphere is an abstract expression of the space [*område*] where society 'is expressing itself' reproductively, but also *communicatively*. This sphere, which among other things includes the activities in education and media, is constituted by action with political and moral implications. That they have a political and moral *implication* does not necessarily mean that they are moral or political in their expression [*framtoning*]. This simply shows that also the actions that are deemed as amoral and apolitical, have a political moral implication—just because they are *a negation of the political and moral action*. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 40f, author's translation, author's emphasis)

We argue that the notion of society in the quote above is that of a singular as it is derived from the notion of communicative consensus in Dewey. If we are to interpret this quote by Ljunggren, where society "is expressing itself", as the field of communication, and where communication produces a sharing and merging in the whole, we might ask ourselves in the context of the other Ljunggren who puts forward a plurality of societies: To what extent is this space able to present society as a uniform and single whole (itself)?

We might say that if it is to express itself as a unity, it cannot be expressed in a multiple or paradox political way, since this multiplicity and paradox would according to the law of non-contradiction not allow for the constitution of the identity of society as a valid logical object that would be constituted in that expression.

Another explanatory problematic emerges, once we take "social actions" into account, which is the means through which society is perceived to express itself.

Social actions are in contrast to actions as spectatorship communicative. They call for 'agreed comprehensibility'—or what Dewey calls shared meanings. This implies not that communication requires consensus other than in relation to comprehensibility. It does therefore not require that people [*man*] necessarily agree upon the issue [*sakfråga*] that is communicated. Social action in terms of agreed comprehensibility entails, however, that the comprehensibility goes beyond that which is intellectually or cognitively compre-

hensible. The *comprehensibility must also include a moral acceptance of different standpoints* [*ställningstaganden*] in the issue that are communicated—therein lies so to say the general necessity of agreement. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 41, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

What Ljunggren’s conception of social action is seen to entail is a notion of comprehensibility that installs a “minimum” morality in the form of a consensus on the acceptance of different standpoints as a grounding consensus that determines the field of meaning. We might argue that this conception of social action is incompatible with the appeal to an absence of a grounding consensus by the other Ljunggren that we constituted in our argumentation above.

It is in the context of this appeal to social action and “minimum” morality that we might see Ljunggren’s conception of society as a singular become theoretically untenable, since it builds on a notion of meaning that assumes that moral acceptance is a necessity, without granting ground for this necessity.

To make this point we can utilise the example of the problematic situation. Let us imagine that a particular depiction of how-it-is creates a particular depiction of society as problematic. This problematic depiction of how-it-is will necessitate that particular relations within society are to be depicted as unwanted and non-acceptable; to put it differently, it will entail a political or moral positioning to a particular demand, that is to say, it entails a political and moral positioning in relation to what is wanted. Yet, and this is critical, this positioning necessitates the articulation of an other. This other is, similar to the identity of the communicative subject, not given, that is to say, not provided by a consensus as ground, but will depend on communicatively constituted identification of a how-it-is by individuals. As the result of an absence of an *a priori* grounding consensus, the self and the other that is constituted through identification will be characterised by a play that in the form of variation will subvert any possibility for fixity of how-it-is to emerge as *a posteriori*. As a result, this play and variation in the acts of identification will prevent the establishment or expression of society as a whole and singularly determinable set of relations.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> We will here introduce a differentiation between other and Other that we derive from Lacan (Lacan, 1966). While we are not capable of providing a sufficient exploration of this Big Other of Lacan, we highlight that we interpret this Other to be drawn upon by Laclau in his conception of antagonism and the impossibility of society. Based on Lacan’s conception of language, where he bars access to and elevates the status of the signified, the Other stands in for the signified in language as to denote the ability of articulation to provide meaning. In this sense, the Other relates to the Name-of-the-Father that suggests the regularity or lawfulness of language, as relating to the Lacanian symbolic. The differentiation between other and Other then denotes the lack of the signifier to construct or rather to arrive at the signified. In this sense, the big Other is crossed out while language is structured around an impossible kernel of the Other (*cf.* Žižek, 1989, p. 122). As a result of this impossibility of the Other, meaning is

In a similar fashion, social action will be subverted by the possibility of anti-social action as the other of social action. What we mean by anti-social action is an action that does not aim at cooperation and an acknowledgement of the consensus on the acceptance of different standpoints. Anti-social action, as a possibility, can be seen to be entailed in social antagonism, where an identification with a particular “we” can be seen to entail the articulation of an other that “we” differ from. To come back to our discussion of Englund, we might in the context of our discussion of Ljunggren’s conception of social action recall the essential overdetermination of the social and the impossibility of any determination in the last instance.

To relate this essential overdetermination to our discussion of subversion of the “social” that can be seen to be appealed to in Ljunggren’s conception of social action, the possibility of anti-social action becomes necessary in relation to the logic implied in the appeal to agreed comprehensibility in the quote above. This agreed comprehensibility entails a need for moral acceptance of different moral standpoints. The necessity of anti-social action emerges with regards to social action that addresses action that does not accept different moral standpoints. In this sense, minimum consensus is still exclusive and requires an other from which it distances itself. The impossibility of society, as a unified and singular whole, as a result of social action emerges in the need for establishment of anti-social action as the limit of society.

Hence, we argue, anti-social action as a limit is not external to that society that expresses itself in communicative action. Instead, it is as an action articulating the internal of society and due to its possibility as an action that is to give meaning to that whole subverts society as a singular base on the notion of social action. To reformulate this argument, while social action can be seen to be an attempt at instituting society, the existence of anti-social action, as the required constitutive other of the foundation of agreed comprehensibility, renders society as an inclusive and comprehensive whole expressed in communication an impossible outcome.

We argue that the notion of social action that is to constitute a quasi-ground of a minimum consensus as a general agreement for society is incompatible with the appeal to an absence of a grounding consensus by the

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“always based on semblance; precisely because ‘there is no last word’; meaning always indicates the direction towards its failure ([Lacan 1998, p. 79]), its failure to anchor itself on the real” as Stavrakakis (1999, p. 39) with regards to the role of the failure of the Other Lacan observes. It is the resulting “split of every object of identification” due to the impossibility of the Other to be articulated that Stavrakakis (*ibid.*) also sees this split to result in what Laclau has labelled the impossibility of society. To differentiate this Big Other from articulated other, we state that articulation, as acts of identification, will aim to establish a closed system of meaning. However, the dynamism of the discursive will prevent the articulation of the other as that which his preventing and enabling my identity in acts of identification from becoming fully self-transparent. As it becomes apparent, the Lacanian big Other plays a crucial role for Laclau’s conception of the subject and articulation as a political act of identification.

other Ljunggren that we constituted in our argumentation above. We argue that it is incompatible in the sense as it tries to maintain society as a singular point of departure in the form of comprehensiveness that is, as we argue, subverted by antagonism as a limit for society.

Based on this appeal to social action by Ljunggren, we interpret that the figure of reasoning of society as a whole remains attractive to Ljunggren due to the danger of normative and moral relativism that might be interpreted to result out of a limitation of public and common good.

### **Communal normativity**

We interpret that Ljunggren can be seen to handle the danger of moral and normative relativism by appealing to a form of comprehensive communal normativity. However, we argue that this communal normativity can be seen to be subverted by a figure of reasoning in Ljunggren that sees society as a plurality, where we might suggest this plurality entails a moral and normative plurality that is not reducible to a singular.

It is with regards to this exclusive character of moral and normative plurality that the Ljunggren who emerges in relation to the figure of reasoning that appeals to the singularity of society can be seen to appeal to a desire of subject to create a comprehensive “we”. Yet, we might argue that the appeal to an absence of a grounding *a priori* consensus and a plurality of society can be seen to introduce a limit to any constituted “we” that is appealed to in order to conceive of collective purpose and public good.

It is with regards to normativity that Ljunggren can be seen to appeal to a figure of reasoning that we have problematised above as it sees society as a form of synchronic unity, where this notion of democratic society was provided by Dewey’s conception of communication.

As the conception of truth [*sanningsbegreppet*] for Dewey, the conception of truth for the neo-pragmatist is linked to the limits [*gränser*] that language is setting for the awareness of the world. The relationship between true and good, as well as between meaning and meaningfulness, are according to these premises never given, instead exposed to constant judgement and depending on the specific [*närmare*] content of the problematic situation. Rorty (1985:5) calls this the constant aspiration for *intersubjectivity and morally dependent agreements*, which incorporate a democratic potential formulated as “*the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, the desire to extend the reference of ‘us’ as far as we can*”. The basis for these agreements are for Rorty argumentation, where the individual via experiences (cognitive, emotional, etc.) that the argumentation causes, relates itself to other individuals, groups, cultures etc., which either (in the particular moment) think and *act sufficiently alike or dissimilar in order to be incorporated or excluded from in relation to the individual conception of ‘us’*. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 24f, partial translation, author’s emphasis)

As the quote highlights, Ljunggren sees language to set the limits for truth, and we might add “the good”.

In this context we would like to question the formulation of that limit as set by language, and might suggest that it is not only language as a whole that *sets the limit for* “us”, but also, as we discussed above, the particular conception of the problematic situation that sets the limit for that “us”.

This possibility of particularity of different problematisations as limit is acknowledged by Ljunggren:

Depending on the content in which the depiction of society [*samhällsbeskrivningen*] is given, that is to say the language and the choice of aspects of the social and political life that it is building upon, the depicted implication (the problem) will *vary*. The theoretical analyses that thereby become possible to be carried out [...] will also differ with regard to which social and political moral consequences (implications) *the different problematisations are likely to lead to*. Thereby is it possible to circumvent that the points of departure that are used for giving the analysis its direction is formulated *in a simple fashion, an unreflected repetition of that which is idealised, and in that meaning a normative depiction of society is taken for granted*. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 39, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

In the quote above Ljunggren is interpreted by us to draw on a notion of society that constituted by a plurality, and, hence, problematises the notion of a singular society. What can be seen to be at stake in this acknowledgement is the potential plurality of normativity and as a result the relativity of normativity in the sense of a relativity to particular notions of society.

We argue that this relativity is countered by the other Ljunggren through an appeal to Dewey’s notion of communicatively constituted society, where normative plurality is synthesised into a comprehensive communicative consensus.

Instead it is necessary to evaluate society in relation to a chosen problematic which can be motivated as relevant [*angelägen*] [...] ‘The problem is to extract the desirable traits of forms of community life which actually exist, and employ them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvements’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 83, quoted in Ljunggren, 1996, p. 39, partial translation)

We might in the context of the quote above return to our discussion of the problematic situation, where we might say the problematic of the situation is not a problematic that is determined by the historicity of perception of the situation in communication, but it will be a plurality of different ways to conceive the situation as either problematic or not. Hence, the issue in our problematisation of the normative aspect of evaluation might be not so much that there exists an initial form of community life, but rather to what extent

this community life might be an unproblematic one, that is to say, one that is not essentially overdetermined by contesting depictions of how-it-is.

What we are aiming to get at in our reference to overdetermination is the argumentative role of synchronic unity as a prerequisite for the conception of normativity in Ljunggren. We might ask Ljunggren as a conceptual persona: Will there be a diachronic difference with regards to the “desirable traits” that *have been* extracted, or are these “desirable traits” relative to the constitution of how-it-is, indicating synchronic difference with regards to the particular conception of how-it-should-be?

We argue that the Ljunggren that draws on a plurality of society is seen by us to problematise an appeal to a singular normative point of reference as this point of reference could be conceived in terms of “community life which actually exist” in the quote above. Here, this other Ljunggren is interpreted by us to overcome certain aspects of what we consider to be problematised communicative notion of society as it emerges in Dewey by aiming to provide an alternative reading of Dewey.

The request that Dewey here makes shall be seen as a deliberate distancing from idealising, normative perceptions of society that not take into account the need for critical analysis, and instead in a non-critical fashion ‘start from themselves’. Those ideas that the concept of society relates to in such a conception of society, are expressions for a static perspective on society where society is seen as a uniform, unproblematic, organic whole. [Footnote indicator in original] [Start of footnote] For a picture of this critique see, Dewey (1927), [...] who in comparison to *Democracy and Education* (1916) is more explicitly critical to the notion of an organic whole—a notion that Dewey is giving expression to in his early texts, and which he has been criticised for. [End of footnote]. The conception of society that instead is focused upon is a critical normative depiction—a descriptive sense of society—gives as a result not a uniform picture of a single (organic whole) society, instead consists of ‘a plurality of societies, good and bad’ (ibid.). Such a point of departure for the conception of society can give the depiction of society a *direction*, grounded in a concrete social problematic that points towards different political and moral implications in the choice of the object of study. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 39, partial translation, original emphasis)

As we can see in the quote above, Ljunggren addresses what we see as problematised notion of society as an inclusive, complete whole, and instead provides a reading of Dewey that puts forward an understanding of society as characterised by a plurality.

However, we argue that this alternative conception of society by Dewey is seen by us to remain committed to certain figures of reasoning that we have problematised. We argue that these traces to problematic figures of reasoning are interpreted to remain in the formulation of “good and bad” in the quote above in the form of a comprehensive normativity. We might for ex-

ample, ask Dewey as a conceptual persona: What would be the normative reference point for your notion of a plurality of “good” and “bad” societies?

What we see to be at stake in the clarification of this reference point is the possibility of ordained common normativity, since in this conception “good” and “bad” will be relative to the particular plurality of societies. It is interpreted by us that Dewey in his conception of plurality of societies mentioned in the quote above can be seen to evade the question of the limit of societal closure, that is to say, the extent by which the plurality of societies themselves can represent themselves as wholes, by breaking down the whole into smaller units as sub-societies of a larger complex of society, as we will argue below.

What Dewey can be seen to evade in his reference to a plurality of societies is the need for conceiving or problematising the limit, where we might ask: To what extent can the internal and the external of society be neatly separated? With regard to this limit, we might ask ourselves: To what extent are the different societies within society able to be totally equivalent to each other?

It is in the context of these questions regarding the limit of society that Dewey cannot be seen to fully explore the consequences of the problematic of holism that can be seen to be an aspect of the organicism that Ljunggren is interpreted to problematise in the quote above. We make this argument as we might suggest that the limit will not be *given*, but that the internal and the external will be constitutively subverted due to a play or overdetermination.

It is in the context of the subversion of the limit and a result of the constitution of society that we might problematise Dewey’s “later” perspective on society as being characterised of good and bad societies, since he is interpreted to remain committed to a notion of society as existence.

“Early” Dewey, clearly states that it is not in relation to an external that Society as a One exists, but there is something immanent in society that keeps it and its different sub-societies together:

[...] and in part, that each of these organizations, no matter how opposed to the interests of other groups, has something of the praiseworthy qualities of “Society” which hold it together. (Dewey, 1916, p. 95)

To make an argument for a remainder of society as existence more clear, this immanence of society is, with regards to its ability to hold together, not confined to the particular sub-division of society that this “society” might refer to, but is a uniform immanence that we interpret Dewey to see as characteristic for all social life.

With regards to these “good” and “bad” societies, as sub-divisions of Society in “later” Dewey, “earlier” Dewey makes a remark that we see as to highlight a potential continuity of appeals to holism that we interpret as problematic.

Now in any social group whatever, even in gangs of thieves, we find *some interest held in common, and we find a certain amount of interaction and coöperative intercourse with other groups*. From these two traits *we derive our standard*. How numerous and varied are these interests which are consciously shared? How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association? (Dewey, 1916, p. 96, author's emphasis)

Dewey's argument is that the standard for "good" and "bad", as a "measure of worth" (Dewey, 1916, p. 96), by which we are to deem the contribution of a society to Society as a whole, is the indicator of a societies integration into Society. This degree of integration is by "earlier" Dewey judged in relation to the shared interests and the interplay of a groups' interest with other forms of association.

If we, then, return to Ljunggren's argument that Dewey's "later" conception of society distances itself from his earlier notion of organicism, we raise in the context of our conception of "earlier" Dewey the question to what extent this dissociation moves away from a figure of reasoning that appeals to a singular reference point, the One, in order to make normative statements.

This question is interpreted by us to become acute once we take a closer look at the issue of normativity. Ljunggren integrates, in his attempt to provide an alternative reading of the later Dewey, two quotes, one from Dewey's earlier *Democracy and Education* (1916) and one from his "later" work (1927).

We cannot set up, out of our heads, something we regard as ideal society. We must base our conception upon societies which *actually exist*, in order to have any assurance that our ideal is a practical one. (Dewey, 1916, p. 83, quoted in Ljunggren, 1996, p. 38, author's emphasis)

Since there is no one *thing* which may be called society, except their indefinite overlapping, there is no unqualified eulogistic connotation adhering to the term "society". Some societies are *in the main* to be approved; some to be condemned, on account of *their consequences upon the character and conduct upon others* ... "society" is something to be approached judged critically and discriminatingly. (Dewey, 1927, p. 70, quoted in Ljunggren, 1996, p. 38, original emphasis)

If we compare these two quotes, we see that, as our earlier quote on the measure of worth of society highlights, Dewey can be seen to maintain a normative sense that is not confined to the particularity of the interest or the demands a particular "society" stands for, but remains committed to a normative project that sets the worth of a particular sub-society into relation to that of Society, as the One, as we interpret Dewey's comment that "[s]ome societies are in the main to be approved, some are to be condemned, on ac-

count of their consequences upon the conduct and character upon others”. We argue that “later” Dewey is with regards to “the main” and general consequences seen by us to be subduing a sub-societies’ worth to that of the One.<sup>57</sup>

Ljunggren’s (1996) conception of society through appeals to the conceptual persona of later Dewey is interpreted by us to have traces to this One, where Ljunggren, as earlier stated, sees the later conception of Dewey as providing points of departure for a direction that approaches the political and moral implications of the choice of the object of study.

Such a point of departure for the conception of society can give the depiction of society a *direction*, grounded in a concrete social problematic that points towards different political and moral implications in the choice of the object of study. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 39, partial translation, original emphasis)

Traces to this One can be interpreted to constitute a Ljunggren that sees political and moral implications in the choice of the object of study, as well as the social problem to be interpreted to be relative to society as the One and not with regards to the particular “society”, which with its demands and interests will provide a particular depiction of how-it-is/how-it-should-be. Traces to pluralities of societies and the resulting other Ljunggren that puts forward a difference among these pluralities of societies, would according to our interpretation highlight that both social problematic might be relative to a particular society as well as the direction might be multiple.

Our earlier announced argument for the impossibility of society as a communicative result due to the possibility of anti-social action can be seen to reemerge against the background of this differential theoretical constitution. The impossibility of Society-as-One is conceived by us as the impossi-

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<sup>57</sup> Honneth (1998, p. 771f) can be seen to substantiate our reading of later Dewey, who characterises the abandonment of Hegelianism by an appeal to socialisation as a form of adaptation of the individual to group specific and societal norms and values: “However, once Dewey overcomes his initial Hegelianism, he has to realize that this [Hegelian] thesis presupposes an untenable teleology of human nature. For that reason, he now endeavors in his various studies in psychology to work out the social mechanism that could explain, without metaphysical borrowings, the social compatibility of human self-realization. This new solution can be understood in terms of an intersubjectivist theory of human socialization: From their completely open drives, which at first consists of nothing other than a multitude of undirected and thus formable impulses, human beings can develop only those capabilities and needs as stable habits of action that have met with approval and esteem of their particular reference group; the satisfaction that a subject has in realizing certain action impulses increases to the degree to which it can be sure recognition of its partners in interaction. Insofar as every member of society always belongs to various reference groups, the superimposed layer of expectation see to it that, in the course of the development of a personality, only socially useful habits are formed”. We see Honneth to substantiate our claim in the last sentence of the quote, where he argues that in Dewey a diversity of expectation are “superimposed” by a society that, so to speak, sublates individualism to the extent that “only socially useful habits are formed”.

bility of articulating how-it-is without reference to a particular society, that is, the constitution of Society without the appeal is in relation to one of many societal centres in reference to which we will give meaning to how-it-is and how-it-should-be. Society, as constituted around a singular centre and as a closed system of relations, is from this perspective not a valid point of departure, since this would necessitate the total eradication of paradoxes that would be the result of an appeal to a plurality of centres.

These paradoxes and the play and dynamism they entail are according to our perspective that highlights the role of conflict, not secondary instances of a primary unity which in the last instance will show itself and thereby sublimate the negation of this divergences. Instead, we have in our discussion of Englund (1986) identified play, dynamism and paradoxes caused by the ontological conditions that necessitate attempts at constituting society in communication. We, therefore, put forward that Society cannot exist, since, if it would exist, it would not allow for play and for different critical perspectives on how-it-is and how-it-should-be to be brought forward.

However, we argue that Ljunggren can with regards to normativity be seen to appeal to such a notion of Society in order to conceive of the historical “direction” of historical development.

### **The historically determined society**

It is in this context of the “existence of society” (Dewey, 1916, p. 83, quoted in Ljunggren, 1996, p. 38), that we arrive in our depiction of the trace to Dewey in Ljunggren’s conception of society as a public dialogue at a paradox, where the appeal to Society as a theoretical primary existent that puts into relation the diverse stands in an antithetical relation to the primacy of critical engagement with the social in order to bring about change, where this appeal is seen by us to be the result of the notion of a plurality of societies brought forward by Ljunggren.

To denote with society something *concretely existing* does not entail that the utopic, future-oriented reasoning is excluded, but rather that the *concrete society*—as it is possible to be described in a particular analysis—shall be taken as *the basis* for both political-philosophical, as well as more well-defined research-related considerations. This means neither that societal ideals cannot nor should not be formulated. The implication of societies which actually exist is that a critical depiction of society provides the basis for a theoretisation where society is seen as an expression for *a historically determined [bestämmd], but simultaneously changeable [påverkbar] situation*. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 38, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

The antithetical moment, as an incompatibility of logics appealed to, emerges according to our interpretation in the conception of society as historically *determined* reality, where we in the context of our earlier discussion might

say determination erases the possibility of play as relating to the contingent in practice.

Practice is variable and changes, where we might assume that, at least partially, change can be accomplished through practice. Hence, we might reformulate this incompatibility as to suggest that if society would be historically determined, there would be no play and, to reformulate Englund, there would be no conflict. As a result of this historical determination, we argue, society would not be “changeable”. Society would not possess a dynamic potential, but the only potential for change would be external to it.

On the basis of our depiction of the challenges that the appeal to society entails, the argument made by us is that it is the notion of society as “historically determined” that stands in contrast to Ljunggren’s ambition to reconceptualise or abandon the concept of society as a form of plurality. We make this declarative statement based on the argument that if society is the result of public dialogue and that dialogue is a diversity of positions and different perspectives as a form of continuity, history would not provide a determined situation, but a plurality of attempts at determining the situation that do not conflate to a particular point.<sup>58</sup> As we argued in relation to Englund, it is this historical overdetermination that we see as to result in dynamism.<sup>59</sup>

We argue that historical determination of society at a point in time can be seen to sublimate the plurality that the other Ljunggren aims to put at the centre of his conception of society as public dialogue and culture.

The motive with making the concept of public the central point of departure in the theming of education, media and democracy consists, thus, of the plurality that society shows in relation to cultural distinctions, political group formations, etc., and the political, cultural and geographical globalisation that media is seen to contribute to. This simplified depicted situation, is an indicator for what is to be highlighted and to be closer specified in the analysis of the concept of public. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 40, author’s translation)

The argument is, therefore, made that the fetish of society is discordant with Ljunggren’s ambition to address dynamism, as we see it to emanate out of conflict and antagonism, and that we interpret as inherent in his acknowledgment of the plurality of society.

It is in the context of this discordance that traces to Dewey’s holistic notion of community, which does not take into account conflict and antagonism as the limit of that “us”, is seen by us to mitigate dynamism that is provoked by the subversion of that “us” and the play between “us” and “them”.

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<sup>58</sup> In the context of our discussion of temporality in the Section 3 we might say that these attempts at determining the situation, as attempts at spatialisation of temporality, are aiming to provide an event, where the temporal Event is elusive.

<sup>59</sup> The source of dynamism is, however, antagonism and temporality.

It is this focus on such a comprehensive “us” of a societal community that according to our understanding limits a conception of this plurality of the social and subdues it to a focus on harmony and consensus.

### **The radical democratic “we” and its consequences**

The other Ljunggren who acknowledges antagonism can, however, be seen to provide an opening for conceiving how it is possible to move beyond this universalising “we” of a societal community through his references to radical democracy.

Identity entails that democracy is seen as a pluralist and contingent concept. To use the words of Mouffe, it is about “a conception of citizenship which, through a common identification with radical democratic interpretation of the principles of liberty and equality, aims at constructing a we, a chain of equivalence among their demands so as to articulate them through the principle of democratic equivalence. For it is not a matter of establishing a mere alliance between given interests, but of actually modifying the very identity of those forces”. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 236f, quoting Mouffe in Giroux, 1992, p. 134f, partial translation)

What this radical democratic “we” mentioned by Ljunggren in the quote above is depicted by us to entail is a “we” that consists of a chain of equivalences, where this chain of equivalences that is to denote a “we” can be seen to consist of a chaining of demands and interests, as they are representatives for a number of other group identities. It is in this way that we can see radical democracy to allow the other Ljunggren who addresses the plurality of society for a conception of how “society”, as reference point for citizenship identity, could be articulated.

In the context of this inclusive “we”, we might also differentiate between an articulation of “society” and society as an existing reference point in pragmatist perspectives. The articulation of society in a radical democratic perspective would, as Ljunggren in the quote below highlights, take place *within* a terrain of discursivity, while we might deem Dewey’s notion of society as existence to denote that society exists *as the foundation or the terrain* of discursivity as a form of *a priori* common purpose without limit. Ljunggren specifies this character of political community, we might say, society, with regards to its discursive character.

This entails that the development towards a political community and an in this sense radical democracy is conceived as “a discursive surface of inscription, not an empirical referent” (Mouffe 1992:14, 237). The term discursive surface of inscription is thus an expression for the creation of a “we”, where this creation in turn is not hegemonic, but loaded with conflicts between different “we”-interests. (Ljunggren, 1996, p. 75, partial translation)

It is this introduction of a radical democratic perspective by Ljunggren that is perceived by us to open up the possibility of conceiving of the limit of Dewey's communicatively constituted community.

As Ljunggren in the quote above highlights, the communicatively constituted 'we' cannot be hegemonic in the sense of a total dominance as it would be a result out of an external "empirical referent" determining the communicative action, but it is a "we" that is fractured and constituted differently by different social forces representing particular "we" interests.

The reference to discursive surface for the constitution of this "we" as overdetermined concept that attains meaning in relation to particular interests and demands is interpreted by us to provide a trace to antagonism as concept for the limit of the constitution of a "we" as a closed and full community.

But in the case of antagonism, we are confronted with a different situation: the presence of the Other prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but the impossibility of their construction. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 125)

It is with this trace to antagonism that we see the introduction of Mouffe's work to critical Swedish curriculum theory through Ljunggren as to allow for a reconception of the source of dynamism in England, in the form of antagonism.

It is towards this trace to antagonism in Ljunggren's appeal to radical democracy that we will turn in our theoretical construction in the next section in order to revitalise the focus on conflict in Swedish curriculum theory and in an attempt to radicalise the tradition of a dynamic perspective on social formation in and through education.

## Figures of reasoning in Säfström (1994)

### **Discourse theory and pragmatism**

In our final exploration of the contribution of the next generation of Swedish critical curriculum theory, it is primarily towards the conception of meaning and its relation to dynamism that we turn in Säfström (1994).

Säfström can, with regards to the conception of meaning, be seen to share the pragmatist outlook as we characterised it through our discussion of Östman (1995). Säfström's main contribution is interpreted by us to come in the form of his conception of context and his elaboration of meaning as discursive. Säfström's (1994, p. 125) synthesis of this (critical) pragmatist outlook and a theory or discourse highlights the centrality of two key metaphors, those of "movement" [*rörelse*] and "dynamism" [*dynamik*].

Both concepts are seen by Säfström to address the conception of the social as continual discursive construction and practice. Such a dynamic con-

ception of the productive character of the social is seen by Säfström (1994, p. 33f) to be compatible with a Mannheimian sociology of knowledge. In his appeal to Mannheim, Säfström can be seen to draw on our earlier discussed argument of Englund (1986, 1990), where Säfström (1994, p. 33) sees dynamism to be characterised by or result out of a battle for dominance between different social forces.

A consequence of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is, thus, a focus on dynamism, change and movement, in contrast to the static points of departure for analysis in social sciences of societal phenomena as, for example, education [*utbildning*] and teaching [*undervisning*]. Another consequence of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge results in case we proceed from the generality in the term society, that is to say, a depiction [*angivande*] of a collective mode of functioning [*funktionssätt*] and possibility of (historic) change [*förändrlighet*]. (Säfström, 1994, p. 34, author's translation)

While Säfström's second consequence, as addressed in the quote above, is interpreted by us to be somewhat unspecific, we might ask ourselves to what extent he breaks or continues an appeal to systemic or organic functionalism. He is interpreted by us to highlight how conflict and societal functionalism, as referring to a closed mode of societal production, can be seen to be antithetical.

A conflictual notion of change that denotes, on the one hand, a purely antagonistic position and, on the other, a synthesising position can be seen to be expressed in Säfström's comment in the quote below that states that the reproduction of society is only within the interest of a limited strata, which aims to reproduce society as a form of social organisation.

At every point in time in history exists only one stratum in whose interest it is to maintain the existing economic and social form of organisation and which therefore maintains the corresponding form of thought [*tankeformen*] or worldview. At the same time there exist different strata whose forms of thought emanate out of passed [*passerade*] forms of organisation and additional other strata whose world views have not yet taken place and therefore place their destiny into the future. (Säfström, 1994, p. 33, author's translation)

If we conceive society in its functionality as an existing social form of organisation, we might ask Säfström, as a conceptual person: To what extent renders the antagonistic force, as a collection of oppositional other strata that are not sharing the interest of society's reproduction of a single stratum, society's structural functioning possible? To put it differently: How is it possible that all other strata are forced to function in a way that is not in their interest?

As we might point out, this societal perspective, in its comprehensive appeal or organisation, is in our engagement with Säfström interpreted to relate to his appeal to a notion of power. It is with regards to this conception of power that Säfström (1994, p. 125 & 131f) can be seen to share Östman's conception of Cherryholmes' earlier problematised notion of power. While Säfström, in a similar fashion to Östman, is seen by us to evade in certain aspects the need of theoretical conception of power in his appeal to Cherryholmes, we put forward that it is towards the discursive, as the terrain of the conception of forms of thought and worldviews and battle among these, that Säfström (1994, p. 72ff) turns in order to depict which worldviews are dominant in a specific period of history. Säfström (1994, p. 74f) is in this way conceiving discursive (pre)dominance, as relating to the quantity of patterns in textual production, in terms of power.

The argument that we shall be making is that Säfström (1994) and other representatives of the next generation of Swedish curriculum theory in their appeals to power and in their implicit notion of temporality appeal to figures of reasoning that can be seen to require reference points that are understood to stand in a somewhat problematic relation to their conception of dynamism.

While we have problematised the use of power already with regards to Östman (1995), in the following, we will focus on how the issue of temporality can be seen to emerge in Säfström's conception of the discursive and context.

The theoretical positioning that the discursive and context attain in Säfström (1994) can be seen to be that of a fusion of Englund's focus on content and meaning, as indicators for conflict, with Neo-pragmatism and discourse theory. What we will argue is that this fusion can be seen to privilege structural closure as it is related to the pragmatist notion of society, where existing conflict is subdued to that closure as a system of relations.

Claims of knowledge [*Kunskapsanspråk*] are, thus, verified by the current society, rather than in the form of privileged representations. From this follows that epistemic authority cannot be explained with reference to rationality, instead epistemic authority and rationality can only be explained in relation to a specific society at a specific point in time. The point of departure thereby becomes the social-historical possible dialogue [*samtalet*]. This *socio-historic holism* does not necessitate idealist or metaphysical foundations just because it departs from the possible dialogue. Through this socio-historic holism, that is to say, the neopragmatic perspective, knowledge is perceived as a field of force rather than an architectonic structure. A specification of the nature of knowledge is from this perspective a depiction of human and socially verifiable behaviour [*beteende*]. (Säfström, 1994, p. 72f, author's translation, author's emphasis)

Our argument is that the “socio-historic holism” referred to above, as related to the pragmatist notion of society, reduces the field of force that Säfström conceptualises to a unified field of relations, rather than, as we will argue in the next section, conceiving it as an essentially overdetermined field without a transcendental reference point that keeps it internally aligned. We argue that this unification of dynamics, as a moment of their sublation, is the result of the appeal to holism.

### **Diachronic change and context**

While our conception of the social in the next section is very closely related to Säfström’s conception of a dynamical field above, it differs in relation to a number of central figures of reasoning that we see Säfström to draw upon. These differences can be seen to become apparent once we take a close look at how Säfström addresses temporality with regard to the system of relations that the field of forces represents.

By focusing [on] content in terms of meaning and by *historitisation (introducing movement and change)* is the structuralist character in the language game problematised. That what is done can be rather described as a castling within the language game; through *centring on the historical and social meaning construction of content* is the analysis of the system subdued to such an analysis; *the diachronic precedes the study of the synchronic*. (Säfström, 1994, p. 122, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

What Säfström can in the quote above be seen to suggest is that an Englundian focus on diachronic difference, as relating to diachronic change within society and its formation, allows for an understanding of how apparent synchronic formations are not an expression of a-temporal or essential features of society. Instead, we see Säfström suggest that a focus on the diachronic allows for an understanding of how these synchronic formations shift over time as a result of successful battles between antagonistic forces.

To recall our earlier discussion, Englund is interpreted by us to conceive of the synchronic formation of society as power relations that are specific for a particular point in time and where these power relations change over time.

The general theoretical perspective in the third stadium is to see education and its content as a field of force that is defined by social forces in battle. The ultimate power centre of this battle is the state, but it is also a ‘battle of interpretation’ that is ongoing at all levels (and that becomes more obvious during decentralisation etc.). It is in this way in which the education system manifests how reality should be perceived and educational knowledge is constructed, it amounts to that certain power relations are consolidated or transformed. (Englund, 1990, p. 28, author’s translation)

As the quote highlights, Englund sees this change over time to be primarily centred on the state where, as we earlier highlighted, the constitution of this shift from political to dominance remains somewhat obscured, especially with regard to how the plurality involved in struggle can be subdued or reduced to a dominant singular, that is to say, dominant ideology.

The struggle between different ideologies concerning education is thus overdetermined by the existing hegemony, both centrally and locally. The latter can in turn best be changed if the state propagates a certain dominant ideology over a long period of time. An existing hegemony can also mean, however, that certain aims which are put forward as part of the dominant ideology are thwarted and never attain hegemony. (Englund, 1986, p. 196)

It is suggested by us that we can interpret the primacy of the study of the diachronic, which is in line with Englund's perspective on diachronic change, as it is appealed to in the quote from Säfström above, is central to Säfström.

The diachronic is, as a consequence of this understanding of change, in Säfström understood to open up the understanding of the directionality of change. With regards to this directionality of change, we might say that Säfström, in line with Englund, moves away from a determinist focus on reproduction and to relate, through a focus on the diachronic, change to the contingency of synchronic struggle between multiple forces, as they engage in the shaping of content and meaning.

Content perceived as *contingent meaning* qualifies the question of objectives in the sense that objectives are *not locked to a question of social control and reproduction*. Which meaning or which meanings are produced through for example, learning materials and teaching practices [*undervisningspraktik*] becomes an *open question, that is to say worth of studying against the background of specific [skilda] historic-social contexts [sammanhang/contexter]*. These contexts, that as partial results [*delresultat*] of an inquiry can consist of, as in Englund (1986a), the discursive context [*sammanhangen*] patriarchal, scientific rational and democratic, whereby the content of knowledge [*kunskapsinnehållet*] (*the relation between individual-society*) attains its *specific meaning [innebörd] varying over time*, that is to say a variation in content of socialisation [*socialisationsinnehåll*]. (Säfström, 1994, p. 122, author's translation, author's emphasis)

This "historical social context" mentioned in the quote above determines content and meaning. Meaning is, as the quote below by Säfström highlights, conceived to be determined by usage and purpose of language use as action, that is to say, the produced context. Further, variation of meaning is in the quote below seen to vary *over time*.

What becomes necessary from such a point of departure is a constant shift between text (in its narrow meaning) and context, that is to say, “meaning is context-bound (and hence not, in any given context limitless), but what may count as a fruitful context cannot be specified in advance—that context itself, is in principle, limitless” (Collini, 1992, p. 13). This can be qualified with a neo-pragmatic standpoint: “Meaning derives from usage and purpose” (Cherryholmes 1991, p. 31), that is to say context is determined [*bestämms*] by *usage and purpose*. (Säfström, 1994, p. 123, partial translation, author’s emphasis)

With regards to this conception of meaning, as being bound to context, we might ask Säfström: How should we perceive *context*?

As the conception above highlights, meaning is provided by, or we might say determined by, context, but at the same time Säfström puts via Collini forward that context is in principle limitless. What is the principle of limitlessness of context supposed to underline? Is it that context can take any form and is contingent in its synchronic form?

If we would follow this line of reasoning we might say that meaning would be impossible, since we would not be able to specify the relating context that is to provide meaning. The phrasing of ‘in advance’ in the quote above might suggest that it is rather in relation to the variation of context over time that context might in principle be limitless, that is to say, that meaning is contingent in its diachronic form.

If that would be the case, we could ask Säfström with regards to the assumed synchronic non-contingency of context: How does context relate to Context as the historic-social context? Would context in this be entailing a notion of socio-historic holism and consist of a closed system of relations among contexts, that is to say, represent a unified context?

## **Holism**

We argue that it is such a unified or holistic context that Säfström can be seen to be appealing to in the reference to historical-social context in the earlier quote, where we might assume that such an appeal is inherited from Englund.

Yet, we might add that Säfström can be seen to appeal to a discursive holism instead of a Marxist holism. It is with regards to the introduction of this discourse perspective that an alternative entrance point for holism, as relating to a shared reference point, can be seen to be provided.

Foucault (1972) defines discursive practices in the following way: “a body of anonymous, historical rules, *always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period*, and for a given social, economical, geographical, or linguistic area *the conditions of operation of the enunciative function*” (p. 117). (Säfström, 1994, p. 74, partial translation, author’s emphasis)

Säfström is, in his appeal to Foucault in the quote above, interpreted to suggest that the determination of discursive practices in time and space refers to Foucault's notion of *historical a priori*. We argue that, in his conception of discursive practise, Säfström is opening up for traces to figures of reasoning that allow him a historic conception of discursive practices and discursive holism. In the following, we are to explore these traces as they can be seen to provide for the claim in the quote above that discursive practices are always determined in space and time and defined by a given period that provides the conditions of operation of the enunciative function.

Foucault sees this *historical a priori* to represent the point of convergence of the whole, which does not necessarily provides coherence, nor necessarily puts in relation, except at the point of convergence.

The reason for using this rather barbarous term [historical *a priori*] is that this *a priori* must take account of statements in their dispersion, in all the flaws opened up by their non-coherence, in their overlapping and mutual replacement, in their simultaneity, which is not unifiable, and in their succession, which is not deductible; in short, it has to take account of the fact that discourse has not only a meaning or a truth, but a history, and a specific history that does not refer it back to the laws of an alien development. (Foucault, 1972, p. 143)

Rather than a unified whole, where all different parts could be related to each other in relation to a unifying principle or centre, the *historical a priori* is, as Foucault puts it, a complex whole in its non-coherent dispersion, it is the point that stands behind all the non-coherence in dispersion and that brings so to say that dispersion back together in its discursiveness. In case we conceive of this *historical a priori* as a connection to history, that is to say, as a historic point of convergence, it might become possible to trace these points of connection as part of the study of *archives* that are to denote the *episteme* of a period.

The formal *a priori* and the historical *a priori* neither belong to the same level nor share the same nature: if they intersect, it is because they occupy two different dimensions. The domain of statements thus articulated in accordance with historical *a prioris*, thus characterized by different types of positivity, and divided up by distinct discursive formations, no longer has that appearance of a monotonous, endless plain that I attributed to it at the outset when I spoke of 'the surface of discourse'; it also ceases to appear as the inert, smooth, neutral element in which there arise, each according to its own movement, or driven by some obscure dynamic, themes, ideas, concepts, knowledge. We are now dealing with a complex volume, in which heterogeneous regions are differentiated or deployed, in accordance with specific rules and practices that cannot be superposed. (Foucault, 1972, p. 144)

What Foucault can be seen to suggest is that a dispersion in statements can be seen to be related back to a point of coherence, that is, the *historic a priori*, which is specific to a historic period, yet where that dispersion is not singular, in relation to a single “positivity”, but in relation to “different types of positivity”, which as a result of their plurality produce a complex discursive formation.

As mentioned above, it is through the study of archives that we can identify the unifying *episteme*, which is the unifying point, or the point that the dispersion of statements can be seen to emanate from.

This *episteme* may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge, which imposes on each one the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape—a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand. (Foucault, 1972, p. 211)

It is in this sense that Foucault cannot primarily be seen to be interested in the study of texts, as statements made, but to be primarily concerned with the determination of texts in relation to a point of convergence, that is to say, he is primarily interested in the study of discourses as they point towards their unifying *episteme*.

It is in this context of a Foucauldian notion of *historic a priori* and *episteme* that we argue that Säfström’s and Englund’s focus on the diachronic can be seen to be compatible with Foucault’s view on history, as being characterised by periods with their respective *episteme*. Further, we argue that it is in his appeal to discourse and discursive practices that traces to Foucault’s notion of history can be seen to be at play in Säfström’s (1994) understanding of socio-historic context.

### **Foucauldian notion of history and discourse**

In relation to Säfström’s view on history, we argue that it entails a particular view of temporality, where temporality is primarily not understood in relation to the textual, the synchronic practice of writing, but with regards to a slice of time, the historic period and its particular social-historical context to which it is related. This is to say, Säfström’s notion of history is interpreted by us to be primarily concerned with discursive temporality rather than textual temporality.

It is with regards to this discursive temporality that the discursive formation is by us in the context of our discussion of Foucault interpreted to present a whole, where this whole is kept together by the *historical a priori* that represents an “in-between” of discursive events. Discursive events can be seen to introduce a change over time.

A discursive formation, then, does not play the role of a figure that arrests time and freezes it for decades or centuries; it determines a regularity proper to temporal processes; it presents the principle of articulation *between a series of discursive events* and other series of events, transformations, mutations, and processes. It is not an atemporal form, but a schema of correspondence *between several temporal series*. (Foucault, 1972, p. 83, author's emphasis)

We would like to suggest that this notion of temporality, as it relates to the discursive event, entails the notion of temporality where the event (discursive event) is the coming into being of a historical difference, as a break between temporal series and a form of diachronic change. This form of temporality as defined by the discursive event is interpreted by us to be drawn upon in Säfström's (1994, p. 74, author's translation) statement that discursive practices are "always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period", where we might say that changes in periods are due to discursive events.

In the context of such a form of temporality, we like to put forward the following question: To what extent is the discursive event possible, if discursive practices are "always determined in time and in space" (Säfström, 1994, p. 74, author's translation)?

In fact, the systematic erasure of all given unities enables us first of all to restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence, and to show that *discontinuity is one of those great accidents that create cracks* not only in the geology of history, but also in the simple fact of the statement; it *emerges* in its *historical irruption*; what we try to examine is the incision that it makes, that irreducible—and very often tiny—*emergence*. (Foucault, 1972, p. 31, author's emphasis)

Would this "great accident" not, as Foucault can be seen to acknowledge, already be a constitutive part of the statement? Would the discursive as denoting the dispersion (determination?), not already necessitate a non-dispersion, that is to say, the historical irruption?

We argue, the logical necessity of these suggested accidental statements and the non-dispersion as a non-regularity would emerge out of the theoretical conception of *discursive* events, where the discursive refers to the *determined* regularity, which, however, needs to allow for the incision of that otherness that would allow for an emergence of a radical difference. Following up on this issue, we could also ask Foucault as a conceptual persona that is to account for Säfström's conception of discursive practice: Does this incision allow for the entrance of a discursively external alterity or has this alterity emerged from the within, as a mutation of that which was already there? Would the event as mutation or transformation be a rare event or as in evolutionary theory that which has already happened and is always happen-

ing? To prefigure our later discussion and to reconnect to our dialogue with Östman (1995), we ask Foucault, as a conceptual persona, and in a secondary instance Säfström (1994) with regards to his conception of context: *Would the possibility of the statement not necessitate a certain madness of the enunciative subject, that is to say, the necessity of an accidental statement?*

The Säfström that we here constitute as our dialogical partner seems to differ with us, since he holds that discourse as rule bound is in control of the statement.

The rules of the discourse control what is said and what remains [*blir*] unsaid [*osagt*] and it identifies who is talking with authority and who must listen: Discourses dominant in a historical period and geographical local *determine what counts as true*, important, or relevant, what gets spoken, what remains unsaid (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 35). (Säfström, 1994, p. 74, partial translation, original emphasis)

It is in the quote above mentioned “historical period”, as an in-between, that can, according to our imposition of Foucault on Cherryholmes and Säfström, be differentiated in relation to a *historical a priori*, where the *historical a priori* is seemingly to provide in a regulative centre in relation to which dispersion proceeds.

From this perspective, the *historical a priori* is, besides being that which provides cohesion, also that which provides the possibility of change, that is to say, that which itself defines the possibility of its own death. According to this figure of reasoning, the *historical a priori* has to provide the paradox possibility of its own vanishing, as it is to account for the incision of that which not yet has been said and the entrance of a different historical period.

It is in this context of the *historical a priori* as a regulative centre that determines the rules of the discourse that this notion of *historical a priori* can be seen to come close to the historicity of practice in Säfström’s depiction.

A practice is discursive to that extent that it is regular [*regelbunden*], that is to say, to the extent it builds on socially (and historically) grounded *conventions*. (Säfström, 1994, p. 74, author’s translation, author’s emphasis)

Säfström can, in a similar fashion to Dewey’s notion of communication as pragmatic, be seen to suggest that the discursive is the concerted consensus in action—we might say conventionality—that can be seen to sublimate the individuality or momentary aspect of practice and to merge or to sublimate it in the whole.<sup>60</sup> It is in this sense of merging in a whole that we interpret Säf-

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<sup>60</sup> In order to substantiate this claim of compatibility between Säfström’s argument and Dewey’s notion of communication, we might take the following remark regarding language and communication into account: “Language is always a form of action and in its instrumental use

ström's conception of the discursive as to highlight the conventionality of the practice, that is to say, the possibility of the meaningful in practice, as a dispersion of a discursive formation.

Yet, in the context of this conventionality of practice, we would like to make another argumentative injunction. To start with, we raise the issue that this ascribed conventionality of practice will, as Säfström already specified, entail "a purpose", in relation to which the conventionality is to be judged. To make this point, we need to recall that Säfström stated that meaning is determined by usage and purpose. We might in the context of this argument by Säfström assume that it is the actual practice and the instance of usage that is to bare evidence to the purpose behind, or the purpose that is *a priori* to the performance. It is then with regards to this performance, we might say its conventionality, that we, following this suggested line of reasoning, can identify the purpose and as a result the meaning of that performance. Yet, with regards to this line of reasoning we would like to ask Säfström: Is this conventionality of practice not necessarily entailing the possibility of failure, either the failure of achieving the purpose or the failure of the observer to identify the purpose behind the usage?

Säfström (1994) does not provide us with an answer—and *how could he?* Would he in the absence of an answer and the possibility of raising the question then not have to acknowledge that all this dialogue with *him* would have been a misunderstanding of the purpose with which *he* (Säfström, 1994) has *written* these quoted lines? Would our misunderstanding be that of *violence*, as Foucault might suggest, or would it as we suggest highlight that his performance of *writing* these lines was *not able to determine or to give the context in which they were to be read?*

Meaning is contextually *given*, that is to say, meaning is produced within ongoing discourses. (Säfström, 1994, p. 74, author's translation, author's emphasis)

Leaving this last question open, we might ask: To what *extent* is the meaning of Säfström (1994) produced in this "ongoing discourse" as he suggests in the quote above?

### **Deconstruction and the other Säfström**

We would in the context of these challenging questions above, like to make the suggestion, or reflexive interpretation, that there are at least two Säfströms (1994), which we will label Säfström A and Säfström B. While, we have addressed Säfström A so far, we would like to highlight that Säfström

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is always a means of concerted action for an end, while at the same time it finds in itself all the goods of its possible consequences. For there is no mode of action as fulfilling and as rewarding as is concerted consensus of action. It brings with it the sense of sharing and merging in a whole" (Dewey, 1928, p. 184).

B can be seen to have a discomforting effect on the conception of context provided by Säfström A.

It is Säfström B who is interpreted to suggest that this givenness of meaning, that is to say, the determination of meaning in the discursive practice, that is to say, context, is not possible.

A different way of putting it is to say that meaning is never identical to itself. This can be qualified in two ways. First, meaning is spread out over a potentially limitless chain of words, which means that meaning rather [*snarast*] is created through a constant shifting between that which is present and that which is absent. Second, a sign [*tecken*], in order to be a sign and not an isolated coincidence, is able to be repeated, reproduced. But a sign that is repeated in different contexts attains different meanings in relation to that context. This reasoning tends to *dissolve the possibility of any determination of [fastställa] of meaning*: “It is just that, out of this play of signifiers, certain meanings are elevated by social ideologies to a privileged position, or made centres around which other meanings are forced to turn” (Eagleton 1983, p. 131). (Säfström, 1994, p. 75, partial translation, author’s emphasis)

We stand in awe of Säfström B (1994), who for a moment, that is to say, in his dissolution of the possibility of any *determination* of meaning in the quote above, can be seen to have undone his own line of argumentation, or at least that of Säfström A, who held that context is *determined* by usage and purpose (Säfström, 1994, p. 123).

We ask ourselves: To what extent is Säfström B questioning the possibility of the project of Säfström A, when Säfström B can be seen to suggest that there is no ultimate meaning?

It is the privileged meaning that is characteristic for the transcending [*transcenderande*] meaning, that is to say, that one which is expected to ground a whole hierarchy of meanings. Or reversed, the privileged meaning is a product of a specific system of meanings. This procedure that entails to show which specific system of meanings that the privileged meaning is a product of, is incorporated in what Jacques Derrida is calling deconstruction. (Säfström, 1994, p. 75f, author’s translation)

This reference to deconstruction and the privileged meaning being a product of a specific *system of meanings* in the quote above, would according to our understanding also depend on *interpretation*, that is to say, it would depend on the interpretation of the privilege and would not *be* the privileged meaning, as a product of a somewhat absent system emerging in, or producing, the particular process of *writing*. Säfström B can be seen to concur with us in the quote below.

That which is deconstructed is the *transcendence of a privileged meaning*, that is to say, the *privileged meaning cannot be said to exceed the specific system of meanings that it is a product of*. This system of meanings can be compared with those binary contrasts that structuralists excavated in their analyses. Examples for such binary contrasts are man/women, high/low, true/wrong, etc. (Säfström, 1994, p. 76, author's translation, author's emphasis)

To state the obvious, the possibility of deconstruction of the “privileged” meaning mentioned in the quote above, is already a possibility inscribed in the system of meaning-making. As a result of Säfström B's intervention, we might, therefore, question the possibility of meaning being a *product*, as denoting a result, as an arrival or coming into presence, of a system of meanings.

To summarise, deconstructive Säfström B can be seen to focus on text and the practice of writing, while Säfström A (1994) can be depicted by us to see through, or to reach beyond, the text and to speak to and about the discourse behind it. To put it differently again, Säfström A can be seen to treat meaning as products of, while Säfström B rather focuses on the writing as producing, where the productivity is always entailing a promise, that of the final production of meaning.

We make the argument that Säfström A is privileged in Säfström (1994). This privilege can be seen to emerge in Säfström's appeal to the concept of context, which we might interpret to be central to his “purposes”.

I shall use the term “wide context” in order to characterise the socio-historical context [*sammanhanget*] in which texts that are analysed are produced, or, in order to reconnect to Scholes above [...], to characterise a situation that texts are a product of. The term narrow context is used in order to define the for the texts immanent ideological layer. The point with utilising this term is to highlight the *continuity* between wide and narrow context and entails also that a shift in the strategy of analysis: from a structuring to an analysing strategy. I seek with the term of context to *avoid structuralism's problem to handle change as transformation between fixed structures at different levels*. The term is in other words a consequence of the socio-historic perspective that is applied here, that is to say that meaning is localised within *ongoing* discourses. (Säfström, 1994, p. 77, author's translation, author's emphasis)

Yet, Säfström B can be seen to be haunting Säfström A's concept of context and its privilege, as Säfström B might question not only the “continuity” between wide and narrow context, that is to say, the possibility of neatly differentiating among “narrow” and “wide contexts” that give or produce an elusive meaning, but also to ask the question: What would the means of provision of continuity be?

We argue that this questioning would amount to a questioning of the historical *a priori* or the *episteme*, that are to function as the regulative One for the dispersion of utterances. This continuity would not be ruptured by the incision of a presence in the event, but continuity as deconstructive Säfström B might hold would already be different to itself, where the madness and that which is so far unsaid would also already be constitutive, as the failure of convention, as a form of iterability.

It is in the context of such a constitutive failure of convention that we might speak with Säfström B of the problem of synchronic “pure” repetition or the unconventionality of every conventionality that exists in every practice and thereby can be seen to alter, or to split, a practice’s *discursive* moment.

To come back issue of the privilege of the study of the diachronic that Säfström A is suggesting, we might ask: To what extent is the historicisation of the socio-historic context, as it shifts over time, supported by Säfström B?

By focusing [on] content in terms of meaning and by historicising (introducing movement and change) of the structuralist character in the language game is problematised. That what is done can be rather described as a castling within the language game; through centring on the historical and social meaning construction of content is the analysis of the system subdued to such an analysis; the diachronic precedes the study of the synchronic. (Säfström, 1994, p. 122, author’s translation)

In the context of our critical engagement with critical neo-pragmatism within Swedish curriculum study and our critical engagement with the concept of society, we would like to ask Säfström (1994) making these remarks in the quote above: To what extent does Säfström B undermine the constitution of that holism? Wouldn’t the argumentation of Säfström B lead to a problematisation of a *singular* configuration, in relation to which “we” feel, both, a part of and want to distance us from? What would Säfström B, as the mark of deconstruction, would have to say, or rather *write*, about the citizenship-based curriculum or the discursive formation, as dispersion that entails an appeal to a “we”?

But this ‘we’ never stops dividing, and the places of its signature are displaced in being divided up. A certain unlimitedness always disturbs the contemporary who reassures him or herself in a ‘we’. This ‘we’, our ‘we’, is not its own contemporary. The self-identity of its age, or of any age, appears divided, and thus problematic [...]. [...] These decouplings and self-differences no doubt introduce a good deal of disorder into the unity of any configuration, whole, epoch and historical age. Such disturbances make the historians’ work rather difficult, even and especially the work of the most original and refined among them. This self-difference, this difference *to self* (*à soi*) and not simply *with* self, makes life hard if not impossible for historical science.

But inversely, would there be any history, would anything ever *happen*, without the principle of disturbance? Would there ever be any event without this disturbance of the principality? (Derrida, 1997, p. 89, original emphasis)

It is this unmaking or the questioning gesture that undoes the unified synchronicity and the entailing questioning of context in Säfström B that we identify as a central contribution to the next generation of Swedish critical curriculum theory. We acknowledge that he provides a contribution that we take as a point of departure and aim to supplement in our theoretical construction in the next section.

## Remarks on Points of Departure and Convergence

Where does this reflection and problematisation of figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory leave us? How should we understand the relation between the theoretical constitution in the next chapter and the above-depicted “traditions” and figures of reasoning?

While we have so far talked about ruptures or prying moves, and created conceptual personae and events, such as Englund (1986), it is in the context of the possibility of portrayal, as the possibility of writing traditions and figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory, that we would like to suggest that these ruptures or prying interventions are ultimately playing with the notion of a limited grounding or fixture.

This limit, as we have highlighted continuously in our reference to play and dynamism, is then something that we have created, for example, in our writing, but at the same time we see it also as the very condition of the possibility of writing.

As a result, we see our investment of force into the prying moves that we have identified to have taken place in Swedish curriculum theory not as breaks, as the entrance of something radically new, but instead we would like to suggest that they are mutations or reconfigurations of possibilities that were already inscribed into underlying figures of reasoning and configurations among them.

When we, therefore, write about Dewey, Durkheim, Englund, Östman, Ljunggren and Säfström, we treat them not as singular authors, whose original intention or purpose we could identify, but we treat them as to still allow for a play in or with their writing and our reading.

If we then are to denote continuity as a form of alignment of our intervention with Swedish curriculum theory, we might say that we are to engage in the dynamic aspects of this tradition, as they can be interpreted to have been highlighted in Englund (1986).

In the creation of Englund as an event, we aimed to bring back into focus the centrality of conflict as a primary source of dynamism. With this focus in

mind, we will turn away from figures of reasoning, which we have problematised in this section and that we have interpreted to denote stasis, closure, essential unity and structural determination.

It is in the mutation, our play with figures of reasoning, that we refocus, again, from the diachronic to the synchronic. It is in this context not to an a-temporal synchrony that we (re)turn, which would allow us for the identification of a-temporal causal laws or truths, but it is towards synchronic contingency that we turn—a synchronic that is already at any moment different to itself—in order to denote how the traces to the past are incapable to determine the present.

We argue, such a determinate present would constitute the present as a system in which the past as determinate reference point for meaning and identity would eradicate the need for articulation and decision. Thus, we argue, articulation and decision will not be determined by the past. The argument that is made in the context of our turn towards the synchronic is that if the present is already different to itself, then the past will also allow for a play and, as a result, our mutation of traditions within Swedish curriculum theory will also be a possibility that derives out of the past.

Our turn towards the synchronic is, therefore, a concession to writing and reading. If we then return in our reading of Dewey, Durkheim, Englund, Östman, Ljunggren and Säfström to Darwin, we would like to state that we have been very true to the traditions of Swedish curriculum theory that can be seen to appeal to figures of reasoning associated with evolution, as we in our prying move are returning to Darwin's theory of evolution.

This theory of evolution and its figures of reasoning have a long tradition in Swedish curriculum theory, as evolution is identified by us to have been drawn upon in order to conceive of society, change and the role of education. However, we are not leaning on a notion of evolution that highlights the role of adaptation, but are playing in our reading with Darwin, since we are playing with the very conception of the relationship between environment, mutation and adaptation, which is to provide us with a deconstructive perspective on the synchronic.

It is in the context of such a deconstructive perspective on the synchronic that we identify Žižek (2005) to have read Darwin in a playful way.

Does the strict Darwinian notion of 'adaptation' not claim that, precisely, organisms, do not directly 'adapt', that there is *strictu sensu* no 'adaptation' in the teleological sense of the term? Contingent genetic changes occur, and some of them enable some organisms to function better and survive in an environment that is itself fluctuating and articulated in a complex way, but there is not linear adaptation to a stable environment: when something unexpectedly changes in the environment, a feature which hitherto prevented full 'adaptation' can suddenly become crucial for the organism's survival. So Darwin effectively prefigures a version of Derridean *différance* or of Freudian

*Nachträglichkeit*, according to which contingent and meaningless genetic changes are retroactively used [...] in a manner appropriate for survival. In other words, what Darwin provides is a model explanation of how a state of things which appears to involve a well-ordered teleological economy (animals doing things ‘in order to ...’), is effectively the outcome of a series of meaningless changes. (Žižek, 2005, p. 82f)

What Žižek is seen by us to suggest is that adaptation is never in relation to an existing environment, but always in relation to an a particular “environment” that is seen to already have been.

What is at stake in this conception of adaptation, which highlights the primacy of the contingency and continuity of mutation, is the conception of environment as providing a point of departure or, put differently, the origin, from which and towards which adaptation is to take place. Environment and, in a secondary instance society are according to such a mutative perspective on evolution interpreted by us to be incapable of determining my position as subject and the direction of development as part of adaptation or socialisation, since the environment and society at any given point is already different to itself.<sup>61</sup>

We highlight that adaption and socialisation are an afterwards-construction in relation to something that has already taken place. In this conception of evolutionary theory, a very different notion of temporality can be seen to be appealed to, one that differs from teleological language, a form of language that we see to be at play in the notion of society in Durkheim (1893, 1897, 1922) and in the notion of social progress in Dewey (1900, 1916).<sup>62</sup> Scholars, whose evolutionary conception of the relation between society and education have continuously shaped Swedish curriculum theory.

The temporality here is future anterior, that is, “adaptation” is something that always and by definition “will have been”. And this enigma of how (the semblance of) teleological and meaningful order can emerge from contingent and meaningless occurrences not also central to deconstruction? (Žižek, 2005, p. 83)

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<sup>61</sup> We see the environment to relate to the conception of society, as the environment plays a crucial role in explaining change as a form of societal adaptation to changes in the environment in Durkheim (1893). Similarly, nature and environment are for Dewey (1928) concepts that are central to his metaphysics of existence, growth and life and how these concepts are to be understood to relate to continuity and change.

<sup>62</sup> While Dewey can be seen to counter a teleological mode of reasoning in his appeal to empiricism, as empiricism opens up possibility of an experience of contingency, Dewey can be seen appeal to a *telos* with regards to certain concepts and figures of reasoning. For a discussion of his ascribed natural teleology see Johnston (2011), and for a discussion of Dewey’s progressivism that we interpret to be involved in his by us characterised teleological language, see Miettinen (2006).

This delay, or future anteriority, that is appealed to in this notion of temporality will, as Žižek highlights above, have been a bracketed notion of temporality, that is a temporality where there is still a subversion from outside of the brackets that we create in order to organise time.

There is, therefore, no history, no social progress as singular historical directionality, no accumulative evolution, since the trace in the articulation to that which “will have been” supplements that originary place of the event in relation to which “adaptation” took place.

Arche-writing, at first the possibility of the spoken word, then of the “*graphie*” in the narrow sense, the birthplace of “usurpation”, denounced from Plato to Saussure, *this trace is the opening of first exteriority in general, the enigmatic relationship of the living to its other of an inside to an outside: spacing*. The outside, “spatial” and “objective” exteriority which we believe we know as the most familiar thing in the world, as familiarity itself, would appear without the *grammé*, without difference as temporalisation, without the nonpresence of the other inscribed within sense of the present, without the relationship with death as the concrete structure of the living present. (Derrida, 1967, p. 70, author’s emphasis)

We interpret, in the context of the quote above, the trace, as Derrida plays with it, to allow for the entering of an exteriority, a living exteriority of temporal difference or, to use Derrida’s words, difference as temporalisation. The inverted commas of “will have been” attempt to keep the living exteriority or movement at bay. However, we might in the context of our discussion of adaptation add that this exteriority as environment is a living environment, not a stasis, and hence will already be different to itself, thereby subverting through the temporalisation these inverted commas as a form of bracketing.

So, what the conception of society as stasis, that is to say, space as a relational positioning of identities, in Swedish curriculum theory can be seen to keep at bay is its living character; where we can see this attempt to keep its living character at bay to take the form of acts of spacing.

This is why the *a* of *différance*, also recalls that *spacing is temporization*, the detour and postponement by means of which intuition, perception, consumption—in a word, the relationship to the present, the reference to a present reality, to a *being*—are always *deferred*. Deferred by virtue of the very principle of difference which holds that an element functions and signifies, takes on or conveys meaning, only by referring to another past or future element in an economy of traces. (Derrida, 1981, p. 29, author’s emphasis)

If we then interpret this above mentioned-passive-active aspect of spacing as to haunt any space, we might once again problematise the concept of society as denoting a whole.

Following Derrida's remarks we might say that society, as the *name* for a whole, will inevitably be subverted by its exteriority, and as a result we might question the usability of that name "society", since once we abandon all appeals to a closed structure or essence of a community, society will solely stand in for the name of the interiority of that comprehensive community. However, this interiority of ascribed to the name of society will be subverted by its living character, that is to say, the trace, which is not standing in relation to an absolute past or origin of that society.

This passivity is also the relationship to a past, to an always-already-there that no reactivation of the origin could fully master and awaken to presence. This impossibility of reanimating absolutely the manifest evidence of an originary presence refers us therefore to an absolute past. That is what authorized us to call *trace* that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present. (Derrida, 1967, p. 66, original emphasis)

If we take this passive-active character of spacing, for example, with regard to what we call the social, serious, it will be impossible to reanimate the structure that we might call society, or to delimit its interiority.

The limit of the social must be given within the social itself as something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence. Society never manages to fully to be society, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevents it from constituting itself as an objective reality. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 127)

Based on this passive-active character of the constitutive moment of the social, that is to say, its articulation and deferral, we argue that it is in relation to the subverting moment of the articulation of the internal and external that we turn in order to conceive how different social groups engage in the articulation of political demands and aim to constitute, in their efforts stabilise or to *passivise*, that which never can be fully constituted, that is to say, society.

As a result of this evolutionary perspective and the appeal to *difference* our foci of interest will change accordingly. Mutation, as change, will be interpreted to be continuous and constant, not limited to rare discursive events.

This is not to say that there will be no social events, as *discursive* and *created* collective orientation points in time, but our focus will move from the periodical, phase or *historical a priori*, which provide shared points of reference, to the effects of subversion of attempts at establishing events, that is to establish order. Thereby, our focus of interest turns towards the irreducible political moment that is involved in the constitution of the social as that complex order.

It is with this political moment in mind that we, in Section 3, will engage in a (re)conception of temporality in order to conceptualise the active moment in *différance*. Accordingly, our focus will move to the subversive effects of the difference-to-self of the historical period, stage, problematic situation, etc. We will with regards to these subversive effects introduce the term “spatialisation”, where the limit, as denoting the dimension of time, so to speak, undermines that *spatialising*, that is to say, writing, attempts at closure.

Our departure point will, therefore, differentiate itself from that common figure of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory, which conceives of society as a reality or socio-historic context that as such determines the conditions of social life within it. The variation or the play we are attempting to capture can be seen as a turning upside-down of the figure of reasoning of society as determined reality. In this gesture of displacement, where we rather appeal to social life in its diversity, complexity and openness than society as a point of convergence and fixation, we see social actors as to engage in the practice of passivising that dynamism in order to give meaning and direction to society, that is, they are attempting to subordinate that dynamism in varying degrees to context.

Yet, all contexts, even the most inclusive ones such as comprehensive society, will remain its dynamic or, better put, active, character due to the temporal dimension that is involved in that practice, which we might call writing.

Society as a *present* reality is for us not a reality that presents itself, but rather we are thrown into a reality, or rather an existence, where the Being of the world is not presented to us in its present presence, but where *we* have to bring into presence that Being of the world, entailing as Derrida suggests a deferral and a promise.<sup>63</sup>

While we in our conception of education do not emanate from society as a present reality, we do not eradicate society from our conception of education, but install it as a promise and a name for that promise into the future. Society in our understanding is a myth that is politically invested in.

This future is a future that is never to arrive, as Laclau and Mouffe underline, since society never manages to be fully itself. This arrival is out of

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<sup>63</sup> It needs to be specified that by “presence of a present” we address Derrida’s critique of metaphysics. Derrida sees metaphysics since Aristotle to be primarily concerned with and centred on presence in the present. In this metaphysics an identity, so to speak, reverberates a form of presence, where that identity functions as an origin that denotes that which the thing is. As Derrida highlights (1988, p. 93f), this metaphysics of presence is characterised by a “hierarchical axiology”, where the origin or pure precedes the deviant or impure. It is in this sense that a particular notion of time is also appealed to in the metaphysics of presence, where the origin as pure or invariable identity is always placed *a priori*. It is this form of anterior identity of presence that Derrida (1967, p. 50) treats as partially synonymous to essence, existence, substance, subject, transcendentality, consciousness, God etc., in the sense that it is the presence of this anterior identity that is fundamental for metaphysics.

reach, since this constitution would have to eradicate the constitutive play and activity involved in its articulation, that is to say, extract temporality fully from its constitutive moment.

Where does this leave us? We have to acknowledge the role of mutation as the constant contingent form of change that subverts the idea of a singular or stable relationship between an organism and its environment. However, we are neither willing, nor able of to abandon a notion of adaptation in the face of this traumatic acknowledgment, since we might say a world of mutation is a world of madness. In the face of such a world of madness, we feel condemned to bring light into this darkness in the form of retrospective reason or, to put it differently, to render that world of madness meaningful.

While some might interpret deconstruction to be primarily concerned with engaging with this traces of “madness”, or the absence/presence of the trace itself, we would rather suggest that these traces of madness are the point of departure and not the destination of our theoretico-constructive intervention, an intervention which some might label deconstructive.

As, for example, in the case of our earlier discussion of the conception of decision in Östman (1995), we might, in the context of the traces of madness, comment that the moment of the decision will be one of madness, that is to say, the decision will be truly contingent, yet the choice, that is to say, the particular way to proceed, will be in line with a certain reasonableness, that is, a certain language game or discourse. This means, while the decision is a form of mutation, which we will argue smites in its madness the choice that is decided upon, there exists an urgency to overcome that contingency involved in the decision and to *a posteriori* present the choice as rational or reasonable.

What we are aiming at here is to highlight that our conception centres not on either madness or reason, but aims to show how the limit between the two is subverted and how any stability as rationality or *objectivity* provided in practice, that is to say, in articulation, is to a certain extent dependent on an unlimitedness, where, as Derrida highlighted, that unlimitedness disturbs the contemporary in a form of self-difference, a difference-to-self. This unlimitedness, with which a decision is faced, is interpreted to highlight the active character of any attempt at stabilisation as rationalisation/spatialisation, where Derrida as our conceptual persona (1997, p. 89) asked: Would there be any event without the disturbance of the principality?

The dimension of time or, better put, temporality, is thus not perceived in terms of periods, stages or in-betweens that would allow for connection and function as a premise of uniformity, but instead temporality is understood as that which subverts any appeals to uniformity. Such a disturbing temporality is understood by us as to take the form of an Event. Time is that which shows that things have already been different.

This is not to say that we break with the notion of discourse or curriculum code as regularity in dispersion of articulations of the world over time, but

rather that we abandon an appeal to the possibility of their ultimate exclusivity or dominance in time. We acknowledge a form of regularity that can be identified, where this regularity is interpreted to be that of a particular discourse, however, there will according to our understanding of discourse be a variation in any regularity and we see the play among these variations not to be determined by the discursive formation.

In this context of the conception of regularity, we differ with the perspective on regularity that can be seen to be put forward by Foucault, who, as we earlier specified, sees a discursive formation to *determine regularity* proper to temporal processes.

A discursive formation, then, does not play the role of a figure that arrests time and freezes it for decades or centuries; it determines a regularity proper to temporal processes; it presents the principle of articulation *between a series of discursive events* and other series of events, transformations, mutations, and processes. It is not an atemporal form, but a schema of correspondence *between several temporal series*. (Foucault, 1972, p. 83, author's emphasis)

Such a determining regularity of the whole, for example, the discursive formation, has also been problematised by us with regards to Säfström A as a conceptual persona, as we see it to put back in relation a diversity of events to the One.

As already suggested, we put forward a different notion of event and temporality, where time or the Event, commonly perceived as *a point in time*, so to speak, is not the common referent in relation to which a number of spatialising practices can be neatly arranged, but where time—similar to our evolutionary appeal to mutation—is associated with a certain excess. To specify, by the excess of the event we mean that the singularity of the event, its *point in time*, is somewhat evasive.

To relate our earlier discussion of Dewey to this discussion of the role of mutation and deferred regularity, it is this play at any point in time, or the evasiveness of that point, that is interpreted by us to problematise the traces of functionalism and teleology in Swedish curriculum theory. In order to substantiate this problematisation, we have to recall that evolution is basically not conceived as the linear adaptation of the organism to a stable environment.

Contingent genetic changes occur, and some of them enable some organisms to function better and survive in an environment that is itself fluctuating and articulated in a complex way, but there is not linear adaptation to a stable environment: when something unexpectedly changes in the environment, a feature which hitherto prevented full 'adaptation' can suddenly become crucial for the organism's survival. (Žižek, 2005, p. 82)

The problematisation centres, therefore, on the assumed stability of the environment (society), that is the equilibrium or stasis of it and, as this section aimed to highlight, also the stability or closure of society. Functionality is in this perspective not determined at a point in time. Time, in a mutative evolutionary perspective is, thus, not conceived as a dignifier, as that which is deferred yet able to reveal to afterwards-constructions how it really has been.

A “cause” is not merely an antecedent; it is that antecedent which if manipulated regulates the occurrence of the consequent. [...] Knowing that consequences will take care of themselves if conditions can be had and managed, an ineradicable natural pragmatism indulges in a cheap and short conversion, and conceives the cause as intrinsically more primary and necessary. This practical tendency is increased by the fact that time is a softener and dignifier; present troubles lose their acuteness when they are no longer present. (Dewey, 1928, p. 109)

Our conception of evolution would withhold the arrival of the *knowing* of the cause, since the cause cannot be determined in relationship to a singular structural relation. This relation is, as Žižek’s comment highlights, withheld, as this relation is not in relation to a singular stable environment, but a relation to an environment that is always already been different to itself.

With regards to this temporal self-difference we might interpret Wittgenstein to touch upon a related issue, that is, the issue of determination in time, where he, as we earlier suggested in the discussion of Östman’s (1995) notion of rule, sees a temporal paradox to be at work.

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after [*nach*] another; as if each one contended us at least for a moment [*Augenblick*], until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call “obeying the rule” and “going against it” in actual cases [*von Fall zu Fall*]. Hence there is an inclination to say; any action according to the rule [*nach der Regel*] is an interpretation. But we ought to restrict the term “interpretation” to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another [*einen Ausdruck der Regel durch einen anderen ersetzen*]. (Wittgenstein, 1953, §201)

As we earlier suggested, any regularity, which we might call discursive, “can be made out” solely *a posteriori*. Further, this “making out”, as a bringing into accordance, entails a moment of substitution [*Ersetzung*], where the particularity of actual cases [*Fall zu Fall*], as turning towards the moment [*Augenblick*], is subdued to the attempt to make them, that is to say, both cases and moments, accord [*in Übereinstimmung bringen*]. What this comment by Wittgenstein is intended to highlight is that the interpretation, or the

deferred delineation of regularity, is not capable of exhausting the case [Fall] in its temporal embedment. That is to say, we are not capable of knowing the consequences, since this delineation of regularity does not capture the rule or regularity as it “was at work”, since time in this understanding is not over, there might still come a case [Fall] that can undo the apparent regularity that has been at work and thereby suggesting that things have already been different.

To provide an example that is to illuminate what we are aiming for in our problematisation of functionalism and teleology, consider the following series of numbers and suggest, based on the observed regularity the next number that you expect to appear: “1, 2, 3 ...”. We might assume in this case [Fall] that the regularity consists of adding a “4”. However, the series is eventually to be extended in the following fashion “1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 13 ...”.

What we are trying to highlight is that we are not capable of *determining* the rule, but solely to provide an interpretation of regularity, where the regularity that *has been* and *is* depends on that *what is still to come*. Or, as Žižek (2005, p. 82f) interprets the consequence of Darwin’s evolutionary theory, it allows us to approach an understanding of “how a state of things, which appear to involve a well-ordered teleological economy, is effectively the outcome of a series of meaningless changes”.

What this meaninglessness is interpreted by us to indicate is the contingency of Being, where no order, as a necessity, can determine change or Being, since Being due to its living character is already different to itself, we might say contingent. Meaning, as providing Being, is from our championed perspective seen as accompanied with an initial contingency, where this contingency can be seen to haunt every attempt at establishing order and that at the same time renders possible the play among attempts to establish order.

This implies for our evolutionary perspective on education that we move away from notions or figures of reasoning that denote holistic or comprehensive notions of a *determined* primary regularity, we might say exclusive Ones, for example, the notion of discursive formation in Foucault. This move away from an appeal to a mystic initial determining instance is replaced by a focus on the play among discursive attempts at providing regularity, where we start complement a notion of regularity with a notion of contingency and become concerned with how the attempts at ascribing regularity to this contingency will stand in an incommensurable relation to another, since they lack a common reference point as it would be provided by the determining instance.

The observable variation or play, as a form of incommensurability, is thus the limit of the conventionality, that is, the limit of closure of the social. Thus, play, as resulting out of a lack of a common determining reference point that provides identity, subverts any limit that is to be established as a form of regularity.

With this focus in mind, we leave aside figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory that conceive of the possibility of establishing limits or limiting social action and, thereby, reduce the social to the form of society. It is in the following reconception of the social, as an open-ended system, that we also aim to provide an entrance point for the conception of globalisation, which we, as we will specify later on, do not conceive in a teleological language of external effects on the internal, for example, in terms of effects of the global on the national, but where we aim to reconceptualise globalisation as a subversion of the limits by which the constitution of the internal of society is shown to be already different to itself. Globalisation comes in our conception to denote the difference of society to itself in terms of connection among societies. It is with these constitutive purposes in mind that we will continue to draw on a number of figures of reasoning, which have been discerned and highlighted in our characterisation of Swedish curriculum theory.

We will, thus, continue to draw on the figures of conflict as the source of dynamism (Englund, 1986), the primacy of decision (Östman, 1995), the absence of an ultimate or determined meaning (Säfström, 1994), among others.

## 2. Beyond Society: Education and the political

To achieve accurate knowledge of others, if such a thing were possible, we could only ever arrive at it through the slow and unsure recognition of our own initial optical inaccuracies. However, such knowledge is not possible: for, while our vision of others is being adjusted, they, who are not made of mere brute matter, are also changing; we think we have managed to see them more clearly, but they shift; and when we believe we have them fully in focus, it is merely our older images of them that we have clarified, but which are themselves already out of date.

Marcel Proust, *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*

The ambition in this section will be to provide an alternative perspective on education and formations in the social. This perspective is aimed to move away from a focus on reproduction as well as forms of determination in the last instance.

In a similar, yet different fashion as Englund (1986), the ambition is to develop a theoretical framework that is able to highlight how conflict and dissension, as constitutive aspects of education, emerge in and shape social production. Instead of building on a perspective that sees education and social actors as being determined by society as an equilibrium or as a whole, education is seen by us to be characterised by a flux of congenial and antagonistic trajectories that result out of strategic interventions that aim to define what education is and should be. Thus, while we will start with this section with a discussion of the social, we will end it with the central aspect of this dissertation, namely with the conception of the political in education that which allows for approaching the political in ESD, one of the main objectives of this dissertation. However, in order to allow for such a conception of the political we see it as necessary to provide a conceptual repertoire. In this repertoire, the concept of the social is to replace society as to denote that which provides stability and continuity to articulation of education and ESD.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> This is to say, we will conceive of the social as that which provides continuity. Yet, the social will not be a closed system of relations as in the notion of society. Thus, we replace the

This conception of the social will be decentred by our conception of the political as the contingent instituting moment of the social. Hence, while the social provides the conditions of social production, our focus moves to the political, entailing a moment of decision due to incommensurability and contestation among positions provided in the social.

In a parallel step, this reconception is envisioned to specify how the relationship among these concepts can be interpreted to relate to education and instances of education policy making. That is to say, the section aims to provide a conception of the relationship between the social, the political and education. With regards to this conception we will introduce a conception of the subject and decision that are envisioned to allow for a conception of the subject as a political actor.<sup>65</sup>

In this effort to create a theoretical framework we will primarily draw on the work of Ernesto Laclau, who in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* together with Chantal Mouffe (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), provides a post-Marxist discourse-theoretical perspective on social group formation as strategic political attempts to define the social. This section aims to summarise some of the cornerstones of this discourse theoretical perspective in order to provide a basis for rendering intelligible how education policy making, as discursive practice, can be seen to engage in the temporary stabilisation of Being, we might say writing, within the social as a decentred, undecidable and uneven structure.

Hence, this section bestows a theoretical terminology that conceives of the relation between the political, social and education.

## The Social

When we are speaking about education's societal role, for example in the context of the production and reproduction of society, it is often that we describe society as something given, as being characterised by a certain state or configuration of elements within a broader system of relations. As we have seen in our earlier discussion of figures of reasoning in Durkheim's sociolo-

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notion of a closed system or structure with the notion of the social as open, undecidable and uneven structure that is characterised by dynamism. We will, however, not discard the concept of "society", but see it as a myth that is appealed to by a number of particular positions within the social in order to denote a state of closure of the social and emancipation of the subject.

<sup>65</sup> This subject will not be the fully constituted subject, but a subject of lack. Hence, we might say that our decentring of the structure is paralleled by the introduction of a decentered subject.

gy, classical social theory entails the ambition of describing society as such a system of relations between elements in objective terms.<sup>66</sup>

The objectivity of description and the capacity to arrive at a declarative statement about the status of society at a point in time or the position of certain groups of elements, for example, classes, within the system depend, as earlier shown, in such descriptions on the notion of a stable state, society as a whole or *equilibrium*. As we argued in the previous section, such a notion of society pushes the issue of change and temporality to the limits of the theoretical constitution of society.

This adaptive notion of the relation between education and society is seen to have allowed for a conception of Being and change from a societal perspective and as a form of meaningful or reasonable adaptive change of education. Change and Being have, as we pointed out in Swedish curriculum theory, been conceived in diachronic and sequential notions of time and in terms of comprehensive changes of society.<sup>67</sup>

While the pure reproduction perspective, which entails a somewhat bracketed and in some cases a-temporal notion of temporality, was challenged by Englund and he is interpreted to have opened up a dynamism of the social, this dynamism was perceived by us to emerge out of the study of the diachronic. As we argued with regards to Englund's Marxist notion of history (1986) and Säfström's (1994) Foucauldian notion of *historic a priori*, change is perceived in terms of limited historic or discursive events as structural changes.

It is thus claimed by us that what is shared by these dynamic perspectives in Swedish curriculum theory is the notion of a necessary and reasonable comprehensiveness of change, as a singular historical development of society. We argue that synchronic variation, as the source of continuous change, is in this notion of change and historically determined Being ultimately subdued to the comprehensiveness and determinability of the historic situation.<sup>68</sup> While the struggle that synchronic variation represents can, in these dynamic perspectives, be seen to be acknowledged by Englund (1986) in the conception of a diversity of ideological/political perspectives, we argue that this dynamism is subdued by an appeal to historical fixation. What we mean by this is that synchronic differences, as they are conceived of in terms of a diversity of perspectives, are perceived to converge with regards to history.

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<sup>66</sup> Classical sociology refers here to a science that builds on society as a point of theoretical departure, as such a sociology has been defined by the work of Durkheim. Classical sociology can, however, also be seen to have an alternate point of departure in the work of Tarde.

<sup>67</sup> We are referring here to our discussion of Marxist notion of history appealed to by frame-factor theory and Englund, as well as the notion of history provided by Säfström in Section 1.

<sup>68</sup> We such a historically determined notion of change to be appealed to in Englund's concept of determinants and Säfström's conception of historical social context that we described to have traces to a Foucauldian notion of historical *a priori*.

Diversity is, in this sense, sublated with regards to history as a form of phase or stage.

While we stand in debt to the contributions of such figures of reasoning, as they constitute the historicity of the field of Swedish curriculum theory, the theoretical framework that is to be developed here will play with some of the figures of reason of these traditions, thereby transforming their temporal outlook.

### The social, contingency and play

What is envisioned to be accomplished is the provision of a conceptualisation that delineates how the social as a non-cohesive, non-closed structure is permeated by unevenness, undecidability, conflicts and an ineradicable play, where changes in configurations are not seen to stand in relation to comprehensive historical events, but rather to result out of the contingent and continuous strategic investment of social actors in the constitution of the social. In this understanding of the social, social actors aim to provide a closure and comprehensiveness that is always elusive. It is the contingent character, that is, the essential play of these discursive investments that we highlight. In our understanding, the contingent aspects of these attempts at constituting social structure are not understood in relation to a necessary structurally determined position or necessity of adaptation to the social, but to emanate out of a failure of structural determination, where play and contingent investment in the constitution of the social structure are constitutive aspects. This is one of the main theoretical points of departure for this dissertation and will be a major concern throughout the following sections.

The play and resulting contestation and conflicts over what education is and should be, is according to our point of departure not perceived as a secondary variation that can be sublated in relation to an *a priori* existent determinable historical whole. Instead, this question of what education is or should be is perceived by us as a political question, a question that requires decision, where different and incommensurable positions and associated different social groups will bring forward different perspectives on how to read certain situations and how to solve problems.

Hence, we interpret play to stand in an antithetical relation to the presumed comprehensibility or wholeness of the historical, that is to say, discursive, situation. This play is due to the overdetermination of any discursive element within a discursive formation and can thus be perceived as a difference-to-self. What we are referring to in this difference-to-self is a perspective on the social where the identity of an element is not provided by an ordinary past, where difference could be ascribed to a deviation from something underlying them all in the form of an essence. Instead, we see the overdetermination as to denote the non-ordinary identity of an element, highlighting its contested and iterable character.

Hence, with this synchronic contested character and iterability of any element in mind, we argue that change in the social is for us not a discursive event, as a form of comprehensive event as a becoming into presence of a new discursive formation, but argue rather that the event is always evasive. Change in the social is for us a constant, since there has, according to our perspective on iterability and the evasiveness of presence in the present, never been a determined conventionality of fully established identity as a form of definitive principality or absolute rule that would constitute the social as a fully transparent set of relations.<sup>69</sup> As a result, we conceive of dynamism of the social as a constant, where this dynamism is the result of the ineradicable *political* aspect of the constitution of the social.

### The social, iterability and undecidability

It is with this focus on the political and play in mind that we see change not as a shift from one structurally determined form of Being to another as part of a comprehensive structural shift, but in terms of a constant mutation, a form of iterability, associated with any identity within the structure.

Let us not forget that “iterability” does not signify simply [...] repeatability of the same, but rather alterability of this same idealized in the singularity of the event, for instance, in this or that speech act. It entails the necessity of thinking at once both the rule and the event, concept and singularity. There is thus a reapplication (without transparent self-reflection and without pure self-identity) of the principle of iterability to a concept of iterability that is never pure. There is no idealization without (identificatory) iterability; but for the same reason, for reasons of (altering) iterability, there is no idealization that keeps itself pure, safe from all contamination. (Derrida, 1988, p. 119)

Similar to our earlier discussion of the temporal paradox that Wittgenstein discerns with regards to rule following, Derrida is in the above quote interpreted to suggest that iterability, as it would follow from a form of regularity over time, entails a necessary alterability of identity and meaning, since we need to bring in accord [*in Übereinstimmung bringen*] different cases or events in order to constitute identity and meaning.<sup>70</sup> As a result of this necessary alteration for any repetition, as continuity between multiple events, there is never a pure identity, nor self of a concept or thing, since the existence of this identity in time requires its accordance among *different* events.

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<sup>69</sup> A more detailed exploration of the concept of Event put forward by us will be provided in the sub-section labelled “The Discursive, Spatiality and Temporality” in Section 3.

<sup>70</sup> Iterability refers, in this Derridian sense, to a form of repetition-as-difference and difference-to-self and as an aspect of repetition and identity. This translates also in a perspective of on the origin in Derrida, where iterability denotes the ‘already-ness’ that both pre-exists and preconditions every origin. This is the origin as trace is the non-origin that was never present, but which was never non-existent (Lucy, 2004, p. 60).

By acknowledging this necessary iterability of every identity to itself and the absence of an original identity, which would have been outside of time, our focus is not primarily on the relative “conventionality” of meaning,<sup>71</sup> but instead we are interested in the non-conventionality of practice. More specifically, we are interested in the consequences of iterability for practices that try to repeat and where the alteration can be seen as a form of mutation.

Yet, once we move our focus away from a certain dominance of conventionality as a determined regularity in the dispersion of practices, it might be assumed by the reader that we end up in a total absence of conventionality. However, we make the claim that this is not the case in our conception, as we, similar to Wittgenstein’s conception of rule following, suggest that every repetition *seemingly* follows a rule. It is to a certain degree regulative, where this regularity is only an *a posteriori* interpretation, and as such there is a certain possibility of misinterpretation involved.

To return to our discussion of Östman (1995), we suggest with regards to the regularity involved in practices that we have to make a decision, such as, for example, the necessary interpretation of what content to include or to exclude in our teaching practices that seemingly follow the rules of the curriculum.

A decision can only come into being in a space that exceeds the calculable program that would destroy all responsibility by transforming it into a programmable effect of determinate causes. There can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial and this passage by way of the undecidable. Even if a decision seems to take only a second and not to be preceded by any deliberation, it is structured by this experience and experiment of the undecidable. (Derrida, 1988, p. 116)

Hence, the discursive then as regularity of practice is not seen as determined in its regularity, since such determination would render any practice calculable as Derrida in the quote above highlights. Instead, we see the field of discursivity as characterised by *undecidability*, as Derrida appeals it to in the quote above.<sup>72</sup> It is with regard to the necessity of moments of decision in the face of undecidability that we see the political to emerge, as requiring decision, as stabilising and spatialising attempts to reintroduce a conventionality that is relative to the decision.

Based on this Derridian appeal to iterability and undecidability, it will be a central objective of this dissertation to provide a theoretical framework that allows to conceptualise how the relationship between education and society, can in the context of education policy making, as writing, be described in terms of an *active* and *passive* spacing.

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<sup>71</sup> In such a focus, conventionality could be interpreted as a form of or premise for power or dominance.

<sup>72</sup> The field of discursive is seen as partially synonymous with the social.

## Spacing, writing as acts constituting the social

To recall, the active and passive dimensions of spacing relate to temporality and spatiality in Derrida's conception of writing, which is characterised by *différance*. Thus, the spacing that is involved in writing is interpreted to provide an entry point for conceptualising how social change and continuity can be conceived with relation to time and space, as well as practices of social actors.

The concept of spacing as Derrida puts it forward is interpreted by us to circumvent or dissolve the challenges in conceptions of meaning making as either being determined by context or as practices that fully produce context.<sup>73</sup> The challenge in such conceptions is perceived to be the introduction of the notion of the possibility of total eradication of play, even though this eradication is bracketed or limited to the particularity of the moment. The concept of spacing can be seen here to subvert the exclusivity of these brackets and is interpreted to highlight how the external, as that which is beyond the brackets, as a necessity for writing subverts the interiority and at the same time renders writing as a practice possible.

The concept of spacing addresses thereby the very conception of the social as structure, which is not a static or closed structure, but a structure that exists as regularity where it maintains the possibility for play. Such a conception of spacing that is involved in writing breaks with the notion of determination of meaning or identity, since such an appeal would necessitate an appeal to language as it is ultimately conceived in terms of substance.

The relationship between passivity and difference cannot be distinguished from the relationship between the fundamental unconsciousness of language (as rootedness within the language) and the spacing of language (pause, blank, punctuation, interval in general, etc.) which constitutes the origin of signification. It is because "language is a form and not a substance" [quote from de Saussure] that, paradoxically, the activity of speech can and must always draw from it. But it is a form, it is because "in language there are only differences" [quote from de Saussure]. Spacing (notice that this word speaks the articulation of space and time, the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space) is always the unperceived, the non-present, and the non-conscious. (Derrida, 1978b, p. 68)

What the notion of spacing in Derrida's quote is interpreted by us to highlight is that, in the case of appeals to determination in uses of language, this

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<sup>73</sup> For a discussion of a notion of meaning as being determined by structure see the sub-section "Figures of Reasoning in Swedish Curriculum Theory before Englund" in the previous section and the sub-section "Frame-factor theory and symbolic violence" in particular. For a discussion of meaning making as fully producing context see our discussion in the sub-section "Figures of reasoning in Säfström (1994)" and the sub-section "Säfström's holism" in particular.

determination would have to summon a positive, a substance, or the transcendental signified in the use of language. As such, the use of language would, so to speak, have brought into synchronic present presence, or to put it differently to have reanimated a presence in the present. As we will argue, this perspective on language and articulation relies upon a metaphysics of presence, which we, with Derrida, aim to deconstruct. That is, we are not so much interested in the presence of something behind or in *a priori* to writing as with the process of writing *per se*.

Writing as Derrida (*cf.*, 1978b, p. 71) highlights is active and passive, where we argue that a de-terminating writing would erase that very need and possibility of writing as the unconscious passivity, which we might ascribe to that what is no longer present—the symbolic character of the sign which is to point towards a non-present. What we might say is that the concept of and perceived need for spacing reminds us about determinate context or the meaning of its temporality.<sup>74</sup>

Writing as spacing would have to allow for a bringing into accordance from case to case, as Wittgenstein puts it, and it is thus not limited to the presence of a present, that is to say, to a case, but as Derrida in the quote above highlights the opening of the first exteriority as a relationship of that living case to its other case, which is no longer.

The gram as *différance*, then, is a structure and a movement no longer conceivable on the basis of the opposition presence/absence. *Différance* is the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other. This spacing is the simultaneously active and passive (the *a* of *différance* indicates this indecision as concerns activity and passivity, that which cannot be governed by or distributed between the terms of this opposition) production of intervals without which the “full” terms would not signify, would not function. It is also the becoming-space of the spoken chain—which has been called temporal or linear; a becoming-space which makes possible both writing and every correspondence between speech and writing, every passage from one to the other. (Derrida, 1981, p. 27)

Spacing refers, thus, not to a totally chaotic non-consciousness or a fully absent non-presence, but can be conceived as a form of historicity, as “traces of differences in writing as mentioned in the quote above. Spacing is in this

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<sup>74</sup> What we are addressing here is Säfström’s notion of the discursive, where Säfström draws on Foucault in order to make the argument that discursive practices are “always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period” (Säfström, 1994, p. 74, partial translation). With regards to this determination in time and space, we argue that the need for writing as spacing highlights the subversion of the bracketing of time in periods, or the elusiveness of the interval that a period is supposed to stand in for. We might say that that which is outside of the intervals can be seen to have not been fully passive after all; the outside can be seen to be still or already been active.

sense concerned with the in-between of cases, as the passage from one to the other.

As such spacing is systematic, yet a systematic play of differences, here conceived as articulated similarities and differences. Through this conception Derrida can be seen to problematise the appeal to presence before writing, as in meta-physics of presence, where a presence is to provide the full substance of a referential articulation, by highlighting how it is not only structure, difference and space that are characteristic for writing, but also movement, play and temporality. Thus, Derrida can be seen to provide an entrance point for conceptualising the social not as stasis or equilibrium, but to conceive how this regularity, this structure and structural difference is also characterised by play, movement and temporality.

### The social as positivity

We argue that such a conception of the social, as characterised by play and movement, has been provided in Laclau's post-Marxist perspectives on political struggle as attempts at social regulation, which is interpreted to allow for balancing at a theoretical level the active and passive aspects of these struggles that engage in the constitution of the social. Laclau's work can be seen in a number of instances to have been heavily influenced by Derrida (*cf.* Mouffe, 1996) and to share Derrida's problematisation of meta-physics of presence, where he sees such metaphysics to be involved in a number of theoretical constructions of society that build upon appeals to a "positivity of the social" (*cf.* Laclau, 1990, p. 16f). The positivity involved is interpreted here to be theoretically derived through a metaphysics of presence that appeals to notions of substance and transcendental signifiers, such as we discussed above in the context of spacing, as they provide the foundation for the claim of presence of a fully closed social formation, that is to say, society.<sup>75</sup>

It is in this context of a critique of the positivity of the social that Laclau can be seen to distance himself from the tendency in traditional social and political theory to make appeals to a veiled presence of an "objective" or "divine" will that *determines being*, as a form of purity beyond or before its

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<sup>75</sup> By "positivity" we refer to a form of positive knowledge, as relating to an experience that is seen as authentic, objective and verifiable with regards to how things are. In this sense, a positivity involves the claim of correspondence of experience and representations to how things are in themselves. To put it into the context of our appeals to Derridian critique of a metaphysics of presence, we might say that positivity relates to the experience and claims that representation is in correspondence with presences or substance as they provide identity. Negativity is related to an experience of a mismatch between representation and experience of how things are, highlighting the subjectivity and particularity of representation. Negativity in this sense relates to the experience that representation and knowledge is not in correspondence to that which is practical in life, that knowledge and representation has been missing something.

particular and impure forms of *representation*. Since Laclau (1990, p. XIV) removes the will of a divine authority, that is to say, an appeal to a positivity that lies in a beyond or before, he also abandons an appeal to an objective historical tendency or development in his conception of the social.

Thus, linking this figure of reasoning back to our discussion of Derrida, play and movement is not conceived by us to take place in relation to external historical force or will, but to be a constant aspect of attempts to give meaning to the world. In such efforts, to dissolve the appeal to an objective structure and to turn towards the process of giving meaning to the world, Laclau is interpreted by us to turn to the inconsistencies, antagonisms and oppositions within the field of the social.

### The social and education

If we are thus to relate to Laclau's work in our conception of the relation between education and society, it is not the relationship between education policy making and objective structures or class-relations that becomes of primary concern for the conception to be provided here, but instead, we turn towards the play in articulation, in the form of paradoxes and aporiae of articulations, that we interpret to be constitutive for the instability, or rather undecidability, of structural formations that the social represents as a form of historic regulative formation.<sup>76</sup> It is also in this context of instability of the social that we are reinterpreting the role of education policy as a particular form of practice that among others engages in the constitution of education. Instead of being seen as an expression of underlying structures, the need for articulation of education policy is seen to emerge against the background of the instability, incompleteness or, to loan a terminology from Derrida (*e.g.*, 1988), the undecidability of the social, where education as a form of social regulation is aimed to come to terms with the effects of the instability and incompleteness by aiming to provide principle for its constitution. Hence, edu-

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<sup>76</sup> By "aporia" we will refer to the experience of an antagonism. This experience of antagonism as a form of negativity results in that the situation can be conceived in accordance to alternative and incommensurable perspectives. Hence, aporia refers to the experience of a possibility of constituting the meaning of a situation according to a multitude of perspectives where these perspectives stand in paradox relation to another and this constitution of meaning becomes illogical. We might say that aporia refers to the experience of an impossibility. More specifically, we see aporia as a concept of Derrida that points towards the blind spots of metaphysical arguments, where these blind spots can be seen to be at play in the universalising aspects of the arguments and are characterised by a-logical arguments (Lucy, 2004, p. 1). These aporia are of interest to Derrida as they brush aside the a-logical in universalising articulation in order to claim a presence. In this sense of a limit of constituting universality, aporia is partially synonymous with Laclau's use of the term "paradox". Paradoxes are used by us in order to denote the political in an articulation of policy documents that aim to present a universalising and coherent vision for society. Paradoxes are in this sense the blind spots in articulations that present differences and incommensurable political perspectives and demands as equivalent. Paradoxes represent, in our understanding, limits for universalising claims.

cation can be interpreted to present the ambition to overcome a seeming absence of a determinate order, acknowledging this absence, in order to fulfil the promise of order through regulative intervention.

Thus, in a paradoxical way, it is the instability and incompleteness of the social, we might say the absence of society, that renders, in the first instance, attempts of an unveiling of the principles of that order that is to be achieved, as an appeal to truth, a possibility (Laclau, 1990, p. 35f).<sup>77</sup> To simplify this line of thought, there has to be a certain absence or indeterminateness of order (social) in order for practice to engage in a constitution of a determinate order (society) to become an option. This Sisyphean attempt at constituting society that education as social regulation represents and where education is to provide principles for what society is and should be, is at the same time a source of partial and temporary stability, or regulation, of the social. That is to say, attempts at regulation and attempts at spatialisation by social actors are partial and temporary, since these attempts have to acknowledge a certain disorder a state of otherness due to the experience of antagonism. It is this experience of a state of otherness of the social order that education as a form of attempt at regulation aims to overcome.<sup>78</sup>

As a result of this experienced otherness that has to be acknowledged through an articulation of an other in attempts at social regulation, the space that Laclau labels the social, is or becomes never a sutured space, since it has, as Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 96) underline, no essence.<sup>79</sup> We might say that while an acknowledgement of otherness will articulate an other, this other is not congruent with Otherness, the Other, or the indeterminate in an order. With regards to the constitution of the relationship between education and the social, this appeal of Laclau and Mouffe to the openness of the social is interpreted by us to suggest that there will not be a fully closed social to be constituted and as a consequence education will not be a form of full and singular socialisation.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Instead of opaqueness we might also speak of the inaccessibility of its operational principles.

<sup>78</sup> This otherness can be conceived in terms of a differentiation between the particular articulated other and Other as a representation of otherness in general. While it is possible to articulate an other, this articulation will remain particular and will not be able to incorporate otherness in its generality or universality. In this sense, there will be always an otherness to the other that is articulated, which is subversive to the articulated other.

<sup>79</sup> Instead of essence, we might equally well speak of the non-origin of identity and the iterability of any identity in repetition, which we see as entailing a difference-to-self. Hence, we might say that a closure of the social and the establishment of society would require a pure presence and the eradication of antagonism.

<sup>80</sup> We see this line of argumentation as to share parallels with Ljunggren's conception of public dialogue as characterised by a plurality that he sees to find the reconception of society in later Dewey. However, we break with our notion of social with the notion of society as something existing and characteristic for a historically determined situation, as we argue below this situation is overdetermined by the pluralities of centres that are to provide historicity according to which the situation is to be constituted. As a result of this overdetermina-

What Laclau's remark on the absence of an essence, is interpreted to highlight is that, since the appeal to a positivity of the social, as it would be provided by a centre, or divine will in the beyond is abandoned, the perspective on the social sees it not as a cohesive or closed system, that is to say, "society", that is ruled by internal objective laws and that could establish or stabilise its internality.

The social is articulated insofar as 'society' is impossible. Earlier we said that, for the social, necessity only exists as a partial effort to limit contingency. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 114)

Following this line of reasoning, it is not a fully constituted structure that determines the regularity of society as a closed system, but instead the regularity, as a form of determining necessity of how things should be, is ruptured by a contingency that subverts the regularity of any attempt at closing the social as a system. Hence, society as a definite set of social relationships and regularity among them is not seen to be a "reality", but rather "reality" is a form of contingency which shows the limit of every necessity, that is to say "reality" is showing us the limits of particular understandings of society as a form of discrepancy from "reality".<sup>81</sup>

With regards to the conception of the relationship between education and the social this can be seen to highlight, this discrepancy to reality can be shown in the seeming non-determination of elements within the social.<sup>82</sup> If

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tion, we might say that any socialisation in education is already different-to-itself, entailing a socialisation in relation to a plurality of demands and perspectives, thereby rendering it a political socialisation and not an act of constituting or reproducing society.

<sup>81</sup> In line with this notion of Lacanian Real we might differentiate between historical determined situation as a discursively constituted situation and the Event that is elusive. The effects of this Event can be shown in the experience that a historical situation could also be conceived differently, highlighting that it was not singularly determined. In this clarification we address how our conception of the social can be seen to differentiate itself from the understanding of society as something existing addressed in the footnote above.

<sup>82</sup> What we mean by this seeming non-determination of elements within the social is the differentiation between 'reality' and Real addressed in the footnote above. We might say that the non-determination is not something that can be 'uncovered', but emerges in the experience that society has been already in a different state, that things have already been different. Instead of a full absence as a form of pure negativity, the seeming non-determination highlights rather the overdetermination of Being than a non-Being. It is also here that the conception of this overdetermination can be seen to differ from the notion of plurality of societies, as put forward by Ljunggren in his appeal to Dewey. To recall, Dewey states: "Some societies are *in the main* to be approved; some to be condemned, on account of *their consequences upon the character and conduct upon others* ... "society" is something to be approached judged critically and discriminately. (Dewey, 1927, p. 70, quoted in Ljunggren, 1996, p. 38, original emphasis). We argue that our conception of antagonism, as drawing on the notion of the Lacanian Real, rejects Dewey's equivalent notion of pluralities of societies as constituting a "main" and to share consequences, as this would require a transcendental positivity in relation to which the main and consequences would attain an equivalent status. We argue that antagonism as a negative would subvert the objectivity that is appealed to in order to conceive

we for example would ask ourselves what “citizen” in democratic society means we might, on the one hand, engage in the never-ending naming of criteria and, on the other hand, see that this naming of criteria might lead to paradoxes. In the first instance, the naming of criteria would be never-ending, since we might always ask: What do you mean by x? Thus, this endless deferral of meaning questions the presence of and arrival where we might determine meaning. In the second instance of a paradoxical articulation of criteria, we might also arrive at the conclusion that there is no point of settlement, a transcendental reference point in relation to which we could reduce the paradox to a failure of conventionality of articulation.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, instead of appealing to society as a totality that would determine the regularity in dispersion of social practices,<sup>84</sup> it is in the *particularity of practice* that we see the social, as a *particular form of conventionality*, to be constituted. The logic of the social is therefore not seen to be determined by an *a priori* “existing” or “singular” determinate relationship between elements of a present totality, but rather to emerge *a posteriori* out of practices that establish contingent relations and constitute temporary identities as a result of the establishment of relations (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 95).<sup>85</sup> To put this

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of the main or the apparent consequences and to show its contingent character as that what is shared and consequences could be experienced to have been constituted differently. In this line of reasoning we fully agree with the other Ljunggren (1996, p. 75, partial translation) who states: “This entails that the development towards a political community and in this sense radical democracy is conceived as ‘a discursive surface of inscription, not an empirical referent’ (Mouffe 1992:14, 237). The term discursive surface of inscription is thus an expression for the creation of a ‘we’, where this creation in turn is not hegemonic but loaded with conflicts between different ‘we’-interests.” With this Ljunggren, we argue that the main and “our” consequences would not refer to an empirical referent, but would be that of a particular “we”-interest.

<sup>83</sup> In classical Marxist reasoning, the paradox would be conceived in terms of contradiction, where dialectical reasoning would be able to sublimate the negativity involved in contradiction, thereby showing the simple governing principle that existed *a priori*. We argue, this notion of contradiction is at play in Englund’s notion of state as he derives it from Poulantzas. To recall, Englund states (1986, p. 151, author’s emphasis) that: “The state is thus a cohesive factor and the hub of transformational/change, rolled into one: ‘It is from this relation between state as the cohesive factor of a formation’s unity and the state as the place in which the *various contradictions* of the instances are condensed, that we can decipher the problem of the relation between politics and history. This relation designates the structure of the political both as the specific level of a formation and as the place in which its transformations occur: it designates the political struggle as the ‘motive power of history’ having as its objective the state, *the place in which contradictions of instances* (dislocated in their own time sequences) *are condensed*’ (Poulantzas 1973, p. 45)”.

<sup>84</sup> We are returning here to the notion of discursive formation as it has been discussed with regards to Foucault in the previous section and aim here to reconceptualise it.

<sup>85</sup> This perspective differs from our earlier discussed notion of society in later Dewey and Ljunggren (1996) to the extent that the social cannot be conceived in terms of equivalences or cross-references that as a totality would constitute society. Instead, the notion of antagonism that will be elaborated in the next sub-section sets the limit for equivalences and established relations to constitute a system of relations, highlighting their difference-to-self.

simply, the social as associated with regularity does not determine practice, but it is only *a posteriori* that practice can be seen to be seemingly characterised by a certain regularity. Such practices of institution, however, never constitute themselves fully as a form of regularity; which is to say, they are as practices of writing both characterised by an active and passive dimension. Hence, they are characterised by a deferral as our discussion of the concept of spacing and *différance* highlighted. Thus, they remain always characterised by a certain iterability and as a result they are open for contestation or we might say interpretation. From this perspective then curricula or education policy are not capable of condensing the play to a singular meaning or sublating the possibility of interpretation, that is to say they do not determine—such as a frame would be able to, as it would denote fundamental structural conditions—the possibilities of action upon them neither at a point in time, nor over time.

If we follow this line of reasoning, we see the social to be characterised by an irreducible openness, where that openness is constitutive for a multitude of attempts to sediment social relations and differential identities.<sup>86</sup> For education this means that it is, among other practices, education policy making that attempts to provide the principles that aim to constitute and sediment identities, for example, those of “the learner” or “the citizen”, and thereby engage in the constitution of the social. Yet, in contrast to a Marxist notion of identity, this sedimentation process is not seen to necessarily be dominated, nor determined by interests, powers and configurations that express existing class relations, historic formations or material conditions.<sup>87</sup> As our reference to Derrida’s notion of the possibility writing above highlighted, any appeal to full determination would entail an eradication of the necessity of writing educational policy documents or curricula, and, in the context of our focus on conflict, determination *a priori* or *a posteriori* would remove any true politics at the conceptual level from that process, as well as remove any explanatory space for strategic intervention by interest groups, since politics would in the first or last instance be conceived as determined by underlying objective relations.<sup>88</sup>

With regards to education policy, it is therefore not *a priori* assumed that there exists something as structurally *fixed* identity of “the learner”, “the

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<sup>86</sup> For a discussion of the concept of sedimentation see the sub-section on sedimentation and reactivation below. Sedimentation can briefly be described as to relate to a repetition of practice and a forgetting of alternate possible ways to constitute the social.

<sup>87</sup> Such a Marxist notion of identity of social actors has been discussed and problematised in our discussion of figure of reasoning in Englund (1986) and specifically with regards to traces to appeals to a Gramscian notion of intellectuals in Englund.

<sup>88</sup> This notion of determination in the last instance by the structure and the notion of historical materialism have been problematised in the previous section, where we made the argument that structural determination renders social change into a form of change that can only be externally initiated and not be the result out of social action; a perspective on society and change that we argue is fatalistic.

worker” or “the citizen” that determines this identity of the articulating subject and the resulting production process of society, but instead it is the *floating* character or the irreducible play of these identities. These identities are seen by us not to be inscribed into the subject but constituted in discursive practice.<sup>89</sup> Hence, it becomes the act of constitution that is central to our analytical interest for the conception of the relation between education and the social.

## The social as overdetermined

It is this play or floating character of any element of the social that we have earlier addressed in the discussion of Englund’s (1986) use of the concept of overdetermination.<sup>90</sup> With regards to overdetermination, we argued that Englund (1986) introduced, in his use of Althusser, the notion of play to the conception of social formation in the field of Swedish curriculum theory.

Only overdetermination enables us to understand concrete variations and mutations of a structured complexity such as a social formation (the only one that has really been dealt with by Marxist practice up to now), not as the accidental variations and mutations produced by external ‘conditions’ in a fixed structured whole, its categories and their fixed order (this is precisely mechanism)—but as so many concrete restructurations inscribed in the essence, the ‘play’ of each category, in the essence of each contradiction, in essence, the ‘play’ of the articulation of the complex structure in dominance which is reflected in them. (Althusser, 1965, p. 210)

We might, thus, due to the possibility of play reformulate Althusser’s remark on overdetermination in the quote above to enable us to understand how certain conditions for articulation, the apparent contingency of the real, enables the ‘play’ of articulation as a conditional.

What we see to be at stake in this overdetermination that Althusser lends from Freud is the irreducible *symbolic character of any signifier*, which turns around the relationship to a signified, either as an arrival or an origin. Or as Derrida (1978b, p. 37) puts it, the signified is always already, that is originally and essentially, in the position of the signifier.

The hinge [*brisure*] marks the impossibility that a sign, the unity of a signifier and a signified, be produced within the plenitude of a present and an abso-

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<sup>89</sup> In contrast to a Marxist notion of structurally determined class or intellectual standing in for a class, our perspective does not appeal to what the subject already is, but instead focuses on what the subject wants to be and identifies with.

<sup>90</sup> In our perspective, the Being of a subject can be seen to be characterised by being an element in the discursive, in the sense that it is floating and empty unless the subject, through acts of articulation as acts of identification, constitutes a momentary and partial identity for itself.

lute presence. That is why there is not full speech, however much one might wish to restore it by means or without benefit of psychoanalysis. (Derrida, 1967, p. 69)

Thus, in our reference to “floating” element as it relates to the evasiveness of identity, we here refer to that the identity of social actors, including the identity of “the learner”, *will* attain multiple and in comparison potentially paradox meanings once a number of articulations of an element, such as the “learner”, are compared.<sup>91</sup> This multiplicity of the identity, or rather the essential play as a difference-to-self, of central concepts to education and education policy are then according to this perspective not to be related back to an original or conventional meaning/identity, as if this “objective” meaning would be provided by a signified, but are understood against the openness of the social.<sup>92</sup>

## The social and the political

This means that multiplicity of identity and paradoxes are interpreted to be the results of the essential contingency that is, due to the absence of a transcendental signified or substance, involved in the production of the social, where this constitution of the social as a result of practice is *strategic* and *political*. But if the production of the social is essentially political, how are we to understand this political moment?

[The undecidable] calls for decision in order of ethical-political responsibility. It is even its necessary condition. A decision can only come into being in a space that exceeds the calculable program that would destroy all responsibility by transforming it into a programmable effect of determinate causes. There can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial and this passage by way of the undecidable. Even if a decision seems to take only a second and not to be preceded by deliberation, it is structured by this experience and experiment of the undecidable. If I insist on this point from now on, it is, I repeat, because this discussion is, will be, and ought to be at bottom an ethical-political one. I sense too that this is the dimension that preoccupies you the most. (Derrida, 1988, p. 116)

From this perspective, where Derrida highlights that the ethical or political emerges in the face of undecidability, we then perceive the political not as to be something as to derive from something that we *are*, but rather from an absence of that determinability of what I am. We might also conclude based

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<sup>91</sup> We see identity to be the result of articulation as discursive practice and hence occasionally treat identity and meaning as synonymous.

<sup>92</sup> This openness of the social entails a diversity, where concepts such as “the learner” will attain different meanings, once the concept is articulated in relation to a particular discursive centre or nodal point. We will elaborate on these centres in the next section.

on Derrida's remark, if society would truly be a reality, then there would not be any space for political action, since we would be already determined by social relations. Thus, we argue that it is the non-closure and undecidability of the social as structure that allows for the emergence of the subject that only attains relative identity through a decision, which as identification is political.

The deconstructive attempt to point out paradoxes and non-determination of identity in practices that attempt to constitute society, such as curriculum and education policy making, is as earlier suggested not primarily concerned with pointing out that these paradoxes exist and that full determination is not possible. Instead, it is argued that such practices engage therefore with and open up *the political* that is a premise for the institution of the social through practices such as education policy making.

## Antagonism

As we can see, the experience of contesting and exclusive alternatives of constituting the social becomes a central aspect in the theoretical constitution of how continuity and change co-exist in practices that are instituting the social, such as education policy making.

It is with regards to the conception of how conflict relates to the social and educational practices that engage in the constitution of society that Laclau's concept of antagonism becomes central. Antagonism attains for us a fundamental position, since it highlights how socialisation and the production of society are promises and calls attention to the limits of the continuous production of "citizens".<sup>93</sup> What antagonism, thus, can be seen to pointing at is the "role of struggle and negativity in the constitution of the social" (Laclau, 1990, p. 16). Antagonism is central for both the theoretical understanding of the social and, as we will show in the following, constitutive for the political.

## Antagonism and the Other

Antagonism in short, is "the experience of the limit of all objectivity" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 122). In order to understand this limit of all objectivity, we have to keep in mind that this notion of antagonism as limit is in Laclau and Mouffe's (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, pp. 122–127) use of the term centrally concerned with the presence of the Other or "radical outside" that prevents a certain practice engaging in the constitution of the social

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<sup>93</sup> We have earlier problematised the absence of such a limit with regards to Dewey's notion of communicatively-produced community and with regards to Ljunggren's conception of public dialog.

from providing a total objectivity.<sup>94</sup> It is here of importance to explicate how we conceive this Other in order also to specify how we conceive of the source of conflict.

Antagonism is not perceived as a relationship between fully constituted identities as would be provided by objective relations, that is to say, by relations in a closed relational system, but instead refers to the effect of the existence of the Other or radical outside on the ability to constitute an identity. What we are dealing with here is the possibility of delineating a fully constituted identity by allowing for the constitution of a stable limit, as we have discussed earlier with regards to context and Derrida. Antagonism refers to this inability of closure or the consequence of the absence of a substance that would stabilise identity.

In this conception of antagonism, Laclau and Mouffe can be seen to share significant similarities to the conception of the Lacanian Other (*cf.* Žižek, 1990). The discussion of this relation between Other and antagonism that is to follow is to be understood as a digression that aims to illuminate certain theoretical traces of the conception of antagonism in Laclau. The reader not interested in this relation might therefore proceed to the next subsection that conceives of the relation between antagonism as a limit for the social.

In order to approach this conception of antagonism as the Lacanian Other, we should highlight that Lacan differentiates between two others.

We must distinguish two others, at least two—an other with a capital O, and an other with a small o, which is the ego. In the function of speech, we are concerned with the Other. (Lacan, 1988, p. 236)

In the conception of antagonism, we have to point out that the notion of conflict that is to be put forward, differentiates in a similar fashion between a double-meaning of enemy, as it can be seen to be put forward in the conception of the Lacanian Other.

If speech is founded in the existence of the Other, the true one, language is so made as to return us to the objectified other, to the other whom we can make what we want of, including thinking that he is an object, that is to say that he doesn't know what he's saying. When we use language, our relation with the other always plays on this ambiguity. In other words, language is as much there to found us in the Other as to drastically prevent us from understanding

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<sup>94</sup> Antagonism can with regards to our discussion of Englund and Ljunggren be understood as the limit for any consensus or common sense as the '-sensus' and 'sense' are seen by us to appeal to particular form of rationality as a form of objectivity. In this sense, antagonism is subverting consensus and common sense from constituting itself fully. Hence, antagonism is interpreted to prevent political ideology from becoming dominant, to lend a terminology from Englund, as antagonism subverts a particular ideology from establishing itself as a closed form of rationality. With regards to its subversive aspect, antagonism results in that any dominant ideology can be shown to have been political after all.

him. And that is indeed what is at stake in the analytic experience. (Lacan, 1988, p. 244)

Thus, in the context of this clarification by Lacan we might say that while the other is articulated in language, the Other remains beyond language, somewhat constantly out of reach, as that which prevents me from fully being myself, and at the same time allows me to articulate my being. This form of the Other could be seen to be “difference as an alien to be negated in its living totality” (Hegel, quoted in Schmitt, 1932, p. 50, author’s translation), where that difference allows me to articulate a relational difference that is to provide me with an identity, as not alien, yet where that alienness in its living totality, as an alienness, which is not exhausted in its difference from me, prevents me from fully being myself. Thus, the Other is not a specific enemy, fully constituted as opposed to “us”, but represents the reminder of the absence of a substance in relation to which I, “we” and that enemy could attain full self-presence. Instead, this enemy as the alien in its living totality is also including the constitutional moment of the articulation of the “I”. It is here that the conception of antagonism, as sharing similarities with the conception of the Lacanian Other, allows for the entrance of play and articulation as they are not products out of something that I already am, but take place against the self-alienation that has to be overcome. Antagonism is in this sense an experience of a difference-to-self

We argue that the enemy/adversary distinction as is appealed to in antagonism allows for a conception of articulation that does not relate back to a transcendental referential point, but instead highlights how the articulation of the enemy/adversary distinction is the consequence of a quasi-ontological absence, as the acknowledgement of an essential play.<sup>95</sup> We might say that the enemy that allows for the constitution of an identity is not the enemy that prevents that identity. As with our introduced Lacanian distinction between other and Other, antagonism is a form of negativity that is not to be sublated where that sublation would show how things have already been. Thus, antagonism is not the conception of fully constituted identities that stand in relation to an objectifiable relation of conflict, for example, as in the notion of classical Marxist class conflict, but highlights how any identity as it results temporarily out of articulation, entails a certain self-blockage.

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<sup>95</sup> We might state that the conception of antagonism in the context of our earlier discussion of Gramscian conception of intellectuals in England (1986) can be interpreted as a radicalisation of this notion of intellectuals as intellectuals are no longer determined by the structure, but where we might instead speak of overdetermined social actors that have to constitute their identity in the face of their non-determination by the structure. We, in the context of this discussion might also bear in mind that we earlier stated that the secret of the Other is that the place of the Other is a void, it is barred or crossed out (Žižek, 1989, p. 122). We might say that this void at the place of the Other is the source of play.

However, to grasp the notion of antagonism in its most radical dimension, we should invert the relationship between the two terms: it is not the external enemy who is preventing me from achieving identity with myself, but every identity is already in itself blocked, marked by an impossibility, and the external enemy is simply the small piece, the rest of reality upon which we ‘project’ or ‘externalize’ this intrinsic, immanent possibility. (Žižek, 1990, p. 251f)

We see Žižek’s argument to highlight that the externalisation of a lack is not the result of an external interference, but the result of an experience of antagonism, where the subject experiences in its act of identification that this self-constitution becomes momentarily impossible and requires that the subject makes a decision. As a result of this perspective it can be argued, that the enemy/adversary distinction, or we might say a focus on conflict, is not the attempt to break up or overcome an initial cohesion or harmony, as would be the case in the notion of society as an existing community of a fully independent subject, but to argue that antagonism is the name for the limit at which the social can be established as a structure of relationships that would provide the subject with full identity.<sup>96</sup>

We must then distinguish the experience of antagonism in its radical form, as the limit of the social, as the impossibility around which the social field is structured, from antagonism as the relation between antagonistic subject-positions: in Lacanian terms, we must distinguish antagonism as *real* from the social *reality* of the antagonistic fight. And the Lacanian notion of the subject aims precisely at the experience of ‘pure’ antagonism as self-hindering, self-blockage, this internal limit preventing the symbolic field from realizing its full identity: the stake of the entire process of subjectivation, of assuming different subject-positions, is ultimately to enable us to avoid this traumatic experience. (Žižek, 1990, p. 253, original emphasis)

While an entrance point for the study of the relationship between society and education might be the claim that society represents a reality in relation to which we have to ground or contextualise our studies of this relationship, we argue here that it is antagonism that denotes the disruptive effects of the Real on any social reality. These effects of the Real can be seen to take the shape of the experience of an antagonism, where the subject encounters a limit showing that things have been already different, where that experience subverts the identity of the experiencing subject, as it highlights not only that things, but also that it, itself, has been different. As a result of this traumatic

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<sup>96</sup> Antagonism should, with regards to our discussion of Dewey in the prior section, not be understood as something that disrupts society as a form of communitarian and pragmatic enterprise, but is instead understood to highlight the limit of any community that prevents it from closure. Antagonism is, hence, the limit for cross-reference among “societies” as later Dewey appeals to in order to conceive of a plurality of societies.

self-difference, the subject is required to externalise this lack. Hence, the reconstitution of identity of the subject depends on the articulation of an other (we refer here to the articulated “enemy”) that at the same time is the name for that which keeps the subject and the social group identified with from being fully realised.

Thus, antagonism, as the name for the limit of stabilisation of any discursive identity, objectivity and closure of the social, is for us the source of dynamism, since it keeps the articulating subject in a never-ending process of articulation, where the subject at the same time provides its own negative.

The subject is a paradoxical entity which is so to speak its own negative, i.e. which persists only insofar as its full realization is blocked—the fully realized subject would be no longer subject but substance. (Žižek, 1990, p. 254)

In this understanding put forward by us, antagonism is the name for the impossibility of determination, as a moment of closure, of absorption of the subject to social position, which condemns the subject to become both at the same time the possibility of its becoming and at the same time the impossibility of its arrival.

## Antagonism as limit for the social

Antagonism is for us the name for dynamism as disruptive effects and source of play that prevents language from constituting itself as closed system of differences and the social to become society. Antagonism is not understood in the context of Hegelian term of negation, since this negative moment in experience is not as part of sublation contributing to an unfolding of the internal characteristics of an idea, but on the contrary shows the *contingency* in articulation that constitutes partial objectivity (Laclau, 1990, p. 26).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> It might be of importance to briefly exemplify these disruptive effects of antagonism in the context of education. Imagine a teacher within an everyday classroom carrying out a lecture to his economics class on the importance of showing entrepreneurial thinking and the benefits of micro-level economic activities for broader societal development, thereby heavily referring to latest discoveries in both micro- and macro-economic research and in these efforts confining to both the existing broader education policy, which underlines the importance for creating innovative young entrepreneurs as requirements for good citizenship, as well as the national curriculum for an introduction to economics. Let us say that the same teacher in his biology class, which he also teaches to precisely the same group of students, discusses the issue of deforestation in developing countries, highlighting the effects of deforestation for the environment, climate change and, as a result, the increase of catastrophes with devastating effects for societies. Being pedagogically innovative, the teacher encourages the students to role-play a scenario where they have to pretend to be subsistence farmers faced with the decision to cut down parts of the rainforest, asking them to provide arguments for their decisions. A student answers that the farmer should not only cut down the forest in order create more farmland, but that he should invest the money generated from selling the wood, in order to buy additional chainsaws in order to diversify his income sources through combining logging and farming.

As such a limit for practices that constitute the social, antagonism is the limit for the social and prevents society to be constituted as a sutured field. These effects of antagonism require of the practices that constitute the social to provide revisioned visions, or imaginaries, that allow for a reconstruction of the partial objective ways of giving meaning to a situation and the identities that have been negated (Laclau, 1990, p. 169). It is therefore possible to say that the non-closure of the social produces a certain movement within the structure, which constitutive practice aims to overcome.

To come back to the reference to the Other, antagonism as an effect of the Other, refers, as already mentioned, not to an other that has a full objective identity, but to an unspecified other that is elusive and where that elusiveness prevents practice to constitute a full identity in relation to that Other. It is therefore in the form of an aporia that the elusiveness of the Other prevents the constitution of a full identity in practice and at the same time renders articulation as such, as a practice aiming to constitute identities, possible.<sup>98</sup> These practices constituting identities are, however, always threatened by the disruptive effects of antagonism, that is to say, the existence of the Other and the dependence of the articulation of an other.

It is this discrepancy between Other and other that ruptures the ultimate objectivity with which the social reality is constituted and as a result produces multiple departure points for reconstituting objectivity, where this *objectivity will be discursive*.

But if objectivity is discursive, if an object *qua object* constitutes itself as an object of discourse, in that case there will always be an ‘outside’, an ungraspable margin that limits and distorts the ‘objective’, and which is, precisely, the real. (Laclau, 1990, p. 185)

Thus, we might state, that the objective/subjective relationship can be seen to have been reversed, where the classical Marxist distinction between ideal

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The student further makes the comment that this line of action would show true entrepreneurial and innovative thought and will, as the economics class explained, contribute to national socio-economic development. The teacher, speechless, contemplates the answer of the student, and, after a moment of confusion and consideration, decides that he/she cannot provide a cohesive argument on how to proceed based on the two ways to read the situation. We might say that the teacher experienced the disruptive effects of an antagonism, where the existence of both an environmentalist and economist perspective that gives meaning to concrete situations does not determine how to proceed, but instead requires a decision on how to proceed from this impasse.

<sup>98</sup> The Other could be here understood in Lacanian terms as a reminder of the Real. Lacan (1966, p. 95f) states: “The dominant factor is here is the unity of signification, which proves never to be resolved into a pure indication of the real, but always refers back to another signification. That is to say, the signification is realised only on the basis of a grasp of things in their totality. Its origin cannot be grasped at the level at which it usually assures itself of the redundancy proper to it, for it always proves to be in excess over the things that it leaves floating within it.”

and material has been confined to one and the same dimension, that of discursive.<sup>99</sup> Yet, objectivity that is provided by the discursive stands in relation to an “outside”, we might say the Real in Lacanian terms.<sup>100</sup> In order to conceive of this outside, it might be of importance to recall our discussion of Derrida’s remarks on the limit, where the demarkation of the outside by the brackets will be subverted. Hence, we argue that the Real as that which escapes signification cannot be reduced to attempts at spatialisation in writing, as the Real will subvert any attempt at providing objectivity.

## Antagonism and education

It is with regards to the discussion of the effects of antagonism on attempts at creating objectivity that education policy making can be understood as a practice that aims to mitigate the effects of antagonism that prevent society from constituting itself. To return to our discussion of Swedish curriculum theory, we might in the context of our conception of antagonism reconceive of curriculum code by arguing that curriculum codes in their synchronic plurality will be attempted to be constituted due to absence of society, which if it existed would determine education. In this understanding, education policy making as an attempt at social regulation is seen as to engage with this traumatic non-closure of the social and the resulting absence of society. In this Sisyphean attempt at constituting society, education policy can be seen to attempt to define a comprehensive relational inside of society, where learners as citizens-to-be are to be socialised in accordance with an assumed objectivity.<sup>101</sup>

Yet, political contestation, which involves incommensurability, will necessitate that equivalences among these different perspectives on society and citizenship will have to be created. In order to hide this incommensurability among different perspectives as part of efforts to constitute society, it will be necessary to appeal to concepts that are shared and different conceptions can be presented as equivalent to each other. Such concepts around which different political outlooks can be gathered in education policy, such as “quality education”, are not to be interpreted to have a singular meaning, whose identity is fully constituted, as this would be the result of a “compromise” or “consensus” as synthesis, but due to the effects of antagonism the apparent equivalence of meanings of such concepts always remains threatened by the

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<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of this Marxist distinction and a reconstitution of this distinction with regard to the discursive, see the sub-section “The Discursive and Antagonism” in Section 3.

<sup>100</sup> We might conceive this Lacanian Real as “that which is beyond the symbolic and the imaginary and acts as a limit to both” (Homer, 2005, p. 83).

<sup>101</sup> Instead of comprehensive relational inside we might also use the terminology of a system of cross-references as this terminology was problematised in the previous section with regards to Dewey’s attempts at reconstituting his notion of society as a form of communicative community of a diversity of societies.

articulation of associated concepts. This threat exists in form of the possibility to show in these articulations the incommensurability among the political perspectives that are attempted to be subsumed. This incommensurability can be perceived in the form of paradoxes in the articulation of these central concepts to education policy. The paradoxes will highlight the inability to reduce a plurality of meanings of central concepts to a singular meaning deriving out of consensus or compromise.

It is with regards to the above-mentioned threat of a possible alternative articulation that any apparent domination, as in England's (1986) notion of dominant ideology, is not seen to be result of domination, but solely as *privileged* articulation. As such a privileged articulation it is always haunted by, and has to acknowledge, a political incommensurability of perspectives, that is to say, the enemy as an alternative articulation that is always a possibility. Thus, this appeal to momentary privilege in articulation of education policy, also allows us for the conception of how interpretation is possible with regards to "domination".

To recall, we held that articulation is not determining context or meaning, but the act of identifying meaning of an articulation rather assembles something close to an act of interpretation. Any seemingly privileged meaning is also active, entailing that interpretation is possible and that the writing does not exhaust the possibilities of its reading. Hence, reading might open up again the question of meaning and context.

This possibility for opening up the essential non-determination of meaning or showing the limits of objectivity of key concepts always exists, since it is solely through contingent articulation of concepts in relation to other concepts that their temporary meaning can be maintained.

We can always ask someone: "What do you mean by 'good citizen'?" The person would then possibly state a number of characteristics and, if we are lucky, even a system of rules that would substantiate his definition of "good citizen". Yet, we might come up with a certain situation or characteristic that he did not mention or that would be addressed with the system of rules provided, but would be in conflict with the religious views of the person that provided the explanation. The person might then say: "Yes, yes, that characteristic is of course also an indicator of a good citizen" or say, "When it comes to such an issue, we should rather stick to the Bible than the curriculum".

What this example is aimed to illuminate is that the objective meaning of for education central concepts is always contestable, due to the non-determination of meaning in education policy making, and that this contestability is interpreted as the inability of uses of language to establish a certain objectivity once and for all. We might instead say that any articulation is unable to erase the active dimension of writing. In a second instance, the example is aimed to show that there is always a partial objectivity, that is to say, a relative meaning of concepts as related to particular ways of reasoning

and as a form of regularity in articulation. Based on this argumentation, we state that the effects of antagonism highlight the *contingency* of existing objectivities and highlight the fact that, for example, “good citizen” could have been equally well understood in relation to another discursive practice.

This brings us back to the issue of education policy as being an expression of an objective system of relations. The experience of contingency in relation to which central terms are, or could have been, articulated within education policy becomes according to the conception of antagonism not a question of a grounding objectivity, an exterior objectivity, or common understanding in relation to which that contingency could be determined.<sup>102</sup> Instead, the presented logic of antagonism holds that it is not a positivity that is constitutive for the play among articulations as a form of grounding or conflating instance, but a *negativity that is constitutive for the need of the constitution of the social through articulation*.

The consequence is that two conflicting notions of “good citizen” cannot *ground* their objectivity in relation to an underlying notion, but that such an attempt of grounding instead remains within articulation and can be seen to engage in a *creation of equivalences or differences* among different notions of “good citizen”.<sup>103</sup> These equivalences and differences cannot once and for all be determined, for example, in relation to the Real or a transcendental signified, but instead are *hegemonic* practices that aim to provide privileged readings of the social, and as such remain contingent, or we might say are characterised by play.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, instead of conceiving the social as structure that provides the historic reference points for what education “is”, *practices articulating education, such as education policy making, that have a certain historicity, are seen to engage in the institution of the social*. However, antagonism as a subversive limit prevents any articulation from eradicating the play and establishing society as a closed system of differences. Hence, the social as structure is incapable of fully determining meaning and as a result is incapable in determining what education is.

It will be of importance to briefly specify how we conceive of that play in terms of *contingency* in order to explicate the basis for how the political as

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<sup>102</sup> That is to say, it is according to our argumentation not possible to relate back two conflicting definitions of “good citizen” to the real meaning of “good citizen” as it would be attainable in a beyond, a *common* sense, or with reference to the Real.

<sup>103</sup> What we are trying to argue is that the difference of the two notions will be due to an incommensurability among the regularities of discourses or language games they seemingly articulate, where this difference cannot be overcome in language, nor by reference to a plane beyond language.

<sup>104</sup> The aspect of privilege here highlights that an alternative articulation could have been a possibility and hence a potential alterity that has not been eradicated.

constitutive practice of the social can be understood in the context of partial objectivity and historic development.

## Contingency

The logic of contingency can be seen to a central contribution of Laclau's work and for our conception of the relationship between the social and education. The logic of contingency is further interpreted to share significant similarities with the conception of play in Derrida.

### Complementing a logic of necessity with a logic of contingency

What we have to pointed out is that the logic of contingency, as it becomes central to our conception of the relationship between education and the social, is not exclusive to the logic of necessity, rather we might say that the logic of contingency is the limit of any appeal to necessity. So, while the two logics can be seen to be antithetical to each other, they require each other in our conception of articulation and meaning as the constitutive practices of the social.

Hence, the logic of contingency does not reduce the field of the social to a field that is totally contingent. We argue, the total absence of any necessity would render any form of regularity impossible.<sup>105</sup>

On the contrary, what we always find is a limited and given situation in which the objectivity is partially constituted and also partially threatened; and in which the boundaries between the contingent and the necessary are constantly displaced. Moreover, this interplay of mutual subversion between the contingent and the necessary is a more primary ground, ontologically, than that of a pure objectivity or total contingency. (Laclau, 1990, p. 27)

The logic of contingency does, as the quote above highlights, not eradicate the appeal to necessity in the discursive.

In order to exemplify how the logic of contingency can be seen to limit the logic of necessity, we shall briefly return to our example of our discussion of Wittgenstein's comments on rule following. We might say that in case of an absence of the logic of necessity in meaning making the question regarding the next number in a "1,2,3,4, ..." series would become nonsensical. That is to say, meaning, as relating to regularity, would be impossible if we would eradicate any appeal to necessity. However, the absence of a logic of contingency would render the asking of the question non-sensical as the answer would already have been determined *a priori* due to the necessity of

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<sup>105</sup> We might in this case speak of a schizophrenic structure in Lacanian terms (Lacan, 1966).

the answer. Hence, we argue in order for the question of the next number to become meaningful, both a logic of necessity and a logic of contingency must be appealed to.

Laclau specifies this relationship between the logics of necessity and contingency, as to build upon a primary dependence on the logic of necessity in order to show how this necessity is limited by the contingent. This contingency of identity becomes apparent in the experience of antagonism as a form of negativity.

For antagonism to be able to show the contingent nature of an identity, that identity must be there in the first place. (Laclau, 1990, p. 27)

We will in the context of the quote above argue that the discursive implores a necessity of meaning, while antagonism highlights the contingency of the identity that is constituted in discursive practice.

To come back to our example of the series, we might say that in order to be meaningful, we would have to be able to expect a certain necessity, a “5”, yet, where that expectance as a form of necessity in relation to a particular regularity is limited by contingency, rendering both the example and the *practice of expectance* meaningful.

Hence, we are not replacing a positivity (objectivity arriving out of a logic of necessity) with a negativity (absence of any objectivity arriving out of a logic of contingency) as an absolute ground, but rather that we introduce contingency, as a form of negativity, that is constitutive alongside a positivity.<sup>106</sup>

To assert, as we have, the constitutive nature of antagonism does not therefore mean referring all objectivity back to a negativity that would replace the metaphysics of presence in its role as an absolute ground, since that negativity is only conceivable within such a very framework. What it does mean is asserting that the moment of undecidability between the contingent and the necessary is constitutive and thus that antagonism is too. (Laclau, 1990, p. 27)

In order to conceive of this in the above-mentioned quote, undecidability as standing in a constitutive relation to negativity and positivity, we can recall the difference-to-self that can be seen to be characteristic of *différance* and iterability. Similarly to our discussion of Östman’s (1995) notion of decision, undecidability does not eradicate the necessity to decide on a particular choice, but highlights that the act of decision is contingent as it is not deter-

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<sup>106</sup> Positivity refers in this context to an identity as emerging out of a regularity, for example the “5” in a “1, 2, 3, 4, 5” series. Negativity refers here to a difference of Being, where this difference of Being can be seen to at play in the “5” not-being “23”, for example, as a non-regularity.

mined by the choices available. Hence, choice is always already different to itself as the choice made entailed an act of decision that excludes from itself other choices that have been equally possible.

Thus, contingency highlights with regard to the conception of the relation between education and the social the contingency of all seeming regularity. To specify, the contingency of all seeming regularity that constitutes the Being of citizenship, student or learning is shown once we experience an alterity of this Being in the form of alternative conceptions as choices that could have been carried out.<sup>107</sup>

## Conceptions of contingency in Swedish curriculum theory

In order to delineate how our conception of antagonism relates to the conception of the relationship between education and society we might ask ourselves: What role did the logic of contingency play in earlier forms of Swedish curriculum theory? This question and its adumbrated answer are supposed to denote how our use of the logic of contingency and the resulting relationship between education and the social differs.

First of all, we might start by making the claim that the logic of contingency has been used in different ways, depending on the figures of reasoning that were appealed to.

With regards to Englund (1986) we are interpreting the logic of contingency to be somewhat absent, where this absence is mostly due to the appeal to a *telos*, where the *telos* as a final cause or intention necessarily entails a logic of necessity.<sup>108</sup>

We argue that it is his Marxist notion of history that erases to some extent contingency from the notion of history and temporality, as it is primarily concerned with a necessary progression in historical stages. To recall, Englund holds that social process as change in society over time is singular and has a singular direction.

The attributes of ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive’ are relative and to a more specific definition ‘always depends on the direction in which *social process itself is moving*. As the fundamental trend of economic and intellectual progress moves along, strata which began by being progressive may become conservative after they have achieved their ambition; strata which at a time played a leading role may suddenly feel impelled to go into opposition

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<sup>107</sup> Objectivity, in our sense, is discursive and is constituted as part of a seeming regularity in discursive practices and finds its limit in the form of antagonism.

<sup>108</sup> We use the formulation of “somewhat” as Englund’s (1986) appeal to Mannheim can be understood to allow for a partial contingency as part of his conflictual perspective to emerge. However, we will argue this placement of struggle into historical context can be seen to sublimate the contingency involved, as Englund draws on a Marxist notion of history that is characterised by a logic of necessity.

against the dominant trend' (Mannheim 1968a, pp. 185). (Englund, 1986, p. 170, author's emphasis)

As a result of this logic of necessity that is appealed to in the notion of historic development, we argue that the singularity of diachronic movement reduces apparent synchronic variation and potential contingency of that variation to a necessary singular.

Further, the notion of levels can be seen to ultimately appeal to the logic of necessity.

[Determinants] have not been constituted uniformly, but have taken shape under the influence of a continuum of levels, from the internal to the external, where "internal" refers to factors within the school system and "external" to societal conditioning factors outside that system. (Englund, 1986, p. 193)

According to this argumentation in the quote above, the most external is the place of determination, that is to say the force that ultimately transforms any apparent contingency within the internal to a necessary expression of external conditions. However, the reader might argue that the notion of change over time in Englund can be conceived as contingent. With regards to such a diachronic contingency we argue that history as change of determining modes of production is according to classical Marxist reasoning not contingent, but consists of a necessary movement towards socialism and communism. Hence, we argue that in Englund (1986), who appeals to historical materialism and the determination by the structure in the last instance, the possibility of contingent historical change can be seen to be sublated by a necessary historical change as it is perceived by us to be the result of his appeal historical materialism.

The next-generation Swedish curriculum theory, as characterised by us, with the representatives of Östman (1995), Ljunggren (1996) and Säfström (1994), can be seen to appeal to three notions of contingency.

The first can be seen to be introduced by Säfström (1994) in traces to Foucault's notion of history, as characterised by epistemic breaks.

The formal *a priori* and the historical *a priori* neither belong to the same level nor share the same nature: if they intersect, it is because they occupy two different dimensions. The domain of statements thus articulated in accordance with historical *a prioris*, thus characterized by different types of positivity, and divided up by distinct discursive formations, no longer has that appearance of a monotonous, endless plain that I attributed to it at the outset when I spoke of 'the surface of discourse'; it also ceases to appear as the inert, smooth, neutral element in which there arise, each according to its own movement, or driven by some obscure dynamic, themes, ideas, concepts, knowledge. We are now dealing with a complex volume, in which heteroge-

neous regions are differentiated or deployed, in accordance with specific rules and practices that cannot be superposed. (Foucault, 1972, p. 144)

The quote above is supposed not so much to highlight the notion of epistemic break, as to highlight how the conception of the in-between, the epistemic period is characterised by a positivity, or positivities, where we might say that it is with regards to the diachronic that Foucault introduces the logic of contingency with regard to discursive events as a form of discontinuity, as in diachronic breaks.

In fact, the systematic erasure of all given unities enables us first of all to restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence, and to show that *discontinuity is one of those great accidents that create cracks* not only in the geology of history, but also in the simple fact of the statement; it *emerges* in its *historical irruption*; what we try to examine is the incision that it makes, that irreducible—and very often tiny—*emergence*. (Foucault, 1972, p. 31, author's emphasis)

What Foucault is interpreted by us to erase in his introduction of the discursive event as a discontinuity and the resulting crack mentioned in the quote above is the appeal to a consistent diachronic *telos*, since the discontinuity and accident would be that of the death of *telos*. Hence, Säfström (1994) is interpreted by us to introduce a notion of diachronic contingency in his traces to Foucault's notion of history.<sup>109</sup>

The second notion of contingency is introduced in the figures of reasoning that we can ascribe to Östman's (1995) and Ljunggren's (1996) traces to Dewey. Dewey is interpreted by us to hold a different notion of contingency than Foucault, one that is always acknowledged but subdued to the potential for control and functioning.

The ultimate evidence of genuine hazard, contingency, irregularity and indeterminateness in nature is thus found in the occurrence of thinking. The traits of natural existence which generate the fears and adorations of superstitious barbarians generate the scientific procedures of disciplined civilization. The superiority of the latter does not consist in the fact that they are based on "real" existence, while the former depend wholly upon a human nature different from nature in general. It consists in the fact that scientific inquiries reach objects which are better, because reached by method which controls them and which adds greater control to life itself, *method which mitigates accident, turns contingency to account, and releases thought and other forms of endeavor*. (Dewey, 1928, p. 69f, author's emphasis)

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<sup>109</sup> This contingency has been perceived by us as to have been sublated in Englund (1986) due to his appeal to historical materialism.

Thus, with this focus on control, manipulation and functioning as we see the quote above to highlight, contingency is pushed to the *limit of knowing*. We might say contingency can according to Dewey always emerge, yet once it is under control, it to some extent, is not of theoretical, nor of practical concern.

The stable and the recurrent is needed for the fulfillment of the possible; *the doubtful can be settled* only through its adaptation to stable objects. *The necessary is always necessary for*, not necessary in and of itself; *it is conditioned by the contingent*, although itself a condition of *the full determination* of the latter. (Dewey, 1928, p. 65, author's emphasis)

What we might thus interpret Dewey to suggest in the quote above is that, with regard to purpose-oriented and pragmatic thinking, the contingent can be temporarily fully bracketed, that is, it can be fully determined with regards to the necessary order that is to be created for something.

When thinking is successful, its career *closes* in transforming the disordered into the orderly, the mixed-up into the distinguished or placed, the unclear and ambiguous into the defined and unequivocal, the disconnected into the systematized. It is empirically assured that that the goal of thinking does not remain a mere ideal, but is attained often enough so as to render reasonable additional efforts to achieve it. [...] Reflective inquiry moves in each particular case from differences towards unity; from indeterminate and ambiguous position to *clear determination*, from confusion and disorder to *system*. (Dewey, 1928, p. 66, author's emphasis)

Dewey remarks in the quote above are interpreted by us to rely on the notion of determination, closure, during a period of time, and that contingency as regards to the problematic can always open up again.

What we would like to problematise in this line of reasoning is actual realisation of the closure, the clear determination, or the systematicity that is appealed to by Dewey. We might with regards to the active dimension of writing as relating to the dimension of temporality as a deferral and the promise of arrival suggest that while there is a transformation of the distorted into the orderly, or of the ambiguous towards definition, etc., this arrival, that is to say, the closure and determination, never arrives, or is *a posteriori* proved to have never arrived. This absence of arrival is in our understanding due to the fact of initial contingency, or we might say that the contingency has penetrated the internal of the bracketed period of time.

Dewey is, thus, seen by us to rely on a promise, that of determination and closure, where we might problematise the arrival or realisation of that promise.

A philosophy which accepts the denotative or empirical method accepts at full value the fact that reflective thinking transforms confusion, ambiguity and discrepancy into illumination, definiteness and consistency. But it also points to the contextual situation in which thinking occurs. It notes that the starting point is actually *problematic*, and that the problematic phase resides in some actual and specifiable situation. (Dewey, 1928, original emphasis)

As regarding the promise of determination, closure and specification of the initial problematic phase as an overcoming of that phase referred to in the quote above, we would like to question the arrival. We argue that Dewey introduces a potential synchronic contingency that, however, can be altered into synchronic necessity as part of purpose bound pragmatic practice.

In order to exemplify this claim, we might think of our already used example of the series “1, 2, 3, 4”. Dewey is seen by us to suggest that the spacing that the brackets of this series represents renders the outside irrelevant, or at least sees it not to threaten the determination of the regularity captured within it. But what happens to that contextual situation, once we put something outside it, that is to say we write: “1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12? We ask Dewey here: Is there is not already a trace in thinking and writing, a confusion to come or that has been, which makes the temporal directionality of the “re-” in Dewey’s appeal to “reflective thinking” in the quote above ambiguous?

### Contingency as a moment of subversion of necessity

The acceptance of contingency can be seen to problematise appeals to *both* temporal and spatial determination. As a result, our theoretical outlook will depart from a focus on fixation, either in space or over time. This, however, does not mean that we abandon a focus on fixation as resulting out of necessity all together, but that our focus will move towards the moment of subversion of fixity by the contingent in order to highlight the political moment of decision on which any attempt at fixation will have to be built.

In this shift of focus, we will be concerned with how any apparent identity and meaning of elements in the social, or elements that are related to education, are already potentially different to themselves, that is to say, there is a certain excess or surplus that is articulated and that deforms the literal character of every necessity.

This implies that the relation between ‘necessity’ and ‘contingency’ cannot be conceived as relations between two areas that are delimited or external to each other [...] because the contingent only exists within the necessary. This presence of the contingent in the necessary is what we earlier called subversion, and it manifests itself as symbolization, metaphorization, paradox, which deform and question the literal character of every necessity. Necessity, therefore exists not under the form of an underlying principle, of a ground,

but as an effort of literalization which fixes the differences of a relational system. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 114)

Thus, based to this conception of contingency in the quote above we argue that there is no determination, or no domination as in dominant ideology, as any “effort” at fixation, at installing a form of necessity, is subverted by the symbolic or overdetermined character that is constitutive to any articulation.<sup>110</sup>

Hence, in our conception of antagonism, we acknowledge this subversive effect of antagonism as a form of negativity on the necessity of regulation as this is provided by the social as a form of regularity. As a result of this acknowledgement of negativity, the logic of contingency focuses on the effects of a radical incommensurability among the exclusive practices that engage in the constitution of the social due to its non-closure.<sup>111</sup>

Summarising these considerations and following the earlier depiction of the social and of antagonism, the practices of institution of the social, which aim to provide the principle for what the social should be, cannot be fully determined by that social. This is the case since the social is due to the *contingency* of that practice of articulation not constituted as closed rule-bound system of objective relation, that is to say society.

## Contingency and decision

As we will argue later with regards to the conception of the political, these practices of constitution of the social are faced with occasional *decisions* among conflicting ways of how to proceed. This *decision*, what we will call the *political moment*, cannot be provided by the social as a structure, since it is the experience of an antagonism that puts the subject at an impasse, where the *subject* has to choose from multiple alternative and incommensurable objectivities. It is this notion of contingency to emanate out of the decision

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<sup>110</sup> In this way, contingency provokes the subversion of the literality of any articulation. “The ‘rigid designator’ aims, then, at that impossible-real kernel, at what is ‘in an object more than the object’, at this surplus produced by the signifying operation. And the crucial point to grasp is the connection between the radical contingency of naming and the logic of emergence of the ‘rigid designator’ through which a given object achieves its identity. The radical contingency of naming implies an irreducible gap between the Real and modes of its symbolization: a certain historical constellation can be symbolized in different ways; the Real itself contains no necessary mode of its symbolization” (Žižek, 1989, p. 107). What Žižek, is seen by us in the quote above to suggest is that any “signifying operation”, as a practice of meaning making, entails a surplus that adds something to the situation in order to replace and Žižek installs the Real as something out of reach. As a result of this inaccessibility of the Real, our refocusing results, as earlier highlighted, in the rejection of a notion of singular positivity that would provide the ground for the constitution of the field of differences as full or closed identities.

<sup>111</sup> That is to say, the social is open due to the effect of antagonism as “negativity”, where practices aim to overcome this openness by providing a particular objectivity as a form of positivity.

that is identified by us as a third notion of contingency that was provided by the next generation of curriculum theory. It is Östman (1995) who we see to have provided such a notion of contingency in his conception of decision [val]. It is this third notion of contingency that our conception can be seen to share a number of similarities with and that we interpret to have developed further.

In order to exemplify how we see contingency to relate to decision we will return to the example of the person that is faced with a situation where he could either define “good citizen” in official terms of the curriculum or in relation to the commandments of the Bible. We argue that it would be impossible to think of this situation as an event of theoretical concern at all if the choice would be determined by what society already is. It is apparent that in this context *contingency* and *articulation*, as the instituting moment of the social, become synonymous.<sup>112</sup> What we are aiming to suggest is that the moment of the experience of an undecidability of the structure as a moment where a number of choices on how to proceed become equally possible highlights the inability of the social to determine me and how to proceed. What is required of me is to take on what the social was incapable of accomplishing, that is, to provide a rationale for how to proceed. The subject is required to overcome this lack of the social through a contingent act of decision and thereby to overcome that lack.

## Contingency and the symbolic character of the social

Contingency, as the subversion of any determination and the non-determined character of articulation of differences can, by returning to our discussion of Englund (1986), in Freudian/Althusserian terms be conceived in terms of *overdetermination* of the social (Althusser & Balibar, 1970; Althusser, 1965).

As in our example of the “good citizen”, there is always a symbolic excess, thus biblical or curricular versions of “good citizen” are according to this perspective not misinterpretations of a grounding or hegemonic meaning of “good citizen”.<sup>113</sup> Instead, we interpret Laclau’s appropriation of the term

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<sup>112</sup> When we make this argument as in the case of determination of articulation by society, we would have to ask: Why the need for articulation? Would meaning of a situation not already be determined?

<sup>113</sup> We conceive of the symbolic in terms of the character of any sign or element of language, where this sign, element or symbol points towards a signified and suggests a certain law or rule that it is associated with. Yet, the signifier retains its signifying function. That is to say the symbol, sign or element remains iterable; it needs to stand over the signified in order to allow for the creation of meaning in practice. Symbolic excess can in this sense be seen to be involved in order to bring case in accordance with case, as discussed by us with regards to Wittgenstein’s explications on rules. The excess can be seen to be due to a need for the symbol, sign or element to be applicable to a third or Other case, thereby decoupling it from the

of overdetermination to highlight that the institution of the social is principally metaphoric. What we mean by this metaphoric character of the constitutive moment of the social is that every discourse is metaphoric as hegemonic articulations or, as Laclau puts it, hegemony is to provide substitute centres that are to stand in for an absent centre around which the social as a totality is to be constituted.

On the other hand, however, all hegemony tries to retotalize and to make as necessary as possible the contingent links on which its articulating power is based. In this sense, it tends to metaphorical totalization. This is what gives it its dimension of power. It is a power, however, that maintains the traces of its contingency, and is, in that sense, essentially metonymic. (Laclau, 2001, p. 239)

What we interpret Laclau to highlight is that as with the place of the Other the social as a totality is organised around a void, where particular discourses provide substitute centres that are to take the place of the Other or the centre that is to constitute the social as a closed order. Such a perspective on the social and hegemony builds, as with our conception of iterability, on a perspective on the performative aspects of language that abandons an appeal to a closure of language, as this would be provided by an originary identity or referential notion of language that subsumes the signifier to the signified.

We argue that it is this barring of the signified and the elevated position of the signifier that renders metaphor as constitutive for the constitution of the social. Yet, as Laclau highlights in the quote above, the seeming necessity with which this metaphoric substituted centre is associated is always exposed to a rediscovery of the contingency of this substitution, as this contingency becomes apparent in the traces in the metonymic structure of the constituting practice. To simplify the notion of metaphor and metonymy that Laclau appeals to here, we put forward that Laclau derives his notion of the constitution of the social as rhetorical from Lacan and Paul de Man. As in Lacan, who derives his notion of metaphor and metonymy from Freud and Jakobson, metaphor refers to the process of condensation of the identity of symbols and metonymy refers to a displacement of the identity of symbols (*cf.*, Grigg, 2008, p. 151).

Based on this understanding of a primary rhetorical character of the constituting moment of the social in articulation, the social is constituted as a symbolic order with a lack of an ultimate literality (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 97f) and as a consequence of the lack of ultimate literality, it is rather the articulation that is seen by us to be hegemonic as it engages in a process of condensation. In this sense, the contingency of the constitution of the social

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concreteness of the case. Or, to put it into the words of iterability, it needs to be able to be different to itself in order to be repeated and to provide identity.

can become apparent in the experience of the displacement of the identity of symbols, as it entails an experience of difference-to-self of these symbols.

Further, this symbolic or overdetermined character of the social, as a symbolic order, can, with reference to Derrida, be seen as the condition of the *political* in writing, since literal meaning as determination of meaning would render the need for writing and alterity in writing obsolete. The play that writing allows for can be conceived in terms of the rhetorical role of metaphor and metonymy in articulation, without a possibility of *pure* conventionality of writing.

Thus, the articulation, for example, of “good citizen”, that aims to move beyond conflicting perspectives between a Christian perspective and a curriculum perspective, will through the metaphorical use of “good citizen” create a fusion or condensation of these two different uses of the term, where the term partially remains associated with its contingent meaning, yet seemingly refers to a single thing as part of a synecdochal articulation. However, this metaphorically-created equivalence as part of metaphoric condensation is always a precarious one and reaches its limit in the creation of a total equivalence, where, in our example, everything would become associated with good citizenship and the symbol would lose any meaning as its meaning hinges on an articulation of difference. As with our explication of the need to articulate an other, the articulation of an identity of an element requires the act of differentiation of that element from something that it is not.

## Contingency as an effect of the Other

What this limit for the creation of equivalence shows is that antagonism, as the limit of an objectivity, at the same time establishes itself “as the limit of the social” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 128). It is, therefore, that the limit of education policy to define “good citizen” is the requirement of an articulation of something from what “good citizen” differs.

In a similar fashion as Popkewitz (2008), we argue that the creation of any inclusive identity will entail a moment of exclusion. Popkewitz argues that the project of cosmopolitanism in education aims to model society by making the child, where this modelling of society entails the process of abjection in the making of the child. In a similar fashion to Popkewitz, we argue that education policy, which aims to engage in social regulation by aiming to define what “good citizen” or “capable learner” are, it inevitably reaches an exclusionary limit where it has to constitute the borders of what it aims the “good citizen” and “capable learner” to be and thereby what the policy will exclude.

We might therefore say that the articulation of the social requires the articulation of an other, where the discrepancy between other and Other high-

lights the contingency of the other that threatens the stability of identities created through the act of denoting equivalences and differences.<sup>114</sup>

Hence, as a result of this difference between other and Other, education policy cannot constitute or determine *where* the borders of the social are. However, education policy can, and here lies its political character, engage in a drawing of borders in articulation, denoting what perspectives and demands are legitimate/illegitimate and thereby denoting the borders of the social. Yet, these borders can be redrawn in different ways in other articulations, *due to the very contingency of articulation as it does not articulate the Other but only an other.*

## Sedimentation and Reactivation

As it is easily agreed to, not all concepts used in education policy are associated with a diversity of meanings and seemingly overdetermined, where we might associate almost anything with that particular concept. What this observation highlights is that concepts, signifiers, or we might say words, are to *varying degrees* political.

Concepts such as “good citizen” are highly political, that is to say, a number of different perspectives and social groups try to articulate what good citizenship is. Hence, in order not to dissociate these perspectives and to decrease the potential for influence or persuasion, it is of strategic importance to articulate such politically loaded concepts as “lofty” as possible. This “loftiness” is a premise for creation of equivalences among a diversity of meanings, allowing thereby the need of an articulation of difference to be pushed further.

We might say that in a second instance that the degree of “loftiness” or openness of these concepts depends on the degree of sedimentation. Laclau lends the terms sedimentation and reactivation from Husserl in order to denote the extent with which a certain articulation is seen to be politically contested. By sedimentation, Husserl referred to “the routinisation and forgetting of origins” (Laclau, 1990, p. 34). Relating the term back to the degree of success that was discussed above, we might say, that *sedimentation is a forgetting of alternative perspectives* that could instead have been drawn upon in order to define what, for example, “good citizen” means. Thus, in contrast to synchronic differences in how an element, signifier or word can be articulated, the concept of sedimentation points towards the diachronic differences as denoting something close to an exclusivity of historicity of articulated differences, where some of these differences are no longer articulated. Sedi-

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<sup>114</sup> For a discussion of this Lacanian differentiation between other and Other see the subsection “Antagonism and the Other” in this section.

mentation as a result of an abandonment of choices of articulation means an elimination of equally possible actions of institution of meaning over time.

### Sedimentation, historicity and objectivity

It is due to this abandonment and subsequent *forgetting* that the instituted, that is to say, articulated, particularity assumes the form of an apparent “objectivity”.<sup>115</sup> The apparent objectivity of the meaning of an education concept is due to the concealment or forgetting of alternatives that have been excluded over time. However, traces to the excluded possibility are to some extent still present (Laclau, 1990, p. 34).<sup>116</sup> That is to say, the past and its openness are still active in the present. This apparent activeness is the experience of antagonism, where a tracing of traces in articulation can not only highlight a synchronic alterity, but also the contingency of seeming objectivity in relation to past articulations where these articulations of an element, concept or word were characterised by incommensurabilities. A result of this active aspect of the past is that it allows for an apparent objectivity to be contested due to the highlighting of its contingent character. That is to say, an engagement with the historicity of apparent objective meanings of concepts can discover that these concepts have once been contested and that the concept could be articulated in a plurality of ways.

It is this *historicity* of the sedimented practice, both with regards to its objectivity and the traces of its contingent character that produces the momentum for the earlier discussed continuity observed in the relationship between education policy and assumed “reproductive” capacity of education.

However, as it might have become apparent, such a “reproductive” capacity of education would focus solemnly on the passive aspects of writing, yet, we would suggest this passivity cannot be detached or perceived in isolation to the active dimension of writing.

This passivity is also the relationship to a past, to an always-already-there that no reactivation of the origin could fully master and awaken to presence. This impossibility of reanimating absolutely the manifest evidence of an originary presence refers us therefore to an absolute past. That is what authorized us to call *trace* that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present. (Derrida, 1967, p. 66, original emphasis)

This passivity mentioned by Derrida in the quote above is not to be perceived as a pointing gesture towards a past presence, but remains solely a pointing gesture, a somewhat obscure gesticulation, that to use the by us

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<sup>115</sup> We use objectivity to describe the seeming givenness with which meaning is constituted according to a particular discourse or language game.

<sup>116</sup> It is with regards to this active aspect of the past that we interpret Laclau to draw on Derrida’s notion of event in order to conceive of an experience of antagonism.

discussed example of seeming rule following in Wittgenstein can be seen to be something close to a bringing into accordance of case to case.

## Sedimentation and iterability

Every sedimentation does in our understanding not *prevail* a particular activity and identity as part of that activity, it solely refers to an elimination of alternate practices over time where the prevalent repeating practice is characterised by iterability.<sup>117</sup> As we interpret Derrida to highlight in his conception of iterability, identity as it emerges in repetition is always characterised by both an idealised singularity and a difference-to-self as part of that repetition, as iterability relates to both rule and event (Derrida, 1988, p. 119). We might say it is this relation to the Event as a form of radical temporality that the constitution of identity requires a form of alteration, as every case or situation is different and for repetition between these unique situations to take place every identity as part of that repetition becomes altered. Thus, sedimentation refers not to a prevailing of a pure past regularity, but that regularity as a form of discursivity will, as part of repetition, be constantly altered with regards to events, yet, also with regards to changes in the field of discursivity.

As a historicity, it does not impose a necessity of pure repetition, instead, since it remains dependent on contingent and iterable practice to think of both *rule* and *event*. As Laclau highlights, sedimentation reaches its maximum historicity when its *contingent* character is not immediately visible (Laclau, 1990, p. 34).

To return to our example about the request for a definition of “good citizen”, it is equally possible to reveal the contingency of sedimented/objective ways to describe something, that is to say, the moment of choice among alternative possible explanations or definitions that were given in the past. In our example of “good citizen”, inquiry into how “good citizen” has been articulated in the past could show that it has been articulated in very “unconventional” ways that are somewhat bizarre, showing that, instead of an originary meaning, there has already been a form of contested and unconventionality associated with “good citizen”.

It is this uncovering of the contingent character, that is to say, a non-conventional inherited conventionality, on which that seemingly objectivity as a form of conventionality of doing things is built, that Laclau labels “reactivation”. As our comments on iterability and trace highlight, *reactivation* is not, as Laclau underlines, a return to the system of historic options that was excluded, but *a rediscovery of alternatives that were actually pursued and carried out*. Reactivation is in this sense not a rediscovery of origin, but the rediscovery of seeming non-origin and alterity of meaning of a concept.

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<sup>117</sup> Instead of “prevail” we might refer to a continuous repetition of the same.

## Reactivation and the contingency of objectivity

Thus, reactivation is not a return to the past, but a rediscovery in the present of the contingency of an apparent objectivity through an emergence of new antagonisms, where the consequence of that rediscovery is a transformation, a detotalisation (Laclau, 1990, p. 49f), of the social. This rediscovery of contingency in the present and the resulting detotalisation of the social thereby allows for the political to re-emerge as an encounter of new alternatives that can be pursued. What we mean by this detotalisation and reactivation is that the experience of alterity in the past allows for a questioning of or dissolution of objectivity with which a particular way of giving meaning to a concept is associated. This reactivation is a detotalisation, as it does not only uproot the givenness of how a particular concept is constituted, but extends beyond that concept and might challenge the position of a particular discourse within the social.

The exploration of these two concepts of sedimentation and reactivation, thus aimed to highlight that the appeal to a historicity of practice, does not condemn us to a historic reproduction that can only be changed through the entrance of an external alterity, but allows to conceive of historicity of practice as to entail a necessary *difference* of the self to itself in any repetition that is to bring about that self again (iterability). Further, this exploration is to highlight *contingency* that every repetition has to take into account, since it tries to bring into accordance past, present and the Event.

## Sedimentation, reactivation, the social and the political

For our conception of the relation between education and the social this means that, in the context of the assumed role of societal reproduction, education can be seen to be maintaining its objectivity and to a certain degree engages in (re)-production of the social through sedimentation. That is to say, that education policy will repeat itself, again constituting certain central policy concepts.

However, and this is crucial, education policy will at the same time engage in the reactivation of certain sedimented elements and associated elements of the social, due to its need to turn towards the experience of antagonism and changes within the social.<sup>118</sup> It will reactivate certain elements as we conceive it to be a political practice, where different political positions will aim to engage in hegemonic articulation of central concepts. We might say this reactivation is the result of a need to transform the social as a whole according to the demands that are put forward by these political groups. This reactivation through education policy can be seen to be more prominent in

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<sup>118</sup> Instead of “antagonism”, we might here speak of the Event as we will conceive it in the next section.

times of significant political and societal unrest and once configurations in politics change. While reactivation will always remain partial, that is to say, it will not uproot the social as a whole, changes or collapses of governments or substantial social unrest are likely to be entailed by the reactivation of certain concepts or broader areas of education policy, due to the encounter of the possibility of, or a need for, a delineation of distance and difference from the previous perspectives of the government and/or particular traditions within the social in general.

This chance for reactivation is not to be seen to be the result of an insufficiency internal to a particular sedimented objectivity, but instead, due to the contingency of the practices that are instituting the social, to be inscribed into the structure itself (Laclau, 1990, p. 56). The name that Laclau provides for this trace of contingency within the structure is “dislocation”. Dislocation is of central importance for the conception of the possibility for change in education and in a broader social perspective.

## Unevenness of the Structure and Dislocation

In order to understand the centrality of dislocation and its relation to contingency within the structure, it will be necessary to briefly return to the metaphor of society as equilibrium.

It is against this background of an appeal to necessity in this conception of society as an equilibrium that we earlier argued that the appeal to contingency of the constitutive moment of the social problematises the possibility of both structural and temporal regularity, as discussed in our conception of contingency above. We argue that contingency problematises structural and temporal regularity, since it not only problematises the possibility of structural or comprehensive fixation of the social, but also with regard to fixation of the synchronic and the diachronic. This contingency of the constitutive moment leads according to our perspective to an unevenness of the social.

## Unevenness and undecidability

As we already pointed out, this closure of or total fixations of relations in the social is in our conception barred due to the effects of antagonism. As a result of the effects of antagonism, the internality of society is constantly subverted by the external. Here we utilise Derrida’s concept of undecidability that we see to allow for such a subversion, we might say, this undecidability, prevents closure or fixture and simultaneously necessitates and renders possible articulation, writing, of the social. What this means is that, if there would be the possibility of a closure of the social, where we could reduce variation in articulation to a singular fixity, there would be no necessity for articulation, since signifier and signified would be congruent.

Hence, what we mean by the undecidability of the social is that the regularity that it represents is not determined. We argue, that the social is heterogeneous as there is incommensurability among political perspectives. The term that was given for that which produces this heterogeneity is antagonism.

Thus, due to the effects of antagonism that results in a heterogeneity of the social and the discursive, the social as a structure is not closed. As a result of this non-closure of the social it cannot fully determine the subject, reducing it fully to the function of an enunciative subject of the discursive structure.

Hence, due this undecidability or unevenness of the structure, the social as the regularity that governs its constitution in articulation does not determine fully its articulation, it haunts due to its heterogeneity the enunciative subject and hence renders the emergence of the subject a necessity in the moment of an encounter of undecidability.

A decision can only come into being in a space that exceeds the calculable program that would destroy all responsibility by transforming it into a programmable effect of determinate causes. There can be no moral or political responsibility without this trial and this passage by way of the undecidable. Even if a decision seems to take only a second and not to be preceded by any deliberation, it is structured by this *experience and experiment of the undecidable*. (Derrida, 1988, p. 116, original emphasis)

Thus, this experience and experiment of the undecidable is failure of the structure to determine me as a subject and at the same time a reminder of its incapability to constitute itself as a closed system.

## Unevenness and dynamism

While we will explore further the concept of the decision below, we can in the context of unevenness of the structure state that the moment of experience of antagonism is not the moment at which any articulation becomes impossible. Rather, it is the experience that, while a decision can be made, the decision is not given. To put it differently and to return to our discussion of Östman (1995), there is a heterogeneity of possible choices, yet the decision is not determined.

Coming back to the figure of reasoning that uses the metaphor of the equilibrium of society, it is put forward here that the concepts of writing, articulation and undecidability render this possibility of a moment of equilibrium impossible. What the reference to “possibility of a moment of equilibrium” is pointing towards or trying to get at is the notion of temporality that is appealed to in such conceptions of society.

As already discussed at the end of the last section, we here propose a political evolutionary perspective that takes, as we argue, mutation seriously and thus we might say that the concept of undecidability points towards the constant ineradicable movement or activity that renders the notion of environment or society as an even, stable or crystallised configuration impossible, since any element within its functional system is already characterised by a difference-to-self, that is to say, in a constant process of mutation and movement.

The perspective on society as equilibrium, as put forward here, holds a particular notion of time, we might say, a deferred notion of adaptive time, where time is seen to be a linear and is associated with *sequential and homogenous* change of elements and their relationships within a society over time. We might here say that this sequentiality and homogeneity of time is threatened by the concept of mutation, since change, as a radical difference between a before and an after, is subverted by the self-difference or difference-to-self of any identity at any point in time. To relate this mutative perspective back to our conception of iterability, we might say that as every identity becomes different as part of its repetition this difference-to-self will prevent identities as they stand in relation to another to be fully present to another at a point in time. By appealing to Derrida's critique of a metaphysics of presence, we comment that this notion of time and its appeal to presence, suppresses a form of haunting temporality and instead focuses on the seeming possibility to reduce Being to a flat space. As such a time of presence, it would allow for the conception of an even structure or a fixed positional system of functions, where we might comment that this system as an environment or society could be ordered into a universal before and after.

We argue that the Event that we will briefly explore in relation to unevenness below and that we expand on in the next section highlights that any such space is uneven and that it has been characterised by a dynamism of multidirectional becoming. The discussion of the relation between unevenness and Event below is a digression that the reader familiar to the Event in a Derridian notion might engage with. To simplify the reading process for those unfamiliar, we might simply state that the Event as a form of experience of antagonism is a limiting of the social as a structure to become fully self-transparent. It is in this sense producing a detotalisation of the structure. Hence, with this argument in mind, the reader might proceed to the next subsection.

## Unevenness and the Event

The event becomes in such even notions of space that rely upon a notion of presence the name for a comprehensive change in presence, a shift in structural or environmental functioning as part of that change from one presence to another. The event in this understanding is a universal event that announc-

es for all of us that things have changed. In the context of such an understanding of event, we will introduce a different notion of event, we might suggest a mutative notion, in the next section.

Yet, to return to our conception of the unevenness of the social and our critique of the figure of equilibrium, we might suggest that changes in equilibrium are portrayed in a similar fashion as in a spatial/temporal emergence of a new presence from nothingness. The before is ascribed a spatial non-presence of that new presence, we might say a total externality of that new presence, while the after meanwhile can be seen to be characterised by a spatial presence or emergence of that otherness or new presence. As a presence/nothingness-relation then, we can, according to this associated sequential notion of time, distinguish between *universal events* that denote the emergence and disappearance of presences at distinct points in and over time.<sup>119</sup> The status of elements and relationships within the system can then be ascribed to particular points in time, where objective laws can be seen to be at work in the form of a change in presences and absences of these presences from one point in time to the next.

What this metaphorical exploration is aimed to show is that there are binary shifts in terms of presences and absence of presences at different points in time and that change is in relation to these presences and absences described as *non-spontaneous* and in relation to universal events, where universal and external forces are at work by introducing and abstracting presences.

The Event in the understanding that we will put forward in the next section will be a problematic event that shows that things have already been different and that the totality has not been a stasis, but is uneven and still active. What the Event in our understanding problematises is the presence of presence to itself. To relate this argument to the conception of unevenness, the Event problematises the apparent presence that provides or gives evidence to the stability to the social as structure. In this sense, the Event does not announce how things are now, but shows that things and as a consequence the structure has already been different to itself. As a result, we might say the Event highlights the unevenness of the structure in not showing that it *has* been a particular structure all together, but that it *could* already have been constituted differently.

Coming back to the metaphor of an equilibrium, it can be concluded that the relationship and, therefore, also the identity of elements within a closed or determinable structure of relationships is ultimately tied to spatial

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<sup>119</sup> We might say, there is an otherness to any seeming present presence that can be experienced in an alterity that has already been or can become, thereby subverting the givenness of that present presence. In this sense, the experience of antagonism is an experience of otherness that not only shows that presences might have changed in the present but that this point in time of change is elusive.

presences, where we can refer to their Being with regards to a necessary sequential, that is to say, spatial, entry and disappearance.

While others have since Heidegger problematised the underlying metaphysics of presence of such notions of time and Being, our conception is here mainly inspired by Derrida's work and Laclau's utilisation of Derrida.

## Unevenness and the detotalisation of the structure

The concepts of trace, undecidability, decision, writing and iterability that are appropriated by us from Derrida allow, it is argued, for a reconceptualisation of the structure, which we, using Laclau's term, might specify as the unevenness of the structure.

As Derrida put it above, it is this "undecidability" of the structure that allows for the political or moral to emerge. A structure that would fully determine the actions of the subject would leave no space for the political or the moral. Thus, we necessitate the openness of the structure—we might even say the absence of society—in order to approach the political in education and practices that are aiming to define what education and society should be like. Further, reliance on appeals to determination, as it is central to the conception of closure of the structure and givenness of identity, is seen by us to put the subject into a hopeless state of being caught up in a static web of relations, a frightening state of homeostasis, where it is condemned to wait for better times to come in the form of an arrival of an externally initiated change.

As it might become clear, based on these consideration, the unevenness, in Laclau's use of the term, refers to the fact that the conception of antagonism and the resulting destabilisation of the structure does not conceive of temporality as being possible to be conceived in stages, periods or general and homogenous events. The *detotalisation of the structure* conceived by us, can be described to lead to an unevenness of the structure and is constituted through an acknowledgement of the openness of the structure and the recognition of the Event.<sup>120</sup> However, *this unevenness must be understood against the background of the partial stability/regularity and subverting effects of antagonism that both characterise elements and their position within the structure*. Here, we can conceive of this effect of antagonism to result in the experience of the seeming floating character of elements, where in this experience of antagonism the possibility of alternate constitution of their meanings according to different positions within the social becomes apparent to the experiencing subject.

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<sup>120</sup> Detotalisation refers to the resulting decentering of the structure and emergence of the subject due to the *a priori* experience of a lack in and undecidability of the structure as an experience of antagonism.

## Unevenness, contingency and heterogeneity

Instead of appealing to full structural determination, we have highlighted the contingency involved in the articulation that constitutes combinations of elements, resulting in an identity of these elements that is not fully determined by a structural necessity, but rather seemingly being an identity as part of a particular regularity (*cf.* Laclau, 1990, p. 49). What we with this “seemingly” denote is the differentiation between “rule following” and “seemingly following a rule” as a form of interpretation that we introduced in our discussion of Wittgenstein’s temporal paradox and Derrida’s comments on conventionality.

As a result, this highlighted contingency in articulation leads to that the movement of the social as structure cannot be a cohesive movement as determined by a uniform law. Instead, due to the openness and constitutive partiality of regularity/objectivity, *the movement of the structure cannot at the conceptual level be seen to necessarily lead to a cohesive movement.* This movement will, as earlier mentioned, due to the different trajectories and in incommensurabilities among perspectives, result in collisions among practices that aim to constitute the social (Laclau, 1990, p. 49).

The unevenness refers with regards to the incommensurability of trajectories, to *the heterogeneity of objectivities* that are constitutive for potential articulations, where this heterogeneity is leading to a non-exclusivity of the constitutive process of the social. Due to this unevenness or heterogeneity of the structure of the social, the appeal to an inherent homogeneous movement, which can be seen to be appealed to in notions of dominant or hegemonic ideology, becomes split at any point in time.<sup>121</sup> As we will see in the next section this split will be conceived in terms of the Event.

Coming back to the assumed constitutive negativity of the social, these effects of negativity can be seen to have disruptive effects on the structure, rendering any transcendental positivity with which the regularity of the structure is associated into a partial or relative positivity. While this source, the negativity itself, can be not be articulated only pointed at in language, its effects on the structure *can be shown* and are by Laclau (1990, p. 50) referred to as *dislocation*.

We might here conceive of dislocation, or its effects that can be shown, in terms of what Derrida (1988, p. 116) labelled, the “experience and experiment of the undecidable”. It is due the externality of antagonism and its effects on the structure that the structure cannot be conceived to provide the necessary conditions of its re-articulation.<sup>122</sup> Dislocation is in this under-

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<sup>121</sup> We are here referring back to our discussions of figures of reasoning in Englund (1986) in the previous section.

<sup>122</sup> Antagonism is external, as it cannot be articulated and integrated through articulation into the structure. It is in this sense external, as it is the limit to the structure and prevents it from

standing an effect of antagonism, where antagonism is antithetical to the social as structure.

## Unevenness and education

Before elaborating the concept of dislocation further, we will briefly explore the consequences of the denoted unevenness of the structure with regard to education, specifically with regards to education policy.

What this appeal to unevenness and resulting heterogeneity of the structure aims to allow for in our reconceptualisation of education's capacity to contribute to social regulation is that practices that aim to define what education and society should be can, as earlier stated, not be seen to lead to the reproduction of society, since it is not able to institute the product that is to result in the reproduction of a cohesive whole, as a singular and fixed system of relational positions. It is with regards to the social that education policy can, neither, determine what the social is to become, nor be seen to be an expression of what the social already is, since we might say that education as articulation is not capable of articulating society as a unified whole. To put it differently, education policy is not capable of fully erasing the need of decision resulting out of the experience of the undecidable from the readings that are provided by the social.

Instead, education and education policy are seen to provide particular or multiple perspectives on what society should be. Seen as a regulative intervention that aims to constitute the social, these attempts at instituting society always remain threatened by potential experiences of undecidability. We might say that every attempt to engage in social regulation through education policy making to a certain extent acknowledges its active dimension, that is to say, its temporal dimension.<sup>123</sup> In this notion of policy making as writing, policy making is not a result of a presence that it articulates. On the contrary, we see policy making as writing to engage in an attempt at writing the past, present and future, where that need for writing emerges only once the differ-

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closure. It is, in this sense, that antagonism attains a quasi-ontological position for us, as it cannot be articulated, but its effects can be shown.

<sup>123</sup> What this means is that every articulation, including education policy making, is as a form of writing characterised by both an active and passive dimension. "This passivity is also the relationship to a past, to an always-already-there that no reactivation of the origin could fully master and awaken to presence. This impossibility of reanimating absolutely the manifest evidence of an originary presence refers us therefore to an absolute past. That is what authorized us to call *trace* that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present" (Derrida, 1967, p. 66, original emphasis). As a result of this trace mentioned in the quote above and the ambiguity of the trace in its presence, we state that every practice in education policy making that aims to prevail, as a form of repetition, will inevitably entail a difference or iterability. It will put into movement that past that seemingly never has been dead, settled or passive.

entiation between what is present and absent, between what is past and present, is blurred.

## Unevenness and the political

It is with regards to the active character of repeating acts that we must remark that the cause of this always-undead character of the past is due to antagonism as the name for the negativity of the social. Antagonism in this sense is the experience of a temporal difference. It is the experience that the past has not been settled, but that this active aspect of the past troubles the present.

We need to keep in mind that this antagonism as the negativity of the social is not the antagonism of existing antagonisms within the social that we labelled social antagonism, but it is an antagonism that subverts the pure internality/externality distinction of these social antagonisms. Hence, we must differentiate between antagonism as a cause of dynamism in and openness of the social that is external to the social from social antagonism, which is the name for the antagonism-resulting conflicts and incommensurabilities in perspectives within the social.<sup>124</sup>

Antagonism causes the unevenness of the social, producing the experience of an undecidability of the social, where the subject has to identify with a particular way of closing or overcoming the unevenness of the social. Yet, this act of identification and the articulation of the enemy, that which has to be overcome and that caused the unevenness, will be a form of self-blockage. It will be a form of self-blockage in the sense that the experience of antagonism highlights to the subject its non-determination, its very lack of identity, as it is no longer provided by the social and requires it to articulate its identity in an act of decision. This act of decision and identification will require an act of exclusion, and articulation of that which prevents the subject from being itself. Hence, the act of decision and identification will require the articulation of an enemy from which it differs. This name of that enemy and the meaning the subject will give to it will, however, not articulate the antagonism causing the emergence of the subject. The enemy will be that of an other and not be that of the Other. As a result, we might say that

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<sup>124</sup> This differentiation between antagonism and social antagonism in Laclau has been highlighted by Žižek (1990, p. 253, original emphasis), who states: “We must then distinguish the experience of antagonism in its radical form, as the limit of the social, as the impossibility around which the social field is structured, from antagonism as the relation between antagonistic subject-positions: in Lacanian terms, we must distinguish antagonism as *real* from the *social reality* of the antagonistic fight. And the Lacanian notion of the subject aims precisely at the experience of ‘pure’ antagonism as self-hindering, self-blockage, this internal limit preventing the symbolic field from realizing its full identity: the stake of the entire process of subjectivation, of assuming different subject-positions, is ultimately to enable us to avoid this traumatic experience”.

the subject will be engaging in an articulation of social antagonisms that are constitutive for the social.<sup>125</sup>

Thus, the ineradicable active dimension of the practices that are to constitute the social and identification have far-reaching consequences for, both, the conception of identity politics, since time, or rather the event, might show that things and consequently I have been different, and for the conception of strategic political investments, as claims might turn out different than expected or can become contested.

Time in this sense is to show the elusiveness of the other and that I, as a subject, have to constitute my identity. Hence, as an attempt at social regulation education policy will try to overcome this undecidability of the social and to institute order, that is to say, to promote a particular objectivity as beacons of identification. We might reformulate this line of reasoning to state that *an acknowledgement of the political and social antagonism, creates an impetus for education policy to acknowledge the fluidity and openness of the social, while the ambition of constituting society and to engage in its regulation at the same time entails a need for education policy to define what society should be.*

## Unevenness and antagonism

Thus, against this background of openness and fluidity of the social we conceive of antagonism, as to impose remainders of this non-closure and the play in the articulation as the constitutive moment of the social. These remainders of antagonism are conceived by us in terms of dislocation, which is “the trace of contingency within the structure” (Laclau, 1990, p. 56). Dislocation as a remainder of the Event, as the experience and experiment of the undecidable, allows us to understand the role of the promise of society-to-come against that which takes place against the horizon of the specific historic imaginary of society, for example, *folkhemmet*, and its role in policy making as an instituting moment of the social.

Elements that have attained stability through processes of sedimentation can, as we argued with regards to reactivation, become fluid again; we might

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<sup>125</sup> Antagonism is, in this understanding, the cause for the emergence of the subject as to articulate what it is through an articulation of an other. However, this articulation of an other will not provide it with a full identity as the reference to the Other would provide it. Identity is not provided as a form of a full positivity through acts of articulation as identification and hence articulation will remain active and continuously aim to articulate an elusive Other. The discrepancy between other and Other prevents the subject to determinate its identity and to eradicate the need for identification. We see Laclau’s conception of the subject, which lends from the Lacanian notion of the subject of the signifier, to prevent him from reinstalling the subject as a primary, or as a form of cogito that would ground its own Being. Through this appeal to the notion of subject of the signifier, we see Laclau complement his decentering of the structure in his appeal to antagonism with a decentering of the subject in his appeal to the subject as characterised by a lack or as a subject of the signifier.

instead of fluid also say dislocated. This dislocation, as we have shown earlier, will be, due to the elusive limit that is installed *within* the structure, the limit at which the social is able to constitute itself as objectivity. Dislocation is in this understanding the result of *the failure of a structure to provide structural objectivity, where the result of the subversive effects of antagonism shows the contingency of any objectivity.*

To come back to our discussion of dislocation as an effect of antagonism, dislocated elements of the social will not provide formulas for how these elements will have to be rearticulated. Instead, dislocation will allow for multiple indeterminate ways of re-articulation. This multiplicity of possible ways of re-articulation will be provided by the choices that are available for decision at the moment of their dislocation. This uprooting of stability of meaning and identity of these elements will also call for the emergence of the subject.

This subject that will have to articulate these dislocated elements will be outside of that structure (Laclau, 1990, p. 43). This is supposed to highlight that the subject is not determined as a form of social position by the historicity of discursivity, since the re-articulation will necessitate the subject to make decisions on how to overcome the undecidability of how to restabilise these elements in accordance to certain regularity. That is to say, that the externality of the subject denotes that the undecidability that has been put into play as part of dislocation does not provide the conditions, or rather the regularity, that have to be created as part of their stabilising re-articulation (*cf.* Laclau, 1990, p. 50)

And the very fact that the dislocated elements are not endowed with any kind of essential unity outside their contingent forms of articulation means that a dislocated structure is an open structure in which the crisis can be resolved in the most varied of directions. (Laclau, 1990, p. 50)

As Laclau highlights in the quote above, the attempt by the subject to stabilise elements is not determined but requires decisions in which the “varying” choices of decision are to be taken by the subject.<sup>126</sup>

We might, in the context of earlier attempts at conceiving the role of the diachronic in Swedish curriculum theory, comment that the conception of dislocation re-conceives the historical in a different fashion.

To recall, Englund (1986) was interpreted to reduce the plurality of synchronic struggle to the singularity of diachronic movement, dominance and power. We might, thus, say here that this singularity of diachronic movement can be seen to be provoked by, or result in, a particular notion of histo-

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<sup>126</sup> We argue that these attempts at overcoming dislocation will also entail an iterability, as this need for difference emerges in dislocation. Dislocation in this sense can be seen to highlight the limit of repeatability.

ricity of history where the plurality of the synchronic struggle can be related to an objective historic stage, movement or historical situation.

In the context of our conception of antagonism and dislocation, we highlight the impossibility of this singular historical movement or rather that dislocation highlights the contingency and incommensurability among social antagonisms that provide different historical trajectories at a given point in time.

## Dislocation

For us, “dislocation” is the name for the possibility of contestation of the singularity of the historical situation, since dislocation is the name for the play or undecidability among different ways to read the historical situation. This open character of the dislocated structure, will allow for the creation of multiple centres around which particular opposing formations of groups will form and will strategically invest into the these group’s centres in order to reconstitute the social. Thus, rather than being determined by a singular transcendental reference point, dislocation allows for a rediscovery of the multiplicity of the historical situation, since the meaning and direction of the here and the now is contested.

This institution of centres that are to provide stability to attempts at stabilising the dislocated structure takes the form of the provision of reference points in the discursive. With regards to these centres, the establishment of relations between dislocated elements and centres aims to provide stability of dislocated elements.

But in as far as the structure is dislocated, the possibility of centres emerges: the response to the dislocation of the structures will be its recomposition around particular nodal points of articulation by the various antagonistic forces. (Laclau, 1990, p. 40)

While the concept of nodal points will be specified in more detail in the next section, it is important to point out that the centre that is referred to here is not a form of transcendental point. Nodal points, as substitute reference points within the discursive, will not transcend the discursive, but will be provided within this discursive structure.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> To return to our discussion of later Dewey’s notion of society, as we discussed with regards to Ljunggren in the previous section, we make the argument that, as there will be multiple centres in the discursive, the appeal to a single cross-reference that denotes an overlay of different societies becomes impossible. We argue that this would require a sublation of the diversity of centres that function as stabilising points of reference on their own. Cross-reference, in our understanding, would require transcendence beyond the play caused by antagonism, where the ultimate reference point would have to be immune to the effects of subversion. For a discussion of this relation of play in the structure, see Derrida (1978a).

Instead, it is the requirement of hegemonic delineation of difference from other attempts to stabilise dislocated elements in relation to alternative centres in the face of the subversive effects of antagonism that prevents them from installing a totality and provides them with a constitutive other.<sup>128</sup>

The investment into these centres will provide temporary stability to the identity of social groups, which emerge as such aggregates only through individual acts of *identification* with a particular centre. As such, these centres are associated with certain perspectives on how to read the world and demands of social groups.

## Dislocation and education

As a result of this plurality, education policy is not articulated in a uniform way, but seen by us to articulate a multitude of different demands and ways of giving meaning to education and its role in the constitution of society. This multitude, which emerges out of a strategic requirement of social groups to engage in issues beyond their narrow field of interest in order to expand their influence, leads to that education policy, as the result of shared and negotiated decision-making processes, is likely to portray these negotiations and alternative perspectives in the form of paradox ways in which meaning is given to contested policy concepts.

Thus, in contrast to synthesising into a singular dominant ideology or coherent consensus, education policy is seen as to be characterised by a plurality of perspectives and social demands, which as part of negotiations and consensus are not overcome, but where this plurality can be interpreted to be active in the paradoxical way that central policy concepts are articulated.

Further, the argument that the dislocated structure does not provide the principles for its re-articulation underlines that, for example, in the scenario of significant political changes, the re-articulation of what society should become is not conceived to consist of the establishment of a singular centre and absorption of political opposition to the old regime into one singular movement. Instead, we argue that education policy is likely to be characterised by a multitude of demands and centres.

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<sup>128</sup> To return to our discussion of the Lacanian Other, we might say that the need to articulate an other, as that difference that is to overcome in the face of dislocation in order to stabilise the dislocated elements, will not provide reference to the Other, but this discrepancy between other and Other, between the means of symbolic representation and the Real, will subvert these attempts at stabilisation.

## The Subject and the Decision

With regard to our provided conception of the subject and the decision, we might say that this conception departs from and explores further our discussion of Östman's (1995) conception of the decision.

This decision is interpreted to highlight the very limit of determination, and, we might say, the limit of the structure to determine me and my acts. Thus, the decision introduced by Östman is reconceived by us against the background of antagonism and dislocation as a theoretical means of limiting the closure of the structure. We argue that the concept of decision allows for the conception of the play, dynamism and the political that is of central concern for our theoretical constitutive ambition.

### The subject

The subject engaging a strategic articulation that aims to promote alternative ways of giving meaning to a situation is, as mentioned above, conceived as external to the structure and will be condemned to be a subject due to its dislocation. The subject is external to the structure due to the experience of the limit of an objectivity, where that limit is shown when the structure fails to provide it with an identity.<sup>129</sup>

This traumatic experience emerges in relation to the limit in the subject's efforts to articulate its identity, where its articulation does not arrive at the signifier, the object of its desire to be (Lacan, 1966). Laclau (1990, p. 44, original emphasis) comments:

There is nothing in me which was oppressed by the structure or is freed by its dislocation; I am simply *thrown up* in my condition as a subject because I have not achieved constitution as an object. The freedom thus won in relation to the structure is therefore a traumatic fact initially: I am *condemned* to be free, not because I have no structural identity as the existentialist assert, but because I have a *failed* structural identity.

This traumatic experience of a "failed structural identity" mentioned in the quote above, which throws me up as a subject, requires acts of identification. We must point out here that the name for the prior structural identity, which has been articulated as an identity, is *social position*. *The subject is therefore only in a temporary state of freedom, while identity is otherwise discursively provided through articulation of subject position.*

Yet, these acts of identification, as acts of reconstitution of identity, have no final point at which the constitution of the creation of identity is complet-

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<sup>129</sup> The subject, in a Lacanian sense, is therefore not a subject with a given identity, as it does not experience that it is essentially something else, but the subject, so to speak, emerges due to the traumatic experience that its identity is not given.

ed and, as a result, the subject as creator “will search in vain for the seventh day of rest” (Laclau, 1990, p. 60). We might say that due to the inaccessibility of the will of God, the subject has to pretend to be God, it has to choose among a range of possibilities that the structure provides for the re-articulation of identity. Therefore, the subject is partially self-determined, that is to say, it requires a decision and consequent re-articulation of possible identity (Laclau, 1990, p. 50).

## Decision and power

Yet, these possible identities never determine the subject’s decision, since they are, as a failure of the structure to determine subject position, equally possible and it is here that Laclau (1990, p. 60) points out that *power* and the contingency of *decision* become synonymous.

It is with regards to this notion of power as decision that we also reconceptualise the notion of power. The power dimension of a decision has in our conception, which builds on Laclau’s figures of reasoning, two dimensions, a positive one that allows for the constitution of identity and a negative one that subdues and excludes alternatives. Following this argumentation, power is conceived not as to operate through structures, but to be the very prerequisite for their constitution. Power is, from this perspective, the power of the subject; the power to make *a choice among alternatives that emerge in the failure of structural determination*. As we will show, in the elaboration of the concept of the decision, power is not associated with rationality, but rather with madness.

## Decision, subject position and mythical subject

Coming back to the partially self-determined character of the subject, this partiality can be re-described in the form of the “historical subject” (Laclau, 1990, p. 47). The historical subject aims to portray the relationship between a subject that is not defined or determined by history, but rather that *acts against a historic horizon, which provides the conditions of possibility of these actions*.<sup>130</sup>

Yet, as we pointed out, this horizon is not defining, nor determining the subject fully, since the subject would then be nothing other than absorbed by that horizon. Instead, due to the undecidability of the structure, the subject emerges as something external to that horizon, against which the subject orients itself in its processes of identification.

This process of identification with trajectories as a movement towards the horizon renders the subject according to Laclau (1990, p. 61) a “mythical

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<sup>130</sup> In the context of our discussions of Östman (1995) we might speak here of history to provide the available choices for action.

subject". The *mythical* denotes the narrative as a reading of a given situation that aims to place the subject in the horizon of continuity. However, continuity is not provided by the horizon, due to its inability to determine the identity of that subject. *Myth* can, therefore, be seen to be *the effort to handle the continuity of discontinuity, we might say the iterability of every act of identification*.<sup>131</sup> Thus, this myth introduces something new, a difference-to-self, since it provides principles of reading a situation and the self that was not previously possible with regards to the historicity of existing objectivity.

As the concepts of reactivation and sedimentation showed, successful *hegemonic* articulation of these new principles will over time contribute to a sedimentation of these principles as a partial objectivity within the structure and in realisation that objectivity reabsorbs the subject within the structure, reducing it to subject position (Laclau, 1990, p. 61).

*Subject position*, on the other hand, "is the effect of a structural determination (or of a rule, which amounts to the same) there is nothing which is substantially constituted outside the structure" (Laclau, 1996, p. 59). We may say here that *subject position* is "determined" by the partial objectivities that are articulated within a particular situation and where that objectivity determines identity. With regards to education policy, it can be stated that it is in relation to dislocation that different actors participating in the negotiation processes of policy making will have to in varying degrees emerge as subjects, creating narratives of continuity in acts of identification and as part of attempts to stabilise dislocated elements.

## Decision and contingency

In order to understand the contingency that is involved in these processes of reconstitution of the social, it is necessary to specify more carefully how that decision is conceptualised. What our conception of decision breaks with is the idea of an underlying rationality or grounding structure that could explain the origin or the validity of a decision.

Laclau highlights that the decision, as the grounding moment of a partial rationality, is left to itself as an act of the subject. The decision has no ground, since, as we have shown, the moment of a need for a decision is the moment of the failure of the structure to determine my acts and to reduce the

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<sup>131</sup> Myth, as a concept that we derive from Laclau, can be seen to share similarities with the conception of myth as has been put forward by Barthes (1973). Barthes sees the function of myth to be that of constructing a universal order as something beyond the political contestation over how things are and, thereby, allow for an appearance that particular discourses are legitimate normal and natural (cf. Barthes, 1973, pp. 143 & 153; Smith, 1998, p. 167). Myths are central to hegemonic articulations, as they allow a particular discourse to present a number of demands as equivalent and organically linked with regards to the mythical state of the universal order, where each of the demands stands in for each other with regards to that myth (Laclau, 1977, p. 102f).

subject to subject position. At this moment of an experience of a structural failure to determine my subject position, the subject is required to take a decision, and this requirement is called for with urgency.

As Derrida (1992, p. 26) highlights decision is not taken by the subject in the context of a given way to proceed; instead, it is the condition of undecidability of the structure that requires a decision with urgency, in the face of possible and the experienced undecidability of the moment; the decision is a necessity for a *posterior* reconstitution of the field of objectivity.

The decision can be seen to be a leap into the unknown or an act of playing God.

A true decision escapes always what any rule can hope to subsume under itself. But a second—and correlative—dimension is that, in that case, the decision has to be grounded in itself, in its own singularity. Now, that singularity cannot bring through the back door what it has excluded from the main entrance—i.e. the universality of the rule. (Laclau, 1996, p. 55)

Thus, in the context of Laclau's argument in the quote above we argue, a true decision cannot be related back to an *a priori* rationality, since a decision is always the result to an experience of undecidability, which shows the limits of that objectivity. Further, the act of decision is an act called for in its own singularity, which is not the result or mirroring of what the subject already is, but is instead an act of identification (Laclau, 1996, p. 60). As a creative act, the decision emerges against the background of an event in the context of which a rupture has to be overcome.

## Decision and undecidability

This rupture, which emerges against the background of an experienced limit of objectivity and the experience of undecidability, calls for a reconstitution of objectivity. However, objectivity will be characterised by a *supplementary* re-articulation (*cf.* Derrida, 1967, p. 154). This supplementation is not a simple addition that leaves the initial objectivity unchanged, but it will add in order to replace. This overcoming of a gap is further characterised by a power relationship (Laclau, 1990, p. 30), since as we earlier said, a decision has two power dimensions, a constitutive one (positive) and an exclusionary one (negative).

It is also with regards to decision that power and antagonism stand in relation, since two different decisions taken by different groups will put them into a contesting/exclusionary relation to one another (Laclau, 1990, p. 31). *A posteriori* to decision, different groups will in the face of the encountered alterity need to repress the other decision through the continued articulation of their privileged option of providing objectivity, as the alternative possibil-

ity of choice that is pursued by others undermines the exclusiveness of the objectivity put forward by a particular group.

It is also in this way that we may say that the privileging, that is to say, articulation, of a certain objectivity will always entail the repression of alternatives. From this perspective, power is not associated with “dominance” as determination by objective power structures, but rather with acts of identification, as a form of privilege, that as decisions are characterised by contingency, since these acts of identification are not determined by what I already am, but due to their contingency might change (Laclau, 1990, pp. 60–61). Privilege is in this understanding not something granted by the structure, but is granted by the subject in the act of decision among equally possible choices.<sup>132</sup>

## Decision and education

Linking the concept of decision to the discussion of education policy, the experience of a structural failure by groups that are engaging in social regulation through education policy, will then, as earlier pointed out, not necessarily lead to a continuous re-articulation of the objectivity that has been dislocated, but this re-articulation will depend on contingent decisions.

Groups that choose to rearticulate the dislocated objectivity, however, will not be able to undo the event of dislocation through efforts to reconstitute a particular perspective as objectivity. Instead, a decision as basis for such reconstitution entails a supplementary, where acts of identification with that prior objectivity will have to add something that allows for the dislocated elements to be reintegrated.

As such, every decision, in our use of the term, calls for a supplementary and a supplementarity in the Derridian (1967, p. 145) sense of the term, as the “supplement supplements. It adds only to replace”. To specify what we mean by that, it is necessary to recall the very traumatic experience that the dislocated objectivity never was a full objectivity. Due to this lack of fullness and the resulting need for the objectivity to be supplemented in order to overcome the dislocation, this supplementation will function as a reminder of its lack of fullness. How would it otherwise be possible to add something to an objective way of describing that situation?

The possibility of supplementation highlights iterability, as it is not a form of deviation from or infringement on an originary identity. It is this possibility that something can be added to, that highlights in our understand-

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<sup>132</sup> We argue, therefore, with regards to the above-mentioned contingency of the act of identification that these acts of identification will split the identities of the subject, and this split identity will “embody the absent fullness of the subject” (Laclau, 1996, p. 60). That split subject is what we in Lacanian terms call the “subject of the signifier”. It is split in the sense that identification with a signifier is not determined by a signified, but caught up in the symbolic play that is always potentially plural.

ing the impossibility of pure reproduction, or the reproduction of something pure, since a supplement “adds only to replace”, as Derrida highlights.

What this comment of supplementarity and the rupture that decision has to overcome aims to show is that there cannot be pure social *reproduction* in education or in education policy in the sense that something existing is prevailed. Instead, education policy can be seen to *initiate constant replacement*, even in the most conservative and dogmatic forms of education policy as social regulation. This need for constant replacement is due to the movement of the social as this movement or the dynamics of the social are an effect of antagonism.

Based on this observation of the need for constant replacement, it is put forward here that education policy and ultimately also education are to be understood as characterised by the dynamics of politics, rather than static objectivity, where certain key political concepts will be dislocated and some will be relatively stable.

Thus, our perspective on education can be seen to vary significantly from figures of reasoning that depart from fully constituted society or society as reality. While we have to acknowledge that there is a significant variety among such perspectives, we argue based on our earlier readings that a common figure of reasoning that is appealed to conceives of historicity or rather history as something that allows for singular trajectories to the past or to a past in its singular form to be traceable in a present.

## Decision, historicity and Event

The following explication of the relation between decision and Event are a digression and the reader might continue to our reflection on the political below. This digression is to create linkages to the conception of temporality and Event in the next section.

We argue that what is at stake in our conception of antagonism and decision is the conception of a universal temporal reference point, in relation to which we might be able to put into relation and to determine the relationship between the different formations or configurations within the social. As we argue that social antagonism is constitutive for a diverse synchrony, we see temporally to be out of joint and hence not to provide the point of reference that puts the diverse into relation. Thus, we argue that our conception differs significantly from figures of reasoning that see history as consolidating synchronic diversity, since it conceives the Event, rather than in consolatory terms of temporality, in terms of a rupturing of time, a split of how it is and how it has been.

It is in this context of the interruption of the event as a form of temporality that education policy making is seen to have the central role in education of providing the myths that aim to provide stabilising events that allow for the articulation of the content of the “history” of society. By investing in this

myth, particular groups are aiming at stabilising the incommensurabilities shown by the Event by denoting something that is shared. The openness of these myths is aiming to provide a common referent for conceiving of how society should be, while particular groups will provide reference points for giving meaning to this referent and thereby aim to ensure that their particular envisioned future is to come.

Yet, as practice engaging in the sedimentation of particular objectivities that are to give meaning to these myths, education policy making is constantly faced by the initial contingency of the decisions that were taken in the face of the event that showed the indeterminability of the past. With regards to this perspective on the past we might say, the trace is to a past that has not been dead yet, a past that is still active. As a result of this active character of the past, the past will attain a contested character, or rather an incommensurable content, where a number of social interest groups are active in providing alternative perspectives on how to achieve the constitution of a society that is conceived in relation to myths, such as *folkhemmet*, and thereby rendering education policy making into a *political practice of identification* with certain salvation narratives.

## The Political

While we started this section with the discussion of the social, we have arrived at the primary concept of our theoretical intervention, that is to say, the concept of the political. This section as a whole can therefore be seen to be ultimately dealing with and culminating in our conception of the political, where the different concepts introduced are to allow for understanding of *education policy making as political practice*.

### The political as our point of departure

When we earlier expressed our alliance with or inspiration to derive from Englund's (1986) conflict perspective, we interpreted antagonism to produce play and the non-closure of the social and to transform education from a reproducing function into a political activity.

Thus, while we acknowledge the partial and diverse structure that the social represents, we aimed to complement this conception of stability by introducing the central concept of antagonism. This conception of antagonism is to allow for a conception of the relationship between education and the social, where this relationship is not closed, cross-referenced or determined. Instead, we aimed through a detotalisation of the structure due to the negativity of antagonism to allow for the conception of education as political practice. In line with this detotalisation, we aimed in our theoretical constitu-

tion and through the concepts of antagonism, contingency, dislocation and reactivation to allow for a re-emergence of the subject as a political subject.

When we speak here of the re-emergence of the subject, we have to specify that it is not the re-emergence of the subject of the enlightenment, an all-powerful rational being in itself, but rather as related to the limit of the structure, as something external that is to reintroduce at the limit through its acts of madness the rationality of the structure.

## The political and the decentering of the structure

What we aimed to show is how the reduction of the subject to an enunciative function of the structure, as the decentering of the subject that has been pursued in critical Swedish curriculum theory, should be accompanied by a decentering of the structure, as entry points for this have been provided by Derrida, Lacan and Laclau.

This decentering of the structure has primarily been accomplished by our conception of undecidability, antagonism and decision, which allowed for the re-emergence of the subject. It is, thus, argued that it is through our conception of the subject, as the subject of decision, that it is possible to conceive of education as something that has to do with politics, or rather the political, instead of seeing it as determined by historical or economical processes. We argue, such determination of education by society would confine education to a part of a machinery in a general and universal self-producing regularity. Instead, we portrayed education as partially contingent and to stand in relation to the political as constitutive moment of any regularity.

Thus, what we tried to argue is that the limits of the social, the point where it is unable to determine how to proceed, that is to say, undecidability, is the moment of the need for its primary constitution. Following this line of reasoning, we see the social and education to depend on the subject in its function to make a decision and to identify with that decision in the subsequent constitution of a certain way out of this impasse that it is grounded in. However, and this is central, resulting acts of political constitution are never able to attain fullness, they remain incomplete (Laclau, 1996, p. 50), since they rely on the exclusion of alternative choices that are equally possible and that other political subjects are actually pursuing. As a result, education as practice is never capable of producing society, as we see education as contested and characterised by social antagonisms.

Thus, in our conception, the political subject of the decision is not constituted as a realisation of *a priori* essence or origin, but characterised by an absence of initial determination, that is to say, the experience that the subject in the face of the Event has already been different (Laclau, 1996, p. 62).

The experience of that lack of determination of the subject's Being stands, at the same time in a hegemonic relationship to that Being that the subject is to articulate. That is to say, the Being that the subject has to identify with, a

particular subject position, has to be constituted in hegemonic articulation through exclusion in an act of identification as the grounding moment of politics.

However, due to the undecidability of this act of identification, the resulting politics are necessarily contingent. This contingency, as we have shown, is always to varying degrees latent and the experience of this contingency in an experience of antagonism allows for a reactivation of sedimented perspectives. It is based on this line of reasoning that we see Laclau (1996, p. 62) argue that it is the tension between undecidability and decision that makes *political* society possible.

The political can according to our argumentation not be reduced to the objectivity of underlying structures, be they society or modes of production. Instead, it is political action with its constitutive and negative dimension of power that is seen by us to produce social links among subjects identifying with a certain perspective and that antagonises in the social others who identify with alternative perspectives. Decision is in our conception not capable of fully constituting the Being or the identity of the articulating subject as a political subject, but, to lend a use of terminology from Lacan, that subject remains the subject of the signifier, where the articulation of the signified is eternally deferred. To simplify, we might state that the subject engages in identification, yet the experience of antagonism will remind it of the contingency of the constitution of its identity. That is, the experience of antagonism will remind the subject that it has to constitute itself through signification.

It is this spectre of the signified to the signifier and not its actual arrival that renders the conception of politics possible in the first place, as we see Laclau argue in the quote below.

It is because of this constitutive split between singularity and universality—this tendency of a signifier to evade its strict attachment to a signified while keeping a ghostly relation to it—that politics is possible at all. (Laclau, 1996, p. 61)

Thus, the conception of the political subject that entails acts of identification, but not the expression of a full identity, aims to allow for the conception of politics as something that is not essentially an expression of structural relations. The political points in our understanding towards and necessitates the conception of the incompleteness of all acts of political institution (Laclau, 1996, p. 50).

## The political and education

With this acknowledgement of this incompleteness of the instituting moment of society in mind we return to our problematisation of Swedish curriculum

theory in the previous section. As our identification of figures of reasoning was envisioned to highlight there are in Swedish curriculum theory appeals to determination, reproduction, sublation or synthesis where certain articulations put forward the notion of fixation of original, essential, structural or relational identity that constitutes society as a reality and something existent. As we argued, figures of reasoning would struggle with the conception of change as emanating from the inside of society, where we argued change is due to the inception of something by a radical externality.<sup>133</sup>

Rather than opting between either society or politics, Laclau can be seen to allow us to transform this duality of choice into a combination, as conception of the social and the political as a polarity between closure and opening, since he suggests that,

[...] a society from which the political has been completely eliminated is inconceivable—it would mean a closed universe merely reproducing itself through repetitive practices—on the other, an act of unmediated political institution is also impossible: any political construction takes place against the background of a range of sedimented practices. (Laclau, 1990, p. 35)

With this polarity in mind we see ourselves follow a path paved by Englund (1986) where we aim to conceive of dynamism, not as a total contingency or fluidity, but instead to allow for the conception of both the social and antagonism as forms of stability and dynamic tension.

Following the argument put forward in our theoretical constitution, our primary focus moves from structures to the actual articulations of education policy as constituting moments of patterns and regularities, which as partial objectivities seemingly regulate social relations.

As political practice that is centrally concerned with providing different objectivities according to which meaning given to these myths, education policy making, as one of many practices articulating education, is not interpreted to be confined to an autonomous level of the social, but various numbers of social groups will aim to provide their particular narratives in the wider social and to promote their particular demands. As a consequence of this attractiveness of education policy, as an arena for provision of myths and social regulation, it is likely that education policy itself is as an amalgamation of efforts and negotiations characterised by paradoxes, lapses and inconsistencies that result out of an appeal to antagonistic and incommensurable perspectives.

Yet, as a result of negotiations, we do not see education policy to result in a synthesis or an appropriation of dominant forces, but rather to maintain the dynamics of the multiplicity and incommensurability of these processes as

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<sup>133</sup> Radical refers here to constitutive difference that is not conceivable in terms of play that characterises the inside of society. This difference is constitutive for the separation between different planes, for example, the superstructure and material base differentiation.

politics. What this multiplicity and incommensurability of perspectives is seen to entail is a plurality of centres that characterise the social and not only education and in relation to which central education policy concepts will attain multiple and contradictory meanings in education policy documents as articulations.

Hence, with its focus on the social and its ambitions to constitute society, education policy will inevitably have to relate itself to what is happening outside the education system.

## Beyond Education and Society: The political, mutation and space

This section aimed to provide a conceptualisation of how education policy in its relation to the social can be both understood in relation continuity and change. In parallel to this conception, we have stressed the centrality of the political as the moment of the institution of the social and as the limit of all stability. As part of this conceptualisation, we have reconfigured a number of figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory, inverted some, excluded others, mainly with the intention of allowing for, as we put it in the previous section, a re-approaching of the political in education and, in particular, the political in articulations of ESD.

Instead of once again repeating the consequences of the conceptual repertoire that has been provided in this section, we aim to return to our discussion at the end of the previous section regarding how we can perceive the relation between education and society from an evolutionary perspective.<sup>134</sup> The ambition in this return to our discussion is to allow for a conception of the relation between continuity and change that highlights synchronic difference-to-self, as we will relate this difference-to-self to the Event and temporality in the next section. Hence, the continued discussion of the evolutionary aspect is to provide an entry point for and argumentative bridge to our reconception of the relationship between temporality and spatiality in the next section. With this argumentative direction in mind, we see our introduction of the social, antagonism and the political to set the stage for a conception of an understanding of education beyond society and education in terms of synchronic mutation.

Thus, as we hinted at the end of Section 1, our reconception of the relation between education and the social that we provided in this section attempted to provide an evolutionary perspective that highlighted the political that, similar to synchronic mutation, denotes the unevenness of the social as

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<sup>134</sup> For a repetition and conclusion of the consequences of this section for education, see the epilogue.

a form of environment.<sup>135</sup> Thus, while we acknowledge that practices, such as policy making, in their political instances are contingent as mutation, we at the same time highlight how these can be perceived as adaptive to a relative stability of broader historic formations in social relations, that is to say, the social.

With the political in mind, the social is not perceived as a closed and as a result a-temporal synchronicity as in the form of an environment that education and the learner is adapting to, but a synchronicity that is already at any moment different to itself. We might say that antagonism highlights that the environment, the social, the subject and the learner are at any point in time already different to themselves. Temporality in terms of the synchronic can, according to this mutative principle of antagonism that we see to be at play in the political, not be synthesised into a cohesive state of the environment or the social. As we argued, as there is a seeming unevenness and undecidability of the social, the social at a given point cannot be transparent to itself. Hence, for us, there is no concrete society that education or education research can relate itself to.

The conceptions of the contingency of the political and the madness of the decision in the face of the undecidable are aimed to provide conceptual means in order to denote how the traces to the past are incapable to determine the present as society. What we argue is that traces as historicity are incapable to constitute the present as a closed system, ahistorical situation, or as a society as a whole with distinct limits, where the past would determine the meaning of the historical situation and the identity of subjects. We argue that such a conception of determinate society forgets the need for articulation and decision. It is in the context of this argument that we see this section to break with a conception between education and society and to approach the beyond.

In contrast to such a notion of society, we argued in this section that the social as an evolutionary structure, or social environment, is not self-determining, that is to say, dictating the means of adaptation. Society is for us not dictating the function of education, nor the problem that education needs to solve.

Instead, the social is seen by us to be characterised by unevenness and undecidability and, as a result, requiring education policy making. As a result, adaptive practice will encounter the limits of objectivity in the experience that things in that social environment have already been different, that is to say, they have already mutated. As a result, the objectivity of the structure, which calls for adaptation, is perceived as a contingent one, as it is always already characterised by a difference-to-self. We might say that the

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<sup>135</sup> For a detailed discussion of this synchronic aspect of mutation, see “Remarks of Point of Departure and Convergence” in Section 1.

beyond is always already a part of society, preventing it from coming into existence.

For our conception of education policy making, this results in a perspective that moves away from an analytical ambition to uncover objective structural relations that *a priori* determine education policy in its particularity as practices of adaptation to a stable environment.

Instead of bracketing education policy in its adaptive character, excluding its unconventionalities as particularities, inconsistencies, paradoxes and vagueness in order to delineate policy concepts in their adaptive position to the social as objective structural relations or functions, it is the particularity or difference-to-self of education policy, its content and meaning that we turn towards. We turn to this particularity in order to highlight how the social and elements within it are already characterised by a difference-to-self as it is characterised by social antagonisms.

With this focus on mutation and overdetermination we ordain *a deconstructive perspective on the synchronic*. This deconstructive perspective on the synchronic aims not primarily to show how the synchronic is already different-to-self, that is to say, mutated, but rather that mutation is taken to highlight social antagonism and conflict as a source of dynamism of evolution, where the contingent and political in acts of decision and articulation are the founding principles of dynamism.

In the face of this mutation, we do not ordain a singular or plural normativity based on the societal, but we are rather interested in the incommensurability among ordained normativities provided by different centres appealed to by political actors in the social. To put it differently, our deconstructive perspective on the synchronic is not interested in socialisation that should be carried out, but rather it is interested in the variety of particular attempts at socialisation, as attempts carried out by different social groups in order to define the learner, education and society.

These attempts are not treated as autonomous attempts at socialisation, but are, as our exploration of antagonism, aimed to show constantly subvert and are themselves subverted by other attempts at socialisation. Hence, attempts at socialisation will rely on an excluding or antagonising articulation, where the other that these differences will have to draw upon is not a stable other, but this other will be subverted by its difference to the Other and as a result will open up the possibility of alternate attempts at socialisation.

As we have tried to argue in this section, the social will remain an uneven and open-ended structure, where this openness and unevenness translates into a constant subversion of the internality of any attempts at defining the centres that are to provide stability for the structure as the whole. As a result of this subversion of the limit out of which the openness of the structure derives, subversion renders the conception of structure as an uneven surface somewhat difficult.

As such a surface, the structure can be conceived in terms of space, as we will discuss in greater detail in the next section. Space, as the systematic and regulative, is according to our conception of unevenness and undecidability not seen to be *a priori* fixated, but the partial and temporary *a posteriori* result of education policy making as spatialisation. Thus, the unevenness or undecidability of space calls in our understanding for spatialisation as a form of attempted reconstitution of space.

What this exploration of the space metaphor, which will be more thoroughly explored in the next section, aims to call to attention to is how this subversion of the limit, renders the conception of that which is beyond society as being problematic. We aim through our discussion of the beyond, which we initiated in the prologue and that we have in this section continued through our discussion of antagonism, to problematise an understanding of globalisation as something taking place among delimited societies. As we will argue in the last section of this Book I, the appeal to society as an existent or reality limits the possibility of our understanding of globalisation. We might ask ourselves: How is it possible that there can be an interaction between two societies that are in their regularity determined and where this determination sets a limit that defines an inside? We might reformulate the question to state: How are we to conceive of a process of mutual influence between different spaces that are bounded? We argue that this question is not only of relevance for our understanding of the relation between education and globalisation but also for how we conceive of the relation between education and society. The question and its answer, we argue, hinges on the conception of limit and the beyond. Hence, a central question that we will pursue in the following sections and try to find a potential answer to is: How to conceive of the beyond of society, or the beyond of the social?

We argue that the metaphorisation of space is a suitable entry point for providing a conception of both the limit and the beyond. What this conception will share with our understanding of the antagonism is the primary focus on the limit of any attempt at spatialisation, the partial and the synchronic variation in attempts at overcoming the dislocation of elements in space.

To reformulate our focus on antagonism and the contingent, we argue that we have dealt with the issue of temporality. We argue that temporality, as in the notion of the Event, is ultimately adumbrating the contingent in the constitution of the social. As a result, this acknowledgement of contingency leads us to a focus on practice and content of discursive practice, including practices that articulate education. This focus addresses the particular relations that are established and enemies and adversaries that are constituted by social actors in their encounter with the Event. The political emerges in this context as the *particularity* in the decisions on relationships that are to be established as part of articulation.

As will be argued in our reconception of temporality in the next section that highlights an irreducible synchronic difference-to-self and, as it to some

extent has been argued in the earlier sections, temporality and spatiality become central to our conception of the political in education and the beyond. Temporality can, as we will explore it in the next section, be seen as producing Events. The Event will for us be the name for the experience of undecidability or of the experience that the past and present have already been different. In this sense, the Event is an experience of antagonism. It is this Event that challenges the possibility of pure continuity and haunts the possibilities for continuous articulation by the subject and requires an overcoming of the unsettling effects of the Event. The Event in this understanding denotes the effects of temporality as a becoming aware of that the past is still active. As we will show, and have already argued, continuity and change are interpreted as to always coexist in meaning making; that is to say, repetition entails iterability and this also includes education policy making.

While the ambition of this and the previous section was to provide an alternative conception of the relation between society and education, this ambition and the attempt at conceptualising the political and the social in a parallel instance aimed to provide an outlook on social regulation and structuration that is compatible with our attempts to reconceptualise the political, social and the contingent in spatial and temporal terms. This translation or spatial/temporal metaphorisation that is to follow in the next section is aimed at allowing for the political dimension in education policy making as spatialisation to be conceived in a terminology of spatiality, which is commonly conceived to be apolitical.

The unifying connections between this and the next section, however, does not remain confined to a theoretical level, but the construction of the theoretical outlook on spatiality and temporality is subordinate to the ambition to allow for an analysis of the political in education policy making. This means that our theoretical conception in this section and the next serves a particular ambition, that of providing entry points for approaching our object of knowledge, which is the political in the relation between education and society.

The ambition with this section is therefore to be interpreted in relation to the objective of generating knowledge on how education policy making on ESD can be seen to be political and to engage in social regulation. Yet, at the same time, the constitution of the object of knowledge that this section engages in moves beyond the scope of the object of study.

This section, therefore, provides entry points for conceiving education policy making as a form of social regulation that aims to come to terms with the effects of the instability and incompleteness of the social and the impossibility of society. As such, it turns towards the paradoxes and inconsistencies as the terrain of the political where different traditions aim to provide different objectivities for how to constitute society. In their strategic efforts to constitute a particular objectivity as valid, these interventions in the social

will have to engage in an *a posteriori* adaptation of traditions to changes in the face of the Event.

In line with this reasoning, we argue that this section provided an entry point for conceiving of the social as a non-coherent and uneven structure that relies on political practice in order to delineate a continuity and closure that is constantly threatened by the experience of alterity. As such an entry point, it will be the objective of the next section to add another layer to this conception of the relation between education, the social and the political by clarifying how they relate to temporality and spatiality. This additional layer, then, is envisioned to provide additional momentum—to initiate a becoming—for allowing for alternative vectors for approaching our object of knowledge, that is to say, to conceive of education policy making as spatialisation that engages in the overcoming of temporality through spatialisation.

To come back to our evolutionary perspective, we thus put forward that while we acknowledge the role of mutation, the temporality at play in constant contingent form of change that subverts the idea of a singular or stable relationship between an organism and its environment, we are not capable of, or willing to, abandon the notion of adaptation that holds the notion of an environment or space to be realised. Thus, while the play, which is introduced through temporality, antagonism and mutation, subverts at any given point in time the limit that is to be established as a form of regularity, there will always remain attempts at providing that limit and introducing a particular form of regularity.

With this appeal to play and mutation in mind, we substitute figures of reasoning in Swedish curriculum theory that conceive of the possibility of establishing limits or limiting social action and to limit the social as such in the form of society.

It is in this conception of the social, as an open-ended system, that we also aim to provide an entrance point for the conception of globalisation. As we will specify later on, we do not conceive globalisation in teleological language of external effects on the internal, but we aim to reconceptualise globalisation as a subversion of the limits by which the constitution of the internal of society is already different to itself. Hence, globalisation in our conception denotes the difference of society to itself in terms of connection.

Thus, we have in this section reconceived our object of knowledge, that is to say, the relation between education and society, through a supplementation of the evolutionary perspective that has been a recurring figure of reasoning. Hence, we argue that our reconception results in a conception of the object of knowledge in terms of the relationship between education, the social and the political.

### 3. Discourse, Spatiality and Temporality

When we think about the present, we veer wildly between the belief in chance and the evidence in favour of determinism. When we think about the past, however, it seems obvious that everything happened in the way that it was intended.

Michel Houellebecq, *Atomised*

The ambition of this section is two-fold. First, its objective is to translate the theoretical conception of the social and the political that was provided in the previous section into a theoretico-*analytical* framework for analysing the political in practices of education policy making as attempts to constitute the social. In this context, key concepts of the discourse-analytical framework of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) will be introduced. In this introduction, discourse is conceived as the particular patterns in the establishment of relationships among elements.

Second, this section aims to provide a basis for conceptualising this discourse-theoretical framework in spatio-temporal terms. This translation to a spatio-temporal perspective aims to provide a terminological framework for an illustrative metaphorisation and reconception of globalisation, as will be introduced in the next section. Further, it is to provide a bridge between the conception of the political introduced in the previous section, the discourse analytical framework introduced in this section and the conception of globalisation that will be provided in the next section.

However, before this section engages in the realisation of the first objective, a broader reflection on the ontological orientation of the discourse-theoretical approach will be engaged in. This is to specify how education and its relation to the social and political is positioned in ontological terms. With regards to this reflection, we argue that the concept of antagonism is ontologically constitutive for the social (*cf.*, Laclau, 1990, p. 96).<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> We argue, this ontological condition of the political is acknowledged by Laclau when he states: “[The categories of negativity and opaqueness] are constitutive. [...] This is precisely the point where the logic of the unconscious, as the logic of the signifier, reveals itself as an essentially political logic [...]; and where the social, ultimately irreducible to the status of full presence, also reveals itself as political. The political thus acquires the status of an ontology of the social” (Laclau, 1990, p. 96). When Laclau refers to the logic of the unconscious, we interpret him to refer to the Lacanian perspective on the unconscious as being characterised

It will be of importance here to specify how we conceptualise the discursive and how the discursive relates to antagonism.

## The Discursive and Antagonism

In order to specify the perspective on knowledge-generation in our theoretical-methodological conception, it is necessary to demarcate the sometimes varying common usages of the term “discourse” and “discursive” from the ways that the term will be used here with the specific objective to allow for studies of practices of policy making and its relation to globalisation. The objective is, thus, to clarify how the discourse theoretical perspective that has been put forward by Laclau and Mouffe (1985, 1990) and that this dissertation appeals to conceives of the discursive.

This sub-section to a large extent represents a digression, where we in the following will provide an ontological positioning with regards to how we understand the discursive and Being. Hence, the reader might directly continue to the next sub-section “Discourse, Discursive Formation, Nodal Points and Articulation”, as this sub-section can be interpreted to represent to provide a horizon of orientation against which some of the terms introduced in the next sub-section are to be understood.

### Addressing potential critiques of a focus on the discursive

In the context of the now common reference to discourse theory, we see it of importance to address two central issues that Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse analytical approaches distinguishes from, for example, Foucauldian inspired conceptions of the discursive. The first issue to be addressed is the way Laclau and Mouffe address the *material* and *non-discursive*.

With regards to the conception of the material/non-discursive, it has to be stated that this issue collapses into two separate issues once we take a closer look at which two classical issues in philosophy are enmeshed. In order to discuss how the material and the non-discursive can be approached, we will here provide a brief example that illustrates how Laclau and Mouffe relate to the two.

A common critique of discourse analytical approaches to studies of education policy is that they neglect the non-discursive that is perceived to lie at the heart of education policy. With regards to this non-discursive, critiques often perceive this non-discursive as providing the ground in relation to

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by the symbolic. Hence, when Laclau refers to the political as the status of an ontology of the social we see him argue that this political is at play in the experience of antagonism that produces the need for subject as an object of the signifier to articulate what it is. This articulation, as an act of self-grounding, provides the ground for identity and in a parallel instance, also an act that constitutes and grounds the social.

which the discursive has to relate or in relation to which the discursive is placed. In relation to such a ground, critiques of discourse analytical approaches in education research contrast the discursive with regards to what is “actually” happening in practices at the class-room level and the material pre-conditions for implementing policy.

### **Beyond functional explanations of education policy and education**

In order to approach how Laclau and Mouffe relate to this critique and how they address the non-discursive, it will be necessary to first acknowledge the partial validity of this critique. As it will, hopefully, have become clear in our conception of the social and the political, there is no appeal to a structural causality, necessity or full determination by the structure in our conception of the relationship between education and the social. This is also true for the relationship between education policy and teaching practices at the class-room level. Hence, the impetus of political practice, for example, that of educational policy, is, thus, not seen to cause or as caused by necessary structural changes, where that impetus or force that the education policy represents could lead to an organicistic transformation of the education system, teaching practices and society as a whole.

As we have argued in our evolutionary perspective, a complex system such as, for example, the environment is never in a state of full presence of all its elements, where we might discern the systematic functionality of the system in regard to this presence. Rather, as we tried to highlight with our appeal to mutation, the social as a structure should be seen as being at any point different to itself and characterised by an unevenness and undecidability. As a result of this difference of the elements to themselves at any point in time, there is no structural necessity determining them in the form of singular system of causal relations or systematic functioning.<sup>137</sup>

Instead, and this is crucial, as with regards to the political, the primary departure point for a discourse analytical perspective is contingent practice. Meaningful practice, such as writing, is according to this perspective seen to be both characterised by an *active* and a *passive* dimension. We argue that this means that, while practice aims to bring into accord, to repeat and to passivise, it has to acknowledge that it does not exhaust that which to be brought into accord as part of meaning making in practice. Practice is not a pure repetition. Meaningful practice has to turn towards the contingency of the case, the potential Event, which renders it already different.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> We might say that in order to be an element of articulation or writing an element has to be iterable; it has to maintain its symbolic character.

<sup>138</sup> A more elaborate discussion of the Event is to follow below in the sub-section “The Event in Heidegger and Derrida” of this section. To simplify, this Event as an experience of antagonism highlights that things have already been different, thereby highlighting the contingency of the case assumed as to relate to “how things are”.

Thus, while practice stands in relation to particular historic conditions of possibility for meaningful practice, it also demands that meaning is adaptive to the Event and requests decisions from the subject caused by what we earlier called an experience of antagonism. Meaningful practice requires as a form of regularity to bring case into accordance with case, as we highlighted earlier on in our discussion of Wittgenstein's remarks on rules. In this sense, practice requires iterability, where the condition of difference in repetition can be interpreted to result out of the emergence of an Event.

To come back to our acknowledgement that the study of education policy cannot *necessarily* relate to classroom practices, we can make the statement that a discourse theoretical approach, as put forward by Laclau and Mouffe, would question the language that can be seen to be at play in such a critique. We argue, such a critique maintains a teleological language appealing to a notion of universalised causal relationships and regularities.

The acknowledgement of contingency, mutation and antagonism, however, questions the explanatory potential of such teleological ambitions, since we might say they remain focused on that impossible object of society as a functional system or determinate structure, while neglecting the dynamics of the political. Thus, due to an appeal to contingency and the occasional requirement of a decision by the subject, it is *not* assumed by us that (a) education policy determines practices at the classroom level, (b) the particular objectivity or objectivities that education policy provides does determine practices in the class-room, and (c) neither policy making, nor teaching can be seen to be in line with solely one mode of reasoning or, we might say, be determined by society.

So, while our focus is partially on education policy making as *discursive* practice, where the discursive is denoting a form of *regularity*, our focus at the empirical level will also be on the *particular* instances of policy making. Policy making will be seen to be *political*, as it is characterised by variation and decision. Thus, the practice of policy making is not seen to be fully determined in its regularity in dispersion within a discursive formation, but will, due to its attempts at constituting society, have to deal with the political and to engage in hegemonic articulation that entails an acknowledgement of diversity.

This hegemonic articulation is, thus, a form of articulation that aims to overcome the unevenness of the social and tries to create equivalences among *varying* discursive perspectives. These portrayed equivalences will require the articulation of an enemy from which that "we" that is created as part of these equivalences differs. In this sense, any logic of equivalence requires a logic of difference.<sup>139</sup> Yet, these articulations will not overcome

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<sup>139</sup> While this mutual requirement of a logic of difference and a logic of equivalence is too complex to be portrayed here, it might be stated that this mutual dependence is a consequence of a seeming absence of a common positive determination of objects as they appear to us.

the effect of antagonism that as a negativity prevents the social from closure. The articulation of an enemy will articulate an other, where the antagonism is exactly the experience that the other is not equivalent to the Other. Hence, hegemonic articulation ultimately engages in the creation of equivalences in relation to a shared “enemy”, where that enemy is subverted by the particularity of the meaning that is ascribed to it. In this sense, articulation is not sufficient to overcome antagonism.

The reason is that in order to speak of hegemony, the articulatory moment is not sufficient. It is also necessary that the articulation should take place through a confrontation with antagonistic articulatory practices—in other words, the hegemony should emerge in a field criss-crossed by antagonisms and therefore suppose phenomena of equivalence and frontier effects. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 135f)

What we see Laclau and Mouffe to highlight in the quote above is that, as articulation is not able to overcome antagonism, the subject in an experience of antagonism becomes aware of incommensurability among different positions and articulations thereof that are subsumed to an equivalence and, hence, might encounter how the social is characterised by social antagonism.

We need to keep in mind the distinction between antagonism and social antagonisms that can be made in Laclau’s work. While social antagonism relates to the incommensurability of perspectives that aim to provide meaning in the social as they are related to the ontic, antagonism as a form of negativity is ontological and external to the social. Hence, it is possible to say that hegemonic articulation addresses social antagonism in order to portray equivalences without being able to fully bracket the effects of antagonism. Hegemonic articulation aims to overcome social antagonism, providing a particular perspective that is privileged among equivalent perspectives on how to overcome certain a social antagonism. Yet, at the same time, hegemonic articulation is in this act subverted by antagonism.

It is due to these subversive effects of antagonism that we do not conceive of the discursive as a form of hegemonic space, since ultimately the border

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With regards to the need to represent equivalences among objects, Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 127) see articulation not as to involve such a common positive determination as this would be “expressed in a direct way, without requiring a relation of equivalence”. Hence, they (1985, p. 128) conclude that “[i]t is because a negative identity cannot be represented in a direct manner—i.e., positively—that it can only be expressed indirectly, through an equivalence between its different moments. Hence the ambiguity penetrating every relation of equivalence: two terms, to be equivalent, must be different-otherwise, there would be a simple identity”. As we interpret Laclau and Mouffe to suggest, in articulation, there is a constant need of articulating logics of equivalence and difference, as the other or the different that is to provide identity to that which is equivalent is always ambiguous and sliding. This ambiguity is due to the fact that the negativity representing the difference that allows for a constitution of identity as part of equivalences cannot be articulated. That is to say, in order to attain an identity, this difference has to be articulated as a form of positivity.

among that which is shared is not stable in its internality. Any attempt at establishing hegemony is in our understanding always threatened by the elusiveness of the enemy; we might here also speak of the threatening Lacanian Other (Lacan, 1988; Žižek, 1990). What we argue with regards to this elusiveness is that, while hegemonic articulation will aim to provide an enemy in relation to that what is portrayed as equivalent, this enemy will not correspond to that which prevents the subject or a particular subject position from being itself. It is in this sense that the difference between other and Other prevents the hegemonic articulation from establishing the social as a closed order, as the experience of that difference as an experience of antagonism, and shows that things including what the subject has been, was already different.

Thus, education policy as a hegemonic articulation is not seen to be able to constitute that full constituted internality of society, but rather we conceive of it to aim to create equivalences among a number of political demands and perspectives that are characteristic for social antagonisms. Education policy is in this hegemonic articulation required to articulate an other or enemy that is to denote that which is shared among a number of particular perspectives, yet, where that other is subverted by the Other. This subversive effect of the Other is seen to emerge in the form of paradoxes and aporiae. We interpret these paradoxes to show the incommensurability among those perspectives that equivalences are to be created among.

Hence, while education policy making can be seen to engage in the regulation of the education system and the social in general, it is not claimed by us that one practice or attempt at hegemonic articulation of education can determine that education system or the social. We might say that as a practice, education policy making has a historicity, this historicity allows us to recognise and engage in a practice that we are able to make meaning of. As such, practices and regularities within them are part of broader formations or totalities of shared practices and meanings that members of *a form of life* (Wittgenstein, 1953). Yet, this discursive totality is not a closed formation.

Necessity derives, therefore, not from an underlying intelligible principle but from a regularity of a system of structural positions. In this sense, no relation can be contingent or external, since the identity of its elements would then be specified outside the relation itself. But this is no more than to affirm that in a discursive-structural formation constituted in this way, the practice of articulation would be impossible: the latter involves the working on elements, while here we would be confronted only with moments of a closed and fully constituted totality where every moment is subsumed from the beginning under the principle of repetition. As we shall see, if contingency and articulation are possible, this is because no discursive formation is a sutured totality and the transformation of the elements into moments is never complete. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 106f)

What Laclau and Mouffe are interpreted by us to suggest in the quote above is that there is a negativity to the social that keeps any discursivity from closing or fixating meaning. This argument is based upon the observation of Laclau and Mouffe that necessity is relative to the “regularity of a system of structural positions”. We need to observe the plurality of positions, that in the form of plurality of discourses characterise the “discursive-structural formation”. It is this form of plurality of the social that we have earlier addressed in our discussion of overdetermination. If this structural necessity would not be overdetermined or characterised by a plurality this would render also the necessity, that is to say the necessity for articulation, obsolete. Necessity would be rendered obsolete as every moment would *a priori* be subsumed under the principle of repetition as Laclau and Mouffe highlight, hence rendering redundant the act of articulation. In order to conceive of articulation as a necessity, the need exists for conceiving of antagonism as a form of negativity that keeps overdetermined elements from fully becoming moments. Once such a constitution or “transformation” of elements into moments takes place, the need for the discursive practice or articulation, as well as the possibility of necessity would become obsolete, as in a fully regulative system meaning would be fixed. In this case, there would no longer be any necessity for articulation.

It is in relation to such an open totality that is characterised by necessity and plurality that we see social positions to be constituted, for example, that of “teacher” and “student”. Yet, it will be a totality that is characterised by effects of antagonism as a form of negativity that leads to its unevenness and undecidability. Hence, practice is not determined by structure, but due to antagonism, the subject has to emerge as a political subject. As such a political subject it has to make decisions; it has to decide upon particular necessities and positions and to exclude others. It is in discursive practice or articulation and based on contingent decisions that the subject constitutes the necessity of a particular regularity, as this limit of necessity was encountered in the experience of antagonism as an experience of the undecidability of the structure.

What is important to underline here is the *inseparability* between the *practice* of meaning making, that is to say articulation, and *meaning*. Studies of one practice are, therefore, not interpreted to stand in a relationship of necessity to another practice. This absence of necessary relationship is based on the primacy of decision by the subject, where the undecidability of the structure requires of us a position that sees any articulation as to potentially build upon a decision. Hence, we argue that such a relationship of *a priori* necessary relation between different practices would require an appeal to a determined structural relationship and an appeal to a positivity, where the negativity that allows for play in and among practices would be totally eradicated.

We appeal to a different notion of the discursive totality, one that is not fully constituted, but subverted by antagonism. In our conception, the discursive as totality is exposed to the effects of antagonism and, as a result, there is a reliance on political practices as constitutive moment for discursive totalities that are to provide relative stability.

It is with this conception of political practice in mind that our focus shifts away from assumed structural functioning or structural position, for example, the impact of education policy on teaching practices, towards *the particularity or the political in practice, its content and meaning*.

This particularity is in our understanding a remainder of openness in attempts to come to terms with antagonistic perspectives and dislocated parts of the social in particular contexts of practice. To recall, the particularity of discursive practice and the antagonistic potential it entails derives out of the moment of decision. This decision has, as we earlier stated, a negative power dimension. Decision has to exclude in order to allow for the constitution of that which is decided upon. This exclusiveness and contingency of decision is in our understanding constitutive for the particularity or political in discursive practice and, as a result, also for attempts at constituting the social.

Thus, with this particularity in mind, our discourse-theoretical perspective is not interested in uncovering the functional impact of education policy, nor the non-discursive ground that is seemingly providing the conditions for that particular mode of functioning. Our conception of discourse and discursive practice that complements this regularity with the conception of antagonism acknowledges the limits of functionalism and moves its focus of interest to *how* the practices to be studied try to constitute what education is, as well as problems and solutions in and through education. We are interested in the seeming *particular regularities* by which the meaning, problems and solutions of education are constituted.

From this perspective then the “problem” or problematic situation in society or in education does not exist prior to articulation or in the non-discursive, but we see the problem or problematic to be discursive. As a result of this discursive character of the problem, the problem can be articulated in varying forms and can even be conceived as a non-problem.

Thus, our discourse theoretical perspective highlights how every structural objectivity or discourse is primarily the result of discursive practice or articulation.<sup>140</sup> As result of antagonism, these institutional objectivities will encounter their own limits. Consequently, these objectivities will *not fully determine the practice of social actors*, for example, within educational institutions, as antagonism is seen to subvert their determining potential.

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<sup>140</sup> For an elaboration of our use of the terms “articulation” and “discourse” see the next subsection labelled “Discourse, Discursive Formation, Nodal Points and Articulation”.

## Beyond a dualism of ideal and material

As with regards to the materiality of practice that a critique might see discourse theoretical approaches to neglect, we might consider which theoretical role this materiality would attain. It might have the function of a ground as in dialectical materialism. In such a figure of reasoning, the material would provide the basis for determining structures, where the ideal is simply a reflection of human mind of the material world. As a result, we would differentiate a dualism of base and superstructure or a dualism of the ideal and the material.

From such a perspective, it might be put forward that the discursive would be solely concerned with the superstructure, that is to say the ideal, and neglect the determining character of the base, the material modes of production. As we have already tried to problematise the effects of such appeals in the previous sections, we just comment here that the challenge for an appeal to materialism as determining ground is the explanation of how ideal representation can take on diverse forms in representation.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, with regards to the non-discursive, we comment that in order to be of relevance our study of this non-discursive would have to be potentially meaningful and hence it would have to be discursive.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> While it might be suggested that such diversity is a form of non-correspondence of the ideal to the material, for example form of false class-consciousness, we might ask ourselves: How can we assure correct representation? Wouldn't then the material have to penetrate the border to the ideal and as a result wouldn't the ideal and the material become mashed up? In such a case of a mash-up or subversion, we might assume that it would be impossible to keep the disturbing effects of false consciousness neatly separated from that which is material and objective. It is exactly this effect of subversion or mash-up that we have tried to describe in our conception of contingency, antagonism and undecidability. Yet, instead of a duality of true/false or subjective/objective, which would require a logically impossible access to pure positivity, we introduced antagonism and Event as forms of negativity that result in that a plurality perspectives allow for divergent objectivities that are limited by the Event and antagonism.

<sup>142</sup> This is not to say that this meaning would have to be fully exclusive, that the description would cover all the aspects of a situation or a moment. As we have already pointed out, antagonism as a reminder of the Real is exactly the name for that lack, as the limit of representation in the symbolic. The symbolic in this Lacanian sense is what we appeal to in our conception of the social, which is characterised by a symbolic character. We specify, the social is constituted by elements, where these elements are associated with the discursive, that is a seeming regularity. Every signifier or element, as a name suggests, it is part of certain regularities or rules, for example, "football" being part of a particular game of playing football. However, as such the symbol remains a name or a signifier and is not reducible to the signified. While a symbol points at a signified, it never arrives; it is never reducible to a correspondent. In this Lacanian (Lacan, 1966, p. 112) sense, the signifier stands over the signified, where the "over" refers to the barring of the signified. The symbol is hence allowing for naming and in this naming relation it is not reducible to a referent. The symbol anticipates but does not disclose, "[f]or the signifier, by its very nature, always anticipates meaning by unfolding its dimension before it" (Lacan, 1966, p. 117).

With regard to the materiality, we put forward that of course the discursive involves the material as Laclau and Mouffe underline in the quote below.

The fact that a football is only a football as long as it is integrated within a system of socially constructed rules does not mean that it thereby ceases to be a physical object. A stone exists independently of any system of social relations, but it is, for instance, either a projectile or an object of aesthetic contemplation only within a specific discursive configuration. [...] For that same reason it is the discourse which constitutes the subject position of the agent, and not, therefore, the social agent which is the origin of discourse—the same system of rules that makes that spherical object into a football, makes me a player. The existence of objects is independent of their discursive articulation to such a point that we could make of that existence—that is, existence extraneous to any meaning—the point of departure of social analysis. (Laclau & Mouffe, 1990, p. 100f)

Thus, with regards to the materiality of the practice, we comment that meaningful practice will of course take part in the world and therefore has a materiality. As we interpret Laclau and Mouffe to highlight, the material is always an aspect of discursive practice. Yet, as a physical aspect of subjects and objects, it has no meaning, identity or Being besides from being articulated as part of discursive practice.

The constitution of Being is for us the result of the establishment of a number of relationships between elements, where that establishment in discursive practice provides a temporary identity to these elements.

Instead of differentiating between material and ideal or discursive and non-discursive, our discourse theoretical perspective differentiates, as suggested by Laclau and Mouffe in the quote above, between *existence and discursive Being*.

## Being and existence

As with, for example, an education policy document, the sheets of cellulose stained by patterns of ink are seen to *exist independently of its meaning*. However, these sheets attain the meaning of an education policy document in regards to the existing totalities of practice, the *Lebensformen*, forms of life, to use the Wittgensteinian term (1953), that we called the discursive or field of discursivity. Our appeal to form of life denotes the ontic conditions of Being that such a community of practitioners provides, where Being is characterised by the constitutive character of practice. Being is, in this sense, discursive as it is constituted as part of practice in a form of life or what we have labelled a social. The discursive in this sense is related to the regularity of practices as they are carried out in a particular form of life.

The distinction between the social and the political is thus ontologically constitutive of social relations. It could be called, to use a term from Heidegger, an 'existential'. But the boundary of what is social and what is political in society is constantly displaced. (Laclau, 1990, p. 35)

What Laclau is interpreted by us to express in this conception of the political as an existential in the quote above is that the political, as the moment of experience of undecidability, prefigures or comes before the constitution of the social as the political relates to the decision that has to be taken.

We might with regards to the political as existential and in reference to Heidegger (1967) differentiate between *Dasein* [existent/available] and *Sein* [Being]. It is our understanding that discourse constitutes identity, or we may say Being, where that *Being does not follow from mere existence*.

Heidegger (1921, p. 12) can be seen to explicate this principal *a priori* of *Dasein*, and at the same time this *Dasein* is connected or paralleled by *Sein*.<sup>143</sup> What Heidegger is interpreted by us to differentiate between is the ontological which is concerned with this possibility of something to be available or to be at hand, and the ontic, which is concerned with the properties of *Sein* [Being].

When Laclau claims that the political is ontologically constitutive of social relations, we seem him equally to arguing that the boundary between the ontic and the ontological is constantly displaced. This implies that in order for something to *be* something, as conceived with regard to the ontic that is provided by the discursive, there will have to be a play in the possibility of absence of that presence, a difference of Being. That is to say, there is a play prior to absence and presence of a particular Being, where we see that play as a condition for constituting Being in the ontic that is provoked by ontologic antagonism. We argue this *a priori* conditioned play opens up the possibility of the difference between Being [*Sein*] and Beings [*Seiendes*], where being is not in its singularity determined by existence.<sup>144</sup> This possibility to differentiate between Being and Beings is for us the *condition of the emergence of the political*. That is to say, the reduction of Beings to Being entails a political reduction and exclusion by the subject through the political act of deciding upon a particular Being among a diversity of possible Beings. In this sense, a form of life does not determine Being, but allows for a diversity

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<sup>143</sup> We draw here on a remark by Heidegger on the ontic characterisation of *Dasein*: "Dasein versteht sich in irgendeiner Weise und Ausdrücklichkeit in seinem Sein. Diesem Seienden eignet, daß mit und durch sein Sein dieses ihm selbst erschlossen ist. Seinsverständnis ist selbst eine Seinsbestimmtheit des Daseins. Die ontische Auszeichnung des Daseins liegt darin, daß es ontologisch ist." (Heidegger, 1921, p. 12)

<sup>144</sup> These traces of difference in Being, which occupied Heidegger in his later work, have been explored by Derrida and can be seen to have influenced his notion of *différance* (Derrida, 1978b). We argue that this *différance* allows us to conceive of the ontological conditions for conceiving play within the ontic.

of Beings to emerge, where it is in political practice within this community that Being is constituted and contested.<sup>145</sup>

Thus, when Laclau comments that it is the political that is ontologically constitutive of social relations, we have to understand this ontological status of the political to emerge in this constant infringement of the ontological on the ontic, as the difference that is at play in Being. That is to say, an experience of antagonism shows the potential alterity of Being that has been neglected or excluded but that could have equally well been possible to have been decided upon. Hence, in our understanding, the discursive as relating to the ontic in which Being is constituted is affected by antagonism that is ontological, which allows for the experience of potential alterity of Being. To put it into the words of Heidegger, there is a constant sliding between *Sein* and *Seiendes*, as the discovery of the aporetic moment when the plurality of possible Being is discovered.

## Antagonism and the Real as ontological

In the following we will discuss the Lacanian distinction between the symbolic and the Real; we argue in the context of the discussion above that any representation within the symbolic, that is, within language, will be subverted by the ontological. Hence, the Real is, in our understanding, the name for the excess in symbolic representation that is always haunting these representations. It is this Real that is for us synonymous with antagonism.

However, it needs to be clarified this is not the real as in realist ontology. For us, the real is not a name for something that will show us how things really are, but it is a traumatic Real that denotes an absence or lack, as we conceived of this lack in our conception of antagonism.<sup>146</sup> Thus, as with antagonism, symbolic representation does not articulate the Real, where articulation instead can be seen to engage in a fantasy of reality. We might say that this reality, such as in the form of social antagonism, to some extent defines a context.

With regards to this reality, Laclau and Mouffe (1990, p. 102) argue that “every identity or discourse object is constituted in the context of an action”.

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<sup>145</sup> See our argument regarding agreement and disagreement in a form of life in Section 4.

<sup>146</sup> Žižek (1989, p. 45) makes in this context of the Lacanian Real a noteworthy clarification of how this Real relates to Laclau and Mouffe’s conception of antagonism. “‘Reality’ is a fantasy-construction which enables us to mask the Real of our desire. It is exactly the same with ideology. Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our ‘reality’ itself: an ‘illusion’ which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel (conceptualized by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as ‘antagonism’: a traumatic social division which cannot be symbolized)”. As we can see, the Real in this sense is something that evades us and, similar to this traumatic experience of antagonism, we will displace this experience of lack with a fantasy of social antagonism or how things really are.

It is with regards to the discursive, as Laclau and Mouffe highlight, that semantics and pragmatics become inseparably connected and where semantics in conjunction with pragmatics become *context specific*.

Yet, in the context of our discussions and problematisation of Säfström (1994), we might say that constitution of context is never fully accomplished—it is never determined. With antagonism and the Real in mind, we argue that instead of neatly fitting into a meta-context, such as the socio-historic context of Säfström A, there is an incommensurability among contexts due to the subverting effects of antagonism as a version of the Lacanian Real.

To come back to our conception of the discursive, statements about Being or meaning are in our discourse analytical perspective always related to identity. This identity is constituted as discursive object in a specific pragmatic context and against a horizon of a totality that provides the historic possibilities for practice, that we earlier labelled the discursive.

Statements about the Being of objects outside any *context* and *practice* becomes in this understanding simply nonsensical (Laclau & Mouffe, 1990, p. 105). Further, the totality of historic possibilities is not closed, but exists in relation to a variety of centres, where the incommensurability among these centres finds its expression in social antagonisms.

We argue that the world emerges for us through meaning making as discursive. As such, a discursive world becomes meaningful in relation to the particularity of the practice it is constituted in.

This discursive never exhausts the Real. We argue, this non-exhaustion is due to their partiality or rather particularity, as discursive Being could have also been constituted differently in another practice. Discursive objects always retain their symbolic character.

It is this encounter with the possibility that things could have been different, that the objects could have had a different “objectivity”, that we can see the Real to be at work. Yet, we need to keep in mind this is not an experience of how things really are, but rather it is an encounter with alterity that shows that we have not been articulating the Real as a form of fantasy of having articulated things as they are. In this sense, the Real is a form of pure negativity.<sup>147</sup> The Real does not provide or suggest identity, as a form of positivity would do, but simply causes the experience that things have been different. The Real in this subversive function is synonymous with antagonism, where antagonism for us provides the constitutive negativity of the social.

What our conception of the Real argues for is the impossibility of articulating the Real. In this sense, the Real is that which prevents articulation

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<sup>147</sup> To lend an argument from Lacan (1966, p. 70): “More exactly, it is in this negativity in so far as it is a pure negativity—that is, detached from any particular motive—that lies the junction between the symbolic and the real”.

from reducing the floating character of elements to a status of moments as fully determined in articulation. It is due to these disruptive effects of the Real that the discursive formation ultimately attains an unstable character. While discursive practice aims to stabilise the identity of objects as part of particular practices and to universalise this stability in hegemonic articulation, these stable objects can be experienced to have been different after all, as part of an experience of antagonism.<sup>148</sup>

This ultimate precariousness of stability leads us, as Laclau and Mouffe (1990, p. 107) put it, to “the affirmation [...] of the ultimate irreducibility of the real to the concept”. Thus, the irreducibility of the signifier to the unattainable signified produces a need for constant articulation and contestation over what the signified is. We argue that the possibility for an emergence of the political requires a never-full transition from elements into moments. This is to say, what is required is the possibility of contestation. This contestation will engage in a fantasy of real alterity of things, but will itself only be an alternate and incommensurable hegemonic articulation that aims to stabilise the identity of elements and to engage in a stabilisation of the social.

## Discourse, Discursive Formation, Nodal Points and Articulation

This sub-section introduces the theoretico-analytical terms that are to allow for an analysis of the political in articulations such as education policy making on ESD. With this objective in mind, it translates our conception of the social, antagonism and the political into an analytical language that has been utilised in the empirical analysis underlying Papers II and III, as well as provides a basis for our geometrical metaphorisation of the social in terms of space, vectors and layers that is provided in the next sub-section.

So far we have introduced the terms of discourse, discursive formation and articulation. In the following, we will briefly elaborate on what particular ways we use these terms and, in addition, provide further concepts that are closely interrelated with our conception of discourse.

However, before we start taking a closer look at the interrelation of these terms, it will be necessary to clarify that these terms should be understood to be specific to a particular discourse theoretical approach, that of Laclau and Mouffe (1985). It is important to point out that Laclau and his collaborator Mouffe have a particular objective in mind when they created their specific discourse analytical framework. Their ambition was not to provide an expla-

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<sup>148</sup> In the context of this discussion, we return to the distinction between *moments and elements* in the quote from Laclau above. The experience of antagonism highlights in this sense that moments have been floating elements as their identity has not been fully fixated as part of an articulation.

nation of the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything else, but to allow for a reconceptualisation of social antagonisms on the basis of a conception of language and the political as constitutive for the social. It is, therefore, of importance to point out that in our appropriation of their concepts and theoretico-analytical framework, we will keep this objective in mind and claim that our ambition to allow for an understanding that the relationship between education policy, education and the constitution of society with a focus on conflict and contestation is to a large extent congruent with Laclau and Mouffe's initial ambitions that lead them to the creation of the here appropriated framework.

When we speak of discourse and discursive practice, it is, therefore, in relation to the particular context of the political in meaning making by social actors that acknowledges antagonism as providing the conditions of the political. This act of articulation is also the moment of constitution of their identity and their relationship to others. When we, therefore, speak of discursive objects, elements and moments we draw not a distinction between human objects and non-human objects, but assume that both the Being of the human and the non-human is equally constituted as identity in relation to that particular discursive practice that is engaged in.<sup>149</sup>

As earlier mentioned with regards to the political, it is practice that is constitutive for identity as part of regulative formations within the social. Hence, Laclau and Mouffe's primary concept on which all other concepts depend is *articulation*. Articulation denotes the linguistic aspects of practice that engage in the making of meaning and identity as part of that practice. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 105) define articulation as "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of that articulatory practice". We will treat articulation and discursive practice for the most part as synonymous.

As we said earlier, the social can be seen to consist of a number of elements, where these elements to a certain extent are characterised by fluidity or, as we said, overdetermination. Elements attain a *symbolic* character. In their linguistic context, elements are synonymous with signifiers.<sup>150</sup> Practice is in this understanding able to constitute a temporary stabilisation of the *element*, where the symbolic character of the element is temporarily reduced through an establishment of relationships to other elements in that practice. It is the recognisability of the pattern in the establishment of relationships that renders these relationships meaningful.

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<sup>149</sup> That is not so say that in a world without humans, an object would still be an education policy, since such a use of the term "object" is not in line with the intended context of application, which is the study of social antagonism as constitutive of the social and in our case the study of the relationship between education policy, the social and globalisation with a focus on the political.

<sup>150</sup> "Linguistic" is here referring here to the *use* of language as an act of writing.

This establishment of relationships in articulation transforms temporarily and in relation to that practice elements into *moments*. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 105) define moments as “[t]he differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse”. “Differential” is interpreted by us to specify the character of the moments, which attain solemnly through their established relation to other elements—from which they differ—a temporarily stabilised identity.

*Discourse* is in our understanding the name for particular patterns in the establishment of these differential relationships among elements. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 105) describe discourse as a structural totality that results out of articulation. Hence, the practice of establishing relationships provides elements with a temporary and partial identity and thereby transforms them into moments. Yet, the borders of that totality cannot be seen to be closed or internally constituted. Due to antagonism, elements can never be completely incorporated into a discourse and always remain an insinuation of their overdetermined, that is to say, symbolic, character. The totality and stability of that totality on which a discourse depends is, therefore, always in a primary way dependent on the regularity and continuity of articulation. As a result of the contingency and context dependency of articulation, the borders of a discourse are never stable. Due to this instability, articulations that want to differentiate discourses as totalities have to articulate a constitutive other, as a name for that Other that threatens the identity of the moments and, at the same time, allows for their constitution as moments. It is in this articulation of a difference that articulation can denote a closure (logic of difference), where, however, the dependence on that name, which itself is overdetermined, permeates the borders rendering an internal positivity and exclusivity impossible.

The ensemble of different discourses will be labelled by us *discursive formation*. Discursive formations are then “a regularity in dispersion, and to be thought, in that sense, as an ensemble of differential positions. [...] [This ensemble] consists of configurations, which in certain contexts of exteriority can be *signified* totality” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 106). Discourses within a discursive formation are in a state of incommensurability to another, as they are centred around different nodal points that, as privileged discursive points, allow for a partial fixation of elements in relation to these points as part of their articulation (*cf.* Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). We will call the total extension of discursive formations and the totality of all elements a *field of discursivity*. This field of discursivity can be seen to represent what Wittgenstein (1953) calls a *Lebensform* or form of life. In this field of discursivity we can differentiate discursive formations that as a plurality of regularities are characteristic for it. The field of discursivity that a form of life represents is characterised by a shared historicity, which sets it apart from other specific discursive formations and forms of life.

## Dynamism and the Discursive Formation

As we stated earlier, one of the objectives of this dissertation is to further develop and radicalise Englund's (1986) dynamical perspective on the relation between conflict, education and society. Thus, with this objective in mind, we will elaborate in the following how we perceive dynamism in relation to the discursive formation.

In this elaboration, we will introduce a geometrical metaphorisation that allows us a conception of dynamism in the social in spatial terms. This metaphoric reconception of the political and the social in spatial terms is to introduce the image of a non-cohesive or uneven space characterised by the overlapping of a finite set of transparent layers is envisioned to allow for a geometric visualisation of how continuity and dynamics can be understood in terms of space and temporality. This metaphorisation can be interpreted to represent a bridge or connection between Sections 2, 3 and 4, as it familiarises the section specific terms with each other and puts them into relation.

The conceptual point that is appealed to in this metaphorisation denotes here the stability and continuity of a particular practice. The dynamics of politics and the effects of antagonism are transforming points into vectors. Vectors reverberate different trajectories and relative identities in regard to existing central coordinates of a particular layer of a space. As such, this metaphorisation provides a means for approaching the notion of Event as a form of temporality to be introduced in the next sub-section.

We here conceive of dynamism in terms of play, or, to put it into the terminology of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the never-full constitution of elements into moments. We argue, since moments that are specific to a particular discourse share an element with other discourses and articulations, articulation aiming to transform elements into moments cannot eliminate the symbolic character of elements. As a result of this never-full transition of elements into moments, it is impossible to conceive of discursive formation as a static political map, where autonomous discourses, similar to countries, occupy certain territories.<sup>151</sup>

Instead, we will substitute the image of a single-layered map with a notion of a multitude of layers of data. This map might be understood as to be characterised by distinct layers. These distinct layers will provide shared reference points, which provide elements that are shared by all layers of a map, with radically different identities than in other layers of the map. We might in this context think of distinct coordinate systems or axes for each

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<sup>151</sup> The following metaphorisation will be provided by the author based on the discourse theoretical means provided by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), as well as Laclau's (1990) conception of space and temporality, where this conception of space and temporality will be discussed in the next sub-section. The metaphorisation is aimed to provide a bridge between our conception of the social, space, temporality and the political by appealing to a geometrical language game.

layer, that so to speak, spatialise any point in relation to these coordinate systems or axes. It is in relation to these reference points that elements of a map attain particular identities; we might say that they become defined points as part of their differential position to a particular layer and its reference point. An element is overdetermined in the sense that it allows for its constitution as different points in relation to different layers.

In order to exemplify how we conceive the map, elements and points, we appeal to the metaphor of transparent layers, as in the case of overhead projector sheets stacked upon each other. While we might speak of a determinate point on one sheet, we might speak of elements once we make a mark on multiple sheets and place them upon one another. Hence, we might think of two or more transparent layers placed upon each other, where the points are congruent but not the layers. The point might be within a zone that is shared by a set of layers; however, the point would attain different coordinates or identities on each of the specific layers due to the non-congruence of these layers.

Such a differential positioning in terms of layers, points and elements would be another conception of the relationship of elements to differential moments, as we have put forward in our conception of the discursive formation. Yet, and this is critical, there is a misrepresentation in this conception of transparent layers, since that visualisation necessitates an elevated point of view, which from a distance would allow one to conceive of the borders or limits of both layers. We argue that in order to approach a perspective on the discursive that focuses on articulation as a point of departure this position of distance should be replaced with a microscopic magnification, which focuses on the earlier-mentioned element, where, due to the transparency and multiplicity of the layers, the totality differential positions of points are not immediately visible in the totality of their spacing.

The argument that we want to make is that, as social actors, we do not perceive discourse as patterns in regularity in their totality. Instead, as participants in the *active* constitution of a meaning, we rather observe and engage in how we or others establish relationships between points of attention, thereby seemingly transforming elements into moments or points as part of that practice. Hence, it is only *a posteriori* or afterwards that we can become aware of the seeming regularity of that practice of drawing lines and the constitution of points.

What the emphasis on pragmatics and afterwardsness regularity aims to highlight is that there is a difference, we might say two different language games, at work, one, in the actual establishment of relationships and another in the afterwardsness of identification of patterns.<sup>152</sup> This emphasis of these two instances or two positions is an important reminder for the analyst of

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<sup>152</sup> We might here also in the context of our discussion of writing differentiate between the death of the author and the death of the reader.

discursive practices that he/she is not stating the rule, the regularity, at work in the practice. Instead, we argue that he/she engages in another activity, that of constituting a rule seemingly at work.

As might become apparent, in this discussion of the rule, we return, thus, to our discussion of Wittgenstein and the temporal paradox he identified. We argue that discourse analysis in our understanding does not claim to *capture* the rule, but rather *interprets* a rule that it sees to be *seemingly* at work. Due to the unconventionality of every practice, for example, that of writing, this interpretation would not exhaust that rule seemingly at work. Further, the interpretation by the analyst remains always threatened by that which is still to come or that which has already been. In this sense, the interpretation by the analyst will aim to bracket that which is studied, yet that which is excluded might show that it has been a different regularity altogether.

Hence, we argue this active dimension in writing and the deferral in *différance* introduces a movement or dynamism into the discursive structure and the analysis thereof. This dynamism becomes apparent once we encounter the different ways in which discursive elements have been articulated. Thus, our highlighted ineradicable symbolic character of the element, which is due to antagonism, allows also for the conception of the political and social antagonism. The political becomes a possibility once we acknowledge that elements cannot be determined and that any articulation, instead of committing violence to a symbolic element, aims to stabilise it in a political fashion, that is by relating it to particular reference points. Hence, there is no violence involved for us as the element has not originary or objective identity, but is characterised by a difference-to-self.

Social antagonisms emerge in the incommensurability between ways of articulating these elements. The antagonistic moment or the incommensurability that we argue for is due to the decision, in the face of equally possible ways to proceed. We have to recall that it is the decision in which the subject provides itself with an identity, where we see the act of decision as an act of identification. Thus, it is this act of decision as an act of identification that puts the subject into an exclusionary relation to that which is excluded. The excluded then allows for the subject's identification and becomes a part of the subject's partial identity.

Yet, we have to remember that these acts of identification are not capable of providing me as a subject with a full identity. This lack of my identity will be shown in the experience of antagonism. It will require me to make a decision on which identity I am to identify with. As that which the decision excludes is part of my act of identification, these excluded alternatives as others are not themselves stable and unthreatened but are a name for an other that is or has been already part of my previous act of identification thereby subverting the stability of my identity. We have to remember, the Other is always out of reach. It is in this traumatic insight of the lack of identity of the subject that Žižek's highlights that the radical dimension in Laclau's

conception of antagonism lies, as this experience of lack is interpreted to highlight that identity is marked by an impossibility.

However, to grasp the notion of antagonism in its most radical dimension, we should invert the relationship between the two terms: it is not the external enemy who is preventing me from achieving identity with myself, but every identity is already in itself blocked, marked by an impossibility, and the external enemy is simply the small piece, the rest of reality upon which we 'project' or 'externalize' this intrinsic, immanent possibility. (Žižek, 1990, p. 251f)

To link Žižek's argument to our discussion of the relation between antagonism and the Real, the experience of antagonism, as a form of experience that the structure is undecidable and does not allow for the determination of my identity, throws me up in my condition as subject. It requires of me as a subject to engage in a task that is impossible. The experience of antagonism and resulting act of identification is to constitute my identity in the discursive, where it was the undecidability of the discursive that forced me to experience the absence of my determined identity as subject. As Žižek highlights in the quote above, this traumatic experience will lead to an externalisation whereby this lack is preventing it from being itself. The subject will articulate an other that, as an enemy, is seen by me to prevent me from being myself. This fantasy of the other preventing me from being myself is in this sense masking the trauma that I lack an identity and that identity is impossible. To link our argument here to our prior discussion of the Other, we need to keep in mind that the place of the Other or the Other of the Other is a void, where this absence is shown in the undecidability of the structure that in the experience of antagonism throws me into my condition as subject.

To return to the issue of dynamism of the social, it is due to the effects of the experience of antagonism that produces social antagonism and that requires that the subject engages in acts of identification, forcing it to decide upon and to articulate what it is. Yet, at the same time it is this antagonism that highlights the undecidability of the social as structure, as it is incapable of providing the subject with the means to fully be itself. As such a condition of possibility for writing or articulation, the self in this process of self-writing is not determined and never complete, but always characterised by unconventionality, by difference, and by iterability.

Hence, it is due to this void of the place of the Other that the practices of articulation as acts of identification are both characterised by historicity in the form of a continuity of the articulation of the other and iterability, due to the need to bring into accord that articulation of the other with the Other, where that difference has been shown in the experience of antagonism. As a result of articulation to overcome a void, regularity in dispersion of articulation as a totality will not be a stable, fixed or determined, as this to-

tality will not stand in relation to a positivity. Instead, as that totality will be addressing a form of absence, negativity or void, it will be characterised by synchronic and diachronic differences or we might say *dynamism*. It will, so to speak, not have to confine itself to the rules dictated by the Other, but will, due to the void at the place of the Other, be able to dictate its own rules to the extent that they allow for an articulation of historicity and continuity of the other.

As a result, if we hold that identity/meaning, including subject position, is constituted as a temporary result out of practice, we argue that every practice stands in relation to a changing and non-determined context. Hence, we might conclude that there is a duality of continuity and discontinuity. Continuity will be characterised by the appeal to a particular other, as well as a certain regularity of giving meaning to that other. Discontinuity, however, will be due to the fact of the difference between other and Other and the void at the place of the Other.

To create an argumentative link between our Lacanian conception of the source of dynamism and our utilisation of Derridian concepts, we argue that this void at the place of the Other in the symbolic as an absence of a unifying centre that would constitute language as a closed structure can be conceived in terms of play (*cf.* Derrida, 1978a). As we highlighted earlier, for Derrida, play comes prior to presence and we might say this play can be seen to be due to the void or absence of the Other at the centre of language. It is this void that can be seen also to be at play in the notion of iterability, where that void, as it results in a form of non-determination of identity, highlights the non-origin of identity that is articulated or written. Hence, it is this void that is allowing for and requiring the process of writing and the difference that every repetition can be seen to entail.

We argue this iterability, which emerges both as a result of the historicity of that constitution of an identity, including that of the other, and the alterability of every idealised singularity of this historic identity in the face of the Event, brings into doubt that singularity of the repeatable identity.

When we speak of moments as being the temporary stabilisations of identity, we might say that this momentary character is threatened by temporality as an Event. Hence, every stability can be seen to be *constantly* undermined by the flow of time, or to put it into the words of the ancient Greek philosopher of Heraclitus: “Ever-newer waters flow on those who step into the same river” (Heraclitus quoted in Esubius, 313AD). As we will discuss later in this section with regards to the relationship between spatiality and temporality, the negativity at work in antagonism is conceived by us as synonymous with temporality, since both have disrupting effects on the capacity of practice to constitute identities.

For the time being, it will be of importance to note that in our geometrical metaphor of points on transparent layers the metaphor of “point” is extracting temporality fully from that metaphor. That is, as a purely spatial repre-

sensation as a form of spacing, it is passive and extracts the active temporal dimension from this representation. While we acknowledge that temporality is evasive to writing and hence also to our geometrical metaphorisation, we suggest that it is necessary to conceive these points on a multiplicity of layers as a form of snapshot of points in movement in order to denote their active and dynamical character. As such points in movement, they stand in vague and uncertain direction to points of orientation or points of reference and suggest at the same time *a movement toward that direction*. Hence, every articulation is seen by us to produce a certain *force* that sets elements in movement. With regards to this movement we can conceive of moments as *vectors* that stand in relation to, or point to, a particular reference point. This reference point is, as we have mentioned above, the stand-in centre that is to provide stability and which we, in analytical terms, have labelled nodal points.

Articulation and the force ascribed to it by us produces in this understanding an active dimension in writing, that is to say, a movement towards that point of stabilisation. However, since different moments conflate to the same element—there is always already a difference to a self—we might say that *every element is characterised by multiple vectors*. The multiplicity of Being of an element, that is to say, its partial identity that it attains in its position to different reference points, should in the context of movement be reconceptualised as *becoming*. That is, an element is in process of becoming a particular moment in its movement towards that reference point. Yet, as we specified in our conception of elements and moments, this becoming is never complete. Temporality as that which we relate to movement and dynamics can, according to our understanding, never be fully extracted from articulation. Every element will, as our conception of antagonism highlighted, always be exposed to a potential contestation. Hence, we might say that every element is potentially characterised by different vectors. With regards to this multiplicity of vectors, we agree with Hegel according to whom we can see this becoming to lead to *conflicts and contentions*, since the different vectors can project a movement in opposing directions. It is in this sense of a multiplicity of becoming of the element that we might state that its different vectors will be incommensurable.

In order to fully grasp this relationship between the force and vector that we have associated with articulation, it is of importance to reflect further on reference points. It is in the prominence with which certain reference points are appealed to that the regularity of dispersion of articulations is constituted by. Reference points, as we have mentioned above, will have the function of providing centres and will allow articulations to produce vectors. It is in their prominence that these reference points can be seen to provide stability to elements. Reference points, in this sense, allow for a spatialisation of elements and to denote their belonging to a particular layer of space.

We will call these reference points that provide *shared direction to otherwise contingent lines of flight*, with a slight modification of the use by Laclau and Mouffe, *nodal points*. Laclau and Mouffe describe nodal points as privileged discursive points of partial fixation (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). They provide, so to speak, certain stability to discursive elements, as these elements are put in direct or indirect relation to these centres as part of articulation. This stability can be seen to be the result of the central positioning of these nodal points in articulation, as well as the continuity of their articulation. They can be seen to be central or centres to the *impossible efforts* to constitute a particular discourse as a discourse that totally expands within the field of discursivity.

Nodal points are central for such hegemonic attempts at stabilising the discursive, since they aim to substitute the absent centre and to provide stability. This is to say, nodal points are to provide a substitute positivity and are drawn upon by particular social groups in order to constitute “society”. However, they are haunted by residue of specificity that prevents the substitute centre to become the ultimate point of reference. That is to say, their particularity highlights their specific position in social antagonism which prevents them for denoting a position beyond antagonism. In this sense, nodal points, as they are associated with particular demands, cannot move beyond these demands, which in their specificity will allow for the experience that other nodal points and associated demands stand in contrast to these demands. Such an experience of contrast can be seen to be involved in an experience of antagonism, where the incommensurability among nodal points as reference points becomes apparent to the subject and the subject has to decide upon which nodal point is to provide the way for how to proceed. Hence, the experience of antagonism requires the subject to choose among vectors by which it is to constitute space according to a regularity characterised by a specific layer. Thus, elements can be seen to be characterised by different movements or becomings towards different layers. The political in articulation as a form of force will be engaging in this production of vectors that aim to relate these elements of a particular layer.

The ambition of the geometrical metaphorisation of discourse theoretical terms in relation to points, layers, forces and vectors was to provide an entry point for translating the theoretico-analytical concepts of Laclau and Mouffe into a language of spatiality that we will put in relation to temporality in the following. This spatial conception is envisioned to allow for an understanding of how we can conceive of the political in relation to space. In this understanding, we see education policy as a practice that engages in the spatialisation of the social or, we might say, the constitution of space. Space, in our sense, then, relates to the field of discursivity and can be seen to represent a form of historicity of articulation. Hence, it becomes possible to conceive of the earlier presented perspective on the social and the political in terms of

*spatialisation as a political practice and education policy as to engage in the constitution of space.*

Further, this conception of the political and social in spatial terms is to provide a basis for our conception of globalisation in Section 4. As we will show, globalisation can be conceived in terms of a connection of spaces as a result of articulation. Hence, while it might seem that a conception of the social, the political and antagonism would have been sufficient in order to conceive of the dynamics in education policy making and how these dynamics relate to the Being of ESD, we argue that our geometrical metaphorisation aimed to show how we can conceive of that which is beyond education and society. We will argue that it is not another space that is characteristic for that beyond, but primarily a temporality that breaks up any attempt at spatialisation and provides the condition of possibility for the political.

## The Discursive, Spatiality and Temporality

This sub-section provides a conception of the relationship between space and temporality on which our above-introduced metaphorisation is based and also allows for a conception of rhizomic globalisation in Section 4.

In the effort to conceptualise the relationship between spatiality and temporality, we will continue to utilise Laclau's framework. However, it needs to be pointed out that Laclau has written very little on spatiality and temporality. This means that we will have to supplement some of his considerations with lines of reasoning that we will derive from our discussions of Derrida and Heidegger.

The most significant considerations on the relationship between spatiality and temporality emerge in the discussion of the concept of dislocation, but this elaboration is confined to three pages (Laclau, 1990, pp. 41–43). This rather brief exploration has led to, what we perceive as, misunderstandings (*cf.* Massey, 2005). Since there are currently no published explications of Laclau's remarks on the relation between spatiality and temporality, this section will aim to provide interpretations based on the work of Derrida and Heidegger who both have been influential for Laclau.

These interpretations are aimed to allow for the provision of a theoretical basis for the conceptualisation of the metaphorisation of the movement and dispersion of a discursive formation that we discussed above, as well as to allow for conceptualising education policy making to engage in spatialisation.

As a starting point for this discussion of spatiality and its relation to temporality, we see it as helpful to explore the critique against Laclau's conception of space, as put forward by Massey (2005, p. 44). Massey argues that Laclau's conception of space deprives it any potential for politics, since she sees his conception of space to be causally closed. We argue that this is a

somewhat puzzling reading of Laclau, since he together with Mouffe has highlighted the primacy of the political and antagonism.

On the basis of the above-introduced conception of space as a multiplicity of transparent layers, we argue that the singular layer of space is as Massey correctly points out relatively closed; that is to say, is characterised by regularities that similar to “laws of objectivity” produce stability or closure. Hence, we might say that with regards to a particular layer of space this spatiality is a-political. We underline that it is not space or discourse that is political, but practice, that is to say, spatialisation. The political in spatialisation emerges once the subject has to decide according to which vectors and principles of a particular layer of space this space as a totality is to be constituted.

In line with Laclau’s conception of the political, it is, therefore, possible to state that in the moment of the encounter of antagonism between two layers of space that the subject has to make a decision of how to proceed. It has to choose among different vectors according to which it has to spatialise. This decision has to overcome an impasse through decision and to constitute space according to the characteristics of a particular layer of space that is provided by a particular point of orientation. In this sense, the decision on which spatialisation is to be carried out has to choose among incommensurable reference points in order to engage in a flattening or ironing out of kinks in space. It has to exclude among reference points in order to attempt to flatten space. We argue that it is in this exclusive aspect of spatialisation that the political emerges.

Hence, we argue that Laclau (1990, p. 41) is not, as we read Massey to suggest, holding varying notions of time (Massey, 2005, p. 43), but is interpreted by us to engage in a *reconceptualisation of temporality*. In this reconceptualisation, he is seen by us to show how *most notions of time eventually are spatial representations*. With regards to such spatial representations of time, we may recall the Marxist notion of history that reduces temporality to a stage that is to show how elements are *positioned* with regards to this historical stage. With regards to these spatial representations of time, we see Laclau put forward that temporality, as a form of negativity, *cannot be articulated*. Instead, we see Laclau put forward that only temporality’s effects on the spatial can be shown.

We make this interpretation in the light of Laclau’s (1990, p. 41, author’s emphasis) comments on the effects of temporality with regards to dislocation:

[...] dislocation is the very form of temporality. And temporality must be conceived as the exact *opposite of space*. The ‘spatialization’ of an event consists of eliminating its temporality.

From this quote, we deduct that for Laclau the relationship between space and time, is antithetical. Dislocation, as an effect of temporality, disrupts space and requires spatialisation to tack the effects of dislocation.

Further, we must also note that Laclau does not refer to time in the quote above, but “temporality”. We interpret this to suggest that he aims to break with a general understanding of time, such as in the time-space continuum. With regards to this break, we interpret Laclau to problematise and reconceptualise time in order to show how temporality is a condition for the emergence of the political. We interpret this reconception by Laclau to be inspired by historic trajectory in philosophy that shares continuities with those considerations on time and temporality, as put forward by Bergson, Heidegger and Derrida. We, therefore, start with a mini-genealogy of the term “event” that Laclau uses and where we interpret these uses to be for the most part in line with Derrida’s use of the term.

## The Event in Heidegger and Derrida

In order to approach Derrida’s notion of “event”, it is helpful to take a glance at Heidegger’s notion of *Ereignis*. We argue that this detour is helpful since Heidegger can be seen to have in many ways been influencing Derrida’s thought; especially with regards the event we see a number of similarities emerge.

In order to approach Heidegger’s notion of the event, we see it necessary to briefly specify the German use of the term *Ereignis*, which as we will show has a number of connotations that the English term of “event” does not entail. The closest translation that has been ascribed to Heidegger’s use of *Ereignis* is that of “enowning” (Heidegger, 1999a). The “eig” in “Er-eig-nis” can be seen to relate to both the verb “er-eigen” (to appropriate/to own) and the archaic trace of “er-äugen”, as in “to put in front of the eye”, or “to catch sight of” (Polt, 2006, p. 73). Further, there is a dynamism at work between the prefix or *Er-*, that similar to the English *en-* suggests an act and thereby changes the dynamics of owning, as an owning “that is not an owning of something” as a form of “unpossessive owning” (Heidegger, 1999a, p. xx), since the act suggests that it is not completed, it is not yet owned.

What these historic meaning-dimensions of *Ereignis* in German can be seen to underline is the sensual and meaning making dimension (appropriation of the sensual by the *individual/subject*). Yet, the subject does not appropriate something, but this event as an unpossessive owning is an act that “is going all the way into and through” (Heidegger, 1999a, p. xx). The relation between meaning making (signification) and Event is further specified by Heidegger and it becomes in Heidegger’s clarifications apparent that the Event is related to a collapse of the system for the meaning making subject.

The word fails, not as an occasional event—in which an accomplishable speech or expression does not take place, where only the assertion and the repetition of something already said and sayable does not get accomplished—but originally. The word does not even come to word, even though it is precisely when the word escapes one that the word begins to take its first leap. (Heidegger, 1999a, p. 26)

We make, in the context of the quote above, an argumentative leap and interpret Heidegger's delineated relation between the failure of the word and an occasional event to suggest that the occasional event, in which the word escapes or fails, is simultaneously the Event as structural event. This event, when the word is seemingly not coming to word as a form of experience of antagonism, is not a trivial lapse in the use of language, but rather a structural lapse. The experienced event in its seeming placid and ordinariness becomes a structural Event. In this understanding, the occasional event is, or exemplifies, the failure of language as a whole. It brings into question how it is possible that the word "escapes".

The occasional or particular event following this line of reasoning becomes in our conception the traumatic experience of antagonism, which distances the subject from the structure. The Event, then, is the moment of the *experience that the other has already been there*, as we have aimed to trouble this seeming present presence in our earlier appeals to Derrida.

It is against this background of the Heideggerian notion of *Ereignis*, as the occasional experience that the word does not fully come to word, that we can understand Derrida's (1978b, p. 278) conceptions of event as a rupture or a doubling. It is this rupture caused by the event that we can be seen to be at play in Derrida's conception of iterability, where this rupture troubles the seeming passivity of a past or that we can neatly separate between what is present in the presence and what has been absent. The Event in this understanding of rupture or doubling calls into question the time of becoming present or absent (*cf.* Derrida, 1993, p. 204).

We might say that, in this Derridian notion, the Event is not the thing that happens, but the experience that it already happened; "has this thing appeared *again* tonight"? The Event suggests that we already could have perceived the thing's ghostly shape, and that the border between before and after the happening becomes split again, since the thing seems already to have been there.<sup>153</sup>

What we see this split to problematise is exactly the order of events, the *sequentiality of time*. The event, in its traditional sense, is interpreted by us

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<sup>153</sup> It is with regards to this troubling notion of time and the event in Derrida that we can describe Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence to introduce a hauntology. In this hauntology the ghost, which seemingly has not been dead but is still active, can be seen to trouble any distinction between what is present and absent.

to announce the arrival of a thing that has not been there. The event announces the thing as it emerges as presence from nothing.

As we see it to become apparent in Heidegger's *Ereignis*, the Derridian use of the event problematises exactly this *point of arrival* in a traditional sense of time. When has it arrived or become present? Hence, it is not only concerned with that which emerges or departures, but problematises the happening of thing. The Event problematises that the thing is or has been owned as it happens, since the point of arrival is exactly that which is questioned by Derrida. In this sense, the experience of the Event can be seen to share similarities with our conception of the experience of antagonism, as this experience shows that things have *already* been different. The Event can be seen to rupture or split the point in time of this experience, as the experience of antagonism does not provide an answer to *when* things have become different.

Derrida underlines with regards to the problem of understanding such a radical form of temporality and the understanding of the Event, that this alternate notion of temporality cannot be thought if we keep ourselves attached to a notion of historic temporality where we can neatly differ between before and afters, where presences are or remain "identical to themselves and contemporary with themselves" (Derrida, 1993, p. 70).

What then the Event, as rupture and doubling, is according to our understanding seen to problematise is the presence in the present, where the present as the successive presence of something or as a continuity from past would provide a referential centre.

The rupturing and doubling provokes a thinking of multiplicity of the thing, since its ghostly queerness seemed already to have been there. Hence, the event is, in our understanding, not the arrival the becoming present of the thing, but exactly the experience of the impossibility of denoting the point of arrival in time. Derrida (1982, p. 10) comments regarding the issue of temporalisation that "temporalisation-temporalisation" can according to the conception of the event no longer be understood against a horizon of the present, but points out that, according to the insights in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, the Event or temporalisation must be understood as the horizon of the question of Being. In this remark, we see Derrida challenge a notion of Being as form of present presence and put this Being into relation to temporality.

What we see as critical for our understanding of the Event is the choice of wording of "temporalisation-temporalisation". Temporalisation, as relating to temporise, suggests the avoidance of a decision in order to gain time.<sup>154</sup> This can be seen to relate back to the pragmatic dynamism in the prefix of *Ereignis*.

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<sup>154</sup> We are here referring to a meaning of "temporise". It is provided in the common understanding of the word as denoting an act of indecisiveness or evasiveness in order to gain time or delay in acting.

The event is in our interpretation related to the practice of avoidance of a decision.<sup>155</sup> The decision can be seen to have to do with the question of *setting* the point or *defining* when something became present. Hence, the event is a substitute for the Event. The event constituted in articulation suggests that it will become possible to refer to the “when” when things have become what they are, even though the Event as an experience of antagonism problematises exactly this time of emergence. The constitution of an event as a form of spatialisation of temporality aims to defer the Event and to avoid the need for decision. The decision, as we have discussed earlier, is the moment when repetition as habitual continuation becomes impossible due to the experience of equally possible alternatives. With regards to this experience, we argue that the making of an event is based on a decision, where the decision determines the seeming presence of a particular discursive object and engages, thereby, in a repetition.

Yet, as we easily see, this decision is not due to the emergence of a presence in the present, but a *contingent* practice *that constitutes the point in “time”* that allows us to talk about the “time of emergence”. As this establishment of points will be contingent and not due to a present, there will be *no general temporality*, but this organisation of time will *be made*. This creation of the event will allow for an alterity of the event, due to the contingency of practice. The making of the event will allow for an attempt at spatialisation and provision of identity or, as we put it earlier, it will allow for the bringing into accord of case to case. However, this contingent *making of the event*, can never erase the possibility of experience of the event being different-to-self, that things in their presence are already different. The Event disjoins *a priori* in order to make the constitution of presences possible (Derrida, 1993, p. 95).

It is in this context that we can understand Laclau’s comment that spatialisation of an Event consists of eliminating its temporality to indicate that in the face of the Derridian Event as a doubling or rupture the subject emerges and needs to overcome this threat of pure temporality by subduing it to space.<sup>156</sup> This means that articulation engages in a spatialisation of the Event through the production of events.

## Spatialising the Event

The making of the event reduces the temporal excess of radical alterity, we might also say movement, to spatial positions as “points in time”.

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<sup>155</sup> Observe that the event is here to referring to the constituted event that aims to postpone the effects of the Event.

<sup>156</sup> In our understanding, the Event, similar to a form of experience of antagonism, threatens or, better said, produces a collapse of the structurality of the structure (space).

The spatialization of event's temporality takes place through repetition, through the reduction of its variation to an invariable nucleus which is an internal moment of the pre-given structure (Laclau, 1990, p. 41)

To return to our discussion of Massey, we argue that it is this pragmatic aspect of spatialisation as reduction of variation that is *political*, since it is exclusive of alternative spatialisation.<sup>157</sup>

Political spatialisation, as discursive practice, is in our understanding establishing rules or patterns for reading a situation and in its passive dimension, aims to provide principles for how space is constituted. Yet, at the same time, spatialisation as a form of passivisation has to acknowledge an active dimension. What we mean by this active dimension is that subsequent practices that aim to continue to spatialise in a similar fashion and thereby aim to constitute space have to acknowledge the possibility of an Event. This acknowledgement of the possibility of the Event and the active dimension of spatialisation is a prerequisite for the political in action, as this political acknowledges that alternate spatialisations exist and that, as a result, people will spatialise differently. Further, political spatialisation needs to be adaptive to the dynamics of space, where changes within that space due to the Event will require iteration of attempts at spatialisation.

We interpret Laclau's comment that "Any repetition that is governed by a structural law of succession is space" (Laclau, 1990, p. 41) to refer to the passive dimension in writing. We see this passive dimension as to relate to the discursive.

However, space is, as we have argued in our metaphorisation of discourse theoretical framework above, not singular, but consistent of a multiplicity of layers of spaces. This multiplicity is, as we argued, due to the contingency of practice provide alternative "structural laws" on how to spatialise temporality. Hence, the apparent singularity of historic identity in repetition or, we might say, "continuity" of spatialisation is not fixed.

Thus, as with the experience of antagonism, temporality can be seen as the pure form of possibility (Laclau, 1990, p. 43), producing dislocatory effects. With regards to these dislocatory effects of temporality, practice as spatialisation will attempt to hegemonise temporality in contingent ways. Spatialisation in this sense has to be iterable. Spatialising practices emerge against existing spaces, which these practices can be seen to try to tack, but this attempt at tacking will always be subverted by a radical temporality.

What we aim to highlight is the primacy of *practice as constitutive for space*. Further, at a theoretical level, spatialisation is not seen by us to be separate from material or physical space as a universal underlying all these historic and pragmatic spaces. It is with regards the earlier made considera-

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<sup>157</sup> We might say that the condition of possibility of the political in spatialisation is the radical temporality of the Event, which requires the subject to constitute events based on decisions.

tions on the Real and materiality that physical space should also be understood as inclusive in our notion of space. To repeat, there is no universal reference point in our notion of space, a form of transcendental positivity, which would allow us to relate to each other these various layers of space. Hence, there is no grounding layer of space in relation to which all other layers could be positioned. As a result, we conceive of space as overdetermined by a multitude of layers, where that multitude of layers can be seen to produce kinks or an unevenness of space.

With this shift towards the effects of negativity of temporality, it is the pragmatic and historic that becomes central for, both, our conception of space and the social. Instead of locating practice in relation to an underlying space, particularity, multiplicity and historicity of space become central. As with our microscopic zoom in on a particular point on multiple layers of space, it is the actual constitution of relationships among points that allows us for an explanatory macroscopic movement. However, it is important to keep in mind that this explanatory movement is an *analytical movement* that denotes the historicity of practice, thereby allowing for a discerning of patterns.

Yet, we underline that this notion of space as a form of historicity and discursivity is always faced with temporality as a form of negativity, which allows for the conception of movement and play within space, that is to say, continuous contingent change.

As discursive practice, education policy can be re-described as spatialisation, where we do not *a priori* limit this practice to a particular closed-off area or field of space, but see education policy, as it is concerned with the production of “society”, to be engaged in the constitution of a delimited and open-ended space, that is to say, to engage in the very attempt at providing the internality of that space.

Space is in our understanding delimited and open-ended, since the meaning making practices of education policy are not seen to limit their objectivity or objectivities, but instead in its hegemonic ambitions aims to constitute these perspectives as guiding principles for a “national body”, for example, that of *folket* or democratic society, that is to be governed.<sup>158</sup>

As we will argue, it is this limitlessness or the hegemonic in articulation and not hegemony that can be seen to lead to both contestations within a particular form of life (space) and among forms of life (spaces). It is with this contestation in and among spaces in mind that we will approach globalisation in the next section.

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<sup>158</sup> In an additional sense, the open-endedness is the result on the reliance of a constitutive other in the constitution of an identity. Yet, with regards to this act of constitution, the Other subverts the internality/externality distinctiveness, thereby preventing a delineation of borders.

## Temporality as that which is Beyond Space

As it hopefully has become apparent by now, the overarching ambition with this section has been to provide a framework for how practices articulating education, for example, education policy making, can be conceived of in analytical terms of articulation, discourse and discursive formation, and to provide conceptual means for how the analysis of particular instances of articulation can be interpreted to engage in the constitution of the social. Continuity of practice is, in these attempts at constitution, closely related to ambitions of spatialisation, while movement and change have been seen by us to be related to the effects of temporality. Education policy-making as a discursive practice can, as a result, be understood to be characterised by strategic attempts of spatialisation, where spatialisation as political practice emerges against the disruptive effects of temporality.

Education policy, then, is interpreted to be characterised by, both, continuity and change. Hence, it is suggested to conceive of policy concepts rather in relation to a process of becoming than a-temporal fixated Being. Space, then, as a form of configuration of historic traces provides stability. Space, so to speak, represents a force of eradication of movement and represents the antipode to temporality. Temporality puts into movement and up-roots gestures of mooring and meaning making.

Education policy making as spatialisation is understood by us to be Janus-faced, since it, on the one hand, aims to contribute to a fixation of movement or passivisation, yet, on the other hand, has to relate to temporality and its movement. Hence, education policy making needs to orient itself towards the restlessness in order to root lines of flight and to moor them to points.

Our distinction between discourse and articulation and spatialisation and space aimed to allow for a conception historic stability and continuity that are not determining the present, but rather stability and continuity in the form of traces shape the meaning of education policy. In this understanding, education policy making, as characterised by continuity, turns to the contingency of the present, or rather the Event.

Putting this section then in relation the earlier ones, this section aimed to conceptualise the issue of temporality differently in order to provide a means of conceiving both relative stability and change. With regards to this conception, we interpret the introduction of the Event to allow for a reconception of this relationship between stability and change, since it conceives of the Event as a rupture and doubling that breaks up the separability between the past, present and future, as we discussed this aspect with regards to Derrida's critique of a metaphysics of presence. Thus, the conception of temporality and the Event is seen to radicalise the dynamism introduced by Englund (1986).

Temporality, in this understanding, breaks with the notion of a continuum where time as a form of history is denoting succession as continuum of

time/space and history as One. As we will further discuss the Event in relation to the continuum in the next section, we here simply state that it is the active aspects of temporality that can be seen to subvert the notion of succession of time. This shows, in our understanding, that the connection between time and space is not mutually reinforcing, but should rather be understood in terms of polarity. The continuum is reconceived by us in form of a polarisation, where the positivity of space is subverted by the negativity of temporality. This means that space, as the totality of historic possibilities for spatialisation, cannot be related to a temporality that is expected to unify it. What our polarisation of spatiality and temporality aimed to show is that space is ultimately a particular, uneven, undecidable and overdetermined historical totality, where different reference points in their repeated appeals to them will produce different layers of space. At the same time, the regularity of layers of space is not determined, but rather subverted by temporality, preventing any layer to tack or flatten space. Similar to our critique of a primary appeal to society we replace a notion of closed or grounding space with a notion of space that is characterised by difference-to-self and an unevenness. This conception of space allows us a conception of what is beyond space. This beyond is temporality that provides the basis for the political in the act of spatialisation.

Thus, when we analyse education policies in different national education systems, it is put forward that we should, as objects of study, interpret them to represent spatialisations made in relation to the particular space that provides the historicity of the analysed practices. By the particularity of space we are referring to the specific historicity that characterises a space.<sup>159</sup> Education policy, as a form of articulation, will therefore be interpreted in relation to a particular discursive formation, which is not determined in regularity of dispersion, but is rather open-ended and characterised by a multiplicity and difference-to-self.

As might become evident, space is conceptualised as a multitude of layers in order to provide a perspective on how education policy can be understood to engage in the constitution of the social as space. Spatialisation is in this sense an attempt to overcome social antagonism. As such, spatialisation is seen to be political, since it can be seen to engage in a constitution of and investment into a particular layer of space, that is to say, a particular perspective on constituting the social, which becomes privileged and excludes other layers of space.

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<sup>159</sup> We prefer the conception of space in terms of a form of life or culture, as both refer to the pragmatic and historic aspects. While it might be assumed that space is synonymous with the national or the specific society, we argue that such conceptions are misleading and will only be appealed to in order to facilitate an understanding of the reader. Space and nation are, in our understanding, not to be treated as synonymous with nation, conceived as a political territorial “entity” that might include different forms of life, different cultures.

Yet, as we have argued in our metaphorisation of the point as relative to a particular layer of space, the element remains irreducible to a particular layer, or as we formulated, the element never fully becomes a moment.<sup>160</sup> As a point or element is associated with an ineradicable symbolic character that it attains in relation to the totality of layers, it can be seen to both connect these layers and at the same time retain its floating character. However, when we speak of space as layers, we speak of education policy as an establishment of relationships among points within a particular space, that is to say, with regards to a specific totality of articulations that we have labelled a discursive formation or in relation to a particular form of life.

This section, in combination with the previous one, has therefore aimed to provide a theoretico-analytical framework for how education policy can be analysed in relation to particular education systems. However, we have not yet provided a framework for conceiving of what is beyond space, or what is beyond the social. While we have argued that antagonism represents the limit of societal construction, we have to specify how antagonism, as a beyond, relates to the multiplicity of spaces that different socials can be seen to represent. Further, what remains to be done is to provide an explanation of how we can visualise education policy concepts as points that relate to *multiple spaces*. It is here, in relation to the question of the multitude of spaces and education policies relation to this multitude, that we have arrived at the need for a conception of globalisation. Hence, we will complement our conception of temporality as that which is beyond space with a notion of globalisation as connection among spaces.

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<sup>160</sup> See our argumentation in the sub-section “Dynamism and the Discursive Formation” above.

## 4. Beyond Space: Globalisation, education and rhizome

Chaos is inherent in all compounded things. Strive on with diligence.  
The Buddha

### Retrospection: Setting stage for the beyond space

The aim of this section is to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the political aspects of the relationship between the social and globalisation in the context of education. With this aim in mind, the section will supplement the conception of the political and social provided in Section 2 with a conception of globalisation. In this effort, it will draw upon the provided reconception in Section 3 of the social as space and antagonism as temporality.

The conception of globalisation that is to be provided will conceive of globalisation as a form of connection among spaces resulting from political practice. This form of rhizomic globalisation conceives of antagonism and temporality as ontological preconditions for the creation of connections among spaces. While we stated that temporality and antagonism cannot be articulated and are beyond space and the social, we will introduce globalisation as a form of beyond that can be articulated. As such an articulation it will produce dynamism and lead to a subversion of that which is both internal and external to a social or space.

Before we provide a conception of globalisation that delineates the relationship between different spaces, we shall briefly summarise what we have aimed to accomplish so far and thereby provide a background against which we can conceive of the “global” in education policy.

Thus far, we have provided a perspective on the relation between the social and the political in education policy making. According to this perspective, education policy as political practice can be seen to engage in the constitution of the social. In relation to this social, we introduced the notion of antagonism as a form of negativity or limit of the social that prevents the social from becoming a closed structure or system.

Based on this theoretical conception of the social, antagonism and the political, we provided an analytical framework in the form of discourse analytical concepts. The aim with this provision was to allow for a depiction of the political in discursive practices, such as education policy making, and patterns within them. The introduced concepts are envisioned to allow for a conception of the political in the analysis of particular instances of speeches, documents, etc.

This conception of discourse and the social, which aimed to provide a conception of how continuity and change can be seen to be constitutive for practices constituting education and society, was in a second instance metaphorically transpositioned into a language of spatiality and temporality. The aim with this transposition was to provide an illustrative depiction of how we can conceive of the relationship between education, the social and the political in spatial terms.

Bringing these different parts together, we have constituted a framework that enables a conception and analysis of the political in the constitution of the social/space. We argue that, with regards to our focus on education policy on ESD, this framework allows us to conceive of education policy making as spatialisation that engages in the production of the social/space as shared historicity of practice. With regards to the social and space, we conceive their historicity as being similar to the conventionality of practice of a form of life. The metaphoric reconception of the political and the social in spatial terms introduced the image of a non-cohesive or uneven space characterised by an overlapping finite set of transparent layers and is envisioned to allow for a geometric visualisation of how continuity and dynamics can be understood in terms of space and temporality. In this geometric visualisation, we introduced the notion of points as distinctive for particular layers of space, where a connection among layers of space exists solely with regards to the shared elements. Within a particular layer an element attains a particular identity and becomes a point. The concept of point denotes here the stability and continuity of a particular practice. The dynamics of politics and the effects of antagonism are transforming points into vectors. Vectors reverberate different trajectories and relative identities in regard to existing central coordinates of a particular layer of a space.

This geometrical metaphorisation of the social as space and points as connections among layers of space was chosen since we argue it allows for a conception of the beyond space, where we can specify this beyond as to denote globalisation.

This theoretical explication of spatiality and dynamics is to be understood in the context of the papers of Book II. That is to say, the conceptual framework to be presented is the result of an engagement with articulations of ESD in different policy documents. This engagement, as we have stated in the prologue, produced a successive reflection on how these articulations of ESD can be seen to reflect on the Being of ESD.

The conception of globalisation to be introduced in this section and in Papers I and II has taken shape in parallel and the explications in this section are to expand and substantiate the conception of the framework in the papers. In order to link more clearly this section to the papers, the reader might read our frequent reference in this section to elements as to refer to ESD, where, as the Papers II and III show, ESD in Vietnam attains different meanings once it is put into relation to nodal or reference points such as “social equality”, “economic growth”, or “national independence”. The articulation of ESD or SD in the established conjunction to these reference points can be seen to produce vectors. Yet, as we have argued more explicitly in Papers I and II, the articulation of ESD as a travelling or shared element among spaces can be seen to produce globalisation, or what we will in the end of this section call “tangent space”.

As a result of the articulation of ESD in a number of different spaces we might say that the element becomes non-orientable, it becomes, so to speak, detached from the particular spaces it is articulated in. This synchronic detachment and attachment of the element of ESD or what we will describe in Papers I and II, as well as in this section, as its becoming should not be seen to eradicate the potential for the political to emerge. The political is, due to antagonism, temporality and the rhizomic, always a premise for action where the rediscovery of this grounding of practice in decision allows for the articulation of social antagonisms *within* and *among* spaces.

Rhizomic globalisation in this understanding can be seen to lead to a proliferation of social antagonisms as it allows for a discovery of additional potential choices of articulation that the subject in decision has to relate to and exclude.

## Territoriality and the Beyond

The following three sub-sections are to be understood as a form of digression that is to locate the conception of rhizomic globalisation in a broader debate on globalisation. This digression does not claim to exhaust this extensive debate of globalisation, but rather focuses on certain figures of reasoning and logics that are seemingly drawn upon in order to conceive of globalisation. The digression aims to portray logics or figures of reasoning and is a continuation or background of the discussion of logics and globalisation in Papers I and II.

Hence, the reader might continue with the introduction of rhizomic globalisation in the sub-section “Connection among Spaces as an Assemblage of Plateaus” or, in case of further interest in this discussion, directly proceed to Papers I or II in order to complement the discussion of the digression that is to follow.

The digression that we will engage in below focuses on how space can be understood in terms of territoriality and how this conception of territoriality allows for or hinders a conception of globalisation as an exchange between different spaces. With this focus in mind, the following subsections portray how our introduced conception of space and temporality allow for conceiving how that exchange is not an interaction among fully-established identities and homogenous territories, but how these exchanges can be seen to connect territories and feed into their becoming.

The selection of the literature that is reviewed in the following subsections is based on the figures of reasoning that they can be seen to stand in for, where the selection aims to allow for a portrayal of different figures of reasoning by which globalisation as interactions between territories is conceived.

## Territory and the beyond

Relating the theoretical considerations of how to understand globalisation back to the relationship between society and education, we could be asking ourselves: What constitutes the limits of the society, or rather the social? How does globalisation relate to this limit? As we said, the field of discursivity, that is to say, the social, is an open-ended field and as space it is constituted by the totality of discursive practices of a certain community of practitioners. It is a *Lebensform*, a form of life (Wittgenstein, 1953). With regards to globalisation, we might ask ourselves: How should we conceive of the limits of this field as space? We see this question of the limit to be related to the conception of the possible relationship between spaces or socials. As we will argue below, it is the conception of the limit that will define how we conceive of an exchange between spaces.

Within the globalisation debate, it has been highlighted how patterns in spatiality, ethnicity and cultural exchanges have changed and how these patterns have become increasingly globalised (Appadurai, 1996). Further, society as the ultimate frame of reference for social and political studies has been increasingly questioned with regards to the assumed effects of globalisation. This questioning of society as the ultimate frame of reference in the face of globalisation has been leading to taken-for-granted-concepts, such as class or nation that are appealed to in order to signify belonging, identity and orientation, which have been described as theoretical relics of the past, becoming “zombie categories” of explanation (Beck & Rutherford, 2002).

While, based on our earlier discussions of antagonism and constitutive negativity, we might question the extent to which society, culture and nation have been categories or signifiers with a closed positive identity, we will not go as far as calling them “zombie categories”. What we would rather like to point out is that such concepts as nation, state and society are often metonymically used with regards to attempts at creating a space to be governed.

We can understand concepts such as state and nation to rely on conceptions of territoriality, where territoriality as relating to space can be understood as a political technology (Elden, 2010). In order to legitimise claims to such spaces or territories of governance, politics and social sciences have traditionally made appeals to ethnicity and culture in order to substantiate the consistency or interiority of that space by appealing to notions of originary people and posterity (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 2000).<sup>161</sup>

It is this notion of territoriality as state or nation that we as we will show see as problematic with regards to globalisation. This problematic relates to the issue how such notions can be seen to draw on figures of reasoning associated with society as a closed form of space in order to conceive of self-determination, legitimacy and power among others.

An early problematisation of this assumed internality of state or nation, can be found in Marxist theory. This problematisation of the unity and specificity of a particular territoriality has shaped Marx's depiction of capitalism and been supplemented by conceptions of the transnational character or expansive tendency of capitalism in terms of imperialism (Lenin, 1917). The problematisation of territoriality in terms of the nation-state takes in such a Marxist conception of imperialism the form of a critique of the distinctiveness of the national, as this distinctiveness is seen to dissolve with regards to the shared characteristics of capitalism. Capitalism, in this understanding, is not a national or territorial phenomenon, but a phenomenon that transcends these categories and can be seen to connect and put into relation territorialities with regards to the capitalist modes of production leading to imperialism as a form of transnational capitalism.

Based on this conception of imperialist tendencies of advanced economies, which highlights the dependency relation among particular configurations, Marxist-inspired theory came to further develop this imperialist transgression of capitalist systems beyond the national level in terms of world-systems theories (*e.g.*, Wallerstein, 1979).

Such systems thinking moved beyond the national or state level and also addressed more directly issues of governance and to what extent the state remained the locus of authority (Keohane & Nye, 1972, 1977). Some systematic understandings of the global economic system (*e.g.*, Guéhenno, 2000; Ōmae, 1995) have gone so far as to question any remainders of the integrity of state and announced the "end of the nation-state". This end of the nation-state is based on the claim that supra- and transnational forces as part of an age of globalisation have rendered the nation and state as territories of authority, legitimacy and self-determination obsolete. Others (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997) have argued for the emergence of a world society

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<sup>161</sup> An example of such appeals can be found in the earlier discussed notion of *folkhemmet*, where *folk* is synonymous with both people, ethnic or racial groups and countries.

or world culture, as a form of isomorphism among cultural and societal differences.<sup>162</sup>

In the context of this assumed transgression of the national or the societal towards the global, we will return to our earlier discussion of the possibility of establishing society as stable or closed structure. The issue that we raise in the context of the perspectives on globalisation and territoriality above is whether it is possible to differentiate between the internality and externality of territoriality.

Thus, when we approach the question of how to conceive of the relation of the global as a beyond the societal in education we acknowledge the impossibility of a pure externality and internality. It is in this acknowledgement that we turn to openness and the constant displacement of the limit between the external and the internal as a form of subversion. Hence, we take openness of the societal and limit as a subversive as a point of departure for our theoretical conception of space and globalisation.

Coming back to this question that concerned the beyond space or the social, this acknowledgement results in that the beyond is not to be understood as something that is purely external. Neither, do we see the beyond as a form of synthesis, where, as in Marxist theory, the whole is to negate the contradictory effects of the particular. Hence, for us the beyond cannot be a form of plane where a positivity is provided.

Instead, we argue the beyond in the context of globalisation has to be understood in the figure of reasoning by which we constituted antagonism. Globalisation is for us a form of negativity that subverts any attempt at providing positivity. The beyond is for us not an external space, but the subversion of space as a form of experience that shows that a particular space has already been different. For us, *the beyond is a name for the experience of an alterity that is provided by another social or another space.*

Yet, keeping in mind that we conceive of space as open-ended, we might ask ourselves: How should we conceive of this place beyond space? How do spaces relate to one another? What defines their constitutive differences?

Coming back to the notion of territoriality that is associated with space, we might be tempted to conceive of this space beyond space in terms of bordering territories. That is to say, we might conceive of the beyond as an alternate territory, as an externality that borders on the internal of a territory in focus. However, issues such as migration, terrorism and cultural export/import might be difficult to grasp by drawing on such a conception of bordering territories, since we might be unable to conceive how the constitutive difference or alterity of one space might emerge from within the other

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<sup>162</sup> Yet, the reliance of such depictions of world society or world culture on a historic and comprehensive movement from the national to international/global has been questioned within field of globalisation research (Elden, 2005; Held & McGrew, 2000; Sassen, 2003; Scholte, 2000).

space. In this sense, the alterity would be associated *a priori* with an externality of space.

In such a conception, we might be tempted to conceive difference with regards to spatial distance, that is to say, a distance to an alternate territory. For example, with regards to terrorism, we might be tempted to conceive this phenomenon in terms of difference particular to an alternate space. In this sense, the phenomenon would be characteristic to an externality.

With regards to this spatial distance the external alterity could be conceived in relation to general or positive reference points in “space” where these general points of reference might allow us to put into relation spaces and to characterise them, for example, as generally “developed” or “underdeveloped”. In such appeals to general reference points, we would be able to locate communities as neatly distinct spatial territories.

A territory in this sense would attain internality in terms of a closed system of relations, where that closure would depend on a form of positivity that allows for an equivalence among that which is internal and a difference to that which is external. To return to our example of terrorism, we might say that terrorism would be equivalent to a characteristic of a specific territory, such as Afghanistan or Iran. The multiplicity of these positivities would then allow us to constitute the limits of the social as a multiple of closed socials that within the same dimension expand space into multiple directions in the form of adjoining territories.

With regards to this closed social and requirement of a positivity, we might, in the context of our earlier discussions of determination and the resulting problems, comment that such a conception of space based on universal reference points would be problematic or at least limit our possibilities for explanation of change and dynamism.

We make this argument for an explanatory limit or problem, since we might find it difficult to explain changes in that space. Change would, in line with our earlier argumentation, have to be externally imposed, as the internal will be fully determined by that positivity. We argue that an appeal to a plurality of positivities that allows for a conception of a plurality of closed social does not allow for a conception of change that would emanate from the within these social. Change in such a space would require a change of the determinants of that space that are constitutive for it.

Returning to our attempt at a conception of the beyond that is to take into account dynamism, we problematise notions of space that are constituted by an appeal to a determining singular positivity. This problematisation emerges in the form of the question: To what extent can space or formation represent a whole, that is to say, to represent a space providing us with places of belonging?

This question is inspired by our reading of Derrida (1997, p. 89) who we interpret to question the possibility of tracing this place of belonging, as an originary belonging, since, “[...] this ‘we’ never stops dividing, and the

places of signature are displaced in dividing up. A certain unlimitedness always disturbs the contemporary who assures him herself in a ‘we’. We hold that, in order to conceive of how globalisation can be seen to lead to an inseparability of territories, we need to conceive of territoriality as open and overdetermined.

We argue that a figure of reasoning that appeals to determination of time and space and determined territory is implausible with regards to phenomena that are associated with globalisation. We might say that such a determined territoriality and determination in space and time is implausible in the context of experience of how phenomena such as terrorism can be seen to undermine the internality/externality distinction that a determinate notion of space/time continuum draws upon. Isn’t terrorism or migration showing that that which is assumed to be associated with an external territory is already internal? Isn’t terrorism a threat that haunts “us” and not only “them”? Isn’t terrorism already committed then by those that we presumed to belong to an “us”?

Hence, we interpret Derrida’s remarks above to highlight the difference-to-self of a territory and the “we” that it entails. In this sense, we interpret his argument that the “places of signature are displaced in dividing up” to denote that the place or the internality of territory is subverted in the experience of that which we assumed to have been external is already part of the internal.

For us, this difference-to-self of territory and space highlights the incommensurability of appeals to a determinate position of space and time, as we argue that this difference-to-self can only emerge once we acknowledge a limit of determination. Thus, what we are arguing for is that we need to problematise the continuum of time and space and that we can thereby approach the dynamics in space and allow for a conception of globalisation as a connection among spaces that overcomes the limit for understanding certain phenomena that a determinate notion of space/time entails.

## Unsettling the continuum

This possibility of acknowledging a limit of determination of space emerges once we take the event into account, that is to say, the Event as we have defined it in a Heideggerian and Derridian fashion. In this understanding of Event, we might say that space is determinate. However, space is in our perspective subverted by time in the experience of a difference-to-self. We are in this sense decoupling temporality from a time/space continuum and installing temporality as the limit of space; we are introducing temporality as an indeterminate, as something that subverts and reactivates space.

The experience of the difference of the “we” as associated with a certain space or territory is then also the Event in which we become aware of the

heterogeneity and the ideality of that “we” that has apparently already been different-to-self.

To return to our understanding of the relation between spatiality and temporality, we need to keep in mind that every space requires a reduction of variation. Temporal variation has to be “brought into accordence” as we see Wittgenstein (1953, §200) to have argued. It is in this sense of overcoming of temporal variation that we conceive of spatialising practice as attempts at determination. As Laclau formulates it, spatialisation as related to discursive practice aims to reduce variation among events.

The spatialization of event’s temporality takes place through repetition, through the reduction of its variation to an invariable nucleus which is an internal moment of the pre-given structure. (Laclau, 1990, p. 41)

Here, we might return to our discussion of Wittgenstein to explain how we interpret Laclau’s spatialisation of the event’s temporality. As in the need for bringing into accordence different cases as part of practice that seemingly follows a rule (discursive practice), we might say that this bringing into accordence needs to create equivalences in the repetition that brings it into accordence. Discursive practice needs to overcome the differences between a series of cases as part of meaning making and to highlight what is shared by these cases.

Hence, the spatialisation of the event needs to exclude that which is specific to the case in its temporal situatedness. It has to constitute continuity as a seeming invariable nucleus and identity repeating itself in the present.

While the spatialisation of an event will try to engage in the creation of such an identity in repetition it is exposed to the Event, we might say that the Event as a form of antagonism shows the difference-to-self of that identity. This Event as a form of experience of temporality shows the variability of the case, that it has been brought into accordence and could have been brought into accordence differently. In this sense, the Event highlights iterability, as it highlights the need for writing as a form of spacing or spatialisation (*cf.* Derrida, 1978b, p. 70). It is due to this experience of the Event and the experience of the *possibility* of and *need* for spatialisation as a form of political practice that we see the possibility of a “re”-experience of that temporal variation to emerge.

We argue that this temporal variation, which disrupts or dislocates space, provides an entry point for conceiving connections among spaces. As spaces are due to the effects of the Event, as a form of split and doubling, not closed, they require articulation as a form of spatialisation to hegemonise these disruptive effects of the Event.

It is this need for spatialisation, as a form of articulation or writing, that we see as an opening for understanding how we can conceive of the beyond spaces and globalisation as a connection among spaces. Writing and traces in

writing will, as we have highlighted earlier, remain active. With regards to this active dimension we might recall that the trace partially entails a trace to temporal variation rendering writing active. It is suggested in our conception of the beyond space that we should keep this spectre of the trace in mind, since we might be tempted to assume that the beyond space as a difference among spaces might be conceived in terms of a difference among closed historical systems.

However, as might become evident, it is such a closure that we attempt to avoid in order to allow for a conception of the dynamics that we see to characterise the social, space and globalisation. Hence, a central question that we would like to ask ourselves, based on our conception of space and the social, is: How should we conceive of this historicity of a space as open-ended and non-determinable?

### Moving beyond a space/time continuum

We would like to suggest that this question becomes relevant not only as far as it is concerned with the notion of beyond space that is to be put forward, but is also seen to relate to the very understanding of how spatialisations should be understood as to relating space.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, this question is understood by us as to be centrally concerned with the question: *How should we conceive of the relation among spaces?*

We argue, a conception of globalisation as something that is happening *among* territories that are seemingly at a distance becomes increasingly problematic.

Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link *distant* localities in such a way that local happenings are *shaped by events occurring many miles away* and vice versa. (Giddens, 1990, p. 64, author's emphasis)

What the quote from Giddens is envisioned to highlight is not what globalisation is, but rather how our conception of space in terms of territoriality shapes the way we give meaning to it.

If we then consider the relationship between globalisation and education, we might critically engage with a tendency to conceive of this territorial interaction in terms of neatly separable spaces, where we might ascribe characteristic differences in terms of *territorial distance*. In Giddens, globalisation becomes an overcoming of or shortening of distances, allowing forces at a distance to affect distant localities.

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<sup>163</sup> For an elaboration of this relation between spatialisation and space see sub-section "Spatialising the Event" in the previous section.

We would like to suggest that this conception of globalisation as a working from a distance can be seen to be limited in terms of its ability to reconceptualise our understanding of the beyond space. It is suggested that Giddens' conception of globalisation does not fully engage with how we could reconceive space and territoriality and movement among space in order to denote how globalisation can be seen to disrupt the assumed distance or territorial externality of phenomena. It is in this depiction of working from a distance that we might ask ourselves: How is it possible to work from a far? Is that which is at work really something that is far away or hasn't this remote force already been among us? How can that which is distant still be distant if it is shaping the local?

We might suggest here that Giddens' conception leaves the givenness of space and temporality untouched.<sup>164</sup> It seems that Giddens' "working from afar" accepts the assumed givenness of general reference points in space and also as a result the territoriality. Further, Giddens is interpreted by us to remain committed to a notion of origin, of place and of belonging, where these notions only draw upon a figure of reasoning that conceives of the identity of elements in relation to a grounding or determined space.

Our earlier explorations of Laclau's conception of space envisions to allow for a different conception of space, a conception that breaks with the groundedness of space, where elements within space do not attain determinate positions. We argue, such attempts at reconceiving space that problematise the givenness of space and territoriality have also been engaged in the context of the globalisation debate.

Mittelman, for example, speaks of a compression of time and space.

[...] globalisation is a coalescence of varied transnational processes, and domestic structures, allowing the economy, politics, culture and ideology of one country to penetrate another. [...] Driven by changing modes of competition, globalisation *compresses the time and space* aspects of social relations. (Mittelman, 1996, p. 232, author's emphasis)

This compression of space and time suggests that this working from a distance can be reconceived in terms of a compression of space, as a form of bringing the far closer, or we might even say to bring the far to the point or the place. Yet, we might ask ourselves: How does this compression of space relate to territoriality? How can we conceive of the changes that are taking place in these spaces and these territories as part of globalisation?

In this context, Parker (1998, p. 6f) makes an interesting remark when he speaks of a permeability of traditional boundaries in order to describe global-

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<sup>164</sup> We might suggest that this givenness of space can be seen to result out of his teleological language that sees events as being shaped by something. Here, the language of causality is seen by us to draw upon a figure of reasoning that cannot overcome a notion of time and space as determined.

isation. Parker is interpreted by us to go further in his conception of globalisation than Mittelman by suggesting that it is not only social relations, but also physical relations that are to be reconceived. Therefore, we see Parker to share similarities with Laclau's conception of space, where Laclau makes no general distinction between physical space and other notions of space. What is of further interest to us is his suggested *pragmatic dimension* in this *permeability of boundaries* that we see him to provide in his comment on "how we do things around here".

We argue that it is with regards to this permeability of space in practice, or we might use the metaphor of *interfusion* (Andersson, 1996, p. 19), that we can approach the question of how to conceive of the beyond space, as well as how we can conceive of the changes that are taking place in spaces. Thus, coming back to our discussions of the internality of space, we might agree with McGrew's (1997, p. 7) conception of globalisation that he depicts in terms of an enmeshment or a blurring of the possibility to posit a limit between the internal and the external. McGrew puts forward that as a result of this enmeshment of that which is external and internal, local and global becomes increasingly blurred. In the light of this consideration of McGrew on globalisation, we can conceive of *globalisation as an interconnectedness of spaces*.

With regards to a pragmatic perspective on articulation, we conceive of globalisation as the creation of connections that are part of the interactions taking place in relation to a particular space and among spaces. As a result of this connection, we see globalisation as an enmeshment of spaces resulting out of practices of spatialisation. A consequence of this enmeshment is that it becomes difficult to differentiate between the internality and externality of space.

It is in the context of this enmeshment and the problematic of differentiating between different internalities or localities that we would like to suggest a change of focus. In contrast to notions of globalisation that see it in terms of functioning or working from afar, we are not primarily interested in the question of internality of space. That is, we are not focusing on external effects on the original or indigenous of closed and determinable territorialities, as such a focus is counter to the centrality of antagonism. Antagonism and our conception of the decision highlighted how we do not take originality, conventionality or that which is assumed to be shared for granted. Accordingly, in this perspective, we do not start in space, but rather in the disruption of space provoked by temporality that requires of the subject to spatialise. Hence, our focus moves to the political in contingent and diverse practices that aim to spatialise, to conventionalise and to constitute space.

With this focus on the political, we are in our conception of globalisation as connection primarily concerned with the pragmatics and the political moment of spatialisation that builds upon an exclusion of alternate ways to spatialise. As a result, the issue of how to understand interfusion or permea-

bility of space becomes a pragmatic question: How should we conceive of this permeabilisation to take shape in terms of discursive practices?

What we would like to put forward is that the relative interiority of space or territoriality can be conceived as a form of a historicity of a form of life, a *Lebensform*. We treat this form of life as synonymous with the discursive that is particular to a language. Space, in this sense relates to a community sharing and engaging in a language, or to put it differently, “[...] to imagine a language means to imagine a life-form” (Wittgenstein, 1953, §19).

However, what we need to highlight with regards to both interiority of space and the permeabilisation of this interiority by the external is that this *Lebensform* is not to be conceived in terms of a pure or general conventionality. What we are here addressing is that this community of language practitioners is not determined by a shared purpose, nor in the sense of communication as a form of general agreement or conventionality of language.<sup>165</sup>

The point to be made is that determined regularity of the use of language as practice and the resulting givenness of context would eradicate the possibility of the Event and the political that the Event allows for. What we argue is that, for the possibility of the political to emerge and change to occur in relation to political practice, we have to conceive a form of life as to be subverted by antagonism and, as a result, language to be characterised by iterability. As we in our exploration of Derrida highlighted, the use of language requires, according to our perspective iterability.

Let us not forget that “iterability” does not signify simply [...] repeatability of the same, but rather alterability of this same idealized in the singularity of the event, for instance, in this or that speech act. It entails the necessity of thinking at once both the rule and the event, concept and singularity. There is thus a reapplication (without transparent self-reflection and without pure self-identity) of the principle of iterability to a concept of iterability that is never pure. There is no idealization without (identificatory) iterability; but for the same reason, for reasons of (altering) iterability, there is no idealization that keeps itself pure, safe from all contamination. (Derrida, 1988, p. 119)

Hence, while we might say that language can be described in terms of language games, as forms of seemingly rule-bound ways of saying and doing, this seemingly rule-bound activity of speaking becomes political once we think of the Event that we see as synonymous with antagonism. Thus, this turning towards the Event in language is allowing for and requiring an alteration of the repetition in order to make meaning.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> What we are addressing here is a notion of communication as we have problematised it in our discussion of figures of reasoning in Dewey.

<sup>166</sup> We might say that space entails a play as spatialisation requires playing along in order to bring into accordance.

To return to our conception of a beyond space, we might ask ourselves: How does the Event as a split or experience of antagonism relate then to the historicity of the discursive or, we might say, to a form of life?

We see Wittgenstein in the context of our discussion to make a notable observation, where he highlights that it is primarily not the *regularity* of practices as would be provided by a space, as a form of *sticking to the rule*, that is the source of disputes. Instead, we see Wittgenstein highlight that, while convention relates to the language people *use* in an argument, language allows for both *agreement and disagreement*.

240. Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. That is part of the framework on which the working of our language is based (for example, in giving descriptions),

241. "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"—It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. (Wittgenstein, 1953, §240 & 241, original emphasis)

Hence, we interpret Wittgenstein to suggest that agreement and disagreement is not determined by language. In the context of this observation by Wittgenstein we might ask ourselves, or Wittgenstein as a conceptual persona: If agreement is a form of use of language and a form of life, why are there disputes?

It is suggested here that we can approach this issue by returning to the in-eradicable symbolic character of language, where we might say that experience of the Event, which calls for a position, shows the undecidability of language. Hence, we argue that agreement in form of life necessitates also disagreement in forms of life, since the absence of disagreement or social antagonism would render agreement meaningless. To reformulate this line of thought, the use of language constitutes both what is true and false, where language does not determine what is true or false. Thus, we argue that language as a form of life is characterised by an undecidability, where the subject has to make the decision of whether to agree or disagree. As a result, a form of life or space does not necessitate agreement, but rather *we should understand a form of life to be the basis for a member to decide to agree or disagree*.

In the context of this reasoning, we make a distinction between an *understanding* of a normative position and an *acceptance* or *rejection* of that normative position. We argue that the undecidability of space allows for an opening for permeabilisation, as space in this sense of a community of language practitioners does not determine conventionality and does not determine the rules to be followed. Instead, it allows for an apparent rule-

following. This apparent rule-following can *a posteriori* be agreed upon or disagreed upon. Conventionality is hence not *a priori* determined by language, but we see it to be the *a posteriori* result of the act of agreement.

In the case of the permeabilisation of space, we might say that there is something like an interconnection of forms of life, where, for example in the case of migration or educational lending and borrowing, languages and practices become intertwined. As part of this entwinement or interfusion a connection among languages and practices is created in the form of *an inception of unconventionality of use of language and practice*.

For example, someone might have been in line with the practice of one form of life, and yet having been using the language of another form of life. Such instances of permeabilisation problematise the notion of internal coherence of space or the social. Further, it calls for a more thorough conception of this *permeabilisation between different forms of life or connection between spaces*. We see ourselves in the context of discussion to have approached and provided an opening for answering our earlier questions of: How should we conceive of this historicity of a space as open-ended and non-determinable?

In order to allow for such a conception of globalisation as interconnectedness and permeabilisation, we will introduce the conception of *rhizomic globalisation*.

However, before we engage in this conception it will be necessary to briefly specify how this conception of rhizome relates to our conception of antagonism and temporality. We argue that rhizome, antagonism and Event are partially synonymous, yet are aimed to give meaning to different aspects of the relation between education, the social and globalisation. While antagonism and temporality attained an explanatory ontological position in our conception that allowed for a conception of non-closure of structure, that is to say, space, the concept of rhizome is envisioned to attain the function of conceiving of *the effects of alterity of space*. To put it differently, while antagonism and temporality attain the name for a certain anti-spatiality, as that which prevents space from eradicating temporality and establishing closure, the concept of rhizome is drawn upon in order to highlight *the effects of anti-historicity or alternate historicity* that we see to be at play in the *multiplicity of forms of life*.

By drawing on this concept of rhizome it is envisioned to provide a reconceptualisation of continuity and change in the practices that characterise education policy making. We see globalising articulation as creating connections. Changes in the identities of elements, such as ESD, are not determined by underlying structural “global” changes, but in our understanding result out of articulations, such as education policy making. At the same time globalising articulations are made against historic formations specific to a particular space, providing particular forms of continuity.

In this conception of globalisation as rhizome, we will lend from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) the concept of rhizome. We have to add that this lending will take place against the background of the discourse theoretical framework, antagonism and spatiality as provided by Laclau.

As already mentioned the objective in this section will be to provide a conception of how we can see globalisation as connection among spaces that leads to a usurpation of space by space. We see this form of globalisation as a form of connected spaces or assemblage of spaces to form a rhizome.

## Connection among Spaces as an Assemblage of Plateaus

In our discussion of the social, as well as our conception of space, we argued for a conception of the social as space, or form of life. This conception of space consists of different layers as a non-congruent overlay of discourses. This connection among non-congruent layers that as a whole constitute a specific space is perceived by us to be the *shared historicity of practice*. Historicity of practice denotes the condition of a form of life, where members are capable to identify a particular practice as just that, a meaningful practice as a form of repetition. Hence, we might say that, as a form of repetition in practice, *historicity constitutes the consistency of space* or, to put it differently, it is historicity that keeps different layers of space in an indeterminate relation to each other. But how are we to understand the particularity of historicity that characterises a space?

### The trace and space as an economy of traces

In order to approach our understanding of the distinctiveness of space, that is to say, its historicity, we return to our discussion of writing and its active and passive dimensions. As we underlined, there is always both an active and a passive dimension. We might say that the active dimension stands in relation to the bringing into accord among cases to cases. Thus, while there is passivity in practice there is something that cannot be brought back in practice that aims to bring into accord. With regards to this something that cannot be brought back, we see Derrida introduce the notion of trace or, to be specific, the trace of the trace.

This passivity is also the relationship to a past, to an always-already-there that no reactivation of the origin could fully master and awaken to presence. This impossibility of reanimating absolutely the manifest evidence of an originary presence refers us therefore to an absolute past. That is what authorized us to call *trace* that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present. (Derrida, 1967, p. 66, original emphasis)

To map the trace is troublesome, in the sense that it evades writing. It is that which is both a condition for and unavoidable leftover of writing. The trace in this sense is a pointing gesture of an element to a past; however, where that presence of the past cannot become fully present. This incomplete fullness or problematic animation of a past provides the premise for the trace, as the trace in writing is a pointing gesture to a past element that, if it would be possible to be present, would render the pointing gesture redundant. Hence, the trace of an element to another element in this sense is not a trace to an element with a full identity, but that trace to an element leads to another trace. We might remember here the non-origin, as we highlighted in Derrida's notion of iterability. The trace in writing allows for the sign to be a sign and, at the same time, keeps it from being a sign for itself.

This concept [of writing that takes into account the trace] can be called *gram* or *différance*. The play of differences supposes, in effect, syntheses and referrals which forbid at any moment, or in any sense, that a simple element be *present* in and of itself, referring only to itself. Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present. (Derrida, 1981, p. 26, original emphasis)

Based on a consideration of “the element that is itself is not simply present” in the quote above, we might say that the trace is the trace of a past or the past in the trace in the present. This trace in writing produces a temporal movement which is not present—has it ever been?—but is the piggyback writing of the past in the present through traces.

However, as we highlighted above, the trace is not the trace to an original identity or origin, but the trace to an element is caught up by another trace, and thus writing becomes both a possibility and a necessity. “There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces” (Derrida, 1981, p. 26).

*The presence-absence of the trace, which one should not even call its ambiguity but rather its play* (for the word “ambiguity” requires the logic of presence, even when it begins to disobey that logic), carries in itself the problems of the letter and the spirit, of body and soul, and of all the problems whose primary affinity I have recalled. (Derrida, 1967, p. 70f, author's emphasis)

The trace, as Derrida highlights in the quote above, is characterised by a presence-absence. We argue, the trace is characterised by a presence of an element that it is pointing to but that element has itself no full identity, it is not a presence, but it is itself caught up in a relation to a trace. Hence, this trace of the trace denotes partially an absence. The trace as relating to the historicity of practice or, to put it in Derrida's (1967, p. 70) words, the trace

as “death as the concrete structure of the living present”, is not a historicity that determines or animates the synchronic.

The trace to a past or as a form of repetition that would recall a full presence and reanimate it in the present would constitute the present structure as a closed system. Such a trace would reduce language and as a result space to a practice reanimating or summoning a fixed structure, where there would be no play, no dynamism and no social antagonism. Instead, the trace as both an absent and present, as Derrida highlights in the quote above, allows for a play; a play we say that is the premise for a condition of possibility of the political. The trace as both temporal (absent) and spatial (present) is understood by us in relation to writing as spacing. This writing as spacing is conceived by us as to engage in an economy of traces that is never fully present to itself. This economy of traces can be understood as being synonymous with a field of discursivity, as this economy of trace is characterised by a non-determining historicity that allows for play and dynamism within that economy, as well as denotes the pragmatic dimension of writing. Space, as related to historicity or the discursive in practice, can hence be seen to be characterised by an economy of traces.

Thus, we understand historicity as such an economy of traces as it is involved in writing, where the trace is both present and absent at the same time. Historicity, as a form of repetition in this sense of trace, is not the reanimation of a past presence, but is characterised by iterability, as a form of repetition that is constitutive and characterised by a non-determinateness and difference-to-self. As a result of this presence/absence, the economy of traces is never constituted as a closed system and never fixates the sign in a web of traces. It calls for writing.

Further, it is due this non-presence of that Other as a form of presence, which the trace points to in the present, that allows for an exteriority to become an interiority.<sup>167</sup> This possibility emerges, as the trace is, similar to the relation between other and Other, associated with ambiguity. The trace is in this sense always dependent on the trace of the trace.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> We might say that writing or rather Arche-writing in the Derridian sense is characterised by an appeal to this Other, as it can be seen to persist on the signified while not being able to fully to signify it. With regards to the other Derrida (1967, p. 70) states that “Arche-writing, [...] this trace is the opening of the first exteriority in general, the enigmatic relationship of the living to its other and of an inside to an outside: spacing”. Spacing or spatialisation in this sense is interpreted to keep temporality at bay or rather to reduce its contingency in order to constitute space. Writing as spacing aims, in our understanding, to externalise contingency.

<sup>168</sup> As in the case of the difference between the articulated other and the Lacanian Other, the trace does not transcend the play in articulation. It in this sense does not conflate with the signified, but refers to another signified. In this sense, the reference is iterable, that is, different-to-self, splitting the trace. The tracing of the traces will lead to an infinite inquiry into the economy of traces that we see to represent the field of discursivity. By this economy of traces, we aim to highlight the pragmatic aspects of traces as a form of historicity in articulation that engages in a communal activity of meaning making. As with the Lacanian other, this trace of

The conception of trace and economy of traces is envisioned to provide a means for a conception of interfusion or permeabilisation of spaces, as an entwinement of spaces. We argue that the ambiguity of the trace allows in this sense for a connection to an alternate economy of traces or what we have labelled space. We see this possibility to emerge, as writing aims to spatialise the contingent or the ambiguity of the trace, where it cannot eradicate this contingency. Hence, while writing, as spacing or spatialisation, aims to externalise the contingency or ambiguity of the trace, it is the trace of the trace that will allow for a rediscovery of that contingency. Hence, a mapping of the trace of the trace, as has been established as part of writing, as a form of spacing, might allow for an experience of the seeming externality of the trace of the trace. In this sense, the ambiguity of the trace and the absence of a presence that would animate and determine the identity of the element that the trace points towards allows for the trace in its ambiguity to seemingly point to something internal that was assumed to be external.

This subversion of the attempt of spacing as an effort to externalise contingency is difficult to grasp. Hence, we might recall our example of a series of numbers. The writing of the inverted commas around “1,2,3,4” can be interpreted as an act of spacing that aims to keep contingency at bay in order to conceive of the identity and regularity of that series, where these inverted commas have a similar function to commas or full stops in writing. However, this spacing is not able to externalise contingency as the trace of the trace subverts this attempt at externalising contingency. In a sense, that which comes before or after the capitalised letter of the beginning of a sentence and after the full stop of a sentence, as an example of the trace of the trace, subverts the attempt at externalising contingency. Think of the following sentence: “Take me seriously!” A mapping of the trace of the trace might discover that the inverted commas aimed to keep at bay the following “The following is not true and should be avoided at all cost: ‘Take me seriously!’” The trace of the trace, which is never fully present in writing, in this example, can be seen to subvert from the outside that which is inside and to change its identity or meaning.

It is in this sense that we see the trace to allow for a connection of spaces as it subverts the internality of space or the attempts at externalising contingency in writing as spacing. We argue that the trace of the trace allows us to conceive of the possibility of a permeabilisation between the external and the internal. The trace of the trace is in this sense the becoming internal of the external.

Hence, the issue we try to address through our discussion of the trace of the trace is the possibility of a form of pure historicity of externalising contingency in that historicity and to allow for the creation of an internality of

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traces is not establishing itself or was established as a closed system of traces, but is characterised by the play that is a requirement for articulation, as well as a limit barring the Other.

that historicity. Such a historicity, as a closed positivity or *ethos*, is interpreted to build on a figure of reasoning where there is a form of positivity assumed.<sup>169</sup>

As we have continuously aimed to highlight, play and dynamism is for us the premise, based on which we are to understand the relationship between education and the social. Hence, it is also this play, as we aimed to conceive in the conception of the ambiguity of the trace of the trace, that we see to allow for a conception of how this relationship can be seen to be subverted by the outside. We argue that the trace of the trace can be seen to highlight how the singularity of social is subverted by an alterity. The relationship can be conceived of as a form of subversion of the configuration of the social by an other configuration, where we will call this subversion “globalisation”, which is produced as part of political practice or spatialisation.

As with our earlier discussions of the possibility of conceiving change, it is put forward by us that appeals to a figure of reasoning that sees the social or space as configuration, as characterised by an internal coherence, would render it difficult to conceive how interfusion or permeabilisation between these configurations can become possible. It is suggested that in such conceptions there would always be a necessity to differentiate between the familiar and unfamiliar, or the conventional and unconventional. Hence, a notion of globalisation appealing to such a figure of reasoning would, as Giddens’ conception of globalisation showed, keep “unfamiliar” spaces at a distance, that is to say, to keep the notion of a pure or closed space intact. In the context of our discussion of the trace of the trace, we might say that such conceptions of globalisation would see space as having externalised contingency, where that which is local or a territoriality is determinate.

We argue that the resulting notion of globalisation renders it difficult to conceptualise how the local or a territory can be seen to be affected by interactions between these spaces, as its internality is seen as a given. As in our discussion of change in Section 1, we argue that such a conception of globalisation will conceive of change as something externally imposed, where that which is entering is not characteristic to that which is internal. Change in this sense becomes a-political from a local perspective, as it is conceived in terms of external imposition.

## Rhizome as globalisation

As it hopefully will have become apparent, we have aimed to provide a conception of social and space that finds its limit in antagonism and temporality. We see this conception of the social and space to evade an a-political conception of change. Further, we argue that such a possibility of conceiving the

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<sup>169</sup> Such a notion of historicity is seen by us to be appealed to in a Marxist notion of history, as was discussed in the first section of the first book of the dissertation.

political to result out of our appeal to the openness or non-closure of the social and space in which we introduced the concepts of antagonism and temporality as forms of negativity.

In the following, we will introduce the concept of rhizome in order to conceive how the permeabilisation of space by space or historicity by historicity can be understood. For such a conception of connection between spaces then, there can, based on our ascribed ontological character of antagonism, be no ground, no ultimate history of a space or universal time as shared point of reference by all spaces. Instead, the rhizomic stands for the subversive effects of connection, where the rhizomic subverts by showing that the external has already been internal. In this sense, the rhizome produced by globalising articulation results in subversion of historicity by historicity, due to the trace of the trace to another space and a rhizome denotes “a short-term memory, or anti-memory” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

The rhizome then has a disruptive and, at the same time, mutative effect on the historicity of practice. The rhizome is in this sense not an external imposition of something, but is rather a resulting subversion of the limit between external and internal. We argue that the rhizome is the result of a particular political action that engages in a spatialisation that connects the external and the internal of spaces, rendering the distinction between different spaces increasingly diffuse as part of their mutual process of becoming. It is not disruptive in the way that it represents an antagonistic discourse, a layer, of the same space. Instead, it represents a subversion of space by space in the form of a subversion of historicity by anti-historicity or alternate historicity.

As with our notion of space, it is not the rhizome as a condition of alterity of space and subversion of space by space alone that produces this subversion, but is a certain practice or spatialisation that produces this interfusion or permeabilisation.<sup>170</sup> It is the rhizomorphic in practice or what we will call globalising articulation that produces this subversion of space. Political practice is for us rhizomorphic with regards to the subversion of space by space. Hence, we use the term rhizomic and rhizomorphic to describe a particular aspect of political practice that we see to lead to globalisation.<sup>171</sup>

To be rhizomorphic is to produce stems and filaments that seem to be roots, or better yet connect with them by penetrating the trunk, but put them to strange new uses. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 15)

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<sup>170</sup> We will use the term “rhizome” in a similar fashion to our conception of the relation between spatialisation and space. The rhizome will not determine rhizomic, rhizomorphic or globalising practice. Hence, we see the rhizome to be constituted by rhizomic practice.

<sup>171</sup> While we might say that any political practice can be seen to be rhizomorphic in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, we will utilise the term “rhizomorphic” to solely describe the globalising aspects of practice.

To connect the metaphor used in the quote above to the terminology that we introduced, we might say that the historicity that the discursive represents can be visualised in the form of the rootedness of a tree. This rootedness of the discursive gives solidity and stability to it. The rhizome connects one trunk of a tree (historicity) with the trunk of another tree (historicity) and does something to both.<sup>172</sup>

We can apprehend the rhizome in this sense as to represent a result out of rhizomorphic practice that establishes connection, that connects an element, for example within a tree or a space (historicity), to another element of another tree; we might say it connects an element of a particular space with another space. As such a connection among trees or spaces, rhizomorphic practice and the resulting rhizome adds something to these entities, *it creates additional connections and produces supplementarity*.

This supplementarity, we argue, is characterised by the historicity associated with another or alternate space. As such, the rhizome produced by rhizomorphic practice represents an outside of the entity, which *breaks up that segmentarity of the entity forming something else out of that entity permeating the border of outside of that entity and allowing the entity to diffuse with something else*.

To come back to our metaphor of the social as space, rhizomorphic practice does something to the seeming internality of space and social. It allows for a permeabilisation of that space with another space. Since we might say that the rhizome represents the actual outside of an entity, it is “irreducible neither to the One nor the Multiple” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21). This is a difficult line of reasoning to grasp, as the resulting rhizome does not transform one space into to an other space, nor does it combine these spaces to produce a third. Hence, we argue our conception of rhizomic globalisation substitutes the notion of interaction between territories and elements within them with a notion of spaces as plateaus that are characterised by becoming.

It is in such an appeal to the rhizome and plateaus that we aim to reconceptualise the limits of and internality of space or the social, as not being demarcated as closed territories, territorial entities and interactions among them, but as forming a rhizome resulting out of rhizomorphic practice.

## Space as plateau

We might then, with the quote below in mind, say that the totality of spaces or forms of life represents a rhizome, where a particular space resembles something like a *plateau*.

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<sup>172</sup> This hiddenness can be seen to parallel antagonism that, as a form of negativity, cannot be articulated. Thus, we might say that while the rhizome remains hidden its effects can be shown.

A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word “plateau” to designate something very special: a continuous self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21f)

In our appropriation of the term “plateau” it should be pointed out that this conception of plateau rejects the notion of an elevation or of determination from above.<sup>173</sup> The term plateau is seen by us to have been appropriated by Deleuze and Guattari from Bateson and put to new and creative uses. We argue that we try to do the same as well in our metaphoric comparison of plateau to space.

Bateson (1972, p. 121f) uses the term plateau in his depiction of Balinese culture. To be specific, he uses the term in order to describe how he in his study of interactions between members of Balinese society differentiated cumulative from non-cumulative forms of interaction. Cumulative interactions are, according to Bateson (1936), engaging in a process of societal construction as practices of adapting to overarching needs of the group. However, in his study of Balinese culture, Bateson (1972, p. 121) found that there existed a number of practices that he interpreted to counter this tendency towards cumulation.

Seeing non-cumulative practices as characteristic for a number of different forms of expression of Balinese culture, Bateson described this culture as a form of plateau. A plateau is, for him, a continuous and self-vibrating region of intensities that avoids a cumulative point or external end (Bateson, 1972, p. 121). The non-cumulative aspect of practice is seen by us to withhold the possibility of a practice to result in a full constitution of subject position by the subject and fixation or closure of culture. Hence, the non-cumulative in practice prevents Balinese culture from becoming closed and static. That non-cumulative aspect of practice produces the Balinese culture’s dynamic character.

Thus, we interpret this conception of plateau in Bateson to share similarities with our conceptions of the social and antagonism. Hence, we will conceive of a space as a plateau and an assemblage of spaces or plateaus will be seen to form a rhizome.

Following Deleuze and Guattari’s appropriation of plateau in order to depict the rhizome, we can, based on our conception of space, hold that this rhizome as beyond space is always in the middle. A rhizome is not dominating through the elevation of particular spaces. With regards to spaces as plateaus, we argue that, as Bateson points out, there is a self-vibration, that is to say, a movement that is produced by practices as spatialisations in relation to

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<sup>173</sup> This can be seen to be the case of conceptions of globalisation that draw on Marxist notions of state and level. For a discussion and critique of these notions of state and level see the first section.

a particular space. As with our conception of antagonism, we interpret the non-cumulative in practice as a limit for hegemonic attempts at constituting the social as a closed space.

Further, as Deleuze and Guattari point out with regards to the plateau, there is not a reference point beyond space, that is to say, an external end or cumulation point, in its singular form and as referring to an externality that provides positivity. Drawing on this line of reasoning we conceive of temporality and the rhizome as that which is beyond space, which opens up the possibility of connection to another space as they subvert, as in the form of the trace of the trace, the distinction between external and internal. As a result of this subversion, that which is external will be an *other* internal or, we might say, the other space within a space.

The particularity of a space is perceived by us in terms of a moving or self-vibrating plateau that provides as a form of historicity stability, similar to the roots of the tree in the metaphor used by Deleuze and Guattari. In this sense, space, due to the rhizomic that to some extent is external, is in movement, where spatialisation and, as a result, the changes in space are contingent or non-determinable in relation to an *a priori* positivity or point of reference.<sup>174</sup>

Before we explicate the implications of these considerations for the conception of education policy, we will briefly describe the mode in which rhizomorphic practice establishes connections among spaces as plateaus and portray how these connections thereby produces movements and surplus.

## Rhizome as connection and anti-history

We said above that the rhizome represents an outside or externality of an entity, such as space. Yet, this statement needs to be revised when our focus moves away from space as providing the stability to an entity and move our focus towards that which is beyond, which in the case of our conception of globalisation is the rhizome.

It is in this refocusing that we conceive of globalisation as rhizome in terms of a middle or, to put into the words of Deleuze and Guattari, conceive of the rhizome as “conjunction”.

The tree imposes the verb “to be”, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction “and ... and ... and”. This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be”. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25)

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<sup>174</sup> This has the result that our conception of globalisation deviates significantly from the common notion that globalisation represents as a uniform movement or development towards a shared end, as, for example, in critiques of neo-liberal capitalism. For our conception there is no common historical stage, no shared event, beyond those that are established through meaning making.

As we stated earlier, Being is a relative and partial Being that exists in relation to the historicity or discursivity of practice that we associated with space. With regards to this Being, the Other or the trace of the trace looms over this historic partial Being through its possibility of alterity. As we discussed above, the trace of the trace is ambiguous and a mapping of this trace of the trace allows for an experience of a difference-to-self. It, to some extent, evades this act of mapping in its ambiguity.

However, as we stated with regards to the partial presence of the trace, this partial presence in writing as repetition allows for a constitution of Being. That is to say, historicity in repetition allows for the momentary constitution of an identity of elements. As we stated, this partial Being is provided by a shared horizon of historicity or the field of discursivity that we labelled space or plateau. Hence, we might state that space or plateau, as a form of life, can be seen as that which is shared by a particular community of practitioners, where that which is shared is the ability to constitute Being in seeming accordance with a diverse set of rules or regularities that we have labelled discourses. As such, the plateau or space is a shared understanding of historicity or seemingly repeating a set of rules or regularities in order to constitute Being and meaning in practice. Yet, this historicity will not determine the constitution of Being in practice, but will be undecidable with regards to how Being is to be constituted, requiring a certain iteration of the act of constitution.

We interpret the impact of rhizome as conjunction as relating to this undecidability of the social as space and ambiguity of the trace. As the trace is not to an origin, but the iterability of writing in our understanding highlights the need to bring into accordance and the partially active dimension of writing, we perceive the trace of the trace to open up the possibility for a connection to an alterity in historicity. To put it differently, as space in our understanding is not closed, but requires spatialisation, there is in that need for spatialisation an opening for connecting one space to an alternate space.

Yet, this connection to an alternate space is ill conceived as the rhizome as conjunction subverts the separability of space. As we stated earlier, that which is beyond space is antagonism and temporality, which do not represent another space but a form of negativity that subverts distinctions between that which is internal and that is internal.

Hence, in order to understand the rhizome in its radical dimension, we argue that the produced conjunction in rhizomorphic practice produces a certain anti-historicity into an alternative "to be". This anti-historicity refers to an alterity of space, as if it would belonging to an other or external space, that in the context of the rhizome shakes and uproots partial Being within a particular open-end space.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> We might say here that this otherness is a different otherness than we have discussed with regards to the Lacanian Other. It is an otherness as an additional trace to an alternate space.

Thus, the rhizome is partially an Event, in the way that it threatens partial Being that in its discursive form is associated with and subverts events that have been constituted as points of orientation within a particular space. Yet, we have to remember that the rhizome is not the pure Event, as the experience of a negativity or antagonism or temporality. Instead, it is *the experience of and conjunction to alterity of Being*.

In this sense, the rhizome is different to negativity as the experience of non-determination of Being. We might say that rhizomorphic practice and the resulting rhizome adds additional traces to another space, it produces a supplementarity within the connected spaces and it allows for a permeabilisation between internality and externality of space. As we will argue in more detail below, this permeabilisation can be seen to allow for a reactivation and political contestation, as the created connection to another space allows for the articulation of a surplus of social antagonisms.

To return to our conception of permeabilisation, this permeabilisation is in our conception of rhizome as conjuncture not the process of bringing together two fully constituted spaces as a connection between an internal and an external. In line with this conjuncture, it will not connect a distinct Being with another distinct Being, but rather, as we discussed above with regards to the trace, rhizomorphic practice produces an interfusion of internal and external, where we might say that the possibility of distinction between what is external and internal becomes in repetition of that practice more and more evasive. We might say that *the rhizomorphic* in practice as interfusion *adds a number of traces to an economy of traces*. It, so to speak, connects a number of traces to the trace of the trace.

Hence, the rhizome as such an interfusion between spaces or plateaus, connects Being and Being, where the connecting rhizomorphic act that constitutes Being in accordance to an alternate historicity is *adding traces in the spaces in conjuncture*.

To put it into the language of Deleuze and Guattari, we might say that the rhizome *produces "lines"*.

An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections. There are no points or positions within a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. *There is only lines*. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 8, author's emphasis)

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To exemplify this otherness as a trace to an alternate space, we might call into mind Foucault's (1966) discussion of an ancient Chinese taxonomy in the preface to *The Order of Things*, where that otherness of the taxonomy in its strangeness yet seeming regularity constitutes a form of alternate historicity.

Yet, we prefer the conception of trace to lines, since we see the notion of lines to suggest a determinate connection between points. We see instead the rhizomic in globalisation to be associated with the ambiguity of the trace.

We shall, in our conception of this connection among spaces as globalisation, speak of repeated rhizomorphous practice as to produce vectors, where the vector points towards or rather connects to another space. We need to keep in mind that this pointing gesture is not determinate to a particular point in space, but rather allows for a play, we might say that the pointing gesture entails both a directionality towards a present and is absent. To put it differently, this vector allows for a play in traces; traces to discursive elements within an alternate space. Due to these traces to an alternate space, elements attain different identities in relation to nodal points of a particular discourse in that alternate space, or we might say with regard to the particular layers of that alternate space.

In addition to this movement that the multiplicity of a space produces, a rhizome as a connection between spaces produces an additional movement; it increases the possibility of play. We argue that this increase in the possibility of play as a surplus of traces in an economy of traces entails a surplus of experiences of antagonism. This surplus of experience of antagonism is in our understanding a result the surplus of traces, as this surplus of traces allows for an increase of possibilities for alternate subject positions by the subject. In this sense, globalisation can lead to a reactivation as it allows for an articulation of social antagonisms not only with regards to the historicity of a particular space, but also in accordance to alternate positions.

We might here think of the social antagonisms associated with multiculturalism, where, for example, conflicts between “foreign” groups or between “indigenous” and “foreign” groups can be seen to result out a surplus of traces and the possibility to articulate a particular subject position in accordance to an alternate historicity.

With this surplus of traces in mind we might ask ourselves: How does this permeabilisation affect the conditions for the articulation of Being and identity within the connected spaces?

## Rhizomic globalisation as a process of becoming

We argue, globalisation as produced in rhizomorphous practice results in repetition of that practice in an interfusion and connection among spaces. This establishment of connections does something to the vibrations and intensities in the connected spaces. It produces a becoming of spaces.

At the same time, something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming—wasp of the orchid and a becoming—orchid of the wasp. Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of the one

term and reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization even further. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 10)

The establishment of a connection between spaces through rhizomorphic practice, for example, in the form of education policy making that articulates ESD as an element in different spaces, can be seen to create interfusion between these two spaces as processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation.

While the introduction of ESD as a “foreign” concept into a particular space as part of its articulation can be interpreted to represent a form of deterritorialisation, this deterritorialisation as part of an articulation will in our understanding entail a reterritorialisation. This reterritorialisation can be understood as to emerge out of the need to provide a historicity to the element that is constituted by aligning the element to vectors that are characteristic to that space and layers of that space. This alignment will, however, not leave that space as a form of historicity as it were, but will produce a surplus and new intensities as part of the additional traces that the introduced element is associated with.

This “relay” of intensities, to use the words of Deleuze and Guattari, between spaces resulting out of the articulation of shared elements is what we call the becoming that globalisation entails. This becoming is in this sense the result of established *connection that produces new intensities in the connected spaces*. We argue that the relay of intensities, as part of the continued establishment of connections, will allow for a reactivation and political contestation, as deterritorialisation in our understanding requires the creation of the historicity of the deterritorialising element. To put it differently, the introduction of a deterritorialising element requires the reterritorialisation of this element that in its foreignness represents a form of anti-historicity that requires for articulation to insert it into a narrative of continuity as if it were already part of it.

In this sense, the element is not reactivated, where the “re-” would denote a supplementation or iteration in repetition, but rather a certain void as it lacks historicity. As such the element is political in the sense that it necessitates decision on what it should be; it can not have been sedimented.

With regards to this political aspect of the deterritorialising element, we might call this political aspect to represent the intensity or force characteristic to globalisation that produces dynamism and a proliferation of the political.

In this perspective on globalisation, we understand the new intensities associated with globalisation as to result out the creation of surplus in traces and fusion of historicities. These intensities are seen by us as to possibly result in a reactivation of moments, as the surplus of traces might promote the experience that things have already been different. We argue that such a

reactivation leads to a production of movement, where elements attain new vectors, based on the surplus of traces, in order for discursive practice to stabilise or reactivate other moments.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 11) contend that “[t]ransversal communication between different lines scramble the genealogical trees”. This comment by Deleuze and Guattari is interpreted by us to suggest that this transversal communication is rhizomorphic practice or what we call globalising articulation, that is to say, an articulation that establishes a connection among spaces provoking an entwinement of economies of traces. Such transversal connection is established in globalising articulation, as there is both a passive and an active aspect in spatialisation. In such a globalising articulation, the established relationships among discursive elements, for example, the element of ESD, create traces to *multiple spaces* and *multiple layers* within these spaces.

Such transversal forms of spatialisation allow for an interfusion and subsequent discovery of an alterity in spatiality as a form of anti- or alternative historicity. This discovery of alterity can allow for the reactivation of formations within space, allowing for a proliferation of social antagonisms within a space or among spaces to become articulated. As we already mentioned above, this proliferation of possible social antagonisms that can be articulated results out of the traces established to other spaces.

Repeated articulation and identification within connected spaces will constitute these acts of identification as subject positions and allow for a number of social antagonisms between these subject positions and other subject positions.

However, with regards to our earlier discussion of dislocation, we might point out that the deterritorialisation-provoked processes of reactivation in such globalising articulation also entails an imperative for hegemonic articulations to overcome this movement or fluidity and to re-stabilise. This is to say that any deterritorialisation of space, for example through the introduction of the element of ESD or the articulation of that element according to an alternate historicity, will provoke spatialisation to reterritorialise the elements that have been put into motion as part of deterritorialisation. However, this process of reterritorialisation will not undo the interfusion, that is to say, re-establish a distinctiveness of that space.

With regards to the proliferation of social antagonisms, we might say that the constitution of a surplus of subject positions will lead to a potential proliferation of social antagonisms. In the face of this proliferation, social groups will aim to reterritorialise and stabilise spaces by articulating equivalences among a number of subject positions. Hence, while globalisation is interpreted by us to entail the potential for a proliferation of social antagonism, we interpret these social antagonisms to call for reterritorialisation through hegemonic articulations.

As it will have become apparent, we utilise deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation of space as part of an analytical language that allows for an understanding of how globalisation, as resulting out of practice and as a process of becoming, is subverting the separability of those spaces. Thus, we see globalising articulation as entailing a *process of becoming that constitutes a change in Being or identity of the elements to be hegemonised*, but also to a certain extent representing a becoming that *changes the field of discursivity*.

## Discursive Forms of Rhizomic Globalisation through Education Policy Making

In the following, we will discuss how the above theoretical conception of rhizomic globalisation can be seen to be conceived in pragmatic terms, that is, how it can be conceived in concrete practical aspects of articulation such as education policy making. With this ambition in mind, this section can be seen to be a digression that provides an exemplification of rhizomic globalisation, as it is conceived above, as well as to provide an introduction to the conception of globalisation that has been provided in Papers I and II.

As we will hopefully have made clear by now, our conception of rhizomic globalisation argues that globalisation is the result of repeated globalising articulation or what we have labelled “rhizomorphous practice”. We see globalisation not as an *a priori*, but as the *result* of discursive practice. In this sense, globalisation does not determine practice or spaces.

For education, this means that every articulation of education or elements and concepts that are put into a relation to education can also *potentially* be a practice of globalisation. What we mean by this potentiality is that a globalising character of an articulation is not determinable. Instead, we might say that an articulation seemingly connects spaces by articulating a particular element or concept, once we *a posteriori* to that articulation compare or put into relation articulations and seeming regularities within them.<sup>176</sup>

This potentiality of globalisation must be understood against the background of our earlier comments on context. With regards to context we put forward that meaning does not determine usage and purpose in action, and we claimed that neither context, nor practice fully determine each other. As we highlighted in our appeal to the Derridian concept of *différance* and writing, this moment of full determination never arrives, since writing involves a deferral and active dimension. Hence, in the analysis of a particular articulation and its traces, we might conclude that this articulation can resemble a practice of globalisation, once we engage in a mapping of traces. We have to

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<sup>176</sup> “Seemingly” refers here to our earlier differentiation between following a rule and *a posteriori* identification of regularity as a practice of interpretation.

remember there is always the trace of the trace. Thus, this mapping represents partially an act of interpretation, such as the identification of regularity or the seeming following of a rule.

It is with this non-determinable aspect of writing in mind that we approach the issue of globalisation and that allows for a conception of the political in globalisation. In this conception of globalisation, we deliberately eradicate the notion of levels or elevated positions. Thus, rhizomic globalisation is for us neither determination from above, nor from below. Instead, globalisation is a process of becoming and interfusion that connects spaces and that includes reterritorialisation as entailing decisions. Hence, we do not conceive policy making to have a privileged or primary position within our conception of globalisation of education, as this privilege would be provided by an elevated or synthesising level. At this point in our argumentation we shall raise the question: How can we then conceive of this permeabilisation between different forms of life or spaces to take place in the context of education policy making?

In order to approach an answer to this question, we come back to our observation that education policy as political practice is conceived to engage in the constitution of the social, that is to say, in spatialisation. Hence, it is as political practice that education policy making engages in the ordering of space in relation to a number of particular centres or nodal points.

Let us imagine a policy concept that education policy makers come up with in order to delineate what the goal for education development in their national education system should be. Let us say that this policy concept is ESD and education policy-makers state that in order to assure societal stability, future social and economic development it is of utmost importance to incorporate sustainable development into the curriculum and to mainstream it into all levels of education. ESD becomes in our scenario a hot topic in education, politics and the media, and a number of experts define it in a number of different ways. Some experts say that the integration of sustainable development will allow students, and as a result society, to come to terms with the negative effects of a situation or an event through strong entrepreneurial spirit, allowing them to overcome economic crises through innovative thinking and strong mathematical skills. Other experts in contrast state that sustainable development is a prerequisite for providing a value base for equal access to social services and equal possibilities for full participation in education and thereby strengthening the resilience of society to the dreadful impacts of potential future events by appealing to social equality.

As we can see in our (to some) familiar scenario, different groups will be trying to provide hegemonic articulations of ESD through the establishment of relations to central signifiers. Over time, these hegemonic articulations will allow for the expansion of influence and seeming stability of the meaning of these signifiers. The relative coherence of these groups will depend on their identification with central demands, in relation to which they will give

meaning to these strategic elements. In the case of our first group of experts, we might say that they are articulating an economic discourse, with a potential nodal point of economic growth. Sustainable development, as a floating element, will according to our perspective be contested by a number of different groups, resulting in a multiplicity of identities of sustainable development that it will attain as temporary results out of its articulation by different groups and in relation to different nodal points. We could say that these articulations provide the element of sustainable development and ESD with a certain vector through repeated articulation and establishment of associations with particular nodal points.

Thus, in these articulations, traces are established in writing. These traces as point gestures to other elements are in their regularity constituting the meaning of sustainable development. While we might say that there is always a trace of the trace, our conception of relative stability introduced the concept of nodal points as substitute centres of that provide relative stability to the meaning of sustainable development. For example, traces to the particular nodal points of, for example, economic growth or social equality will provide sustainable development with different meanings, where it, on the one hand, is associated with economic growth and, on the other, with social equality. Over time and as a result of the continuous association of sustainable development with economic growth by other social groups these practices of spatialisation, to a certain extent, reduce the floating character of that element. Such sedimentation will, to a certain extent, erase the movement, thus sedimenting this element in space.

To come to the rhizomic character of globalisation that the articulation of a policy concept can be seen to produce, we have to change our scenario a bit in order to denote the global in *globalising* articulations. Let us say, education for sustainable development is not an exclusive domestic invention, but, for example, lent or appropriated from another country. We argue that, in this case, a rhizome as connection emerges.

Let us imagine that when education policy makers were looking for, or stumbled over, a suitable or otherwise attractive education policy concept that they could make central to their objectives for education development when they visited another country and consulted extensive literature and research on ESD from that country. This contact with ESD and sustainable development could then be characterised as a deterritorialisation of education policy making in the country or rather space that is to appropriate the education policy concept.

It could be seen to be a deterritorialisation in the way that the existing articulations of the policy concept in one country, we should instead speak of space, provide an impetus for the *re*-articulation of that policy concept in

another national context, that is to say another space.<sup>177</sup> The deterritorialisation in our scenario takes the form of an imposition of temporary meaning of that policy concept on subsequent re-articulation, or meaning making practice, of that policy concept. We might say that a connection between spaces has been established.

This connection as trace is not determinate in relation to a point, but rather connects elements among spaces. These elements, as we earlier stated, do not have an originary determined meaning, but are overdetermined or, to put it differently, have a symbolic character and are shared by different layers of space.

As with the example of pollination that Deleuze and Guattari provide, the re-articulation of a policy concept could be seen to be an imitation, as a reproduction of something pre-existing, where that pre-existing something is allocated in a different space and that reproduction could be seen to take place in a parallel space. We might, for example, assume that the articulation of ESD represents a re-articulation of something pre-existing as a copying of its meaning as it is produced in an other space. Yet, this would turn a blind eye to the “capture of code” or becoming that Deleuze and Guattari are seeing to take place in becoming and to be initiated by the simultaneous reterritorialisation. We argue, every re-articulation in a connected space will be characterised by iterability, as well as a capture of code that represents an articulation of ESD according to the spatial specifics in relation to which it is to be reterritorialised.

With regards to our conception of space, it becomes further apparent that the conception of reproduction would become problematic once we reconsider our conception of space as to relate to a certain historicity of practice that does not have to be congruent with the historicity of another space. It is here that we see the conception of a *parallelism* and *reproduction* collapse into a singular problematic that we addressed above, that is to say: How to conceive the *anti-historicity of the policy concept that is to be re-articulated?*

We are engaging in a conception of how articulation can be interpreted to engage in meaning making, where these seeming patterns in meaning making can be seen to be constitutive for different spaces. Anti-historicity in this sense stands for an alternate historicity and how globalising articulation can subvert that alterity.

We argue, the globalising moment in such articulations can *a posteriori* be interpreted to emerge in regularities that are characteristic for different spaces. Yet, as the conception of becoming is supposed to highlight this

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<sup>177</sup> “Re-articulation” refers in this section to the rearticulation of an education policy concept as an element within another space. This reference therefore assumes the perspective of a parallelism, where we theoretically differentiate between particular historicities that can be seen to be constitutive for a space.

seemingly shared regularity is not conceived as to relate to pure discursive forms in articulation, but instead the inseparability is interpreted to emerge in an entwinement of traces. To return to our discussion above, this entwinement of traces is the surplus of traces that connects spaces. In this entwinement of traces, *the supplementarity of the globalising articulation is seen as to engage in a permeabilisation or interfusion of historicities as part of the constitutive aspect of articulation.*

Thus, in our understanding, globalising articulations engage both in a subversion of the anti-historical, as well as a familiarisation of that alterity. It introduces a seeming a-regulative articulation and shows how this a-regularity has been regulative. Such a familiarisation with an alternate historicity or alternate discursivity, however, does not emerge in one and the same articulation. Familiarisation involves, in our understanding, repetition.

What the globalising articulation produces or introduces is not a present familiarity, but rather it is the creation of a trace that is both present and absent. In the creation of this trace to an alternate space, the trace is providing an opening for the possibility of repeating articulation to produce a familiarisation. The globalising moment in articulation is then part of the passive and active dimensions in writing as spacing, where we might say that the spacing entails or connects to an alterity that is to be brought into accord and that brings into accord as a form of deterritorialisation.

That is to say, the introduction of, for example, sustainable development requires an appropriation of that term according to the historicity existing in that space as a form of reterritorialisation. However, at the same time, this continuous appropriation will open up the possibility of a familiarisation with how sustainable development is articulated in other spaces as a form of deterritorialisation.

Earlier on, we specified that an element of discourse can be conceived as a vector that strives towards a particular identity that it attains in this differential relationship. However, we noted that this vector is rather a gesturing vector, that is to say, points towards, rather than determines the element in a relation to other elements and a nodal point.<sup>178</sup> In the case of an education policy concept, we can say that *any re-articulation will also provide the concept with a new vector and in their totality re-articulations will produce new vectors within a particular space and among spaces.*<sup>179</sup>

Yet, the vector as a form of trace is characterised by a presence and absence. The absence is due to its temporal dimension, that is to say, the active dimension in writing which entails a temporal deferral that is always still to come. Thus, discursive practice engages in the attempts at stabilising ele-

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<sup>178</sup> We might here also speak of an articulation that can be seen to be in line with particular discourses that will aim to stabilise the identity of that element.

<sup>179</sup> These lines will, however, be disrupted and affected by the effects of temporality, which is aimed to highlight that lines should not be conceived as linear or where the initial vector points to the final point of departure.

ments and can be seen to engage in a reduction of movement by reference to points of orientation.

However, when we come back to the issue to the “re”-articulation of a policy concept within another space, the policy concept alone should be understood as an element, while when it is analysed in relation to an articulation it provides vectors. These vectors are provided by the specific layers of a space. An element is not a determined point in space for us, but rather conceived as a shared point of a number of transparent layers of space, where this element attains an identity and becomes a point in relation to particular spaces and layers of these spaces. While the concept detached from any concrete set of relations, remains floating or indeterminable, a concept as a point attains a relative identity in relation to a particular space.

Thus, as a result of this learned ability to identify relative identities as part of regularities, we are capable of conceiving of a number of meanings in a policy concept detached from a particular articulation, or any other element of a discursive formation. That is to say, we can spontaneously produce connotations or associations that resemble some of the vectors that this element has in relation to a particular space. We might, with regards to these connections, speak of the possibility of producing a number of traces, yet these traces will never be determinate and finite; there is always the Other that evades articulation.

This ability to come up with traces is possible, since we, as members of a form of life, are usually aware of a number of instances of usages of that concept in varying language games of a language.

We could visualise this power of association and connotation in the form of an inversion of the transparency of the layers of space into opacity, where we could clearly identify the momentary position of a point with regards to a number of opaque layers. We might here speak of the tracing of the concept to particular configurations and differential relationships where, however, this tracing is never exclusive or exhaustive. This identification of *connotative vectors*, as familiarity with the use of a certain word or, in our case, policy concept is due to the familiarity with the use of language, which denotes the continuity or historicity of its use.

What this clarification of vectors and connotative vectors was intended to allow us to conceive of is how a familiarisation of spaces can be seen to take shape. We might argue that as part of continuous globalising articulation that creates connections among space these connections allow for a familiarisation with connotative vectors *among* spaces. The connecting element that is repeatedly articulated as part of a globalising articulation will allow for a mutual familiarisation with alternate connotative vectors, as they are characteristic for alternate spaces and layers of these spaces.

We argue that this conception allows us to move beyond a conception of globalisation as a form of parallelism and to reconceive the beyond of space as a discursive form of the interfusion of spaces. We could say that these

above-mentioned connotative vectors stand in relationship to a particular space that a form of life represents. With regards to globalising articulation, we have to reconsider our earlier deliberations on interfusions of space and to reflect on the notion of rhizomic globalisation in order to denote how connotative vectors relate to interfusion.

As Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 10) point out with regards to the example of pollination, there are two becomings, a becoming of the wasp of the orchid and a becoming of the orchid of the wasp. Yet, Deleuze and Guattari (*ibid.*) highlight that the central aspect of the rhizome is that these two becomings interlink:

Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of the one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization even further.

We propose that, in the case of education policy, certain articulations of concepts can be seen to permeate the internality of space and to “interlink” or to create connections between spaces, allowing for a localised saturation of space by space at the point of connection.

This saturation of space by space can be conceived as a non-orientation at the point of connection, that is to say, where the connecting concept in articulation does not belong to a singular space. Thus, the articulation of that concept allows for traces to different spaces, where these traces that are partially present in repeated articulation allow for a familiarisation with alternate connotative vectors.

This is supposed to mean that, for example, in our case of ESD, the re-articulation of the policy concept within another space produces a connotative vector that burrows the distance or anti-historicity of the “origin” of the policy concept and allows for a localised interfusion with an alternate historicity. This interfusion of spaces is conceived to exist in relation to the repeated articulation of an element, in our example, the policy concept of ESD, where we might say that this element attains as part of globalising articulation additional traces, a surplus of connotative vectors. This surplus of connotative vectors will become established through the repeated articulation of ESD, as these vectors are characteristic for a deterritorialising space. This means that the re-articulation, we might refer here to a reterritorialisation or re-alignment of the policy concept to existing discursive formations, to a certain extent, *leaves an opening for an familiarisation with alternative vectors that give meaning to the policy concept in other spaces.*

In our scenario of ESD, a provincial education decision-maker might, for example, during his local adaptation and implementation, as a form of reterritorialisation of ESD, become aware of the associations that are made with that concept in another country and study national guidelines from that coun-

try. In the following re-articulations of what ESD is, the decision-maker articulates regularities that are seemingly in line with articulations of ESD in that other space from which the decision-maker consulted national guidelines. We might say that these articulations of ESD produce a surplus of connotative vectors and traces as part of a familiarisation between spaces. The policy concept in this example produces a saturation among connected spaces or, we might say, the elimination of distance between spaces.

We argue this connection should not be understood as being allowed by translation, where the translation would be something as a conversion of something external to something internal. As we interpret it, this would leave us with a parallelism, where the external and internal would remain intact, cohesive, non-threatened and non-deterritorialised entities.

Instead, we underline that the becoming that the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation produce does something to both spaces and leads to that the distinctiveness of these spaces is transformed into a process of fusion.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 11) made in this context a noteworthy remark on the rhizomic: “[t]ransversal communications between different lines scramble the genealogical trees”. This remark is in the context of our argumentation used in order to denote how spaces as relating to historicity and continuity become *convergent*, they produce *a fusion only at the point of contact*. As it becomes apparent, based on the appeal to a primacy of pragmatics and contingency, these convergences are not a necessity, but are dependent on continuous articulation.

## Globalisation in Retrospect

The introduced conception of rhizomic globalisation aims to provide a conception of globalisation that allows us to move beyond a focus on exchanges or interactions among otherwise coherent and closed systems or spaces. The ambition has been to provide entry points for conceiving these processes of interfusion between spaces and the permeabilisation between the internal and the external of space.

Further, the ambition has been to specify these conceptions of globalisation in order to depict how rhizomic globalisation can be seen to emerge in education policy making as discursive practice. This attempt at trying to provide a bridge from theoretical constitution to the terminology of discourse analysis is, thus, concerned with allowing for an analysis of concrete articulations of education and to conceive of how they can be seen to relate to globalisation, as carried out in Paper II.

In its pragmatic dimension, globalisation is understood to be a connection between the different and interfusion of the different, where difference, as difference of partial identities, is provided in relation to historicity of a par-

ticular form of life or, we might say, space. What the practice of articulation of “foreign” education policy concepts can then be seen to produce is a connection among spaces, where the very anti-historicity of the foreign has a disruptive effect. This anti-history of education policy concepts necessitates a realignment of the foreign Being of the policy concept with the domestic in articulation as reterritorialisation.

Through this focus on spatialisation instead of space, we see the parallelism between foreign and domestic or external and internal to be transgressed as part of what we labelled globalising articulation. What this transgression suggests is that the spatialisation that globalising articulation produces results in repeated globalising articulation in the constitution of a tangent space. In this tangent space, the orientation of points as vectors becomes non-orientable. Further, in tangent space, points cannot any longer be exclusively associated with a particular space. We might with regards to tangent space think of a Möbius strip, where we might proceed to the “other” side without traversing any border or edges.

The ambition with the characterisation of globalisation as rhizomic was to provide an alternative entry point for understanding globalisation in relation to the historicity of space. We argue that this understanding of space that highlights the constitutive moment of spatialisation does not *a priori* limit analysis of education policy to territorial restrictions that are confining the object of study at a theoretical level to the particularity of space.

With regards to this contingency of spatialisation as a premise for the constitution of space, the characterisation of globalisation aimed to break with the notion of globalisation as a singular that operates behind diverse forms of appearance.<sup>180</sup> What we have to tried to break with is a conception of globalisation that appeals to a notion of systematic unity and we might here partially agree with Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 8f) who underline that: “[u]nity always operates in an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered (overcoding)”. As with our conception of antagonism, we abuse the clarification of Deleuze and Guattari to suggest that the unity is mythical, rather than a primary ontological condition provided by a positivity. As a myth, it operates in an empty dimension.

As a consequence of our understanding of globalisation, it is then not towards a unity or shared characteristic that we turn, but to the contingent and the political in articulation of shared education policy concepts. This sharing is seen by us to lead to the permeation of spaces, while the contingent highlights that the articulation of policy concepts such as ESD will remain political aiming to give it particular meanings.

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<sup>180</sup> An example for such a common approach to globalisation can be found in the conception of globalisation as an isomorphism (Meyer *et al.*, 1997), where we confine the characteristics of one phenomenon to be true to another related phenomenon.

With regards to this permeation of spaces, our conception of globalisation can be characterised as a perspective on globalisation that embraces mutation. Globalisation is then in our conception not a process of adaptation of, for example, a number of national education systems and historical configurations to a stable global environment. Instead, we see globalisation as a process defined by political spatialisations and as being in a constant fluctuation and to be characterised by conflicts and a number of becomings and directions of movement. This flux, becoming and multiplicity of directional movement can, in our understanding, not be reduced to a singularity underlying them all.

Thus, this permeation of space by space is not interpreted to produce unity or a mooring at ultimate anchor points or in relation to a global environment. Instead, we see permeation of space by space to produce movement, to uproot and to produce possibility for change in sedimented space. This production of movement is, in our understanding, providing conditions for the re-emergence of the political and a proliferation of social antagonisms. These movements are, based on the contingency of spatialisations, not seen to be determined by an underlying structural, global movement. Instead, we see movements to be produced by the myriad of practices of spatialisation, which, as such, are political.

This section aimed to highlight that in the context of constant change the question of the ultimate Being or meaning of a policy concept such as ESD, as it would be provided by the global, becomes meaningless. Instead, our perspective that focuses on spatialisation highlights that it will of key importance to discuss the meaning of travelling education policy concepts with particular articulations and particular spaces in mind. As the political in spatialisations will result in a diversity of articulations of these concepts, these concepts will be characterised by conflicts and contestations. Such political spatialisations will be creating parallel and incommensurable layers of space and, due to variation in the historicity of practice, incongruous spaces.

However, such attempts to stabilise meaning and to provide reference points will not be permanent. They will always be exposed to the Event and potential reactivation. Hence, the sedimentation of space is due to the intervening effects of temporality threatened by a constant and contingent flux. As a result, the becoming of education policy concepts is characterised by historic trajectories, which, yet do not determine the processes of their becoming.

# Epilogue

The world is still a weird place, despite my efforts to make clear and perfect sense to it.

Hunter S. Thompson

These final remarks on the content of this first book of the dissertation and its relation to the second book that are to follow should not be understood as a true summary or a synthesis of the different sections. It is suggested that, if the reader so wants, this first book aims to provide a number of perspectives on the relationship between education and society. The different sections can be seen to approach that relationship from different angles, where these sections as a whole do not claim to exhaust the view that can be provided, nor claim to have fixed the relation under scrutiny. Thus, the different sections aim to put into play different figures of reasoning and, thereby, to conceive of the relationship between education and society in various ways that open up a number of ways to conceive of education and society. Here, the objective has been to allow for different perspectives on the object of knowledge and, thereby, to allow for a reconception of the object of study.

Some readers might put forward that the lines of argumentation have drifted away or circumvented the discussion of the implications of this reasoning for education. We might instead put forward that, in our focus on the beyond and its role for Being, we have put into view the distance or proximity of education to that what is supposed to be external to it. Hence, we would like to put forward that, through the putting into perspective of this discussed beyond the different sections can be seen to have aimed to render the perspective on education flat. By this flatness we mean that we do not extract *a priori* aspects from social life from our conception of education and its relation to social life, or, as we used to call it, society. To recall, Dewey's conception of the consequences of evolutionary theory and the notion of change can be seen to provide an argument for such a flattening of our perspective on education.

The claim to formulate *a priori* the legislative constitution of the universe is by its nature a claim that may lead to elaborate dialectical developments. But it is also one that removes these very conclusions from subjection to experi-

mental test, for, by definition, these results make no differences in the detailed course of events. (Dewey, 1910, p. 17f)

To reformulate Dewey's observation, if we would *a priori* limit what education is by demarcating its external, we would reduce that conception to a focus on the *Being* of, for example, ESD. However, what the flattening and the theoretical intervention in the first book aimed to highlight was a shift from a focus on Being as determinable, spatial configuration to a focus on the becoming of education. In a similar, yet different, fashion to Dewey, the flattening of our perspective on education aims to allow for approaching its relation to *life*. In this sense of education's affinity with life, we see education in a Heideggerian fashion as characterised by its *Weltung* [Worlding].

In einer Umwelt lebend, bedeutet es mir überall und immer, es ist alles welt-haft, "es weltet", was nicht zusammenfällt mit dem es "wertet". (Heidegger, 1999b, p. 73)

In this sense of education as *weltend*, education's Being can be seen to be caught up in the myriad of constant changes and differences of a mutating environment. As Heidegger is interpreted to highlight, this worlding aspect does not coincide with its normative position, which we might say results out of a secondary reduction of the worlding aspects to a definite form of Being in discursive practice. The initial question of the Being of ESD can from a Heideggerian perspective be seen to erase or annihilate the living character of education and is reduced to Being from an indefinite experience of the world.

Halten wir daneben das Frageerlebnis. Darin finde ich mich selbst nicht vor. Das Etwas überhaupt, nachdessen "es geben" gefragt ist, weltet nicht. Das Welthafte ist hier ausgelöscht, fassen wir jedes mögliche als Etwas überhaupt. (Heidegger, 1999b, p. 73)

Thus, what the so-called flattening of our perspective on education can be seen to have aimed to highlight was that education's relation to the social is not determinable in the sense that the social is characterised by life. In this sense of a social in movement, the dynamics of life initiate a constant becoming of elements of the social, including education. Hence, the initial focus on the question of the Being of ESD can be seen to have been confronted with an acknowledgment of its constant becoming due to its "worldly" character. In order to approach this worldly character, the ambition has been to conceive the relation of education and society in the context of the Event, as a form of radical temporality.

To return to Dewey's quote above, the Event in our understanding is troublesome and ruptures the apparent "course of events", highlighting the

play of events and how they unfold in their seeming contingency. Hence, the acknowledgment of the Event highlighted in our conception the contingency of the becoming of the social and education.

This acknowledgment of the Event has in the theoretical intervention taken the form of the conception of antagonism as a metaphor for a form of negativity that prevents the social from closure and hence transforms the relation between education and society into a dynamic relationship. Secondly, the Event has also been conceived in the form of rhizomic globalisation, where the experience of an alternative constitution of space provoked by the Event produces an interfusion among alternate spaces. As mentioned, this acknowledgment of the Event has had the ambition of providing an alternative conception of the relationship of education and society. This alternative conception was focused on the acknowledgment of the primacy of the political moment in the constitution of the Being of education and society. In this sense, the conception moved beyond the notion of society as a grounding instance for education and, instead, reversed this figure by highlighting how antagonistic attempts at giving direction to education and society become political once they are not determined by underlying social structures.

The constant return to the notion of play and absence of determination that highlighted the political relates in our understanding to the possibility of freedom in education. It is with this notion of freedom in mind that we might say that the reconception of the relation between education and society has been very conventional in the sense that it adheres to the principles of freedom as central to the Enlightenment. What we want to highlight is that in the sense of German Enlightenment, Enlightenment can be seen to appeal to a feeling of the underlying freedom of the subject from the determining instance of the structure. In this sense, our reconception is antithetical to the notion of socialisation, where we might see education as primarily reproducing society. This aspect of freedom has been at play in the initial discussion of the conception of determination in the last instance and appeals to relative autonomy in the conception of the state. In the context of that prior discussion, we might ask ourselves: To what extent is there a possibility of freedom in conceptions of education that hold that there is a determinable underlying reality, such as society in its different conceptions? Would not society in the end or in the last instance determine me as a subject and result in that education produces that which has already been my real self?

We therefore say that to allow for a conception of freedom in education requires an acknowledgment of the disturbance of Being. This disturbance of Being excludes the possibility of true or pure determination of Being. We return in this line or reasoning to our argument made by the use of Derrida, who can be seen to problematise the point of determination of Being by challenging that Being with the notion of Event.

This self-difference, this *difference to self* (*à soi*) and not simply *with self*, makes life hard if not impossible for historical science. But inversely, would there be any history, would anything ever *happen*, without the principle of disturbance? Would there ever be any event without this disturbance of the principality? (Derrida, 1997, p. 89, original emphasis)

With Derrida, we argue that the event as the moment of change—when something truly is happening—requires a notion of the disturbance of principality. In the context of our discussion of the first section, we argue that the Event can *always* happen, is happening and is a constant. We might say the Event is what we might call the source of life. Would in the notion of equilibrium of society, or society as reality, anything truly happen? And if this would be the case, what would be the meaning of education in such a society? Would education not solely attain *meaning* in relation to that rare event, where the event introduces a radically new principality? To put it differently, if society is determined and determines me as an individual or subject, what is the role of education? Is it to install reason into the unreasonable subject as fostering the ability to act in accordance to and understand what I have already been? If this is the case, what is the guarantee that there has not been another rare event that I am not yet aware of and that has already changed my Being as a member of society?

We further argue with Dewey that the Event can always challenge the perceived Being, yet argue against Dewey that the Event might alter the course of events, as the Event entails a change of course or, rather, shows that it has been a different and multiple courses altogether. We argue that the acknowledgment of the Event, that is the acknowledgment of things happening all the *time*, highlights the contingency of becoming. If this contingency as the disturbance of principality are the conditions of my Being, these conditions cannot determine me. With this reasoning in mind, we argue that the meaning of education can be interpreted to appeal to that which is *not* the point of departure, but rather that which is to be constituted, that is, society as a determined configuration of social relations. However, education will always be overdetermined in the sense that it is caught up in social antagonisms within a particular social, as well as being shaped by different social configurations that we have labelled spaces. In this sense, education will be shaped by particular principalities—discourses (within a space) and discursive formations (among spaces) —but also *always* be characterised by disturbances of these principles. To put it bluntly, as a result of these disturbances education can never realise that which it attempts to accomplish, to constitute society as a form of reasonable and coherent form of social relations.

In the following, we will explore some of the potential consequences for education along these lines of reasoning.

## Political Education for Society

We might say that the point of departure of this dissertation is that education is political. It is political for what it is, what is done in its name and what it is to realise is not determined by society. Earlier curriculum theory can be interpreted to have introduced a bracket notion of political education in its conception of relative autonomy of the state. In this conception, the political moment can be seen to be confined to the level of state, where different societal groups struggle for education as a means of changing social relations and, in the end, society. However, as we argued, this bracketed notion of political education can be seen to collapse into an a-political understanding of education, as the political is in the last instance “relative” to determined configurations outside the level of state. The a-political conception of education emerges once we keep in mind that the economy in the last instance determines ideological struggles. Thus, it remains to a certain extent unclear to what extent the struggle for consensus at the level of state is political and not in the end determined by economic structures that *a priori* determine who has the ability to dominate. With regards to consensus, we argue that consensus is not capable of erasing antagonism and thereby to extract the political from education.

## Normative Education that Remains Political

Therefore, we counter ordained normativity of pragmatist curriculum theory (Östman, 1995) with a focus on the political, a political that highlights that there is no ultimate grounding consensus on what is desirable in society as an expression of an inclusive whole. This is not to deny the role of the normative in education, but we argue this normativity will be relative to particular demands and not stand in relation an inclusive consensus that society as a whole shares. We argue that all apparent consensus that claims to stand in for a society’s value basis has a remainder. An engagement with that remainder, for example, in the form of paradoxes in consensus, is interpreted to account for the prevalence of social antagonisms that have been claimed to be overcome by consensus. As the utilisation of the concept of empty signifier in the papers included in the second book shows, consensus or the meaning of concepts that consensus appeals to can be seen to have been emptied in order to hide social antagonisms that exist in education and the social. To put it differently, an emptying of consensus is seen to be required in order to subdue the potential for an emergence of the political in education in the form of an experience of how different demands and subject positions put forward as compatible in consensus are incompatible.

## Education as Political Beyond Policy

Education is in this sense not only political with regards to certain levels, but, according to the perspective put forward, the political aspects of education can always and everywhere emerge. While the first book has in many instances focused on education policy and policy concepts, the conception of education as political that is appealed to in this focus on education policy can be seen to include all forms of practices associated with education or articulating education. As Östman (1995) highlighted, social actors at every level are faced with the need to make decisions. It is in our provided sense of decision that the political emerges once the articulation and enactment of education is not perceived as given, but where instead actors are faced with the need to decide upon a number of valid ways to proceed. This includes policy-makers articulating policy, teachers choosing content, students engaging in classroom interactions. Their actions are not seen by us as determined, as they might reach an impasse and have to overcome it as subjects. It is this encounter of the political that can be seen to render our conception of education flat. In this sense, the encounter of the political shows that there is not a privileged or authoritative level that is capable to determine what is taking place at a “lower” or subjected level. We might say that the encounter of the political in education highlights that, as Dewey said, education is life.

## Education and the Diverse We

In this understanding of education as life, we reject the functionalist perspective that we have ascribed to Dewey. The encounter of the political in education is antithetical to the discovery of a “we” that is underlying common purpose or society. The encounter of the political instead shows that I am already different-to-self, that is, the emergence of me, in the sense of my subjectivity, is provoked by the encounter that I have to decide which particular “we” I have to identify with through my decision and thereby to constitute my Being as part of that inclusive, yet also exclusive act of identification. To put it differently, the encounter of the political in education highlights, in our understanding, the impossibility of common sense or consensus to act as foundations for action that is all inclusive and regulative as the act of decision is contingent and exclusive. To recall, Dewey’s functionalist notion of society highlights how education and communication in education are about producing and reinforcing community, which requires consensus.

The parts of a machine work with a maximum of cooperativeness for a common result, but they do not form a community. If, however, they were all cognizant of the common end and all interested in it so that they regulated their specific activity in view of it, then they would form a community. But

this would involve communication. Each would have to know what the other was about and would have to have some way of keeping the other informed as to his own purpose and progress. Consensus demands communication. (Dewey, 1916, p. 9)

Let us consider that a teacher who is fully following the curriculum or education policy is faced by an encounter that there are paradox objectives set in the curriculum or policy. Would this moment of the encounter of a paradox and the need to make a decision on how to proceed not highlight that there has not been a singular purpose with education? We argue that the encounter of the political in education highlights that education cannot produce an all-inclusive “We”, as this “We” requires, as Dewey can be seen to highlight, communication. This communicatively constituted “We” negotiates a number of different “We”, yet these “We” cannot be synthesised into an all-inclusive we, since the act of negotiation needs to exclude something that has been put forward as a potential “We”. We argue that the functionality of the “We” that is communicatively constituted is tautological and relative to the act of articulation. What we mean by this is that, for example, the articulation of a “we” that appeals to gender equality is relative to the demand and where the articulation of that demand allows momentarily for the constitution of that “we”. In the example of the teacher that faces a paradox in the objectives of the curriculum, his encounter with the paradox is interpreted to highlight that the curriculum was apparently not capable of articulating a consensus, as it would have to articulate an inclusive purpose. The decision that the teacher will have to take will realise a particular “we”, one that is relative to the particular objectives set for education that he chose to include in his teaching.

## The Need of an Empty Consensus in Education

Consensus on education aims in our perspective to subdue the apparent particularity of the purposes set for social development and to constitute it as the common purpose of society. In this understanding, common purpose is not a point of departure but that which is to be created in the face of apparent social antagonisms. Social antagonisms will conceive common purpose differently, that is in relation to the particular perspectives on how it is and what needs to be done. The role of consensus in education can be seen to subdue or to postpone social antagonism by highlighting something that is shared.

However, the potential of the political moment, which is in our understanding due to antagonism, is seen to render social antagonism as constitutive for education. The result is that education in this perspective cannot produce or reproduce society as an outcome. This does not eliminate society

as something that education tries to constitute. However, social antagonisms will in this understanding be the limit for attempts to constitute society in and through education. While education cannot overcome this limit of social antagonism politically, strategic practices will aim to push social antagonisms to the limit in order to appeal to an inclusive notion of a “We” as possible. The creation of an inclusive “We” will require an emptying of that “We”.

This creation of a consensus will, as we argue, require an emptying of that what is shared, as appeals to concepts with a particular meaning, such as gender equality, clearly highlight that they stand for a particular demand. The particularity of that what is called for in education acknowledges the traces of antagonism. To reformulate this argument, the particularity of a demand that allows for the construction of a “We” becomes possible only to the extent that it is exclusive. The premise for the constitution of an inclusive identity is, in our understanding, the articulation of an other. To reformulate again, we argued that the establishment of an identity, that is, a “We”, relies upon the articulation of a difference. This difference becomes constitutive for that “We” and permeates that border to the internal as it is a prerequisite for its Being. As this difference will always be the condition for the constitution of a collective identity, it will be impossible for education to relate to society in a singular and inclusive way. This impossibility of singular determination is understood by us to be the result of the traces of antagonism.

The remainder or trace of antagonism that exists in the relation between education and society haunts the normative dimension of education as it, amongst others, has been appealed to by pragmatists in education research.

For curriculum theory research there are three consequences that can be concluded out of the neopragmatic perspective. The first consequence is a shift of basis for valuation of research to the existing practices of society and thereby to evade the effects of the either/or-trap; the trap which leads to the responsibility is withheld from humans to judge for themselves the suitability of a practice and thereby also their responsibility for the continuity of society’s forming [*utforming*]. By ordaining normativity—objectives that are agreed upon and desirable within society—, it shall constitute the basis for judging research, which entails that curriculum theoretical research should address the normative dimension of education [*undervisning*], that is to say education’s fostering [*fostrande*] character. It is impossible to shift the basis for evaluation to societal consensus/agreement [*överenskommelser*], unless research addresses such aspects that relate exactly to the societal [*samhälleliga*]; it has to exist a dimension of comparability between results of research and the basis for judgment. (Östman, 1995, p. 78, author’s translation)

We might argue against Östman (1995) that the normative dimension will always be limited by antagonism. To put it differently, as the condition of any agreement is disagreement, society as an all-inclusive whole cannot be

the basis for agreement as this whole would have to entail disagreement, which, in turn, would *limit* the collective identity. Antagonism as the limit of collective identity renders in our reasoning society as a basis for judgment invalid.

## Education and Play

The reader might now preclude the validity of our raised objections against a foundational normativity, keeping in mind that such a questioning would lapse into moral chaos, as this danger is framed by Östman (1995) in his appeal to Descartes.

This play can be conceived in a simplified fashion as humans being forced to take sides [*ta ställning*], as they are to live in a world where either everything is possibly both true/untrue or they are to live in a world where there are true narratives to be sided with, both with regards to the self and one's actions. This choice is a very much limited choice [*val*] and builds upon the formula created by Descartes: 'Either there is a support for our existence, a stable ground for our knowledge, or so can we not evade the forces of the dark that surround us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos' (Bernstein 1991, p. 39). (Östman, 1995, p. 77, author's translation)

To come back to our recurring theme of play, we might argue against the danger portrayed by Descartes and ask: If there is a very much limited choice, how come there is a play at all? How come humans are forced to take sides? How could this taking of sides be understood in terms of a decision, if the alternative is madness?

We argue that a notion of play has to acknowledge that play is prior to the presence or absence of Being, for example, presence of absence of reason. Thus, the primacy of play problematises the stability of the ground of our knowledge. We might argue that we as humans are thrown into our existence in this world [*geworfen sein*] and are condemned to take sides as life unfolds, that is, we are condemned to constitute meaning in a living world. The normative in education in this sense is not withheld, but requires the subject to take sides. The valuation of existing practices requires in this sense a taking sides, a normative identification with a particular "We" that might be anti-fascist or feminist. Curriculum research will, in this understanding of normativity, be able to depict a number of different bases for validation of education, but will not be able to reduce the plurality in relation to stable ground, that is will not be able to provide a basis for that normativity beyond an act of decision that is not grounded in madness and an act of identification. The differences, or rather the incommensurability, of these perspectives

is conceived to be the result of antagonism. This is to say, antagonism is the limit of normativity.

Due to antagonism there will be always a number of normative stances on education, where the perception of social antagonism shows the limit or the particularity of the stances that are pursued. What, for example, good education means will in our understanding be shown to be particular once it becomes apparent that inclusive explanations of good education entail paradoxes. These paradoxes in education are interpreted to result out of the incommensurability of perspectives on what education is and should bring about that are presented as equivalent to a comprehensive notion of how education should be. As a result of this perspective, we put forward that there will always be different normativities in education, where the subject is forced to take sides with a particular normativity once it explains what, for example, good or quality education represents.

## Education and Freedom

It is this non-determination of the decision, or the contingency of the act of taking sides, that is conceived as the source of the freedom of the subject. Freedom in this understanding is not the freedom of the subject, for example, teacher or student, to be what they already are, but a negative freedom that forces me to constitute myself through acts of identification with a particular normativity.

In this understanding of freedom and the subject that emerges in relation to that freedom, the subject in its being is not determined by society. That means that, for example, a subject is not reducible to a fixed position of social relations, such as to the position of student, teacher or policy-maker. Instead, the subject can articulate itself through a diversity of subject positions, which are, however, not seen as equivalent to the subject.

We might say that education exists due to the inability of society to determine my very Being. This line of argumentation might be reformulated to state that, since I cannot be reduced to a stable subject position, I am condemned to attempt to constitute that set of stable relations. However, this will according to our reasoning be an impossible task, as antagonism renders a true fixation impossible or at best a momentary resting point. For example, in the context of citizenship education, the learner, teacher or policy-maker will be condemned to take sides, that is, condemned to choose with what social positions they want to identify with and according to which they want to give meaning to education.

As part of this decision on what position to identify with, the subject might encounter existing social antagonisms between different available subject positions. For example, between the position as woman and the position as socialist, where in the act of citizenship education these two positions

can become exclusive in a particular case, as the pursuit of the equity of the working class might be counter to gender equality. In such a situation, the subject might experience the incompatibility of the two social positions with which it could identify, highlighting how the notion of citizenship becomes political in the sense that its meaning will radically differ if it is to be understood in terms of a feminist discourse and a socialist discourse.

This is also to illustrate that the negative freedom that we put forward is not free from normativity. On the contrary, the subject will be very much committed to identifying with a particular notion of citizenship that is to be realised in and through education. Yet, as we argued, this normative act of identification will be with a particular “We”, for example, that of the worker or feminist, that is to stand in for a comprehensive “We” as it is appealed to in the notion of citizenship.

## Education and Progress

To expand the argumentation around this relative normativity, progress in and through education will, in our understanding, be relative to particular normative demands. To return to Östman’s (1995, p. 78) approach to ordained normativity, the conception of antagonism will highlight that there is a diversity and incommensurability among agreements upon what is desirable within society. It is with regards to this diversity and incommensurability of the produced “We” that (e)valuation of education produces different narratives of progress. However, the diversity and incommensurability of these normative points of reference, for example, demands such as gender equality or environmental protection, will render comparability among such different notions of progress impossible. It is antagonism that will produce different notions of progress that are not reducible to an all-inclusive consensus or agreement as the basis for judgment.

In a second sense, the provided conception of a radical temporality will trouble these relative notions of progress, as they are haunted by mutation. What is meant by this is that the created normative perspectives and the “We” that are created around demands, such as environmental protection, in education are seen as caught up in and invest in the constitution of the social as structure in movement. Thus, while, for example, the demand of environmental protection might work as a nodal point, as a point that stands in for stability and fixture, its stabilising function can be seen to be caught up with the acts of articulation that refer back to it in order to give meaning to education and social progress. The articulation of such demands as nodal points for the constitution of a “We” prevent acts of meaning making from becoming psychotic; that is, they provide the necessary illusion of fixed meaning. We might say that they allow for a temporary halting of the slippage of the meaning of education and due to their articulation give the appearance of a

stable meaning. However, as we highlighted in our appeal to mutation and dynamism, there is a continuous synchronic difference-to-self, that in the end not even the signifiers commonly articulated as nodal points can escape. This synchronic difference is to highlight that even central demands that are to provide the continuity for a “We” are caught up in the dynamics of a changing formation that the social represents. The environmentalist “We” as it might be articulated by environmental educators is, therefore, seen as to continuously change, or to have already been different, as the acts of articulating that “We” around demands such as environmental protection in and through education will engage in an ordering of the social. Hence, while we might say that there is a relative progression towards a particular vision for education and society, for example, with regards to environmental protection, this relative progress will be a partial progress constituted by creating continuity among events.

With these two objections to progress in and through education in mind, our presented conception of the relation between education and the social will not allow for a teleological notion of progress, but instead appeals to a notion of progress that is constituted in order to allow for education to become meaningful. In this sense, the notion of progress appeals to the feeling of possibility of realising political demands and realisations of particular identities as part of these political investments. Yet, this feeling of progress that entails a notion of continuity can be seen to face in its limit the encounter of the political moment, which in the case of the event that shows that things, and as a consequence I, have already been different.

## Education and Globalisation

The conception of antagonism as a negativity that prevents the social from closure and fixation, is understood by us as to allow for an alternative conception of the relation between education, society and globalisation. Instead of remaining committed to appeals to levels and economism in order to understand the processes that have been ascribed to globalisation, the provided notions of antagonism, rhizome, space and temporality are seen to allow for an understanding of globalisation as political. As we have aimed to consistently underline in this first book, the conception of globalisation as political, in our understanding, is not the uncovering of structural arrangements that show how, for example, particular global economic formations determine national spaces and education within a diversity of national settings. Instead, the aim has been to allow for a conception of globalisation and the social that takes into account the dynamism with which social, as well as global processes can be seen to be associated. As we ascribed antagonism the role of a limit of every attempt at stabilising the social, we might also go so far as to say that antagonism undermines the stability of every global formation of

socials. The abandonment of the notion of society as a point of departure is seen by us as to allow for a conception of globalisation in relation to education that moves beyond the understanding of an interaction between fixed social systems. Hence, the exchanges that can be described as processes of globalisation in education are not understood by us in terms of exchanges where, so to speak, something exterior is incorporated into a particular national education system. Instead, we aimed to show by the conception of rhizomic globalisation and globalisation as connection how globalisation is seen to lead to an enmeshment of socials. Globalisation is seen as to result out of practice, yet where these practices shape the conditions for the possibility of practices.

As we try to embrace how education is shaped by life, we have to underline that the globalisation of education should not be understood as being limited to particular institutional exchanges. Phenomena, such as immigration, global cultural consumption, etc. highlight how globalisation can be seen to emerge in practices without being confined to or necessarily transmitted via particular levels, scapes or scales. Globalisation, as connection and rhizome, highlights how globalisation can shape education and specifically practices articulating education in every “corner” of space. Further, in the understanding of globalisation as connection and rhizome, globalisation can be seen to be political in the sense that it adds another layer of potential social antagonisms to the practices that aim to articulate education. As we highlighted in our earlier discussion, globalisation can be seen as a permeabilisation of space and, thereby, can be seen to add additional social antagonisms to a particular social. This process of addition is not necessarily to be understood as the emergence of “new” social antagonisms, but can in a number of instances be the becoming aware of already-existing antagonisms that have a historicity in other spaces. An example from education might be the discovery of ethnic and religious antagonisms in Swedish schools among students identifying with Assyrian or Kurdish cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In this example, the connection to existing social formations in Swedish education can be seen to add antagonistic layers to the potential articulation of identities such as “student with an immigrant background” or “being of Turkish heritage”. This additional layer is seen to be non-orientable in the sense that it is impossible to specify to what particular space the possible meaning “belongs” or “originates”. It is in this sense of production of non-orientable space that the alterity of space or the alterity of different forms of life produces a subversion of the internal, that is, the external can be shown to have already been internal. Here, we might return to the conception of frame and context within Swedish curriculum theory that was discussed earlier on and state that in our understanding of education, there is a constant subversion of the inside by the outside, or rather the collapse of the frame and context.

To return to the prologue and the discussion of the role of the beyond, we might state that the beyond has been conceived as a troubling beyond. It is troubling for the constitution of society in education to the extent that the beyond shows that society is constituted differently and that this difference is not purely external. Globalisation in our conception highlights that the articulation of education cannot keep the external at bay, but rather highlights how the articulation of education can have traces to that externality. These potential traces to an external, that is, shown to have been internal, allow for a political surplus that globalisation entails.

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## Book II

## Introduction to Book II

In the following, we will briefly discuss some of the findings of the papers of Book II, as they allow us to reflect on the theoretical and analytical framework that has been developed in Book I. As a continuation of our discussion in the prologue of Book I, we might state that the underlying analysis in Papers II and III can be seen to have approached the Being of ESD with the beyond in mind.

While we aimed in Book I to conceptualise the beyond, Papers I and II can be seen to analyse how this beyond relates to the concrete and articulated spaces that have been analysed. What we mean by this is that the analysis of Thai and Vietnamese policy making was not primarily interested in the specific alterity of historicity of these spaces, nor the specific reterritorialisation of ESD that this alternate historicity provoked, but rather aimed to conceive of how the Being of ESD relates to alterity of historicity *per se* and the effects of this alterity for policy making on ESD.

Hence, what we aimed to address in our analysis was how dissensus and the political relates to in the global and national Being of ESD. As Paper II in the discussion of the logic of aporia highlights, the global framework for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development argues for both a diversity of articulations of ESD and a need to address the root problems that necessitate an implementation of ESD. We argue, the analysis presented in Paper II and also with regards to the articulation of ESD in Vietnam in Paper III shows how the articulation of ESD acknowledges the political, as articulations of ESD acknowledges in diverse ways the plurality of demands that are put forward as part of conceptions progress, society and sustainable development. However, this political aspect can be seen to be kept at bay, as ESD and sustainable development draw on the notion of a state beyond the contemporary insufficiencies, where ESD and sustainable development as names for that state denote an equivalence among diverse political demands. As Paper II highlights the articulation of ESD entails aporiae or paradoxes, where on the one hand differences are acknowledged but these differences are at the same time presented as equivalent.

This aporia in such an articulation of ESD is interpreted to suggest that ESD attains the function of a myth. This means that the analysis of the global ESD framework in Paper II as well as the conception of ESD and sustainable development in Vietnam in Paper III highlight that policy making as a political act has to acknowledge antagonism that as a form of subverting

alterity cannot be presented as part of the articulation of an internal coherence, while ESD is precisely a name for a status beyond antagonism. The articulation of ESD claims so to say a coherent singular Being of ESD and sustainable development, which stands in contrast to the diversity of demands and potential social antagonisms that education policy is interpreted to entail and to articulate in the form of paradoxes.

The analysed articulations of ESD, as Papers II and III highlight, shows how ESD can be seen to represent a myth, in the sense, that it is portrayed to allow for particular and political positions on education and society to stand in for ESD as an imaginary universal order that is presented as a-political and beyond contestation. This a-political character of ESD can be seen to be articulated in the case of the depiction of ESD in the global framework for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (see Paper II), where ESD in its diversity of articulations (difference) is portrayed as addressing the underlying root problems that haunt societies (equivalence). In this mythical subsuming of diversity as part of the articulation of ESD, these root problems are presented as to be shared by and equivalent with all demands and perspectives of the articulations of ESD in diverse national contexts (spaces).

As part of this articulation of ESD as a myth, a diversity of demands are presented as organically linked in relation to this myth, for example, in the form of the themes that are associated with ESD in the Vietnamese National Action Plan on ESD, as discussed in Paper II. In this sense, gender equity, social equity, economic development, environmental protection, among other demands are articulated as to be linked with regards to a universal problematic and this creation of equivalences allows, as a result, each and every one of these demands to represent ESD.

We argue, such mythical articulations of ESD allow for the portrayal of a seeming consensus on or shared rationality associated with root problems, as this articulation of ESD as a myth permits the presentation of particular demands as equivalent with regards to ESD in relation to that which ESD opposes. We argue in the context of our conception of the political in Book I that myths such as ESD play an important role for hegemonic attempts at promoting political perspectives in education policy making. They represent in some ways the notion of consensus as a notion of that which is shared and that we have aimed to problematise in Book I. As a myth, ESD allows for a particular demand to stand in for that myth and, as a stand-in for that myth, the particular demand is conceived as beyond the political and as subsumed to a universal problematic.

It is this articulated equivalence of demands with regards to ESD that we have, in Papers I and II, labelled the emptying of the concept of ESD. Hence, we might say, ESD can be seen to represent an empty consensus. As a result of this emptying of ESD, any demand associated with ESD can stand in for achieving that universal state that ESD names. Such a mythical articulation has also been portrayed in Paper III with regards to how ESD and sustaina-

ble development are associated with a diverse set of demands in Vietnamese policy making. As is shown in the paper, economic growth is articulated frequently throughout the Vietnamese Agenda 21 and presented as a guarantor for progress towards sustainable development. This articulation can be interpreted as a hegemonic articulation of a social group, which we might label economists, that invests in ESD in order to hegemonise the social.

We might conclude, based on the analysis of Vietnamese policy making, as presented in Paper III, that ESD as such a myth allows for hegemonic articulations and thereby subverts environmentalist demands for environmental protection, as ESD allows for a presentation of economic growth as equivalent with environmental protection. With this conclusion in mind, we might partially agree with critiques of ESD that have criticised ESD as to play into the hands of neoliberalism, as we have portrayed these critiques in Papers I and III.

However, we need to keep in mind that ESD as a concept is not determined, for example, by a global force, such as neoliberal globalisation. As we argued in our conception of the social and elements within it in Book I, ESD is not in the last instance determined by a determinate structural relationship in its regularity, but ESD is articulated due to the impossibility of constituting hegemony as such a form of determinate structure. The mythical articulation of ESD as a form of hegemonic attempt in our understanding highlights that, for example, economist demands are not determining education and ESD in Vietnamese policy making.

To turn towards critics of ESD, we might say that, in order to increase the potential for political success and to assure that environmental protection becomes a central demand that is to be highlighted in education, environmentalists or environmental educationalists will have to invest in myths and in empty signifiers such as ESD. For example, based on the findings of Paper III, we argue with regards to Vietnam that hegemonic articulations of environmentalists that aim to promote the demand of environmental protection in education might consider articulating equivalences between the demand of environmental protection, social equality and national sovereignty, as well as portraying the demand of economic growth as that which is to be opposed. We argue, such an investment might be counter-hegemonic to attempts to privilege economic growth as to stand in for sustainable development. Further, such counter-hegemonic articulation can shape what ESD is and can denounce economic growth as leading to unsustainable development.

As we highlight in all three papers, ESD is not determined with regards to its meaning or Being. Hence, this allows for and requires attempts at hegemonic re-articulation in education policy making, where the articulation of ESD can disrupt the presented equivalence and a-political status of ESD and articulate a social antagonism between an environmental perspective and an economic perspective. What becomes apparent in such a possibility of politi-

cising ESD is that the Other, in our case the potential differences in the articulation of unsustainable developments, haunts the organically presented equivalences among demands that are to stand in for ESD.

What we mean by this is that, as the meaning of ESD hinges on the articulation of its other, the articulation of the other that unsustainable development represents is capable of redrawing the border between internal and external or, rather, between friend and enemy. We argue, it is this haunting aspect of the Other, where the Other cannot be fixed, that also results in that the analysed policy documents to a large extent avoid addressing what unsustainable development is. The analysis underlying Book II highlights that for the most part policy documents avoid articulating what unsustainable development is in concrete. We argue, that the danger with a concrete articulation of unsustainable development entails the risk of re-politicising sustainable development. That is to say, an articulation of unsustainable development might portray a particular perspective or demand as that is opposing sustainable development, where that particular perspective will put forward a particular demand and perspective that is to be realised.

The danger of such a hegemonic investments into sustainable development and ESD as a myth runs the risk of being as revealed as simply a particular hegemonic articulations, once it articulates unsustainable development in concrete terms.<sup>181</sup> The risk in such an articulation is that the target audience, which is to be convinced that a particular demand is to stand in for that myth, becomes aware that this articulation of ESD is exactly that, a hegemonic attempt of a particular social group investing in a myth and privileging their particular group's demands. The danger of articulation the other of ESD and sustainable development is hence the risk of becoming aware of the political character of that articulation.

We might say, the greater the equivalences that are to be articulated with regards to ESD, the greater the risk that an articulation of unsustainable development highlights the particularity of the investment into ESD in order to privilege certain demands. We argue that such an extreme emptying of ESD has been documented in Paper II with regards to the articulation of ESD as addressing root problems in the global framework for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. We argue, this total emptying of the meaning of unsustainable development is a requirement for the presentation of total equivalence of conceptions of ESD in all national attempts at policy formulation.

However, such articulations of total equivalences cannot hold the political at bay, as we demonstrate that it is possible to show the political aspect of articulated equivalences among particular demands that are subsumed to the myth of ESD in the form of paradoxes. With regards to such paradoxes, Paper II can be seen to highlight the political in sustainable development in the

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<sup>181</sup> "Concrete terms" refers here to elements closely associated with a particular discourse.

light of an assumed global equivalence of national articulations of ESD and SD, as a comparison of Vietnamese and Thai policy-making shows that market liberalisation is presented as both to lead to sustainable development and unsustainable development.

Hence, what Paper II is able to show is that even in the case of the total emptying of ESD of any meaning, as a result of presenting all national articulations of ESD, its political character can be seen to remain as an element or signifier claiming meaning or identity. The in Paper II identified paradox in the articulation of market liberalisation, we argue, highlights the incommensurability among articulations, thereby showing that they did not articulate a universal a-political problematic, but remain particular and hence political in the conceptions of that problematic.

We argue, ESD as an empty signifier or myth is not universalising or representing a universal order, but is only a name for it and, as a name, can always be politically contested. As an element or signifier, ESD is, as Book I argues, always characterised by iterability and difference-to-self, where we argue that a critique of ESD should not focus on its Being or meaning as an element or signifier, but should focus on concrete articulations of it. The normativity involved in such a critique is not given by what ESD is, as such a Being would be determined by the social or global, but instead we see this normativity to be based on a political act of articulation of ESD as an act of identification with particular demands and perspectives.

To return to the initial question of “What is ESD?” that we raised in the prologue of Book I, we will provide, based on our theoretical reflection in Book I and our empirical engagement with ESD in Book II, the answer: “ESD is what you want it to be”. Or to relate to our discussion of the epilogue: “ESD is what you want yourself to be”.

## The papers and their relation to the dissertation

The four sections of Book I aimed to provide a theoretical and analytical framework to substantiate and develop further the analytical outline of studies of globalisation and the politics of education that has been developed in the three papers that this dissertation includes. To put it differently, we might instead say, the first book of this dissertation aims to approach or allow for a conception of the object of knowledge, that is to say, how we conceive of the relation between education, the social, globalisation and the political. We might say, the different sections of Book I allow for a conception of the Being of policy concepts, such as ESD.

The papers, in particular Papers II and III, meanwhile, aim to approach the object of study, which is Education for Sustainable Development and its particular meanings within a particular space. The second book engages in an analysis of practices that aim to constitute the Being of ESD. As part of this analysis, the second book and the papers aim to show through concrete examples of policy making how global policy concepts, such as SD and ESD, attain diverse and occasionally conflicting meanings. Papers II and III, thereby, aim to put into action the theoretical framework that has been outlined in the first book of this dissertation and to explore the concrete relations and constellations among policy concepts dealing with SD and ESD in different spaces. The focus in Book II is, then, not to produce universal knowledge about what SD and ESD *are*, or which characteristics they share, but instead to investigate to what extent these concepts live a political life, in particular, national instances of educational policy making as instances of education politics. This means that the second book deals with concrete struggles and social antagonisms that shape the acts of constituting the meaning of ESD as a policy concept. The political character or the relevance of the policy concept of ESD is, therefore, not an *a priori* assumed necessity, but we see its relevance instead to be contingent and dependent upon the ways it is given meaning to by drawing on historic formations and traditions in policy making.

While Paper I focuses on outlining an analytical and theoretical framework, we might say that a language to talk about globalisation in the context of ESD, the two analytical papers (Papers II and III) are instead focusing on applying this framework in order to discern what logics can be seen to be at

work in concrete instances of national articulation of ESD. These logics concern, therefore, not only the *global*, but to an equal extent the national or *social* character of ESD. In general, these analyses in all three papers aim to highlight the political character of ESD, thereby contrasting perspectives in the field of EE and ESD research that highlight its determined character.

Further, Papers II and III present the findings of the analysis of the politics of ESD as they are seen to shape Vietnamese policy making. Both, papers (Papers II and III) highlight how ESD is politically contested and how an analysis of articulations of ESD in policy making emphasises how these articulations relate and partially aim to overcome existing social antagonisms.

## Paper I. Globalisation and Education for Sustainable Development: Emancipation from context and meaning

The paper tries to contribute to the critical debate on the ideological and globalising potential of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which exists in the research field of environmental education research, by arguing for a shift of focus on what ESD-assumed abilities and political tendencies are *in general* to a focus on the importance of making such claims *in relation to the particularity of the space* in which ESD is giving meaning to. The paper can be interpreted to introduce the consequences of the curriculum theoretical engagement of the first book of this dissertation to the debate on the political potential of ESD within the field of environmental education research.

Critics of ESD within the field of environmental education research underline that ESD is an ideological construct that plays into the hand of envisioned neo-liberal globalisation. At the same time, critics denounce its usefulness by pointing out the fuzziness, ambiguities and internal contradictions associated they see as characteristic of the concept. This paradox in the conception of ESD that on the one hand makes clear statements about what ESD is and on the other hand questions its validity due to a lack of clear definition is first problematised and then, in a second instance, deconstructed.

The paper argues for an alternative perspective on how education policy dealing with ESD can be seen to promote political ambitions and on the other hand be seen to contribute to globalisation. The argument that is made is that it is not the essence, core or alignment with broader structures of ESD that is political. Instead, it is the articulation of ESD in all its vagueness that is seen to represent its political potential. ESD's political dimension is therefore not understood in relation to its alignment with objective structures, global historical formations or modes of production, but, rather, it is argued that it is its multiple and displaced identity that allows for various social

groups' demands to be associated with it that is characteristic for the political dimension of education policy concepts.

In an effort to make this argument, two conceptualisations are provided, that of globalisation as connection and ESD's role as an empty signifier in the politics of education policy making. The concept of empty signifier is envisioned to provide a conceptualisation for how a vague and polysemic concept can allow for the creation of equivalences among a multitude of potentially antagonistic demands, thereby allowing for the expansion of certain political positions due to a demarcation of commonly shared enemies. The second concept of globalisation as connection, aims to show how education policy can, as a practice of establishing connections through the articulation of "foreign" concepts, be understood to be constitutive for globalisation, rather than an expression of global structures.

The overall ambition with the paper is to outline an alternative theoretical outlook in the field of environmental education research that allows for an empirical study of the processes that can be seen to feed into or interrupt the preservation of hegemony in a global setting.

## Paper II. Globalisation and Education for Sustainable Development: Exploring the global in motion

This paper is to a large extent an extension and empirical exploration of Paper I, where the theoretical outlook on globalisation and the political character on policy concepts are related to various concrete instances of policy making. The three spaces that are used in order to illuminate particular aspects of the movement of ESD within these spaces and its alignment to historic formations are the framework for the decade of education for sustainable development (DESD), and Vietnamese and Thai socio-economic, sustainability and education policy.

What the paper is able to show in these explorations is how similarities and differences are characteristic for the meaning that ESD attains in Vietnamese policy making and the DESD framework. This duality of similarity and difference, where differences become apparent when the deferred meaning of SD is traced to broader ambitions in socio-economic policy making in Vietnam and Thailand, is then conceptualised as a process of becoming where the introduction of the SD and ESD policy concepts, which entail certain articulations, are reterritorialised as part of the embedment of these policy concepts in the broader space that policy making orients itself.

In a second instance, the paper aims to illuminate how this process of becoming as part of global movement of ESD and SD can be seen to be characterised by three logics, namely the logic of imbrication, the logic of displacement and the logic of aporia, as they have been earlier specified by

Buenfil-Burgos (2009). The exploration of the comparison of articulations of ESD within Vietnamese and Thai policy making and the DESD framework exemplifies the first logic, the logic of imbrication. We might here also refer to associative power, where apparent congruencies of meaning of ESD dissolve into divergences once the relational meaning of the concept is set into relation to other policy concepts by the association to which ESD attains meaning.

A comparison of Thai and Vietnamese articulations of SD highlights how the reconfiguration of the meaning of SD in the two contexts is contingent, since the same concept can be articulated in contradictory ways.<sup>182</sup> The paper is, as a result, able to show how SD and consequently ESD become different things as part of processes of reterritorialisation. This observation is interpreted to show that the articulation of ESD and SD in national settings highlights a logic of displacement where the re-articulation is not determined.

The resulting multiplicity of ESD and SD, we might say its political character, is further interpreted as relating to the logic of aporia that can be seen to be at play, when policy makers refer to ESD in its singular and essential form. The aporia exit in the logical disjunction, where ESD is articulated in diverse ways and, at the same time, ESD is paradoxically used as a shared referent. The tension that is due to the incommensurability of these exemplified paradox uses is interpreted to be an expression of the impossibility to provide an objective reference point as source of positivity, that is to say, as a point that stabilises the meaning of ESD without falling back into particularity and, as a result, these uses fail to establish the incontestable objectivity that was aimed for.

In this sense, the paper exemplifies and explores how social antagonism represents the limit for the constitution of sustainable development as unifying vision for society and education. By exploring paradoxes with regards to particular spaces and among spaces the paper puts into action the notion of antagonism, temporality and space, as has been provided in the first book of this dissertation.

### Paper III: Status Quo, Hegemony and Education: On the politics of policy making for Education for Sustainable Development in Vietnam

The objective of the paper is to analyse how the meaning of ESD and SD as policy concepts is shaped by historically and culturally specific traditions and tensions between these traditions. In particular, the paper engages in a critical reflection on the conception of hegemony and how hegemony as a

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<sup>182</sup> Instead of “reconfiguration” we might also speak of a process of reterritorialisation.

form of stability in historic social formations relates to difference in Being as a premise for change and contestation.

The underlying study of policy discourses in Vietnam builds on a mapping of patterns in the establishment of relations, that is to say, meaning making, within Vietnamese policy documents on education, socio-economic development, environmental education, ESD and SD. The mapping emanates from a close reading in which signifying chains are investigated and mapped based on qualitative analytical software. Based on these tracings of deferred meanings, key signifiers and nodal points are discerned to which the meaning of policy concepts is partially deferred. The findings of the mapping show that four key discourses can be discerned within socio-economic policy, education policy and sustainability policy of Vietnam. The four main discourses are an economist, socialist, globalist and nationalist discourse. Key signifiers, such as socio-economic development or quality education attain different and conflicting meanings when they are articulated in relation to nodal points of the four discerned discourses. The mapping is able to show that existing tensions, which exist in the form of contradictions and aporiae, centre on a frontline between demands associated with the socialist/nationalist and the economist/globalist discourse configurations. Concepts, such as ESD and SD, become in the current reformation process that Vietnam has initiated beacons for envisioned harmonious amalgamation of the past and the future, which allows for the articulation of equivalence among conflicting demands.

By asking the question: “How should we understand the relationship between policy concepts, hegemonic discourses that articulate them and the status quo?” the paper addresses the issue of the possibility of determination. With regards to this question of determinability of the meaning of concepts of SD and ESD, the paper returns to the question of Being, as it is addressed in the first book of this dissertation. By empirically exploring paradoxes in Vietnamese policy making, the paper substantiates and exemplifies the issue of openness of the social. This openness is interpreted to suggest the limit of power and the limit of the possibility of determination. It is with regards to this limit that the paper makes a case for the presence of a space for politics.

## The Focus of the Analysis

While Papers I and II address the global and Paper II in particular addresses Thailand as a space in which ESD and sustainable development (SD) are articulated, the analytical focus of the analysis underlying this dissertation has been on Vietnam and national attempts at articulating ESD and SD.

In a processual perspective, we might say that this analytical focus is the result of an *a priori* engagement with policy making on ESD in the Mekong-region. Hence, the author at the beginning of the analysis focused on how member states of the UNESCO in the Mekong sub-region engaged in a process of policy making on ESD. As it became apparent, national attention to ESD was limited in most countries. In a number of cases, ESD was subordinated to other aspects of education policy making and broader policy objectives. In line with a focus on the realisation of a universalisation of access to basic education as part of the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All (EFA), goals in specific international education development assistance, as well as national foci of interest became primarily concerned with issues of access to education. This does not suggest that there was no genuine interest in other issues, such as the education system and curricular reform, but is rather to highlight that, as national policy making within the Mekong region is intertwined with international development assistance, the articulation of national objectives of education reform was to a high degree centred on issues of access. For national ESD implementation this meant that ESD was in a number of cases understood as integral to EFA efforts. In such an understanding, ESD was understood as a means for assuring access to quality education.

The two national cases of Vietnam and Thailand, as discussed in Paper II, are interpreted to differ from this EFA alignment. Thailand, with its in comparison to the Mekong-region high socio-economic standard, found itself in a different position than other countries in the region, as it was not reliant on international development assistance in order to finance its education system and reform thereof. We interpret this financial self-reliance, as well as a perceived culture of national self-sufficiency to have prevented ESD from becoming a central concept in education policy making. As Paper II highlights, policy making in Thailand highlights the concept of sufficiency as a national alternative to sustainable development. Consequently, ambitions with education reform prefer reference to sufficiency and a society of moderation to education for sustainable development. The absence of reference to SD and

ESD in Thai policy making was in this sense a criterion against a focus on Thailand as a case that the discourse analysis should focus upon.

Hence, Vietnam as a focus for the analysis was chosen due to its eagerness to integrate sustainable development as a central policy concept into overall socio-economic planning. An expression of this eagerness was the (for the region) early adoption of SD as a policy concept and issuing of the *Vietnam Agenda 21*. The *Vietnam Agenda 21*, or *Strategic Orientation for Sustainable Development in Vietnam* as it is also called, translates the core objectives of the *10-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan* into terms of sustainability.

This early commitment to the terminology of sustainability is one central criterion for the analytical focus on Vietnamese policy making. Another criterion is the result of an initial engagement with Vietnamese sustainability policy and ambitions to engage with ESD, where it became apparent that the sustainability terminology did not displace existing means of giving meaning to socio-economic development and education policy. The criterion of selection of Vietnam as a case consists in this sense in the appropriation and reterritorialisation of SD and ESD into the specific configuration of discourses that the analysis came to differentiate.

Vietnam became of interest to the analysis of how the political emerges in the articulation of ESD, as the social that it is seen to represent is interpreted to impregnate the concept with existing social antagonisms. This spatial specificity of this impregnation was deemed as a promising entry point for analysing how this national specificity highlights the political aspects of policy making on ESD. To put it differently, as ESD and SD was clearly related to broader political struggles in Vietnamese politics, this specificity was deemed as having the potential for highlighting how the Being of ESD is political, as it is to promote particular visions of society that stand in contrast to the universal status that is ascribed to it as part of these visions for national or global sustainable development.

## The Analysed Material

The discourse analysis that aimed to identify which discourses are drawn upon in order to give meaning to ESD in Vietnam was not restricted to ESD or environmental education policy, but extended to broader socio-economic policy.

This inclusion of socio-economic policy is based upon the articulated relationship between ESD policy and broader education policy, as well as socio-economic policy. What this means is that ESD policy, to be specific, the Vietnamese *National Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development*, states that its ambitions with regards to ESD have to be understood in relation to the objectives set by the overarching *Education Development Strategic Plan*. Hence, both the Vietnamese ESD policy and other policy documents articulate their hierarchical relationship to one another, where the principal point of departure for all policies is the overall 10-year *Socio-Economic Development Plan*.

It is in relation to this overall development plan that all other policies are positioned and where other policies, for example, those of the overall education development plan, portray their specific objectives as to feed into the in the core objectives set by the *Socio-Economic Development Plan*. Further, the specific policies are interpreted to assume traces to the socio-economic development plan once they articulate particular concepts without specifying them. This means that a particular policy document might articulate a policy concept without explaining it. The analytical or interpretative step of tracing the meaning of this concept leads, then, in most cases to the *Socio-Economic Development Plan*, where this concept is articulated more thoroughly and put into associative relation to overall demands that we see as providing relative meaning to these policy concepts.

To exemplify this relationship and connotative traces, the meaning of ESD in the *National Action Plan for ESD* is interpreted to be deferred to the *Vietnam Agenda 21*, which articulates SD more thoroughly. Hence, in order to understand the meaning of what ESD is supposed to be about, as a form of “education for” something, it becomes necessary to trace the meaning of that something to the *Vietnam Agenda 21*. However, as it is explicitly stated in the *Vietnam Agenda 21*, this policy document does not displace existing objectives, but translates the objectives set by the overall *Socio-Economic Development Plan* into terms of sustainability. As a result, ESD and SD attain meaning in relation to how meaning is given to socio-economic devel-

opment. It is this articulated relationship and hierarchical relationship between concepts that provided the basis for the selection of policy documents that were analysed.

In the following, we will provide a categorised overview of the analysed documents that were incorporated into the discourse analysis of Vietnamese policy making on ESD:

EE/ESD policy:

- Viet NatCom DESD (2010) National Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development of Vietnam
- MoET (2007) Decision approving the ‘Scheme on the Inclusion of Environmental Protection Contents into Program of the National Education System’ (No: 1263/QD-TTg)
- MoET (2005) Directive by the Minister of Education and Training ‘On strengthening education on environmental protection’ (No:002/2005/CT-BGD&DT)

SD policy:

- PM & Gov Viet (2004) The Strategic Orientation for Sustainable Development in Vietnam (Vietnam Agenda 21) (No: 153/2004/QD-TTg)

Education policy:

- MoET (2001) Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) for 2001-2010
- PM and MoET (2005) Approved Proposal of ‘Building learning society in the period 2005-2010’. (No: 112/2005/QD-TTG)
- PO and NatAss of SRoV (2005) Education Law (No: 11/2005/L/CTN)
- MoET (2008) Instruction on the launching of the emulation campaign “Building child-friendly schools and active students” in general education institutions in the 2008-2013 period (No: 40/2008/CT-BGD&DT)
- MoET (2008) Plan for the implementation of the emulation campaign “Building child-friendly schools, active students” in general education institutions in the school year 2008-2009 and the period 2008-2013 (No: 307/KH-BGD&DT)

Socio-economic policy:

- CCoVCP (2001) Strategy for Socio-Economic Development 2001-2010
- MoPI (2006) The Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010

# The Methodology of the Analysis

While an analytical terminology has already been provided in Section 3 of Book I, this section will briefly outline how the actual process of analysis that the papers build upon has been carried out. Hence, this section is to demonstrate how the underlying discourse analysis of this dissertation has been put into concrete action.

As we highlighted in Book I, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analytical framework embraces the pragmatic aspects and contingency of articulation. For discourse analysis, this means that the conducted analysis of policy documents starts from the analysis of articulation as the constitutive practice for meaning. In concrete terms, this means that policy documents as articulations are seen to *establish* relationships or among elements, where that establishment is not *a priori* determined by the social.

As we earlier specified, elements *per se* do not have specific meaning, but attain only temporary meaning as part of articulation that transforms elements into moments as part of the regularity of the establishment of relations. We might, here, speak of traces that are established in articulation.

Hence, the analysis treats any element or signifier of an articulation that is to be analysed as initially undefined. The analytical practice focuses upon an identification of seeming regularity of the articulation and traces of an element to other elements. That regularity and that trace is in an analysis interpreted to be at play and in articulation will be called a specific discourse. It is of importance to highlight that the analytical stance that is provided by Laclau and Mouffe does not see this *regularity to determine* the articulation *a priori*. Hence, we argue that the analysis that has been conducted is not interested in the power of discourse as discourse would determine articulation, but focuses on the political in articulation as constitutive for the establishment of a seeming regularity. As a result, our analytical focus treats any meaning as only relatively stable, where our analysis becomes primarily concerned with the identification of *multiple* regularities that are seemingly drawn upon and multiple traces that are involved in order to give meaning to elements. It is this multiple or overdetermined aspect of policy making as articulation that we see as to highlight its political character.

In order to highlight this political aspect of articulation, the analysis aims to identify how elements attain multiple meanings according to multiple discourses. This political aspect can accordingly be studied in instances where elements attain paradox meanings.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> We might also here speak of multiple traces, where in the mapping of traces, we become apparent of the incommensurability of traces.

Before we continue this line of thought, we shall briefly illustrate how the actual process of analysis in this dissertation proceeds. This analytical process is primarily a reading process where the analyst familiarised himself with the articulations and the apparent regularities and meanings that policy documents as articulations establish. Hence, the analyst engaged in a reading and rereading of the selected documents and, as part of the that rereading, included additional documents based on references that are made in the analysed documents in order to give meaning to elements.

In order to systematise and document the reading process as a process of interpretation, the analysis in this dissertation utilised a qualitative analysis programme (Atlas.ti). The programme does not do the process of interpretation or analysis for the analyst, but facilitates and documents the process of analysis. This utilisation entailed a coding of articulations. We will demonstrate this coding by an example of a concrete articulation in a Vietnamese policy document.

The material and spiritual life of the population has been markedly improved. The people's educational level, the quality of human resources, and the social dynamism have been raised considerably.

The example sentences above are treated as an articulation, where we are interested in how the practice of articulation establishes signifying chains, where elements in similarity to pearls in the threading of a necklace are put into relation to another and momentarily kept in place by a thread (regularity).<sup>184</sup>

The first interpretive step of analysis would, for example, consist of ascribing the following codes to the two sentences above: "material", "spiritual", "life", "population", "improvement", "people", "education level", "quality", "human resources", "social dynamism" and "raised/increase". Subsequent to this coding, these codes are assigned relations to another, where, for example, the relation "associated with" between "people", "education level", "quality" and "human resources" is established. This association between these codes as elements is seen to be the result of the articulation.

These codes are, however, not treated as stable in the overall process of analysis, but the process of analysis as part of a reading and rereading of policy documents will refine and put into relation codes. For example, based on the continued rereading of the documents, the analyst subsumed the codes of "material", "spiritual" and "life" to a code family of "material and spiritual life", as this combination of the three elements is continuously rearticulated in this combination. Similarly, the code of "raised" was put into a family relation to "elevated" and "increased" as these elements are substituted as part of metaphorical articulations. In these metaphorical articulations, a similar meaning emerges, where

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<sup>184</sup> We might say that, with regards to regularity and repetition, we engage in a mapping of traces of elements to other elements.

similarity is relative to the identified seeming regularity, yet the elements of “raised”, “elevated” and “increased” are substituted.

In this first instance of analysis of coding, we still treat these two sentences as articulations where these codes resemble elements. As part of the subsequent overall identification process of discourses, the analyst asks himself in the reading and rereading of the documents: What is the thread that keeps these elements in position and gives them meaning?<sup>185</sup> This thread is according to the developed analytical framework provided by nodal points as relative points of stabilisation. The identification of nodal points is a complex process and can be seen as the result of an overall interpretative process, where, based on the software-assisted interpretation, it becomes possible to move between different codes and to see how these codes are articulated in a number of sentences, passages and documents.

We argue that a suitable entry point for the identification of nodal points is the identification of paradoxes in articulation, as we interpret these paradoxes to be the result of an articulation that draws on different discourses. Hence, the analyst traced the meaning of elements in paradox articulations by looking at what common associations are made between these articulated elements and other elements as part of the overall process of interpretation. This tracing or mapping of traces is envisioned to identify the element that seemingly provides a resting point for meaning and that similarly to a spider at a centre of a net puts a number of flying objects in relation to another as they are caught up in its net. In paradox articulations, a plurality of different nodal points is interpreted to be at play that allows for different meaning of these elements to emerge. The incommensurability of these meanings is seen to lead to paradoxes. Hence, it is in these paradoxes that we see the political to be at play, as the political denotes an incommensurability among alternate perspectives that are interpreted as articulated. It is these multiple discursive perspective that a study of paradoxes aims to identify.

It is through the identification of these regularities and the nodal points that provide stability that the analysis aims to portray the discursive formation that based on the analysis of policy documents is seen as characteristic for a specific discursive field. This is not to claim that the analysis of Vietnamese policy documents is seen to portray the discursive formation in its totality. Such a claim is seen to be counter to the conception of this formation as in a constantly mutative change due to the contingency of articulation. Instead, the analysis of Vietnamese policy documents, aimed to portray the relation of ESD to seeming formations of social antagonisms. With this focus on social antagonisms, the analysis is interested in portraying different political positions and how different articulated positions are interpreted to strategically invest in certain policy concepts and, thereby, to adumbrate equivalences and differences to other positions.

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<sup>185</sup> We might reformulate this question: “What traces seemingly exist as part of repeated articulation?”

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