

# To Teach Undercover: A Liberal Art of Rule

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**Abstract:** School-age educare centres in Sweden have previously not engaged in teaching guided by objectives, but since 2016 there has been a legal requirement to do so as part of an assignment to complement the knowledge requirements in school. Through focus group discussions with children and school-age educare teachers this study explores *how* it is possible to teach in a voluntary educational programme such as school-age educare. The analysis problematises the voluntary nature of school-age educare in relation to the requirement to teach by using the concept *liberal arts of rule* while asking *what* can be governed and *how* one can govern in these centres. The results show that the children willingly participate in school-age educare since they experience themselves to be free and with great opportunities to play when in the centres. At the same time, the teachers fulfil the complementary assignment by disguising learning while teaching undercover.

**Keywords:** extended education, school-age educare, complementary assignment, advanced liberal rule

## Introduction

How does one teach in a context where teaching —by tradition— is not considered legitimate? This seems to be a task that is not easy to perform, yet it is a mission that Swedish school-age educare faces today. How this task is handled by teachers and how children experience their participation in school-age educare is explored in this article through a qualitative analysis of focus group discussions.

School-age educare, hereinafter referred to as SAEC, is an integral part of the education system in Sweden, constituted of both education and care – educare. Legislation stipulates that all municipalities must offer this kind of educational programme, staffed with university-educated SAEC-teachers among other pedagogues, for children in preschool classes, compulsory school and compulsory school for children with learning disabilities. Unlike the school, SAEC is completely free from knowledge requirements and mandatory attendance for children; nevertheless 85% of children aged six to nine are enrolled in this educational programme (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2019a, hereinafter SNAE). However, SAEC centres are governed by the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) and a national curriculum (SNAE, 2019b) and through these they are regulated to *complement* the school. The curriculum requires co-operation between the different forms of education with an intention to enhance children's development and learning. The complementary assignment for SAEC revolves around offering learning that is situationally governed, experience-based and group-oriented and with a content that is based on children's needs, interests and initiative.

Since 2016, SAEC teachers have been obliged to teach while guided by objectives. During this time the term teaching was entered into a new chapter intended solely for SAEC in

the national curriculum. While the purpose, objectives and central content were clarified, the concept of teaching was given a prominent role: to teach *should* aim to stimulate children's development and learning, and offer meaningful leisure time (SNAE, 2019b). It is therefore through teaching that the centres should complement the other education forms in their implementation and fulfilment of the objectives of the curriculum (SNAE, 2016). In the Education Act, teaching is defined as goal-driven processes that, under the guidance of teachers, aims at development and learning through the acquisition and development of knowledge and values (SFS, 2010:800, 3§). The curriculum includes a supplement which states that in SAEC, the concept of teaching should be given a wide interpretation, where care, development and learning in the teaching forms a whole (for more detailed explanations of the Swedish SAEC, see for example Klerfelt & Ljusberg, 2018 and Klerfelt, 2017).

SNAE points out that the concept of teaching is controversial and debated vis-a-vis SAEC. In their evaluation of the new curriculum chapter a dissatisfaction emerges among the personnel in the centres, revealing opinions that emphasise that the concept does not belong in SAEC. According to SNAE there are fears that the use of the term 'teaching'—distinctly associated with the school— will reinforce an ongoing and contested schoolification of SAEC. The evaluation also shows different interpretations of the complementary assignment among the personnel, some indicating that the new curriculum chapter—with its focus on teaching guided by objectives— may lead to overly controlled activities, which is also considered too similar to the school (SNAE, 2018).

Overall, this indicates contradictions between traditional and newer ideals, implying a disagreement about what SAEC is or should be these days. This study, therefore, intends to highlight how this contradiction is handled by SAEC teachers in SAEC centres when assigned to complement the school by conducting teaching guided by objectives in a voluntary educational programme, and in relation to this the study examines how the children perceive their time in SAEC today.

## Aim and Research Questions

To make visible how teaching, as part of the complementary assignment, is managed in practice in SAEC, the study explores how children and SAEC teachers talk about the purpose of SAEC and about what they actually do when in the centres. Given the voluntary nature of SAEC, the aim is to problematise the requirement of teaching in relation to *what* can be governed and *how* one can govern in the centres. The analytical focus is directed towards the following research questions:

- How do the children talk about their time spent in SAEC?
- How do the teachers talk about their work in the centres?
- How is it possible to teach in a voluntary educational programme?

## Previous Research

As part of the research field called ‘extended education’, Swedish research has since 2016 — when the curriculum chapter exclusively about SAEC was launched— engaged in some studies, mentioned below, which in various ways, to some extent, deal with the concept of teaching and/or the complementary assignment. Together they paint a picture in which the centres are caught between a tradition of social pedagogy and a contemporary educational discourse, positioning SAEC as an arena offering both social everyday knowledge and formal school knowledge. In the tension surrounding older traditions and newer standards, a shift is visible in the policy documents, moving SAEC away from an assignment focused on care towards a strengthened educational assignment focusing on objectives, individual performance and assessment. However, such a schoolification is not assumed to be as prominent in the centres. There is said to be a gap between what the centres are expected to do and what they actually do. A traditional way of working is prioritised at the expense of the newer goal-oriented and curriculum-bound assignment (Boström & Berg, 2018). In the centres, a social pedagogical discourse still seems dominant (Lager, 2019), where a relational approach means that personnel consider themselves as role models, guiding children in social learning (Jonsson & Lillvist, 2019). One reason this discourse continues to be central is said to be the long history of care and development of children’s relational and social abilities. As a consequence, teaching in SAEC today is shown to be primarily about care, relations and children learning to play with others (Lager, 2018). Along with this way of teaching, a persistent starting point in the child’s perspective is found when analysing how a commonly shared discourse produces a professional identity among personnel in SAEC centres (Klerfelt, 2018). This professional identity —emphasising fundamental values of social relations— is claimed already to have been created and adopted in the teacher education (Ackesjö, Lindqvist & Nordäng, 2019), for example, through the literature student teachers are exposed to in their education. This literature ties teacher’s professionalism in SAEC to the skill of not being formal and school-like, but still being educational in a politically approved way (Ljusberg & Holmberg, 2019). Due to this kind of ambiguity, the personnel consider their educational assignment to be unclear. When giving the skill of not being too formal and school-like a high value, the personnel experience dissatisfaction when they need to be controlling towards both children and content (Ludvigsson & Falkner, 2019). In addition, there are different understandings of the complementary assignment (Perselli & Hörnell, 2019). Some researchers call for other concepts, specifying the unique character of SAEC, to avoid losing special features in the SAEC tradition and end up too deep into the school tradition (Klerfelt & Ljusberg, 2018).

The present study is an additional contribution in the field of extended education, and tries to broaden our understanding of how extended education can be staged.

## Theoretical and Methodological Framework

As a way of framing the analytical focus, a theoretical perspective with its point of departure in the Foucauldian notion of governmentality will be outlined. Such a qualitative approach

contributes knowledge of how children and SAEC teachers create meaning and find solutions based on available conditions in the centres.

Formal education has for centuries been a practice of governing, a way of shaping ideal citizens as a way of trying to achieve a better society. Today, a new set of educational obligations have emerged, not confined in space and time in the same ways as the school. Besides this, a shift in *how* to govern has been established. The value of learning has become a dominant principle of our time; consequently, children are taught in arenas other than the school. Simultaneously, the value of freedom underpins our conceptions of how our life should be organised; consequently, children cannot be forced into things in any way possible. For that reason, the government of freedom will be theorised here (Fejes, 2006; Foucault, 1997; Rose, 1999).

In Foucault's later work, he addresses the governability of subjects and discusses how the emergence of the modern social state enabled changed ways of exercising power involving an increased governability of people's conduct. These forms of governing can be analysed using the concept of governmentality, putting the practice of governing into question. Analysing governmentality means the searchlight is directed at liberal rationalities of governing, implying liberalism as a mentality of ruling, a mode of governing. The mentalities of governing have shifted from repressive and centralised power into decentralised rationalities of governing via institutions, such as SAEC, and via subjects, for example children in the SAEC centres (Fejes, 2006; Foucault, 1982, 2003; Hultqvist & Petersson, 1995). One way to describe this shift is by naming a pervasive rationality of governing as *advanced liberal rule*. This kind of rationality degovernmentalises the state but de-statises practices of government. If possible, it seeks to govern through regulated choices of citizens rather than governing through society. The advanced liberal rule locates social institutions within a market logic, comprising ideas of competition, benchmarking, accountability and consumer demands, thereby creating a distance between political decisions and providers of social services. In a wide range of choices, people are created as autonomous actors who need to choose and thereby fulfil themselves as citizens. This is a form of governing conducted through people's own free choices, using techniques to act in the name of freedom (Fejes, 2006; Hultqvist & Petersson 1995; Rose, 1996). That is, to shape people's behaviour in accordance with particular norms and ideas. Instead of laws, rationality shapes people's conduct by working through their desires and beliefs:

The regulation of the conduct becomes a matter of each individual's desire to govern their own conduct freely in the service of the maximization of a version of their happiness and fulfilment that they take to be their own, but such lifestyle maximization entails a relation to authority in the very moment as it pronounces itself the outcome of free choice. (Rose, 1996, pp. 58–59)

Accordingly, in a productive way advanced liberal rule governs the conduct by shaping, promoting and attributing subjectivity. Government of subjectivity thereby operates through a complex and heterogeneous assemblage of technologies that act as relays, bringing political ambitions into alignment with the ideals and aspirations of individuals. In Foucault's thinking, subjectivity is what people *do*, rather than who they *are*, it is an active process of becoming, a technology of living. People learn to recognise themselves as certain subjects since their understanding of themselves is linked to the ways they are governed. The subject acts, but also acts within the limits of subjectivation. It is produced rather than oppressed and animated rather than constrained (Ball, 2013; Dean, 2010; Rose, 1989/1999).

In conclusion, to problematise the requirement to teach in a voluntary education programme is to raise the question of *what to govern* followed by the question of *how to govern* the conduct of individuals at liberty, in order to make visible how children in SAEC centres can be taught in legitimate ways today.

## Material and Procedure

The analysis is based on discussions in focus groups recorded in 2019 in three different SAEC centres, located in a large Swedish city. The discussions included three sessions with a total of eight SAEC-teachers and seven sessions with a total 23 children aged eight to nine. Each of the sessions with the teachers lasted about one hour and the sessions with children about 15–25 minutes. All participants gave their consent to take part in the study, and were informed about the ethical guidelines concerning research involving people. In the case of the children, their guardians also gave their written consent.

Focus groups here used since such a method is suitable when the interest is in how people, in this case children and teachers, make sense of a given topic (Morgan, 1997). The discussions were focused around a set of predefined issues and all participants were asked to discuss the question “What is SAEC?” Beyond this, the children also talked about “Why do children attend SAEC centres?” The teachers, in addition, talked about “What purpose does SAEC have in the education system, and in society, today?” The moderator was the researcher; however, the researcher took a passive role to enable open discussions between the participants. Accordingly, the discussions were thematically controlled, while avoiding control of content as far as possible.

The analytical approach used was closely related to the theoretical perspective. Thus, the notions of governmentality, liberal arts of rule and of freedom guided the analytical readings of the transcripts from the sessions. In the initial readings, were highlighted containing talk about what children and teachers do and why, talk about teaching, and talk about the relationship between SAEC and school. In the continued reading, passages analytically distinguished as being about *what* is possible to govern and about *how* it is possible to govern were marked. Based on this, the analysis was then structured into a section called *SAEC from the children's' point of view* and a section called *SAEC from the teachers' perspective*. In the analysis, excerpts from the focus group sessions are used to make visible and problematise mentalities of how to make children governable in the centres and what kind of liberty appears compatible with advanced liberal rule in SAEC. The question dealing with how to teach in a legitimate way in SAEC today is discussed in the concluding remarks.

The excerpts that are given in the analysis are translated from Swedish. For ethical reasons, the various children, teachers and centres are not defined, not even with fictitious names, to avoid the risk that they may be identified. Instead, the participants are referred to only as children or SAEC teachers. However, the excerpts found in the analysis consist of discussions from all centres, from all participating teachers, and from about half of the participating children.

## Analysis

### SAEC from the Children's Point of View

*What* is possible to govern in SAEC today? When coercion and demands are not appropriate and children cannot be forced into things, other technologies must be put into play. To be able to let the children act freely but at the same time control them, the government needs to be aimed at their subjectivity, creating children who like SAEC but also enabling the centres to meet the expectations found in the curriculum. Accordingly, it is children's mentalities that need to be worked upon, and so the answer to *what* can be governed is children's conceptions of themselves and of SAEC. On the theoretical basis that their conduct is shaped through their desires and beliefs, how do the children describe their participation in SAEC?

To begin with, the children are unanimous on one point, when in SAEC centres you have fun and do whatever you want. By that means, they seem to regard themselves able to exercise some sort of freedom when in the centres. Nevertheless, they are not entirely sure why they are there at all. According to them it might be because their parents are working and that they deserve to be free and enjoy themselves after a hard day at school: "Maybe to have a break and have fun when you've done quite a lot of work that you might not want to do." Portraying SAEC centres as a break from school indicates that they are aware of the different expectations of their behaviour depending on which setting they are in. They draw a clear line between time spent in school and time spent in the centres. In SAEC the children find themselves less controlled than in the school. This provides a contrast to the school, and there are opportunities to do things you want to do instead of requirements to do things you might not want to do. This indicates that in SAEC the children are enabled to act autonomously, which subjectivates a mentality where freedom of choice is central, as part of fulfilling themselves as citizens.

The children's ideas about SAEC are consistent: it is a fun place to be. A fun place is also a place where you are willing to spend time, even if you do not have to. Thus, their mentalities become inclined towards voluntary participation. Another reason to spend time in the centres that they mention is the opportunity to spend time with friends:

You are kind of there to be with friends and then there are different things you can do, and you can, for example, go to the spa room if you want to, be in the craft room if you want to, and be in various rooms and play with friends.

In SAEC you are a child in charge of your own mobility, and you decide for yourself who you spend time with and what you do. Seemingly, you are trusted to make your own choices without being fully supervised. From the children's point of view, they can do pretty much whatever they want.

When the children talk about SAEC, it is always in relation to the school. In addition to descriptions of involuntary work, the school is distinguished from SAEC through explanations that emphasise that learning takes place in school while SAEC is all about play. The children adopt the mentality that play is not equated with learning; instead play is described as something that is purely fun. The children explain that unlike SAEC, school means you have to follow some sort of plan, keep a schedule and work on school subjects. School means compulsory attendance and that you have to do what the schoolteachers tell you. In the school, children are subordinated and under the control of others, both teachers and external authorities, aspects not prominent in the descriptions of SAEC. The children appear to be well aware of what applies in the different settings and they accept the disparities but prefer the



conditions prevailing in SAEC. The content of school is predetermined and they are required to learn things, which, according to them, is not the case in SAEC. While the time spent in the centres can be summarised in terms of ‘want to’ in line with their own desires, the school is about ‘have to’ in line with the views of the schoolteachers:

In school it's more like this, you need like... what do you say, you need to learn stuff, what to say, like this: it is more sit-still-learning. So, you sit still and learn calm things, for example maths, Swedish, social sciences and things like that. It's more like certain lessons and stuff, more determined time. And in SAEC it's like you can move freely. Perhaps you might practice making an earring. But, it's like if you want to. But in school you have to learn because there are basic subjects and blah, blah, blah.

When distinguishing between the settings it seems easier to put into words how the school is structured than to explain how things work in SAEC in detail, since the school is organised in a clearer way than the time in SAEC centres. In SAEC the children say they are to a large extent allowed to be self-organising, which is only advantageous from the children's perspective. Linked to the vagueness of how SAEC is organised is also the children's uncertainty about who works there. In school there are teachers, but they do not really know what profession the adults have in SAEC.

Although the attitude towards the school is apparently less positive than towards SAEC, the children say it is useful to go to school but “at school you have to work really hard. It is quite hard.” In contrast, while in SAEC centres, they are free and can do things that suit them since there is no one there who control them. “It's like you have a break, and you are free to play.” They can come as they are, they get to relax and can just take it easy. The children define time in SAEC centres as if it were leisure time, despite the fact that it is an educational institution. In the mentality the children display during the discussions, leisure in SAEC is basically portrayed like leisure elsewhere.

Yet another difference is that the school requires the children to sit still, while in SAEC they are free to be physically active. In school:

You are sitting still, and then it's always so nice when the teacher says, “Thanks for today!” and they come from SAEC and say, “Yes, jump and play!” And we can run and everyone just rushes from there, everyone just runs.

Freedom to decide your own mobility is highly valued. For that reason, the children emphasise that they can leave SAEC if they want to, but they are never allowed to leave school. Some of the children say they like that they can do different things during the day since “It is good that you can learn in school and play in SAEC, like everything on the same school day”, which shows that in the children's conceptions, one of the most significant differences between these two institutions seems to be that learning primarily takes place in school, and SAEC is mainly about play. But even if most think school is important, they long for the time in school to end so they can go to the centres: “After school you should be rewarded with something, because you've been working all day, then you come here and you can play.” Apparently, what they like most about SAEC is that it is not school. In their understanding of it, it is rather the opposite. SAEC is everything that the school is not —SAEC offers what the school does not offer, what is not possible in school is possible in SAEC.

In conclusion, the children like SAEC and when in the centres they tend to perceive themselves as free and utilise that freedom to play. In relation to the centre's complementary assignment and their obligation to conduct teaching guided by objectives, this might be somewhat contradictory. How is the children's mentality in SAEC —linked to freedom and play— compatible with the requirements of education? To get the whole picture, the SAEC

teachers' version of why children are in SAEC centres and their focus group discussions about how they work is needed.

### SAEC from the Teachers' Perspective

*How* is it possible to govern in SAEC today? What are the techniques used to govern the children's mentality allowing the teachers to teach in line with the objectives in this voluntary educational programme?

Based on the SAEC teachers' discussions, children spend time in the centres in order to become good citizens in the society when they grow up. To induce them into this ideal citizenship in the voluntary setting, the personnel talk about themselves not as teachers—their formal title—but as mainstays, guides and mentors leading the children in the right direction: "We guide children, so that they will become good people." Liberal art of rule in SAEC thus comprises techniques of guidance, subjectivating the mentalities of the children in certain ways. These certain ways are related to the specific purpose the teachers say is always present in their work and to what they want to achieve in the centres: "We are educating them more now." They emphasise a greater educational awareness in the work than before. The teachers strive to ensure the children grow through the education they offer. They want them to be able to take responsibility, draw conclusions and to understand the society, thus being able to manage life in and outside the centres and be a part of the society. To succeed in these ambitions, they say they need to be strategic:

We have a well targeted focus, we plan: What is the purpose? Which goals do we have? We evaluate to see what we came up with and then we continue to work to make our centre as good as possible for the children.

These strategies are barely visible, if not invisible, when the children talk about SAEC. Part of these strategies seems to be to keep the children out of them. Recurring in the discussions are the teachers' unspoken motives for what they do and why. They always seem to know what they do and why, while the children do not, as the educational aim exists mainly in their minds. The objective "is still in the back of our minds when we shape our content and our activities." This tends to be the way to align aims, planning and goals with meaningfulness, spontaneity and voluntariness for children, constituting the liberal art of rule in SAEC; a power technology used in such a way that the children do not feel controlled, but instead feel free. In a delicate way, the children's mentalities are worked upon so that their beliefs about SAEC merge with their own desires. Although the children perceive themselves as free, the teachers—somewhat paradoxically—indicate that teaching is ongoing all the time in SAEC. Teaching takes place wherever you are and whatever you do: "When you are in SAEC centres, you teach. [...] Teaching is conducted continuously." At the same time, they do not use the word teaching in front of the children, indicating that the concept is not quite legitimate to use in the SAEC context, even though teaching is a requirement in the centres today:

We don't call it teaching, because I think, both in my own mind and in the children's minds... If so, it becomes something else, something more rigid. If I say, "Now it's teaching in...", I want to beware of that. Because I can absolutely teach in the centre, but I do not use the term there. It is about the desire to learn, we're talking about "It's fun!" or "We'll have fun together" or so. So, even though in my own mind, in my own planning, I understand that this is teaching actually, just like everything else, I don't use the word teaching among the children.



This liberal art of rule, teaching undercover, seems to please the children: “The children want their free time when in SAEC centres.” It also works to prevent the children from being “more school-oriented in their thinking” since the teachers do not want them to experience being in school in the afternoons. In the same way that the children distinguish between school and SAEC, the personnel draw clear boundaries between the settings; however, seemingly not for the same reason. The teachers consider that very important learning continues in the centres, but say: “We don’t talk much about what they have learned or about learning. But we have it in us, even though we may not talk that way to the children.” That is, while the children talk about the school as learning and SAEC as play, the teachers talk with children about school as teaching and about SAEC as fun. Simultaneously, in the mentality they display, SAEC is all about learning and the work of the teachers consists solely of teaching. So, despite the fact that everything is teaching, nothing is staged explicitly as teaching. Rather, “you are like a big, huge, family in the afternoons.” When in school you “inhale and are filling up” and when in SAEC you “exhale”, and the teachers claim children learn a lot while exhaling. The learning curve in SAEC is said to be huge although everything happens while children intentionally are supposed to experience their time in the centres as a sort of break:

And we do it all in the break [referring to SAEC activities in the afternoons]. Grasp how much that happens during this break. This indirect way of learning, it’s much easier to absorb.

Doing things indirectly becomes part of the technology used in the liberal art of rule that the teachers are devoted to, letting the children believe that they are engaged in play while there is a hidden agenda, with teaching and learning at the top. Making children governable is therefore about inducing them to believe that the intentions of SAEC are something quite different from the school, even though they are almost the same; whether the children are in the school or in the centres they should, based on the objectives in the curricula and due to the complementary assignment, continuously be developing and learning.

The knowledge and the abilities the children are taught theoretically in the school, they learn in more implicit ways in the centres. For example, if the children happen to love some of the things they do in school, the teachers just let them devote themselves more to these. In this way, SAEC complements the school, without the children noticing that they are learning:

There are those who love to read, who sit and read in a reading corner. And I think that’s a great complement to the school. Here they get the enjoyable reading and stuff like that, without them thinking about it.

According to the teachers, the children wish they were at SAEC all day, probably as a consequence of the experience of not having to perform and deliver in the centres as they do in the school. In surveys about how the children experience SAEC, there is sometimes — surprisingly, since the teachers does not seem to talk about this with the children— a question about what the children are learning in the centres:

Usually it’s that question the children ask about: “But learn? That’s something you do in lessons?” For them SAEC is... It’s a place to relax. It’s not supposed to be like sitting at a school desk because that’s what they think about, when thinking about learning. That “Now I am supposed to learn stuff. Now I learn maths” All this socialising, that’s usually not learning for children. It’s just something that happens.

For the teachers, social learning equals learning for life, which is equal to spending time in the centres. In SAEC, children prepare for life —how to use proper table manners, road safety, how to be a good friend and so on— through daily practice, and are not necessarily aware of the teaching and learning involved. When discussing this, the teachers refer to how SAEC

complements the home —not the school as requested in the Education Act—by providing the children everyday knowledge: “It’s our job to get the children to... yes to complement their everyday life with other things than what they do at home.” This seems essential for the teachers since: “They get to learn so much in SAEC that they don’t need to learn at home.” The teaching that is constantly in progress and seem to be hidden for children, tend to be important to make visible to parents as a way to ensure professionalism. It seems important that the parents know what their children are actually doing in the centres:

The parents have begun to understand that we have an intention, exactly, that we raise... that we work really hard with that. That it’s not just the... the storage. There are reasons behind the things we do.

To communicate the reasons behind things appears fairly simple in relation to parents, but when governing individuals at liberty —the children in SAEC centres— the conditions are different. When dealing with coercion, it needs to be disguised just like the teaching and learning: “When you start in SAEC you should try different activities. It becomes a tiny obligation, without the children grasping it. [...] So it is a tiny obligation, but a disguised obligation. They have no idea that we...” Like hidden coercion, “you can always have fake participation and similar things too.” Again, secret motives serve as the key to governing the children without the children realising that they are being taught. The teachers work upon the mentalities of the children, shaping their desires in ways that allow the children to experience themselves as free to play, while from the teachers’ perspective the free and playing child is also a governable child who learns through the undercover teaching.

## Concluding Remarks

### The Art of Teaching Undercover

The contradictions between traditional and newer ideals implying a disagreement about what SAEC is or should be these days, which are highlighted in the introduction and in previous research are not noticeable in the children’s conceptions about SAEC and what they are able to do in the centres. Regarding the teachers, they deal with this contradiction by going undercover. While they acknowledge the complementary assignment and the requirement to teach, they disguise these aspects while working with the children. Somehow, they seem to manage to fulfil their professional assignment and at the same time keep the children unaware of what is going on to keep them voluntarily engaged in the activities offered in the centres.

Within the contemporary SAEC discourse it is possible —and expected— for children to talk about SAEC as a free and fun place with unlimited opportunities for play. Such a mentality is necessary for them to be governable and, thus, to voluntarily participate in the educational programme. At the same time, the teachers need to talk about SAEC as educational and about a professional purpose in their work. However, this only applies when talking to each other, in documentation of quality work and when talking with parents. When talking to the children they need to emphasise that SAEC is fun. The dichotomisation the children use to differentiate SAEC from school is encouraged by the personnel, letting their beliefs and desires merge in a mentality where SAEC is about leisure and school is about teaching, SAEC is about play and school is about learning, SAEC is about mobility and school is about being

sedentary. These dichotomies do not exist in the same way in the teacher's conception of SAEC, since to them, SAEC is teaching disguised as leisure and learning disguised as play. Being sedentary is disguised as mobility in that way that the children think it is OK to sit still as long as it is self-chosen, such as when they choose to sit and read. That is, when skilfully disguising that SAEC is much like school, the personnel make children governable in a regulated freedom. The complementary assignment can thus be said to be met when freedom becomes an achievement of government. The advanced liberal rule used in the centres promotes a specific form of freedom as a way of integrating the children's mentalities and conduct into the practices of government (Fejes, 2006; Rose, 1996).

To teach, when teaching —by tradition— is not considered legitimate is therefore about working undercover, meaning that SAEC must always be staged as fun as part of the work to disguise that the reward the children believe they get after school is actually more teaching and learning. Here, a relevant question demands attention: How does this disguising work from the child's perspective, which is said to be highly central in SAEC? How can one take their perspective into account, listen to them, and promote their interests while also withholding key aspects, like teaching guided by objectives, from them? Is this the public secret of the profession, stressing that SAEC is based on the children's interests and initiative, when instead, SAEC revolves around the complementary assignment and teaching? Is talk about the child's perspective primarily only a well-polished surface? When professionalism in SAEC is about the skill of being school-like, and thereby politically approved, without the children noticing, the recently imposed requirement of teaching does not seem to legitimise the concept itself, but rather the advanced liberal rule of freedom.

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