The Education Dispute in Baden-Württemberg: Homosexuality as Danger to Social Order

MATTHIAS FUCHS

University of Passau, Germany

Introduction

In 2013, a draft of a revised school curriculum in Baden-Württemberg advocated a cross-disciplinary treatment of sexual diversity. Subsequently, a petition in opposition to the government's educational program was initiated: its main point of contention was the state's interference with the parents' right to educate their children about sexuality at home; this was accompanied by the fear that the state aimed to 're-educate' children in schools. The petition's media impact invited conservative, religious, and especially right-wing groups to piggyback their agendas on this extensive coverage and to use it as justification for the public demonstration 'Demo für Alle'. This is a quote from said petition translated into English:[1]

> We support the endeavour to combat the discrimination of homosexuals, bisexuals, transgenders, transsexuals and intersexuals. Existing discrimination shall be a topic in school curricula. The 'Establishment of Guiding Principles' and the action plan 'For Sexual Acceptance & Equal Rights Baden-Württemberg' nonetheless overshoot the goal of preventing discrimination. The present paper 'Establishment of Guiding Principles' and the announcement to implement 'the acceptance of sexual diversity' into the educational standards of individual subjects, for us, aims at a pedagogical, moral, and ideological re-education in schools.[2]

We can read this refusal to make non-heterosexual ways of living equally valid topics at schools as heterosexual ways of life – while at the same time aspiring to not discriminate

---

[1] All original quotations from the chosen examples have been translated from German into English. Original quotations will be cited in footnotes.

[2] "Wir unterstützen das Anliegen, Homosexuelle, Bisexuelle, Transgender, Transsexuelle und Intersexuelle nicht zu diskriminieren. Bestehende Diskriminierung soll im Unterricht thematisiert werden. Die 'Verankerung der Leitprinzipien' und der Aktionsplan 'Für sexuelle Akzeptanz & gleiche Rechte Baden-Württemberg' schießen jedoch über das Ziel der Verhinderung von Diskriminierung hinaus. Das vorliegende Papier 'Verankerung der Leitprinzipien' und die Ankündigung die 'Akzeptanz sexueller Vielfalt' in ähnlicher Weise in den Bildungsstandards der einzelnen Fächer zu verankern, zielt für uns auf eine pädagogische, moralische und ideologische Umerziehung an den allgemeinbildenden Schulen." (Zukunft-Verantwortung-Lernen e.V. 2013)

against homosexuals – as indicative of a desire for clear-cut heteronormative conformity. Within the endeavour to not discriminate against non-heterosexual ways of life lies the practice of explicitly marking deviations from the heterosexual ideal. Sexual deviation, which encompasses not only homosexuality but all ways of LGBT identification, is thus placed in a tolerated zone at the borders of normality. The choice of words in the preceding excerpt, including 'moral and ideological re-education', moreover, reveals fears about how deviant ways of life could obtain the same status as normal ways of life. At worst, a new normal could form, which then would push 'normal' heterosexuality into the sphere of the marginal. As becomes evident when looking at the discussion about curricula and, more broadly, at similar phenomena like the 'Manif Pour Tous' movement in France, for example, normality is contested and accompanied by constant social conflict between those who seek to change notions of normality and those who seek to uphold the borders of normality. Social integration of homosexuality in particular continues to be disputed, which is apparent in a variety of different societal debates about the topic. In addition to the aforementioned controversy concerning school curricula, the legal integration of same-sex couples into marriage law – a process that can be witnessed since the 1990s in Germany and other countries – is at the heart of such considerations. All cases of social or legal integration evoke questions of boundaries: who may be integrated? What are the limits of integration?

In the following, I want to consider the establishment, stabilisation and semantic weighting of borders of normality as part of the education dispute in Baden-Württemberg. Within the spectrum of the normal, borders require both legitimisation and semantic solidification to obtain societal validity. I will focus on symbolic boundaries, which permeate social order and create hierarchies between groups in society. "Symbolic boundaries are often used to enforce, maintain, normalize, or rationalize social boundaries as exemplified by the use of culture markers in class distinctions [...] or cognitive stereotyping in gender inequalities." (Lamont/Molnár 2002: 186) Such boundaries manifest as part of a society's social order and entail consequences of in- and exclusion. They cause a classification and aggregation of individuals, which imply social difference and real-world effects for those affected. My analysis explores the question of how symbolic borders are drawn in the aforementioned dispute and how the separation as well as differentiation among two groups – homosexuals and heterosexuals – are constructed and legitimized. For this purpose, I refer to the results of a discourse analysis conducted with newspaper articles about the education dispute in Baden-Württemberg. Processes of integration are always accompanied by conflict determined through discourse and, thus, also *visible* in discourse. The debate about curricula makes this clear, since it is a conflict in which certain social groups purposefully oppose integration – more specifically the non-discriminatory treatment of non-heterosexual forms of life in the classroom. As a first step, I will thus delineate theoretical positions according to their relevance for the negotiation of borders in the process of the discussion of normality.

Second, I will present the results of my analysis and locate them within my theoretical framework.

Border Disputes

New Right movements operate on the general idea of border closure (Wodak 2015), which, next to material borders such as national ones, also encompasses symbolic borders like the borders of normality. Both possible demarcations, be they manifest and material or abstract and symbolic, evince the efficacy of border stabilisation most notably in the provision of security for those who move within said borders by grace of, on the one hand, an explicit separation of inside and outside and, on the other, the establishment and emphasis of difference between groups. Following Ruth Wodak's argument, borders and their negotiation as key elements of right-wing populism are the focus of my analysis. Considering the possibilities of integration, Lamont and Molnár (2002) define symbolic boundaries as such:

> Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space. They are tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality. Examining them allows us to capture the dynamic dimensions of social relations, as groups compete in the production, diffusion, and institutionalization of alternative systems and principles of classifications. Symbolic boundaries also separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership. (168)

Accordingly, an investigation of symbolic boundaries necessitates discourse analysis as it enables us to trace negotiation processes and lines of conflict; more specifically, it allows us to see the legitimisation strategies of drawing boundaries between hetero- and homosexuals and the generation of two distinct groups. The demarcation and separation of distinct groups on a semantic level have consequences for social order, which causes and legitimises social disparity. Michel Foucault considers discourses to "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (1972: 49). Lamont and Molnár underline this position and refer to the fact that symbolic borders have distinct effects on reality by exposing the interplay between symbolic and social borders:

> Social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities. [...] But symbolic and social boundaries should be viewed as equally real. The former exists at the intersubjective level whereas the latter manifest themselves as groupings of individuals. (2002: 168f)

In this way, discourses acquire socio-theoretical pertinence because they produce and stabilise social order. At the same time, they facilitate processes of classification and

hierarchical differentiation between said groups. Classifications are negotiated socially and are connected to evaluations, which in turn establish social order, as Pierre Bourdieu (1984) explains:

> [S]ocial classifications are not based on objective separation, but connect with socially constructed evaluations that do not precede society. Classificatory schemes and social structures are engendered socially, reciprocally relate to one another, and generate a kind of social order based on the distance and proximity to other agents and groups. (466f)

Classifications or groupings of individuals, according to Bourdieu, do not establish coequal groups as pure descriptors of social structure. Classifications merge with evaluative ascriptions, qualities and stereotypes of a particular group, which induces a hierarchic ordering. Through symbolic boundaries, social classifications have an internal closing point and an external delimiting effect. They constitute social groups and exclude those who do not belong. This raises the following questions: which kind of demarcation operations can be made visible? How is homosexuality and heterosexuality distinguished and what does the closure and stabilization of these boundaries mean?

Following Jürgen Link's theories on normalism (2014), I want to proceed from the assumption that discursive strategies make the closure of symbolic boundaries stabilise social order. In Link's approach, the category of normality as a determinant discursive marker is crucial for the description of current western societies. Link develops his argument throughout several works on literature and media discourses; he defines normalism as "the ensemble of all discursive dispositifs and cultural authorities (or institutions) that produce normalities – as the supposedly most important controlling and regulating authority of modern dynamics." (2014: 11)

What is important for normality is the need for a border marking the range of abnormality in the fringe areas. Normality cannot exist without abnormality; it requires deviation as demarcation and point of reference. The areas of abnormality are the result of negotiation processes and, hence, products of discursive negotiation: borders are drawn semantically, need legitimization, and are accompanied by conflict. Regarding the borders, Link distinguishes between protonormalistic and flexible normalistic strategies. Both need to be understood as ideal types. Currently, Link assumes flexible normalism to be the dominant strategy. Protonormalism is defined by fixed borders that demarcate the narrow range of the normal, whereas the borders are pushed far out and the range of the normal is stretched to the utmost in flexible normalism (Link 2013a: 54). This begs the question of whether right-wing movements point to a hegemonic conflict between protonormalism and flexible normalism. Here, we need to observe protonormalistic strategies as effectors of a clear demarcation and hierarchical differentiation between groups through a fortification of borders.

In his works, Link uses homosexuality as an example to illustrate in which way, due to the historical shift from protonormalism to flexible normalism, a deviant group was and is subject to normalization. A growing flexibilization and pluralisation of notions of normality has facilitated the integration of non-heterosexual subjectivities towards an increasing attitude of tolerance within society (2013a: 71). Queer-theoretical approaches, however, criticise this assumption: Link portrays the integration of homosexuality as a successful process of normalization without, on the one hand, considering the conditions of normalization and, on the other, without critically scrutinising the placement of homosexuality within the spectrum of normality. Normalization requires a reference, according to which the abnormal group may be aligned. In the following, this will be shown with the example of heterosexuality.

Queer-theoretical works situate homosexuality in a transitional zone: no longer entirely normal but not yet excluded from it. In this context, Antke Engel (2008) talks about tolerance zones. This opens up a precarious position: being part of normality always also means being in danger of denormalization because the conflict concerning the borders of normality is fought in this very arena. To establish a differentiation and stratification of the normality spectrum, queer-theoretical works criticize Link's distinction between normality and normativity. Norms and normativity "are explicit and implicit regulatives, which are reinforced through sanctions, which prescribe a specific action to materially or formally determined groups of people. 'Norms' are, therefore, always pre-existent to (social) action" (Link 2014: 8). Accordingly, normativity is an action-directing category, which defines a certain action to be right or wrong from the get-go, whereas normality exists after the action. Many queer-theoretical works that show the connection between normality and normativity – especially heteronormativity – refer to this point. They proceed on the hypothesis that the process of normalization is in alignment with normativity and that the latter provides corresponding conditions. Sabine Hark and Mike Laufenberg (2013) speak of a heterosexual normalization of homosexuality in this context. For them, this means that homosexuals must adopt heteronormative ideals in order to be integrated into society: an imperative that entails gender performance just as much as ways of living. This applies, for example, to the adoption of lifelong monogamous relationship ideals, which are institutionalized by marriage, as Suhila Mesquita (2011) argues in her work. It also relates to performances of hegemonic masculinity by gay men in public office, as Andreas Heilmann (2011) has shown in his work on gay politicians. Ultimately, normalization requires certain conditions, which need to be adopted by groups or individuals. In the case of boundary closure, however, limitations need to be designed to enable a clear demarcation between the included and the excluded group in order to make visible the lack or limitation of integration.

The Education Dispute in Newspaper Discourse

My preliminary analysis suggests three major aspects: the dualism of nature/culture, the dichotomy of public/private and the fear of denormalization; I frame the latter, following Ruth Wodak's *Politics of Fear* (2015), as the core of right-wing movements. In order to isolate processes of normalization and denormalization within discourse as well as to identify the negotiation of borders, a discourse analysis of media – in this case of newspaper articles – is especially advantageous: Link emphasises the importance of media in normalism, since they negotiate conceptions of normality and are simultaneously the site of its negotiation. Media provide orientation concerning what is considered normal and what is not (Link 2013b: 28f).

> [T]he individual mass atom can experience the normalistic curve-landscape as its life-landscape and organize its life with regard to the limits of normality, to both the in-suring normal middle zones and the risky transitional zones of those limits beyond which the marginal zones of abnormality begin. (Link 2014: 15)

Media, thus, educate individuals about normality and its limits.[3]

As the most basic example, one may observe the construction and invocation of the dualism of culture versus nature:

> Classic sex ed is no more. Where biology was formerly the focus, today it's all about responsibility and tolerance. And in the future?[4]

Biology, which is seen as being based on natural, heterosexual sexuality with the goal of reproduction, is replaced by social and ethical questions here. These, according to the author, distract from the biological concept of sexuality and instead emphasise an alternative: cultural aspects like responsibility and tolerance should be given greater weight. What is invoked is sexuality's 'actual' purpose, which, in a most perfunctory biological approach, is limited to the act of reproduction. The 'natural' biological process – seemingly foregrounded in the past – appears to be increasingly replaced by the cultural aspects of sexuality, which results in a shift from nature to culture. At the same time, the question regarding the future invokes impending change: change which, because of the openness of the question, is implied to be a negative consequence of a disregard for human biology or nature. The prognosis is, thus, that social change harbours a threat for all of society due to the fact that the 'true' aspect of sexuality – biological reproduction – is neglected. This can be seen as an initial drawing of borders. Same-sex sexuality, which is unable to fulfil this 'natural' biological function of reproduction, is excluded *a priori* and

---

[3] Next to newspaper articles, other media, like literature, cinema, television, social media and blogs fulfil the same function.

[4] "Den klassischen Aufklärungsunterricht gibt es nicht mehr. Stand früher in der Sexualkunde die Biologie im Vordergrund, so geht es heute um Verantwortung und Toleranz. Und in Zukunft?" (Spreckelsen 2015)

is constructed as a non-essential part of sex education. The next example shows how, through referencing an uncertain future and ideological re-education, the biological 'natural' family is under imminent danger of being replaced by alternative family models:

> Opinions differ on the question whether modern sex ed, which by far goes beyond the scope of sex ed of years past: here we see how the next generation shall live. [...] The brochure shows father/father/child and mother/mother/child, all smiling happily. And father/mother/child? No chance![5]

The addressed threat through re-education reveals a distinction between nature and culture and frames homosexuality as a learnable behaviour. This turn of phrase, in the sense of 'being educated to be homosexual', unhinges homosexuality from the realm of the natural and pushes it into the cultural and, consequently, makes it seem a matter of choice, as does the following example:

> Is this about anti-discrimination or rather about 'de-naturalising' the heterosexual parents and biological children of the nuclear family, like the article 'Gender Mainstreaming within the Context of a Sexual Pedagogy of Plurality' proposes?[6]

This example emphasises the danger of 'de-naturalising' both the 'natural' nuclear family and the heterosexual development of children posed by lobbying on account of LGBT organisations, feminist groups and scholars in the field of gender studies, all of whom allegedly represent the ideologies and interests of a minority seeking to impose a certain mind-set on the majority.

> What is an achievement of emancipation and equity for some, is for others the missionary work of sexual minorities, who not only demand more tolerance from the majority but also seek to enforce their self-perception as a general orientation upon it.[7]

Minority interests allegedly undermine a majoritarian interest of society, namely the protection of 'natural' and 'normal' heterosexuality as well as its institutions of marriage and the nuclear family. The dangers of tolerating a minority form a guiding principle: the 'proper' normal – heterosexuality – runs the risk of being replaced by a new normal, which denies the 'proper' heterosexual nature of man. 'Tolerance', here, cannot mean equality

---

[5] "An moderner Sexualaufklärung, die weit über den Sexualkundeunterricht vergangener Jahre hinausgeht, scheiden sich die Geister, denn hier zeigt sich, wie die nächste Generation leben soll. [...] Zu sehen sind auf der Broschüre glücklich lächelnd Vater/Vater/Kind und Mutter/Mutter/Kind. Und Vater/Mutter/Kind? Fehlanzeige." (Voigt 2014)

[6] "Geht es um Antidiskriminierung oder eher darum, die Kernfamilie mit heterosexuellen Eltern und leiblichen Kindern zu 'entnaturalisieren', wie es im Aufsatz 'Gender Mainstreaming im Kontext einer Sexualpädagogik der Vielfalt' heißt?" (Voigt 2014)

[7] "Was den einen ein Werk der Emanzipation und Gerechtigkeit ist, ist den anderen ein Missionswerk sexueller Minderheiten, die der Mehrheit nicht nur Toleranz abverlangen, sondern ihr Selbstbild als neues Leitbild aufnötigen wollen." (Büscher 2015)

or egality. The emphasis on a natural, normal and predominantly heterosexual development and way of living prevents equalisation. Tolerance, in this case, refers to an acknowledgement of the existence of ways of life and sexualities outside the heterosexual norm, which cannot reach the same social status as heterosexual ones. In this vein, we can observe a hierarchical difference, which separates homosexuals and heterosexuals on the grounds of a biologically natural basis and thus draws up a border. The reference to human nature, here, may be seen as a discursive strategy that semantically draws and closes borders.

In this, we can see the establishment of a universal principle, which constructs heterosexuality as a desirable and valuable form of sexuality for society whereas homosexuality as a deviant form cannot fulfil the same functions. The hierarchical difference grounded in this biological principle is deployed as non-evaluative, is thus seen as unproblematically valid and is not defined as discriminatory. The argument's logic hinges, therefore, on assumptions based principally on 'nature' and not on socially exclusory or discriminatory practices. The lack of biological reproductive options among same-sex relationships represents a hierarchical difference and an insurmountable boundary between straight and gay couples.

Here, a border of normalization, which cannot be crossed, appears to have been reached. To make normalization – in the sense of integration – impossible, borders have to be drawn in order to make border-crossing seem impossible. A margin legitimated by human, natural, and biological qualities is thus a powerful discursive strategy of exclusion: the 'naturalness' of the border renders any attempt to cross it null and void. Normalization, in turn, requires borders to be generally exceedable – a possibility the quoted article denies.

Differences in a moral evaluation of relationships stem directly from biological differences. Heterosexual unions with the goal of reproduction derive their legitimisation as the primary relationship form directly from human biology. Notions of a natural sexuality generate an idea of sexual morals inscribed so thoroughly into society that their legitimisation seems wholly unnecessary, as Michael Warner argues:

> When a given sexual norm has such deep layers of sediment, or blankets enough territory to seem universal, the effort of wriggling out from under it can be enormous. The burden becomes even heavier when one must first overcome shame, or break with the tacit force of sexual morality that other people take to be obvious. We might even say that when sexual norms are of very great antiquity or generality, as prohibition against sodomy has been until recently and still is for many people, they are hardly intended as coercion. No one has to try to dominate others through them. They are just taken for granted, scarcely entering consciousness at all. (2000: 6)

Here, the deep inscription and specific power of heteronormativity becomes evident: it determines discourse without the need for legitimization.

> Heteronormativity therefore covers a range of beliefs – that human beings fall into two (different but complementary) categories: male and female, and that sexual relations are normal only when they occur between two people of the opposite sex. One of the main heteronormative arguments in society is that because a woman and a man are (normally) required for procreation, heterosexuality is normal. (Baker 2008: 109)

A heteronormative order is established: based on the 'natural' difference between man and woman, and heterosexual desire, heterosexuality is more valuable to society. Discursively, this also indicates a separation of heterosexual and homosexual people into different social levels. At the same time, a justification of natural/normal heterosexuality seems superfluous. A crucial aspect of normativity in discourse emerges: the main focus lies on the deviant and not the 'normal'. "As an identity discourse, homosexuality is indeed more prevalent. Heterosexuality as the 'normal' case is, most of the time, not perceived to be an identity. This shows that the concept of identity is more strongly tied to non-normativity." (Motschenbacher 2011: 166f) Heiko Motschenbacher indicates how deviance is negotiated more strongly in discourse than normality. In the case of heteronormativity, the normal has little need for being negotiated as it is seen as the unquestioned default. Nonetheless, the current example indicates something else: the normalcy of heterosexuality is explicitly marked, the hierarchical difference in turn explicitly legitimised. Link's concept of a "fear of denormalization" (2014: 10) is an apt description at this point: in his opinion, this fear is typical of normalism and caused by the threat of being excluded *from* or, in other words, the threat of a reframing *of* the scope of the normal. Normality – as a discursive category which is not universal but adaptable through historical processes and constantly contested – leaves room for the possibility or danger of reframing. That which was once normal may become abnormal or superseded by another idea of the normal at any given moment. Thus, we must conceive of normality not as fixed but as contested and precarious.

Link locates the fear of denormalization within this precarious condition. This fear triggers discursive processes in order to protect the normal from losing its status as this very normal. The material in question displays this fear in the form of perpetual invocations of social dangers leading to dystopian scenarios. In conjunction with the argument of the natural, it delineates the negative repercussions on society – as well as on the state – resulting from a disregard of the (heterosexual) nature of man. These dystopian visions are another discursive strategy to strengthen borders semantically and to legitimise them. This, however, requires a legitimisation of that which is considered to be normal and worthy of protection. It also helps to explain the pressure to justify the 'proper' normal. The legitimisation and justification of the normal is grounded in

normative notions of nature and man from which consequences for society are directly extrapolated. This fear of denormalization reveals here how discourses are laced with breaches and, hence, reveal their discursive structures. The normal, which is presupposed as a given and no longer needs to be explicitly mentioned, yet underpins discourse as intersubjective knowledge, and is thus made visible. Especially in recourse to the normal, which is rendered as the heterosexual norm, the unspoken yet present becomes crucial for discourse, as Norman Fairclough argues: "If something is presupposed, it is in a sense present in the text, but as part of implicit meaning." (1995: 106) If this implicit meaning is, however, challenged and questioned, it requires legitimization. In this sense, normality as implicit meaning becomes visible when normality itself requires legitimization. In the text, normality appears as discursive and constructed.

In conjunction with the preceding, a binary regarding the private and the public emerges: here, too, a drawing of boundaries, which rest on a diverging perception and evaluation of homosexuality and heterosexuality, takes place. The connected exclusion of deviant sexual orientations from both public and institutional space relates to the question of the public and the private:

> When Marie [a fictitious 12-year-old girl] comes home the next day, she recounts how she should always have a condom on hand, since it would be a shame if she were to miss out on spontaneous pleasure for lack of preparation, according to the students.[8]

The article fashions sex education as a so-to-speak manual for sexual intercourse, which is deemed inappropriate for schools. The danger of enticing 12-year-old girls into random hook-ups emphasises the text's argument. Sex education and also the treatment of diverse sexual orientations in schools is connected to the improper education of minors as sexual deviants, especially within the school as public space. By interpreting sexual orientation as sexual act, homosexuality is excluded from the public sphere. Heterosexuality and the permeation of the public sphere *by* heterosexuality – as for instance Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998) argue in their article "Sex in Public" – is by contrast not seen as connected to sexual activity. The need for sexual activity to remain within the scope of the private sphere legitimises the exclusion. "Heterosexual culture achieves much of its metacultural intelligibility through the ideologies and institutions of intimacy." (1998: 553) Berlant and Warner deduce: sexuality is considered to be inappropriate for the public sphere. At the same time, however, this ignores how even though the public sphere is shaped by heterosexuality, it is nonetheless not perceived as a structuring power.

---

[8] "Als Marie [fiktives 12 jähriges Mädchen] am nächsten Tag nach Hause kommt, erzählt sie, dass sie das Kondom jetzt immer dabeihaben soll, denn es wäre ja schade, wenn der spontane Spaß am fehlenden Kondom scheitern würde, hätten die Studenten gesagt." (Voigt 2014)

As a result, a boundary is established, which eliminates the sexual from the public sphere and, at the same time, separates the public from the private. The crucial difference in the evaluative practices of homosexuality and heterosexuality lies in the respective perception as sexual act. Homosexuality is consistently connected to sexual practices, which must not be part of the public sphere. There are clear differences in the perception of heterosexuality: it is present in everyday practices without there being pressure to legitimise itself. Rather, heterosexuality appears to be so deeply inscribed into social normality as to be invisible as a marker of sexual identity: "Heterosexuality is not a thing." (Berlant/Warner 1998: 552)

Here, a link to the sexual act as well as biological-medical discourse is discernible. It informs the entire argument, which repeatedly invokes homosexuality as a deviant sexual behaviour. The demand to include sexual diversity in the curricula is thus portrayed as an invitation to pupils to perform these 'deviant' sexual practices without mentioning the purported consequences, as the following example in connection with the former shows:

> If Marie wants to attend a Christopher Street Day parade dressed up as a galactic sex alien, her parents might lack the support of the school, but hopefully not the energy to explain to their daughter why she doesn't need to bring a condom yet.[9]

The recurrent invocation and display of 'deviant' sexual behavior, which, it is implied, is purposefully made accessible to children, and the threat of children being encouraged to behave in such ways, here is joined to the accusation that schools hamper parental rights. Again, we see a separation of private and public: public educatory institutions are seen as undermining the private parental rights of nurture and education. At the same time, schools as environments supposedly free of ideological bias are threatened by 'gender ideology' and lobbyism[10].

> Does this serve to diminish discrimination or do state and schools promote 'coming out of the closet'? The latter would be a highly problematic intrusion into peoples' private spheres on grounds of a contested theory. 'Anatomy is a social construct' is the key phrase of feminist critic Judith Butler. This may well be a hypothesis for a doctoral dissertation but mustn't be the basis of governmental action.[11]

---

[9] "Wenn Marie demnächst also als galaktisch verkleidetes Sex-Alien auf eine CSD-Parade gehen will, fehlt ihren Eltern zwar der schulische Rückhalt, aber hoffentlich nicht die Energie, ihrer Tochter klarzumachen, warum sie noch kein Kondom dabei haben muss." (Voigt 2014)

[10] The debate about the education curricula has repeatedly included efforts to delegitimise gender studies as unscientific and ideologically tainted attempts to re-educate children in order to create a new worldview. According to this argument, political lobby work aims to change a 'proper' binary and heterosexual order into something else. This new order, however, runs counter to human nature and corrodes society.

[11] "Dient das dem Abbau von Diskriminierung, oder wollen der Staat und die Schule damit das 'Coming out' fördern? Letzteres wäre ein höchst problematischer Eingriff in die Privatsphäre der Menschen auf der Grundlage einer umstrittenen Theorie. 'Anatomie ist ein soziales Konstrukt' lautet der Kernsatz der feministischen Theoretikerin Judith Butler. Das kann eine Hypothese für Doktorarbeiten sein, darf aber nicht Grundsatz staatlichen Handelns werden." (Soldt 2015)

Opponents of the curricula operate on the assumption that a treatment of non-heterosexual ways of living includes a treatment of sexual practices, which have been marked as deviant and must remain limited to the private sphere. Here, a boundary is drawn and closed between the different constructions of homosexuality and heterosexuality by reducing homosexuality to a sexual act.

The child – primarily the female child – functions as a projection surface for social fears, as the example also shows. These rest upon the assumption that a re-education or indoctrination of children disrupts the natural heterosexual development as well as a natural, normal heteronormative gender order and, in turn, threatens the continuity of family and state. One may observe a protonormalistic strategy in this, which, despite claiming not to discriminate, nonetheless constructs and establishes a 'normal' in need of clear distinction from a 'deviant'. Another requirement for a protonormalistic closure of boundaries is the installation of a universal principle: the protection of children rests on everyone and validates the legitimacy of the argument. In this case, children are manifestations of this universal principle. Constructed as innocent beings, they require protection as ciphers for future societies. Imke Schmincke (2015) points out that children are central to the debates within the French 'Manif Pour Tous' movement and the German 'Demo für Alle' movement: all debates incorporate essential aspects of protonormalistic discursive strategies. For one thing, they all indicate the dangers of losing a natural 'normal' and, consequently, a displacement of normal individuals into the realm of the abnormal. This, furthermore, makes clear the displacement of a 'natural' social order, the consequences of which are seen as undefined but definitely dystopian for state and society.

An uneasiness about children's welfare, the dangers of re-education, the imminent threat of the dissolution of a 'natural' social order as well as the permeation of the public order with deviant sexualities refer to a discursive anxiety, which Ruth Wodak terms "the politics of fear" (2015). Similar to the concept of this fear of denormalization, Wodak identifies a discursive strategy, which evokes specific fears in society with the help of threatening scenarios and – as a core element of the strategies of right-wing populist discourses – seeks to legitimise exclusion: "Right-wing populist parties successfully create fear and legitimize their policy proposals […] with an appeal to the necessities of security." (2015: 5) In addition to manifest closed borders, like national borders, this can be observed as social exclusions. Fear is projected onto specific groups of people, who appear as a threat to society. Exclusion, Wodak argues, aims at creating security and warding off danger. Equally, it serves as a strategy upholding a political agenda based on exclusion:

> We are therefore confronted by a contingency of factors that serve to facilitate dichotomist perspectives, create scapegoats and play into the hands of right-wing populist parties: traditional and new threat scenarios, real and exaggerated crisis as well as related horror and moral narratives, real and exaggerated security issues,

media reporting that produces fear scenarios, and political parties which instrumentalize all these factors to legitimize exclusionary policies. (Wodak 2015: 5)

The integration of non-heterosexual people is considered a danger to society. By referencing children and – as was shown – their potential deviant sexual development, a fear of a decline of values is discursively created. A moral narrative, which demonizes public sexuality, is furthermore invoked. The equalization of homosexual identity with sexuality fosters this fear. Hereby, it allows for a group to be held responsible for threats to society: exclusion is thus not simply legitimized, it is made necessary.

Conclusion

As was shown, if we consider the boundaries, we may ascertain a crucial discursive strategy in the separation of culture/nature and public/private which establishes a difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality in the sense of a heteronormative social order. The relocation of homosexuality into the realm of culture supports the heteronormative idea of an ahistoric normal and natural heterosexuality. As a learnable, culturally engendered behaviour, homosexuality is excluded from the natural order. This argument delegitimises the equal value of both sexualities for social order and allows both legal and public discrimination. The stabilisation of boundaries and the subsequent differentiation thus emphasises difference and creates certainty regarding heterosexuality's persistent higher-ranking position in society. Out of this emerges the opponents' core discursive strategy in the Baden-Württemberg curricula dispute: it allows them to take action against plans to make non-heterosexual people visible in school education. This strategy is supported by, on the one hand, constantly evoked fears concerning how an inclusion would destroy crucial social structures and, on the other, the vague threat that the supposedly secure social order – the heteronormative order – may be leveraged.

Were we to afford homosexuality an equal standing within the public sphere and within the social order, natural, universal, and ahistoric heterosexuality would be displaced. In my opinion, it is no surprise that especially homosexuality and the public perception of it is able to trigger an astounding amount of conflict. Times of growing uncertainty and precarious circumstances, as we can see in employment, geopolitics, terrorism and a neoliberal social order, necessitate a safe space. Heteronormative ideas are especially attractive: by grace of their natural, universal, and ahistoric validity they elicit little pressure for legitimisation and promise security through their strong naturalisation. Protonormalistic strategies need to construct a distinct inside and outside *and* demarcate boundaries in such a way as to make transgression seem impossible. The

discursive strategy of boundary closure by invocation of nature allows for such an argument because it is human nature and not social practice that justifies the social order with its separation and hierarchical arrangement of homosexuals and heterosexuals.

Works Cited

Baker, Paul (2008). *Sexed Texts. Language, Gender and Sexuality*. London: Equinox Publishing.

Berlant, Lauren and Michael Warner (1998). "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry* 24.2: 547-66.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984 [1979]). *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.

Büscher, Wolfgang (2015). "Kulturkampf um die sexuelle Vielfalt." *Die Welt* 13 July. <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article143885671/Kulturkampf-um-die-sexuelle-Vielfalt.html>. [accessed 31 Mar. 2018]

Engel, Antke (2008). "Gefeierte Vielfalt. Umstrittene Heterogenität. Befriedete Provokation. Sexuelle Lebensformen in spätmodernen Gesellschaften." *Heteronormativität und Homosexualitäte*n. Ed. Waltraud Kannonier-Finster, Christian Fleck, Horst Schreiber and Meinrad Ziegler. Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 43-63.

Fairclough, Norman (1995). *Media Discourses*. London: Edward Arnold.

Foucault, Michel (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

Hark, Sabine and Mike Laufenberg (2013). "Sexualität in der Krise. Heteronormativität im Neoliberalismus." *Gesellschaft: Feministische Krisendiagnosen*. Ed. Erna Appelt, Brigitte Aulenbacher and Angelika Wetterer. Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot, 227-45.

Heilmann, Andreas (2011). *Normalität auf Bewährung. Outings in der Politik und die Konstruktion homosexueller Männlichkeit*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.

Lamont, Michéle and Virág Monár (2002). "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 167-95.

Link, Jürgen (2013a). *Versuch über den Normalismus. Wie Normalität produziert wird*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht.

— (2013b). *Normale Krisen? Normalismus und die Krisen der Gegenwart.* Konstanz: Konstanz UP.

— (2014). "Crisis between 'Denormalization' and the 'New Normal': Reflections on the Theory of Normalism Today." *Norms, Normality and Normalization*. Ed. Matthias Uecker and Dirk Göttsche. <http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/3611/1/Norms_Normality_and_Normalization.pdf>. [accessed 08 May 2017]

Mesquita, Sushila (2011). *Ban Marriage! Ambivalenzen der Normalisierung aus queer-feministischer Perspektive*. Wien: zaglossus.

Motschenbacher, Heiko (2011). "Taking Queer Linguistics further: sociolinguistics and critical heteronormativity research." *International Journal of Sociology of Language* 212: 149-79.

Schmincke, Imke (2015). "Das Kind als Chiffre politischer Auseinandersetzung am Beispiel neuer konservativer Protestbewegungen in Frankreich und Deutschland." *Anti-Genderismus. Sexualität und Geschlecht als Schauplätze aktueller politischer Auseinandersetzungen*. Ed. Sabine Hark and Paula-Irene Villa. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 93-107.

Soldt, Rüdiger (2015). "Einer Lobby zu Diensten." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 June.

Spreckelsen, Tilman (2015). "Kinder, was wollt ihr wissen?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 30 Aug. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wissen/die-zukunft-des-sex/sexualaufklaerung-in-der-schule-13775762.html.> [accessed 31 Mar. 2018]

Warner, Michael (2000). *The Trouble with Normal. Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.

Voigt, Martin (2014). "Aufklärung oder Anleitung zum Sex?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 23 Oct. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/lehrplaene-aufklaerung-oder-anleitung-zum-sex-13223950.html> [accessed 31 Mar. 2018]

Wodak, Ruth (2015). *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. London: SAGE.

Zukunft-Verantwortung-Lernen e.V. (2013). "Petition. Zukunft – Verantwortung – Lernen: Kein Bildungsplan 2015 unter der Ideologie des Regenbogens." *Bildungsplan2015.de.* <http://www.bildungsplan2015.de/petition/>. [accessed 31 Mar. 2018]