Schooling: so much more than algebra.

The way school disciplines.

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Abstract
The objective of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of the disciplinary purpose of elementary school by asking authorities to define it in relation to education which takes place outside of school, and how school shapes the behavior of children by examining how the ones who deviate from its discipline are viewed and treated by its experts. In order to answer this I have used a phenomenological approach by interviewing several individuals’ common understanding of the disciplinary purpose of school, and found that the school disciplines by the use of surface-rearing, in-depth rearing, and group conformity. The theories which has helped to understand the empirical data and put it in a larger context is Foucault’s theories of discipline, Durkheim’s theory of moral authority and social facts, and Aronson’s theories of conformity. The study has revealed that the disciplinary purpose of school is of equal or greater importance than the purpose of transmitting knowledge, and it reveals that the discipline is not merely a method which the teacher uses on its students, but that the school itself works as an apparatus of discipline.

Keywords: School, discipline, rearing, deviant behavior, conformity.

Sammanfattning
Syftet med denna studie är att få en djupare förståelse av grundskolans mål av att disciplinera genom att be myndigheter att definiera det i relation till utbildning som tar plats utanför skolan, och hur skolan formar barns beteende genom att studera hur de som avviker från disciplinen uppfattas och behandlas av skolans experter. För att svara på detta har jag använt mig av en fenomenologisk ansats genom att intervjuat ett flertal individers gemensamma upplevelse av skolans disciplinära mål, och upptäckt att skolan disciplinerar genom att använda djup fostran, ytfostran, och grupp konformitet. De teorier som har hjälpt med att förstå det empiriska materialet och satt det i en större kontext är Foucaults teorier om disciplin, Durkheims moral auktoritet och sociala fakta, och Aronsons teorier om konformitet. Studien har visat att skolans disciplinära mål är lika viktigt eller viktigare än skolans mål av att förmedla kunskap, och den visar att disciplineringen inte endast är något som sker mellan lärarna och eleverna, utan att skolan i sig är ett disciplinärt verktyg.

Nyckelord: Skolan, disciplin, fostran, avvikande beteende, konformitet.
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Introduction

As you are reading this paper your whole focus is shifted to the words I have written down. Because of this you might not be reflecting over many of the things which led up to this point like how it is possible for you to read this paper of a computer screen, or which forest the paper you might print out comes from. You might also not be reflecting over how you are able to read this paper in a well behaved manner without anyone having to force you, and without easily getting distracted. In a similar way we might not have reflected over how school has shaped us over many years of discipline since we were too focused on the task at hand, that’s why this thesis aims to allow us to reflect on how school disciplines. This thesis reveals that school has in addition to its objective of educating, a strong goal of disciplining. The objective of discipline has been expressed and formulated in different ways over the course of history and in some periods it has been expressed as the primary goal of schooling (Landahl, 2006: 8), others claim that it has been a part of a hidden curriculum (Wester, 2008; Bartholdsson, 2007). Since it’s mandatory that we spend around eight hours a day, five days a week, 178 days a year for nine years from the age of seven, it might be worth studying how the disciplinary purpose of primary school shapes our behavior. The previous research on the subject of school’s discipline has for the most part focused on the environment in the classroom, studying the relationship between the teacher and the students; while others have studied the discourse on discipline has changed over time. On the other hand, this thesis aims to understand how the school itself works as an apparatus of discipline by studying how it encloses bodies, restricts time, supervises, implements norms and values of discipline, and how it uses the social influence of classmates to discipline children.

Purpose

The objective of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of the disciplinary purpose of elementary school by asking authorities to define it in relation to education which takes place outside of school, and how school shapes the behavior of children by examining how the ones who deviate from its discipline are viewed and treated by its experts.

The main questions to answer this purpose are:
How do authorities define schooling by viewing it in relation to education that takes place outside of school?

- How do the experts in school define a deviant behavior?
- How does school respond to a deviant behavior?

**Delimitation**

The thesis will focus on school ranging from first to ninth grade where students receive their primary education. By only focusing on primary education I am excluding all preceding and following educating institutions, and by doing so my empirical data will not reveal the combined influence every educational institution has on the behavior of individuals. The reason I choose to focus on primary education is due to the fact that it is the only educational institution in Sweden that is compulsory (Sveriges riksdag, 2012-04-01).

I will collect data by interviewing individuals who make decision on whether families are allowed to educate their children, and the experts in school who make decisions on what behavior is deviant and in need of psychoanalysis. By focusing on these two groups I leave out members who have significant parts in relation to the school, such as students and parents. As a result I include only a small fraction of the total amount of actors who embody the educational institution, and I exclude individuals who could provide many alternative views on the phenomenon. What motivates me to focus on these individuals is the fact that they make decisions on what deviates from school and its discipline. By examining the ones who handle deviants it becomes easier to view the social force that surrounds them (Durkheim, 1982: 51).

**Background**

*Pedagogue = from Latin pedagogus, a slave who looked after and raised his master’s son* (Svenska akademin ordbok, 1952).

**Homeschooling**

Homeschooling is a form of education where parents take the responsibility for educating their children. The way the children are educated and where the education takes place can vary depending on the choice of the children and their parents. In Sweden there are close to a hundred families who practice homeschooling (Folkbildningsnätet, 2012-05-02). In the
United States and the United Kingdom homeschooling has reached a higher popularity rate as it is estimated that around 2.5 million people are homeschooled in the United States (American libraries, 2012-05-02). Studies on how these children have developed have shown very positive results (Ray, 2000, s. 77) (Medlin, 2009, s. 111). However, since July 1 2011, a new school law was enforced in Sweden which made Sweden along with Germany the only European countries which illegalizes homeschooling (Sveriges riksdag, 2012-05-25). This law contradicts the UN declaration of human rights which says in article 26:3 that “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children” (United Nations, 2012-05-02). As a result, parents have been forced to pay fines ranging up to 180 000 kr (Världen idag, 2012-05-02), have their child abducted by the social services and have other parents adopt their child, and many have moved from Sweden in political exile (Mynewsdesk, 2012-05-02).

Deviant behavior in school

The discourse on the problematic child in modern society often concerns the deviant child who suffers from behavioral disorders. In order to handle these matters a psychiatric counseling bureau called BUP (barn och ungdomspsykiatrin) was set up to help find the underlying reasons for the unwanted behavior, and the school has been the institution who has reported the most cases. These matters often concerned a lack of discipline. Before these cases are sent to BUP, the deviant behaviors are identified by a group of school faculty which is called the student health team. This team consists of a teacher, a special education teacher, a counselor, a nurse, and the principal. Their job is to grasp the width of the child’s problem by recognizing which students are in need of help, investigate and document it in order to suggest solutions, and then follow up on the behavior. Examples of behaviors which the student health team investigates are: learning disabilities, functional disabilities, acting out or acting aggressive, being quiet and passive, skipping class, or having difficulties adapting oneself to the forms of education (Hjörne & Säljö, 2008).

Rearing in School

Before 1962 Swedish schools were divided into girl schools and folk schools which had different levels in quality of education, and recruited children unevenly based on socio-economic status. A reform was demanded by the people, and a school which forged them together was built as a result, and it came to be known as primary school. The political incentive was that the new school would help build the new vision of a democratic society.
based on a modern Swedish culture, and schools would have a primary goal of establishing
democratic values by shaping democratic citizens. A first step was to have a school which
held its doors open for every individual, where every child had the right to an equal education.
As a result a big question became how the problem of discipline should be handled when
different pre-existing rearing methods would collide by forging these schools together. In
some schools physical punishment was tolerated while in others it was forbidden. The new
vision was to shape free, illuminated, and independent citizens who would embrace
democratic values. The critique of the old ways of rearing individuals said that it focused too
much on the physical health of students and as a result the mental health of students was not
given the attention it should have. As the focus shifted to the mental health of children, a new
expertise came about where psychologists, counselors, nurses, and pedagogues became the
experts who would determine behavioral disorders in children. Teachers would cooperate
extensively with psychologists and learn the new psychological methods of discipline. As the
discipline shifted to psychological methods of improving mental health, children became
divided up into deviant and normal, and the school needed to observe the abnormal behaviors
which could indicate a mental instability. As it was important that new ways of discipline
would not intrude on shaping the free democratic individual, obedience had to be excluded
out the vocabulary of school officials, and the new way of discipline needed to encourage an
obedience which developed inside the child through internalizing democratic values in
students. By the student’s enthusiasm of being a part of the community of rearing, the student
would be encouraged to discipline himself which in turn would make the physical rearing
enforced by school less necessary. However, this discipline towards freedom was not
completely without force since the child had to develop “freely”, but in a determined direction
in a matter decided by school. Along with the psychological discipline a physical discipline
was developing at parallel which went from spanking to developing habits by making children
punctual and orderly (Qvarsebo, 2006).

Theory & prior research

In this section I will present the theoretical tools which will serve to apprehend the purpose of
school, and how it disciplines children and shapes their behavior. It will explain how school
has a purpose of rearing, how rearing is related to discipline, and the two forms of discipline
which takes place in school, and  lastly how group conformity relates to discipline.
**Discipline**

School has in addition to its goal of educating an objective of rearing (Landahl 2006: 8). These two objectives have been expressed and formulated in different ways over the course of history and in some periods rearing has been expressed as the primary goal of schooling. Granath (2008: 11), who is deeply inspired by Foucault argues that rearing can be used synonymous with discipline in the way discipline affects, forms, socializes, and develops individuals. She explains that the teachers curriculum describes rearing as a way of shaping students into democratic citizens, and that the new techniques of discipline is through the interaction between people which teachers use to their benefit when shaping students. The rearing of children that take place in school has two dimensions which are called surface rearing and In-depth rearing (Persson, 2003: 189).

**Surface rearing**

Surface rearing is a form of discipline that tries to produce a rhythmic use of body movements through methods of decree and restrictions (Persson: 2003: 189). In his book Discipline and Punish, Foucault describes the school as an institution where this form of discipline is inherent in its structure, where the purpose is to shape behavior by controlling individuals through different techniques (Foucault, 1979: 138). One of these techniques is the control of time which school manages through routinizing activity by repeating daily cycles of compulsory attendance and subjection to a strict time table in an enclosed space which allows supervision of every behavior. The school also has a way of ranking individuals where supervisors judge the quality of one’s work, compare and classify it, and place individuals in their proper level, but it also has a way of classifying and ranking people in relation to a norm. This norm has its own laws and regulations and enjoys a penal system that contradicts a judicial penalty by its way of differentiating individuals. It punishes “lateness, absence, interruption of tasks, inattention, negligence, impoliteness, disobedience, idle chatter, insolence, incorrect attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness, impurity and indecency” (Foucault, 1979: 178), and the sanctions used when the norm is violated can be anything that would humiliate the individual that has dishonored it, like being given the shameful label of abnormal. This normalizing method is at the heart of the schools disciplinary action (Foucault, 1979: 164).

Joakim Landahl (2006) has studied how disciplinary rearing takes place in Swedish schools by examining it through a historical perspective. The questions he tries to answer are what the
school sees as a crime against the norm, and what solutions have been taken into action as a result of this crime. His study it revealed that a crime against the norm was a crime against its discipline and the examples of crimes were too much talk, a lack of attention, or indecent language etc. He goes on to explain that school views it as a psychological problem, and as a result the fault shifts away from the child, and the solution becomes psychological matter. By trying to solve the problem school encloses the child in a small space with a psychologist, a principal, a councilor, a parent, and a teacher, who all become a part of the supervision of the child’s behavior as a way of an ambiguous disciplinary punishment. Maria Wester explains that another method of discipline is through the strict use of time in the way the teachers discipline children by making everyone show up on time, followed by an entering phrase of good morning, taking attendance and chastising everyone who shows up late. As a result the time schedule becomes an integrated structure of the child’s system (Wester, 2008: 193).

Foucault’s theory of discipline lacks however, in that it only explains how the discipline affects the physical body, hence his theory does not explains how school discipline’s through internalization, neither does it explain how we are disciplined by social influence. This is why this thesis is an expansion of this view of discipline since it brings up these subjects and relates it to discipline.

**In-depth rearing**

In-depth rearing is an attempt to discipline through controlling the consciousness of individuals and as a result the discipline becomes a task of the individuals themselves (Persson: 2003: 193). In-depth rearing is achieved through internalizing norms and values which are perceived as important (Landahl 2006: 8). According to Aronson (1995) internalization is the most permanent way of shaping behavior through conformity. It occurs when an individual perceive another person or group as trustworthy and accept their convictions as their own. The individuals who internalize the norms and values needs to feel that they are a part of the creation of these beliefs, and should therefore partake in the implementation of them (Qvarsebo, 2006: 93). Once it is internalized the individual finds it hard to perceive the influence as external since it has become a part of the persons system of belief and hence it is the most permanent way of conforming and the most resistant to change (Aronson, 1995: 36).

According to Durkheim the school discipline provides the child with a moral education. Durkheim’s definition of moral is the subjection to a norm of a group or a society consisting
of rules which help to discipline behavior. Discipline is achieved by implementing habits in the child through rhythmic repetitions, however in order to assure discipline it needs to be internalized in the child. Once internalized, the child can accomplish self-mastery by feeling a limit to its desires, a limit which Durkheim calls moral authority. This authority is invisible to the child since moral is not perceived through vision and it is not enforced by a physical constraint, rather it imposes itself discretely by manifesting as an inner state in the child. In order to accomplish internalization of discipline and self-control the mind of the child needs to be in a state of void. The child needs to be separated from the family since its intimate relationships are incapable of disciplining the child to adhere to an impersonal moral. This role is in turn replaced by teachers who impersonally but authoritatively transmits the moral ideas of their time and their country by subjecting the child to a moral that is not invented by the teacher but imposes itself upon them as much as it imposes itself upon the child. The teacher suggests the empty minded child a moral presented as beneficial, and is accepted as such when the teacher’s authority is perceived by the child as legitimate, and thus the child internalizes the discipline of moral authority (Durkheim, 1973).

Maria Wester has studied the behavioral norms that are present in Swedish schools and the repercussions that take place when they are broken. The discipline which school aims to implement is a self-discipline which means that the norms which children break is not the problem in itself, rather the problem lies in the fact that they do not possess the ability of self-containment. For example, the problem when children break the norm of chewing gum in class does not lie in the act of chewing gum per se, but in the fact that the child had not internalized the value of perceiving this act as a wrong behavior. Children learn self-discipline with the help of the schools objective of rearing children into good citizens who know right from wrong, and hold values of democracy, respect and empathy. Since teachers expect these values to be internalized and taken for granted, the aim towards implementing self-discipline in children is seldom motivated and thus part of a hidden curriculum (Wester, 2008).

**Group conformity**

“We are the victims of an illusion which leads us to believe we have ourselves produced what have been imposed upon us externally” (Durkheim, 1982: 53).

The first sociological theory that described social influence as external and constraining was formulated by Emile Durkheim. According to Durkheim each member of society are bestowed by a coercive force that exists outside of the individuals’ consciousness and
constrains the individual by exerting a control over him. This coercive force is Durkheim’s definition of a social fact, which manifests as an entity which exists on its own, and is independent of the individual. Social facts are the sum of a group’s collective conviction, and it is through the collective group that social facts pressure individuals to act in a manner one would perceive as alien if it were taken out of the group context (Durkheim 1982).

The social fact is less felt when one abides by it, but by resisting it makes itself felt through the sanctions it imposes when one fails to conform. It is by resisting the social fact that it becomes evident and perceptible, and when one fails to abide it immediately attempts to correct the action through chastising the individual who contends it (Durkheim, 1982: 51).

The theory of social fact helps to describe the coercive force of the collective that is present in the school environment and the way it influences individuals, and it is very applicable in this study since the social facts are revealed when one goes against it which the deviant behaviors in this thesis do. However, Durkheim’s theory lacks in the way it fails to describe the social mechanisms that cause the collective force to impose itself upon the individual (Scheff, 1988: 395). In response to this Thomas Scheff argues that in order to solve this one has to examine the subject of conformity. According to Scheff conformity is a result when individuals feel shame or pride. However, in the book The Social Animal, Elliot Aronson describes a broader spectrum of conformity which is more applicable to this study since the respondents describes different ways in which discipline is used through conformity (Aronson, 1995).

According to Aronson (1995) conformity can be defined as a change in behavior due to pressure from a group of people. One explanation to why individuals conform is that there is an attempt to avoid punishment which takes the form of rejection or ridicule, or gain a reward in the form of love and acceptance. The other reason is that through a group of people an individual can acquire information about a proper behavior. Aronson continues by dividing social influence into three categories which are compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance is a term used to describe conformity through the motivation of receiving rewards or avoiding punishment. Identification occurs when an individual strives to resemble a person or group who is perceived as admirable. Through identification we reshape our behavior in accordance with the group we favor. Internalization is the most permanent way of shaping behavior, and it occurs when another groups beliefs becomes our own.

According to Landahl school is characterized as an institution which situates the child in a social setting of a large group of children of the same age. He explains that school forges
children together in order to control students by creating a unitary collective which is expected to behave orderly. The school has shifted its focus from trying to get children to respect the teacher to encouraging children to respect each other, which he explains as a shift from a vertical to a horizontal focus. This is shift took place because the unitary collective could, if the teacher failed, become a threat to the teachers authority and as a result the solution became that children should discipline one another. In horizontal respect the focus is shifted to the interaction between children, as they should teach each other moral values, and thus the discipline becomes a task of the classmates (Landahl, 2006: 61). Maria Wester explains how this takes place in the classroom by giving the example of how classmates help the teacher with the most frequent disciplinary task of censuring their fellow pupils. The teachers placement of children in the classroom also has a disciplinary purpose as teachers try to create social patterns by placing undisciplined next to the preppies (Qvarsebo, 2006: 119).

The most prominent experiment done on conformity was performed by Solomon Asch. His experiment consisted of college students ranging from groups of 2 - 15 people. Only one person who would be the subject of the experiment would be unaware of the purpose of the experiment, whilst the rest of the members would be instructed on what to do. The experiment started by showing two cards to the whole group, where one card had one straight line, and the other card had three other straight lines which they were asked to compare the first straight line with.

They were asked which line out of 1, 2, or 3 matched the standard line. The person who was unaware of the experiments purpose was asked last. The rest however, gave an incorrect answer. 123 trials were performed with 123 study subjects. When there was only one person who contradicted the subjects answer, the subjects would stick to the correct answer almost every time. When there were two who gave wrongful answers the subjects changed their minds and gave the same incorrect answers as the other two had. This occurred on 13.6 percent of the trials. When the opposition was more than two, the subjects changed their mind 36.8 percent of the time, and when the subjects heard twelve consecutive incorrect answers the subjects changed their mind almost three quarters of the time. To test these results Asch performed trials where the subjects answered alone, and the results showed that the subjects answered correctly almost every time. The results of the experiments showed that the individual would conform to the majority even when the correct answer at first seemed
obvious, and the extent of conformity would increase depending on how big the majority was (Asch, 1956).

Reflection, motivation, and critique of prior research

The prior research I have presented are all related to the purpose of this thesis since they all handle the subject of discipline. The purpose of Landahl and Wester’s research is to reveal what a crime against the norm in primary school is, and the repercussions of those actions (Landahl, 2006; Wester, 2008), in the same way this thesis reveals the norm in school, what a crime against it is, and the repercussions of those actions. They both used interviews when gathering their data just as I have, however, while Wester has added personal observations to her study and Landahl has analyzed educational periodicals, teacher magazines, and teacher manuals, this thesis is limited to interviews. Their use of different sources is a great supplement to this thesis since it presents a more comprehensive aspect of the subject.

Qvarsebo and Landahl has both examined disciplinary action through a historical aspect where they examined how it has changed during the 20th century, while this thesis handles the present; however, their research is relevant for this thesis since the present is a result of history. While the prior research I have used differs from this thesis in some of its focus, I have used only the parts which are relevant to this thesis. Another aspect Landahl and Wester’s research has in common is that they both examine the environment of the classroom and the relationship between the teachers and their students, and thus they take for granted the disciplinary effect of the school itself. This thesis has much like Qvarsebo examined how the school itself disciplines.

However, in contrary to this aspect there is prior research which reveals that though school tries to discipline there exists a great deal of disorder in schools (Aspelin, 1999). Aspelin has examined the theories which claim that conformity takes place in school, and by studying the environment of the classroom he challenges these theories by explaining that while order takes place there exists disorder within that order. He gives the example of a classroom where most conform to the orderly behavior, but where some classmates challenge that order in spite of all the sanctions thrown by the teacher, and he concludes that while the orderly behavior shapes individuals, individuals shape the order of behavior in the example of the ones who resist conformity. Some of my previous research fail to bring this point out.
Method

Choice of method

In this thesis I have chosen a qualitative method to acquire the data needed to answer my purpose. The qualitative method uses a smaller sample group than the sample in a quantitative study, but by using a smaller sample it gives the researcher a deeper understanding of the phenomena. A quantitative method would not be enough to answer the purpose of this thesis since it only allows me to examine how people make certain decisions, but not why they make them (Hedström & Swedberg, 1996, s. 287). The qualitative method is the most appropriate for this study since I am interested in understanding a purpose of school which is usually taken for granted. My approach can be described as phenomenological, which aims to understand several individuals’ collective understanding of a phenomenon. According to John Creswell, phenomenology requires the researcher to set aside all presumptions of the phenomenon and instead describe the various philosophical aspects on which the conception is founded on. By examining how several individuals share an understanding of a phenomenon the examiner tries to interpret its essence (Creswell, 2007: 60). Since it is a phenomenological study, an adequate approach of gathering data is to conduct interviews, which allows the interviewee to express its view on the phenomenon. Interviews are an efficient method of gathering data in the way they prevent the interviewer from shaping the answers since the goal is to allow the interviewee to steer the conversation while the researcher only decides the subject (Trost, 2010: 39). Personal observation is another method of gathering data where the researcher examines the phenomenon by observing it on the field (Esaiasson, 2010: 343). However, this method would be inappropriate for my study since I do not want to take the role of the psychotherapist by judging what a normal or a deviant behavior is.

Sample group

In order to complement the phenomenological approach I have chosen a multiple case study to see if patterns exist in the answers I receive from interviewing respondents from both cases. A case study is a study of one or multiple bounded systems with the help of several sources of information. Creswell explains that a multiple case study is of benefit when the researcher wants to show different perspectives on the same subject. A challenge of a multiple case study
is determining which cases and how many of them. Selecting the proper case requires the researcher to rationalize and motivate the choice of case (Creswell, 2007: 73).

The respondents of the first case handle families who want to practice homeschooling, and the respondents of the second case handle behaviors which the school labels as deviant. By interviewing the respondents of the first case I examine how they define what the purpose of the school is by comparing it to education that does not take place in school, and as a result I get a comprehensive view of the school’s purpose. I also examine what school does by studying how deviant behavior within the school is perceived and treated, and thus I have an internal view of how the purpose of discipline transpires in school. Each of these two cases handle deviants, the ones who deviate from school and the ones who deviate from the normal behavior in school, and by asking the respondents what they deviate from I motivate them to define what school and its discipline is since they define what it is by explaining what it is not.

The sample of the first case consists of politicians and heads of education, where I have interviewed a school director, a head of education, a chairman for the children and education committee, a deputy major of education, and a secretary of state for the department of education. This case will be named authorities, and each member of the case will be identified by last names which I have made up, since they need to remain anonymous (Trost, 2010: 123). All of the above have all directly or indirectly handled cases of home education, and they all have different mandate in handling these cases. The sample of the second case consists of a counselor, a teacher, a special education teacher, and a student care coordinator. This case will be named student health team since that is their actual title, however, they will be indentified by first names which I have made up. Four schools were picked out by random. The reason I choose the individuals for the second sample group is that they all handle cases of what the school labels as deviant behavior and they all have a part in the decision of sending school children to get diagnosed for dysfunctional behavior.

**Collection of data**

Before I conducted my interviews I read Jan Trost (2010), Idar Holme (1997), and Bill Gillhams (2008) instructions on how to conduct interviews and the ethical considerations which needed to be considered. Gillham mentioned a fitting technique of interviewing which is called the unstructured interview. In the unstructured interview the researcher does not have a clear sense of what he’s looking for, instead the knowledge is gained through the interviews.
This method would prove to be fitting in a phenomenological approach since it requires the researcher to set its own experiences and interpret the topic of inquiry (Creswell, 2007: 59). In the unstructured interview it is the interviewee who decides on which direction the interview should head so that the structure of the interview does not impede or limit the answers of the respondent (Gillham, 2008: 73). It also complements the phenomenological approach in that it builds upon the first questions which Creswell describes as horizontalization where the researcher highlights significant statements, sentences or quotes (Creswell, 2007: 60).

I have interviewed a total of nine respondents, where five were from the first case and four from the student health team. Some of the respondents from the first case were advised by homeschoolers in Sweden, while some were found in articles on homeschooling. The secretary of state for the department of education was picked out because they are the ones who suggest the school law to the parliament. The schools from the second case were picked out randomly, and then I picked one teacher, one special education teacher, one counselor, and one student care coordinator.

Two of the interviews with the authorities were conducted over telephone while the rest were face-to-face. When interviews are conducted over the telephone the researcher miss out on all the nonverbal communication which takes place in a conversation, however compared to other distant forms of interviews it reveals the tone of voice, and another benefit is the fact that it reach far away which proved to be very suitable for these two interviews (Gillham, 2008: 143). All the interviews were recorded with a tape recorder, and before each recording I politely asked for their approval before I pressed the record button. Before I started each interview I also asked if they had any questions before we started.

**Process of data**

Creswell (2007: 59) mentions that a challenge when using the phenomenological approach is the ability to use bracketing, which is studying a phenomenon without tingeing it with ones experience. When I conducted the first interview I tried to ask questions that were as open as possible by simply asking what purpose school had, if it had a purpose besides transmitting knowledge, and if the school differed in any way from homeschooling. Besides the fact that I had a long experience of school, and an understanding of ways homeschooling differs from school, these questions did not derive out of any theories. The respondent answered that school had in addition to education a secret goal of rearing. When I conducted the rest of my
interviews I did not construct questions based on theories on rearing, but instead followed up on the answers that showed patterns with the first and asked them to define and elaborate.

By analyzing the data I found that there were two major patterns which the respondents emphasized the most, which were rearing and group dynamic. Rearing had two sides which I divided up into two sub categories of in-depth rearing and surface rearing, since the respondents described two types of rearing where one was a physical constraint of the body and the other was implementing values. In order to find these patterns I highlighted sentences, quotes, and statements which provided an understanding of the essence of how the respondent viewed the phenomenon. Then I divided the data into themes which were: rearing, discipline, internalization, parent to teacher, and values. When I analyzed the data I found that the group dynamic was of such great importance that the thesis would loose a critical part of its complexity if the group dynamic had been filtered out. However, what proved to be difficult was relating the group dynamic to rearing and understanding how they correlate, thus I constructed more question relating to the group dynamic in my interviews with the student health team. As a result I was able to gather more data on this, and when I analyzed it I developed themes which were, group size, friend influence, classroom placement, chastisement, and social codes. As I tried to make sense of this I found that it was related to conformity and the size of the group had importance, thus I named it group conformity.

**Limitations**

When I approached these concepts there were many aspects of rearing and group dynamic at my disposal, any which could have had validity and could be applied to my data. This thesis does not show the multiple aspects of rearing and how it takes place in school, like how teachers discipline or how testing disciplines etc. In the same way, the group dynamic could have been analyzed in many different ways like for example how social capital is created. This is a challenge when using bracketing which is also called epoche where the researcher should identify the width of the philosophical aspects behind the theory (Creswell, 2007: 59). The respondents also emphasized that norms and values were conveyed in school, which is not given its full description in this thesis by explaining the whole definitions of what a norm and a value is. Creswell explains that a hundred pages could be devoted to the philosophical aspects, which would not fit in the size of this thesis. Since Foucault and others helped in analyzing the data collected, the study is partly deductive though partly inductive since they...
did not shape the questions, and many of the questions were based on the answers of the same respondent.

I could also have studied other aspects the respondent brought forth, and used other theories to analyze the empirical data, however the reason this thesis uses the theories of surface rearing, in-depth rearing, and group conformity is because these theories helped grasp the multiple dimensions of the empirical data gathered.

Since I introduced myself as a sociologist, and explained that I was studying the social part of school, I might have affected the answer given by the respondents since they might have known that it was not the educational part of school I was looking for, and thus emphasized more on the aspect of rearing. This could have been an underlying reason as to why all the respondents told me that school had an additional goal of rearing. This might also have been the same reason as to why I received the kind of examples of deviant behavior, since the respondents might have believed that the most severe cases of deviant behavior were not of interest for the sociologist as it is for the psychologist.

**Operationalization**

Operationalization is a way to measure the theoretical definitions used by the researcher, by setting up indicators which can be used as a measure of the definition (Esaiasson, 2010: 59). In this thesis I have asked questions regarding deviant behavior. Deviant is in this case anything which averts from the norm, and something which indicates a dysfunctional behavior, since it is these deviant behaviors which are indicators for what could be given a diagnose of dysfunctional. Another term used is homeschooling which is when children receive their education outside of school due to the choice of themselves or their parents. In this study the respondents kept emphasizing norms and values. A norm in this sense is an accepted standard or a way of behaving that the concerned individuals agree with. Values are in this thesis the beliefs or convictions one holds.

**Ethical considerations**

When a researcher acquires new data through research it is important that the ethics of research is followed. Jan Trost (2010: 123) explains that the most important ethic guideline to follow is guaranteeing the respondents confidentiality. This was done by excluding the names of every respondent I have interviewed, and excluding the names of the schools, political parties, or cities they live in. Trost also explains that their identity can be revealed...
unintentionally by using quotes which reveal who they are to people who know them best. This was considered by not including any information related to the person interviewed in the results. Another thing of ethical importance is letting the respondent know what the subject is about, which I did in the beginning when I introduced myself to the respondents.

In this thesis I have interviewed people from Sweden who answered the questions in Swedish, therefore, since this thesis is in English I have translated all quotes from Swedish to English, which means that the words have to be rearranged in order for it to have a comprehensible grammatical structure. A result of this could be that the respondents would argue that their answers have been misinterpreted, however, a certain effort has been made to assure that the meaning of each sentence has not been changed, altered, or angled.

Result

This section will present how in-depth rearing, surface rearing, and group conformity was explained by the respondents. It will connect it with the theories and previous research to help comprehend their answers and place it in a larger context. The reason these theories have been used is because they captured the multiple dimensions of the respondents answers, and help in understanding the essence of the respondents view of the phenomenon of school discipline.

In-depth rearing

The answer which never failed to be given was that school had a two-fold purpose where one was to transmit knowledge and the other was to rear children. This answer was always given by asking the initial question of: what are the main purposes of school? Rearing was described as a way of conveying norms, culture, and values, and it was imperative that it should coincide with the demands of society. The respondents often described it as a democratic rearing where school should implement values of treating everyone fairly and with respect and in turn shape democratic citizens. Children should treat each other with respect and learn how to receive each other properly, and teach each other to respect the value of the majority. Boys and girls should be treated equal and based on their preconditions, and as a result learn how to behave in a democratic society. As children learn how a democratic society works and also get to experience this society in school by practicing its virtues through the interactions in school, children are formed into democratic citizens.
If one looks at a very comprehensive perspective it is about education and rearing people into responsible citizens of society. Through a limited perspective one could assume that it only has to do with knowledge, but I mean that school has the goal of creating in quote: fine citizens, responsible citizens, and that also means that one has to contribute by following norms and democratic values that are fundamental in society. - Turesson

Even though one respondent explained that school should not inflict on parents role of rearing, when I asked the respondents to define school in relation to homeschooling by asking what homeschoolers miss out on, they often responded that parents taught their children improper ways of thinking. Parents had the ability of inflicting values and cultures which are improper to society. The school on the other hand provided a broader spectrum of values since in their view homeschooled children only possessed the values of their parents. One respondent expressed a concern that children who are homeschooled risk being marked with the values of their parents which is risky since one has no control over what those values are. Another respondent explained that parents who bring their children to school still have the ability of inflicting their believes on their children, and this was acceptable as long as those beliefs did not come in conflict with what was being taught in school. If the child were to be homeschooled the risk was that it would spend too much time with the parents and in turn internalize the values of their parents. It would miss out on the relationships and values the school could provide.

Parents provoke their opinions and thoughts on their children and try to adapt the child’s behavior, and the children try to abide their parents and do what their parents tell them to do, and in this case I can actually say that the school has a positive role, because then the influence of the parents has stepped aside and the child is forced to make its own decisions at least for some hours of the day. - Persson

I don’t believe I have spoken to any children directly, but when they have told me, they often think that they made their choices on their own because they have become so dependent on their parents. On the other hand, you do not fully make your own choices in school either. - Persson

This is an example of what is described as in-depth rearing where children are reared with norms and values which are important to society (Landahl, 2006: 8). In this case children are reared democratically and it is the democratic norms and values that are perceived as important by society where everyone should be treated fairly and with respect, where men and women should be treated equal but based on their preconditions, and everyone should act as responsible citizens which in turn provides a culture of democracy. As Durkheim points out, it is important that these are not the norms and values of parents or teachers but instead impersonal morals of the child’s time and country. The child had to be separated
from their parents since they had the ability to inflict contradicting morals, and be replaced by the school (Durkheim, 1973). The fact that the democratic norms were described as respecting one another is an inclination of how it is a norm of self-discipline, since by respecting others one practice a form of discipline. Once this is internalized and children start disciplining themselves, this type of conformity becomes very persistent (Aronson, 1995: 36).

The respondents explained that the values and norms which were to be channeled through school were conveyed by teachers, however, it was imperative that teachers do not transmit political views or religious convictions of their own, but instead remain neutral and convey values which society holds dear. This was possible since teachers themselves had been educated in the same way by learning the same norms and values. It was also possible since the teacher’s relationship with children which was described as more impersonal than their relationship with their parents. The teacher needed to establish a good and healthy relationship with the child where the student would be able to rely on the teacher since this provided a feeling of safety.

A child’s relationship to a parent is emotionally deep in my opinion. You love your mother and father regardless of how they behave. You never have this relationship with your teacher and you should not have it in my opinion. The relationship you should have with your teacher is a kind and warm relationship, yet it is not like the parent relationship. It is not a more professional relationship, but nevertheless a pure functional relationship, meaning the function of the teacher to the function of the student. If you are to learn, then this should be a kind relationship in my opinion. If you educate your own children then I would assume that children oppose their parents more than they oppose their teachers. – Turesson

Try to gain contact, and build up a relationship between the adult and the child is vital in order to work on children. Feeling safe together with adults and together with children is important. Because they don’t care if they have a substitute, they need to feel that the adult care about them and believe in them.- Linda

According to Aronson (1995) internalization takes place when an individual perceive another person or group as trustworthy and as a result that individual will in turn accept their convictions as their own. In the same way Durkheim explains that internalization of self-discipline is achieved when the child perceive the school’s authority as legitimate, and in order for this to take place the child’s mind need to be in a state of void which acquires school to separate the child from its parents and replace it with the role of the teacher who unlike parents authoritatively inflict an impersonal moral (Durkheim, 1973).
The respondents give a clear example of this as they explain that the teacher should establish a good relationship with the students which they described as kind, warm, and reliable however the relationship was not and should not be the relationship children have with their parents, but since it was a reliable relationship it provided the legitimacy needed for internalization to take place.

They also expressed that it was imperative that children partake in the implementation of these values, and plan it together with their teachers. Children should have an active part in how their schooling is shaped and they should take part in the creation of official and unofficial rules which the school operates through. If the child shows signs of a deviant behavior then that child should partake in constructing a corrective action plan which would improve the unwanted behavior by setting up short goals of how to improve. It was also important that children feel that school cared, and a clear example of the implementation of self-discipline is how one respondent emphasized that safety had to be self perceived and in turn this perception would mend the feeling that contradicted that perception:

Everyone should have a treatment that they themselves perceive as safe, its very important that this is self perceived because not everyone that feel unsafe actually are unsafe in reality, but they feel it, and then it has the same effect as if they would be. – Persson

This is how Qvarsebo (2006: 93) explains the process of internalization, where the child gets to partake in their own self-discipline by creating these norms together with school, which was in this case the partaking in implementing the rules they would follow and help structure a plan for how they should correct their unwanted behavior.

In her study Maria Wester explains that the problem when children break norms does not lie in the result of breaking it as much as it is the fact that they do not understand the norm or possess the ability of self-discipline (Wester, 2008). This was also brought out by the respondents as they explained that a deviant behavior was someone who didn’t understand the rules, who “Doesn’t understand that you have to go to the bathroom when have to pee, and that you don’t do it on the schoolyard” – Linda, or someone who “does not know how to contain oneself, who has to fight, use foul language, or talk ill about each other” – Linda, or who “lacks a control of impulse, the kind of immediate desire fulfillment, it’s only me, me, me, I have to go and do this and I need to do this” – Anita.
A normal behavior was on the other hand someone who “understands that you learn because it’s fun” – Anita, or “understands how to answer, understands how to converse, and who understands that you raise your hand and show respect” – Linda.

Some don’t understand the rules, it’s really hard for them to get why there are rules, then they break them because they are not aware that it is an important rule which we implemented so that everything will work. They think this is what I feel like doing so I will do it.

**Surface rearing**

One example of deviant behavior are the “in the mood children” who only do what they are in the mood for. Not the usual of being in the mood for something but restraining yourself anyway. They only have an engine when they are in the mood for something. - Anita

Before I conducted my interviews with the student health team I assumed that their answer on deviant behavior would be that deviant was anything that deviated from normal behavior in general, like breaking social codes by being too forward or something of that nature. To my surprise the answers revealed that deviant behavior was anything that challenged the school discipline.

When I asked the respondents to name examples of deviant behavior they responded that it was: having high absence, often showing up late for class, not doing homework, having a lack of energy for school, having a lack of enthusiasm for school, loosing focus, daydreaming, working too slow, using profound language, using sexual expressions, using incorrect posture, having bad hygiene, seldom changing clothes, behaving aggressive, urinating on the schoolyard, amusing schoolmates, breaking rules in school, often getting into trouble, talking bad about other students, or fighting.

The last two can be examples of deviation from the democratic norms previously explained, however the rest can be seen examples of surface rearing where deviant behavior is explained as anything that deviates from the norm of school discipline which is the school’s control of behavior (Foucault, 1979: 138). These examples were very similar to Landahl’s examples of talking too much, lack of attention, and indecent language (Landahl, 2006).

Another clear example of this was how the respondents answered to what a normal behavior is. The examples of this were: doing your job, behaving properly, knowing how
to answer, always raising your hand, respecting the schedule, understanding that you learn because its fun to learn.

It could be argued that by using the term normal the respondents might refer to the average behavior in school. While this might very well be the case, the behaviors that deviated from it where the signals that initiated an investigation of the behavior which could later on get diagnosed and would always be treated with disciplinary action. Therefore their view on deviant can not be seen only as a behavior which challenges the school discipline since the behavior is diagnosed and labeled abnormal; neither can it be seen only as an abnormal behavior since school always use disciplinary action to correct the behavior since the behavior always challenged the discipline of school.

Many of the disciplinary techniques explained by the respondents were applicable to the disciplinary techniques explained by Foucault in his book discipline and Punish. One technique of discipline Foucault mentions is placing individuals in an enclosed space (Foucault, 1979: 138). In addition to the fact that not being in school during school hours, and having a high absence was seen by the respondents as a deviant behavior, the actions that were taken when children deviated shrink their space until it was so enclosed that it minimized every possible external distraction. One explained that an efficient method of working on a deviant child was to place the one who was easily distracted in front of a wall and shield it off by using a screen which would leave only the wall visible. If the child would still be distracted many explained that earmuffs were often used, and proved to be very helpful even after class since they eliminated the stimuli of distracting sound.

Does the child have a problem if the child has a deviant behavior? - If it doesn’t want to come to school then the deviant behavior is a problem. - Linda

We have earmuffs for the ones who take in all sensory input which just flows right in, where you don’t have the filter, where you take in everything. - Anita

Here it can be seen that deviating from the normal behavior causes disciplinary action which reduces the child’s range of stimuli by closing of the field of vision and sound in fear of it distracting the child, which in turn encloses the space even more than the school and its classroom already is.

Another technique Foucault explains is the regulation and control of time by the inducement of the time table and the establishment of rhythms and repetitions (ibid). The
interviewee’s explained that structure and routine was perceived as crucial in order for children to feel safe. It was important that every day would be the same, every day and in every class children should enter the classroom at the exact minute it starts, say good morning, and register their presence.

*It’s all about creating a structure on everything, you have to have a lot of structure, it should be the same thing every day, same lecture, one should enter in the same way, and in this way students learn pretty fast that with this teacher this is how you do.*

Finishing class at the time the teacher ended it was equally important as one respondent explained that at times some would get angry or start crying because they had not been able to finish their work when it was time for lunch break and the teacher told them they had to stop. The respondents gave a vivid picture of the importance of the child’s subjection to a strict time schedule which did not allow tardiness or overlapping. Maria Wester explains that the strict use of time makes the time table an integrated part of the child’s system of routine (Wester, 2008: 193).

The combination of these techniques allows for great supervision which is an important element of discipline (Foucault, 1979: 138). When a child shows signs of deviant behavior the teacher expresses a concern to the student health team which consist of a special education teacher, a counselor, a nurse, a student care coordinator, a principle or assistant principle, and the teacher. An investigation is then initiated and a special education teacher or a counselor steps in and observes the child’s behavior during class to determine if the behavior is deviant and what the causes are. If the behavior is deviant a corrective action plan is organized together with the parents, which works as a contract where certain goals the child should achieve are written down, and the parents together with the student health team signs the contract, and in the best cases the child get to partake in the organizing of those goals.

“But In these small groups they always have someone who tells them that now you are crossing the line, now you are doing wrong, this is not ok, do like this, and eventually they learn.” – Elsa

Then the child’s behavior is constantly evaluated and the student health team reviews the child once a week to make sure the goals of the contract are met. The supervision of experts such as counselors, special education teachers etc. is an example of what Landahl
describes as a psychological discipline which increases the supervision from the teacher to a whole team of experts (Landahl, 2006).

The supervision is not limited to the classroom but also takes place at breaks. The respondents explained that a child with a deviant behavior should always have an assistant who watches over the child constantly, and always makes sure that the child does activities that are controlled and evaluated. It also takes place after school when the student health team asks parents about the child’s history to try to find the reasons for the abnormal behavior. The respondents explained that the collaboration with parents were of great importance, since in order to correct the behavior the parents had to listen to their advice on how to treat the child.

On breaks we work on deviant behaviors by always keeping an eye on them. There are often children who sit outside my office and have a conversation, and then we always have the door open, and we walk outside and say “hey, what kind of language are you using? What are you calling each other? Is that ok?” So we are constantly on them. - Elsa

The respondents from both sample cases explained that in addition to education, the school has an objective of discipline or rearing. This discipline takes the form of in-depth rearing which is the internalization of norms and values (Landahl, 2006: 8), and surface rearing which is the control of the physical body through decree and restrictions (Foucault, 1979: 138). In-depth rearing causes the children to be the bearers and the inflictors of the discipline of themselves (Persson, 2003: 193), and surface rearing is what they are supposed to inflict on themselves.

Is the role of the faculty important in helping a child with a deviant behavior?

- Extremely important. One has to act like a coach, like a brake pad, and like overcoat both physically and mentally. – Anita

There were however examples of deviant behavior in which the behavior came in conflict with the task of transmitting knowledge, like the signs of Asberger where they don’t understand the nuances of language. However this was a great exception, not the rule. There were also one example of a compulsive behavior, and the example of being introvert or having flair as deviant behaviors, however, since these behaviors did not come in conflict with the discipline of school, they would not be pursued. The respondents also explained that a good classroom environment was a tolerant environment; however,
concluding from their answers, their definition of tolerated does not include the examples in this section.

**Conforming to the group dynamic**

One thing which both groups and every respondent kept emphasizing was the importance of the group dynamic in school. Most respondents explained that the group dynamic was the most important aspect out of all the aspects of school, and it felt that this part was too vital to ignore. Finding the underlying reason for the importance of this aspect would prove to be crucial in connecting the parts of how the school disciplines.

The authorities explained that school had an important role of teaching children how to be able to work in a group. They expressed that a social connection between children was important where individuals receive each other with respect and understand and adapt to the social codes of the group of individuals they interact with. The group had to have a certain structure where it was important that it consisted of many individuals of equal age. The size of the group was the essence of its dynamic and it was of importance for the school, which was also one of the reasons homeschooling could not have the same effect as schooling. The size of the group enables the individuals to understand that the belief of the majority is the one to be regarded as paramount.

_In school its more of a bigger group of equal age who share a common interest in school and the arena of learning is only a limited part of life, and then the question becomes if the dynamic of the family is so exciting when it is unchangeable even when it comes to the learning process. I am convinced that you miss out on a lot of useful dynamic in the education at home. It’s very important to be able to work in a group._ – Olsson

The respondents explained that the essence of the group dynamic was its size, which according to Asch’s (1956) experiment is an important factor in getting individuals to conform, since a large group could make an individual doubt the strongest conviction. In Landahl’s study it is seen that the use of the collective is a mechanism of control school uses so that the classmates will discipline each other. Just as in Landahl’s study the respondents explained that it was important that it was a large group of children of the same age, which according to Landahl is to try to establish order (Landahl, 2006: 61).

When such a group exists a friend effect takes place which respondents explained as positive influence where the group members teach each other norms and values, and also
social codes and proper ways of behaving, and make sure that they are upheld. It causes each member of the group to share the same democratic values since these values are learned in the interaction between people, were they learn to take heed to each other in the receiving of one another. The group provides the tools the individuals need to scorn the values imposed by parents since these values are challenged in the interaction between the group members by critically discussing it with the members of the group. The group is also responsible for making sure that each individual behaves properly, as one respondent explained that a jargon which did not coincide with the rest of the individuals would be rejected and the individual would be shunned by the other members of the group. It also helps children to perform well since the child evaluates his or her own performance by comparing it to the rest of the group. If the group conformed to the discipline of school and behaved properly, than this behavior would influence the child to behave in accordance with the group even if it desired to avert.

The dynamic is when you boost each other, what scientists call the friend effect, that friends affect how one is doing in school. That is important. – Persson

Provided that every student can have a jargon which does not at all fit in with the other students and which the other students would feel is an unpleasant way of reconciling with. Now I don’t believe that any people are super-beings and are able to adapt a hundred percent, but if I still say that overall all our teachers can handle this. - Persson

One acquires knowledge in another way in a group or engages in a social setting where one acquires a corresponding development or corresponding values. – Turesson

The influence the group exerts over its members is what Durkheim (1982) describes as social fact which is an external force that coerces individuals to act in a manner which would not manifest outside of the group. This is expressed by the respondents when they emphasize that it is a friend effect, meaning it would not have taken place in the absence of their group of friends. The influence the group exerts coerces the group members by inflicting the democratic values the group is supposed to learn in school. The group also constrains through its social influence by dictating the behavior that should be upheld by every individual, which the respondent explains by saying an improper jargon would be rejected by the other group members. This is an example of how Durkheim explains that the social facts manifests in the collective conviction of the group.

However, while all the respondents emphasized the importance of the group dynamic, they often motivated it by saying that it provided friendships which they believed was in
everyone’s interest without hinting to any disciplinary incentive. One respondent also stated that if a child truly felt happy in their solitude, then that would be respected. However, at the same time they continued by mentioning this would be unfortunate, and that friendships were of benefit since it taught social codes which in this case were codes of disciplined behavior.

While Durkheim thoroughly explains how the social influence manifests, and how it corrects behaviors by punishing what goes against it, and the respondents from the first sample group demonstrated how internalization take place, neither Durkheim nor the respondents of the first sample group were able to adequately explain the social mechanisms behind this phenomenon, and the complexity of this process; hence the reason why this study will go deeper into the subject of social influence by examining how group conformity takes place in the school environment. It could be argued that the method best suited when studying conformity would be by observing students, however, it is imperative to posses the knowledge of how individuals conform to discipline in order to practice the appropriate disciplinary action.

“Human beings are a bit of herd animals and it is natural for us to be able to exist in a larger context.“ - Persson

In The Social Animal, Aronson (1995) describes three ways in which group conformity take place which is through compliance, identification, and internalization. Since internalization has been described with the previous example I will continue by only touching on the former two.

Compliance occurs when an individual conforms in order to gain acceptance or to avoid punishment in the form of rejection or ridicule (ibid). The respondents explained that when children deviated from the normal behavior the classmates would always react to that behavior. Sometimes it would take the form of silence as one respondent explained that when someone acted violently all the other kids would turn quiet and look frightened. At other times the classmates would chastise the individual who were always fussing and fighting by calling him screwy and calling the behavior strange and stupid, and at times the individual who deviated would get jumped by classmates. When name calling and fighting failed, neglecting the individual by ignoring him or her proved to be an efficient method of resolving the behavior. The respondent explained that this method was
recommended by the teachers as a result when the children couldn’t handle the individual on their own.

*They can be quite mean to each other and say ugly things. We do it together, sometimes we talk and say try something else instead, ignore them. If they don’t stop when one has told them of then you let it go through one ear and out the other.* - Elsa

Here it can be seen that the group worked to correct the deviant behavior by ridiculing the individual with name calling and punishing by using violence, and if this proved to be ineffective they turned to rejection.

Identification takes place when an individual shape its behavior in accordance with a group which the individual values, so that the behavior resembles or acts in accordance with that group (ibid). The respondent’s answers resembled the previous research of Qvarsebo as he explained that teachers place children in classrooms to create a desired social pattern. Many answered that children with these behaviors were replaced in other groups, specific groups, who behaved well which the student health team believed would have a positive influence over the individual. This would not be requested by the child but insisted by the student health team, as they would place the child close to certain classmates in class or put them together with the group who behaved the best when they had group activities. At times these children would be able to skip a class like physical education because it led them in to contact with children who caused them to behave improperly.

*You can try to steer the way children are grouped when they are doing different things, we give an extra thought when they have crafts or something that oh these kids are good, he should probably be with them.* – Linda

These examples show that the classmates in school are used as a disciplinary tool as the classmates discipline each other through compliance, identification, and internalization. The fact that the classroom consists of a larger group of classmates affects the degree to which these individuals comply; this larger group was explained as the essence of the group dynamic where a friend effect takes place which the respondents described as a social influence which according to Durkheim (1982) manifests through the collective convictions. The research Landahl (2006: 61) has conducted explains that there has been a shift from encouraging children to respect their teacher to respecting their classmates, and here it can be seen that this is used as a disciplinary tool.
Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of the objective of elementary school and how it shapes the behavior of children. In order to understand its purpose I interviewed authorities and asked them to define it by putting it in relation to an education which takes place outside of school. In order to find out how school shapes behavior I asked the schools experts on behavior what a deviant behavior is, and how they treat that behavior.

The results reveal that school does not only have the purpose of transmitting knowledge, but has in addition to its objective of education a purpose of rearing. These purposes were often explained as having equal importance and were equally emphasized by the respondents. Some explained that the purpose of rearing was of greater importance than the purpose of educating. By the considerable amount of description the respondents gave of how rearing takes place, and their emphasis on the importance of transmitting, values, norms, culture, and proper ways of behaving it is evident that the schools purpose of rearing is a major essence of the school’s goal. Therefore it is imperative that this purpose is not taken for granted and only viewed as an institution of education, and that it is not just school faculty and politicians understand it as an apparatus of rearing, but that parents, children, scientists, and others understand that they send their children to get reared and not just educated.

According to Aronson (1995), internalization occurs when an individual perceive another person or group as trustworthy and as a result accept their convictions as their own. What this thesis implied is that children perceive the individuals in school as trustworthy as a result when school restricts the influence of their parents. Since parents are not allowed to spend too much time with their children due to the risk that they will emulate the values of their parents, school replaces that time, and as a result the individuals in school replaces the trustworthy role of parents.

Judging from the result, the replacement of parents is the most effective method of internalization. As school replaces the role of parents, we are a society which has over 150 years gone from raising to rearing, and since school becomes the new parent and the new conveyer of values, and since it instills the whole society at such an early age when we are
as Durkheim describes it in a state of void, it might be a reason we take school and its purpose for granted.

The school’s task of rearing intends to shape children’s behavior in its way of disciplining children through surface rearing, in-depth rearing, and group conformity. School shapes children into disciplined individuals who behave self-controlled, who come to class, arrive on time, speak decently, walk straight, abide rules, and do their work. Once these behaviors are internalized they are as Durkheim brilliantly describes it, the victims of an illusion which leads them to believe they have themselves produced what has been imposed upon them externally (Durkheim, 1982). These children learn to go on behaving in a disciplined manner without reflecting over the fact that their behavior has been reared and shaped through nine years of discipline. This fact remains in the unconscious of individuals who have internalized it, since it is perceived as an uninfluenced inner state (Durkheim, 1973). Thus we go on behaving in this manner after school, getting up early to go to work, following a strict schedule, taking one lunch break and one shorter break, with the exception of the jobs who have a more flexible schedule fit for individuals with a better self-discipline who inflict this schedule upon themselves. We abide the rules and do our work as disciplined individuals, and perceive it as uninfluenced since we partook in inflicting the discipline.

It is imperative to understand how the disciplinary function of school works, not just in the relationship between the teacher and its students, but how the school disciplines as a whole by enclosing, inflicting time schedules, supervising, inflicting values, and using peer pressure. This thesis does not only reveal that school has another purpose, but also the different disciplinary methods practiced.

With the help of Foucault I was able to understand how the respondents were describing surface rearing. Although his book discipline and punish was first published in 1975 where he uses empirical data going back to 1668, and none of it referred to Swedish schools, his theories proved applicable in this thesis since he describes how school as a whole disciplines. What he is describing is a universal essence of how school works, and regardless of the culture of each classroom, regardless of the quality of teachers, or what resources school has, school will still enclose bodies, it will still enforce repetitions and time schedules, and it will evaluate its progress by supervising.
Foucault did however use examples less applicable to this thesis since the era they were taken from are somewhat out-dated. Judging from the examples of Foucault, school is an institution which is evolving since the rearing the respondents described were in some ways less blatant. The respondents explained that school has gone through reforms in the way that sometimes the surface rearing does not have to be as strict. This is because school works towards implementing self-discipline where the discipline becomes the task of the child and the work load is thus released from school.

This is why the theory of in depth-rearing helped to complement the theories of surface rearing. The new ways of discipline which the respondents explained was an internalization of discipline which Aronson explained as the most permanent. Durkheim’s explanation of how internalization of discipline takes place were very applicable to this thesis since he described how the influence of the parents have to be replaced in order for internalization of an impersonal moral to take place, hence why homeschooling could not be the same as school. Aronson adequately described how internalization takes place when individuals perceive another person or group as trustworthy, and thus explained the method school uses of internalizing discipline.

The prior research had parts which were consistent with the results of this study in the way they explained how surface rearing, in-depth rearing and group conformity take place since they study the norm in school and the disciplinary action which take place when the norm is broken. However, besides the fact that they viewed discipline in a historically emerging aspect, they differed from this study in the way they all studied the environment of the classroom, focusing on the relationship between the teacher and the student, and thus taking the disciplinary methods of school as a whole for granted. This thesis differs in that it puts school and its discipline in relation to something which deviates from it, both by viewing it in relation to homeschooling and deviant behavior. By doing so I received a broader view of how the school disciplines, and showed how school disciplines regardless of the reforms of its internal structure.

**Reflection and critique**

Since this study examines the purpose of school and how it shapes behavior by interviewing the ones who deal with the political aspects of the school and the ones who discipline, I examine what school intends on doing. This thesis does not however examine
the effects it has. If it would have been complemented with observing or interviewing the children’s reaction to this, it might have revealed a discrepancy between how school intends on imposing self-discipline and how children resist conformity. It might also have revealed which methods of discipline proved to be effective, and which ones elicit resistance. It might also have shown that the theories used in this thesis were less applicable for a number of reasons where one could have been that the respondents were unable to explain their own methods of discipline since it might not be reflected on. It might also have revealed the pull factors, as in the factors that motivate individuals to engage in school, which this thesis lacks since it focuses on the push factors of school.

Before I conducted my interviews I did not suppose that I would receive answers which so blatantly revealed that school had a purpose of rearing, and that the rearing would be described by in ways which were so consistent with the theories of Foucault. I realized that I could have asked direct questions on discipline and how it takes place without any defensive responses since the respondents seemed to view it as something natural and accepted. I could also have shaped the questions with the help of the theories I used to get answers which were more consistent with the theories, however by doing so I might have lost the width this study provided.

Further studies

There are many aspects of school which this thesis did not touch upon, however it indicated that other studies could have complemented this one in order to get a more comprehensive view of the aspects of school which are not limited to the aspect of transmitting knowledge or discipline. The authorities mentioned that there were certain norms the school should transmit, and the respondents from the student health team explained a norm which differed somewhat in each school. A question worth studying would be if different schools transmit different norms and how this might create a socio-economic inequality. It might be interesting to examine this with the Bourdieu’s theories of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1994), and study if school transmits different symbolic capital depending on which school one attends.

This study revealed that the school’s definition of deviant behavior was anything which deviated from the purpose of school which was its discipline. Some of the respondents gave examples of deviant behaviors which were being introvert or having flair, yet the
deviant behaviors which were sent to the psychologists were only the ones who challenged the disciplinary objective of school which being introvert or having flair did not do. It would be interesting to study if the diagnoses individuals receive by psychologists are due to a mental distress or if they are given a diagnosis because their behavior goes against some purpose or interest and what interest it is and who’s interest it is.

A complementing study could also be to examine if the school purpose of discipline is much greater than its purpose of transmitting knowledge. When students are tested, they are almost always tested on the knowledge they have learned most recently. The tests examine how well student memorize the information they expect to be asked on their test. If the grade is based on their attainment of knowledge it would be interesting to do what schools never do, which is to test how much of that knowledge still remains by testing the same information years later. If it is that most student score poorly on these test, then maybe one can come to the conclusion that school does not test how much knowledge one possesses, but it tests how well one disciplined oneself to memorize the information that would be asked on that test. If we forget those large amounts of information, then maybe they are meant to test the degree of self-discipline instead of possession of knowledge.

The phenomenon of the different types of rearing and discipline is not limited to school, it could vary well be applied to other cases. It could very well be applied at more advanced stages of education. Ironically the researcher sits on a beautiful sunny summer day enclosed in a dark room, writing about how school encloses children. He does not have a fixed schedule given to him or any supervision, instead he creates his own fixed schedule and supervises himself in the enclosed room he has placed himself in, since he long ago learned to discipline himself and his research will be heavily dependent on his ability to master self-discipline. When his research is done, it is his classmates which will acknowledge and oppose his work in a seminar of critique, and while they believe it is their own critique they are giving, it has on the contrary been taught to them through their last years of education. A reason that they might be unaware of this could be due to the fact that they have internalized their assignment of disciplining their classmates. Another reason could be that it is expected behave in this manner in school, and an instructor sits at the end of the row, making sure everyone behaves in the appropriate way.


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