

## Who is Yum-Yum? A cartoon state in the making

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### abstract

The departure of this article is a Danish public campaign called 'Healthy through play'. The campaign is organized around a cartoon figure named Yum-Yum. Yum-Yum is the campaign's description of itself, but it also becomes a semantic of the State. With Yum-Yum, the state is turned into a cartoon character with long plushy ears, widely spaced eyes, and a very large and soft nose. Maybe we are witness to the making of a carton State, a playful State? Yum-Yum is cute, friendly, playful, inviting, and above all completely harmless. The cartoon state seems to be a state that gets in the way of itself. It is a state whose impotence consists precisely in the fact that it is state. The state would rather be (civil) society. In order to work as state and have power over the self-relation of it citizens, it has to look different than a state. The state plays that it is (not) a state and hopes that someone will play along so that it may yet work as state.

### Introduction

The present article presents an analysis of the campaign 'Healthy through play', organized by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries. 'Healthy through play' is aimed particularly at vulnerable families and their willingness, knowledge, and capacity to live a healthy lifestyle with respect to both food and exercise. In general terms, the campaign exists as one among a larger number of campaigns that have been launched over the course of the past decade, directed at citizens and their administration of their own lives. This applies not only to the health sector but also the labor market, transportation, education, and so on. The starting point for this article is the fact that this is a campaign ultimately concerned with the self-creation of citizens. Central to the article, in turn, is the way in which the campaign links its content to play. Why is the concept of play so central to the campaign? What do play and campaign share in common? What do health and play share in common?

Play is understood in this article as a particular form of communication, which makes social contingency visible by doubling the world into a virtual play world, and a real one that can be played with (Andersen, 2009; Baecker, 1999).

Basically, this is a state-run campaign that simultaneously seeks to and seeks not to be a campaign, seeks to and seeks not to be regulation (Pors, 2009). This results in a form of embarrassment, and the way to escape this embarrassment is through play. I argue,

therefore, that play is not simply articulated as a substantial health-related element (although it is that, too), and that play is also not simply articulated as a pedagogical medium, a so-called 'edutainment' (although it is that, too). Play becomes the very form of the campaign, permeating the campaign to the extent that every element of the campaign oscillates between play and seriousness. The campaign is portrayed in such a way that we never really know if something is meant in a serious way or whether we are simply playing a game. This becomes constitutive for the campaign as such, leaving open the question of whether the campaign itself is play or campaign.

In the article, I challenge the notion of media neutrality. And I try to overcome the fascination often seen in media studies whenever a new medium is discovered, in this case the medium of play. I realize that this has already been done. A range of ideology-critical works within media studies have long since deconstructed the distinction between form and content by showing that the form is a significant contributor to the definition of the content; that is, that the content can be lost in the form. My point is different but parallel. My point is that experiments with new media such as play or contracts in public campaigns directed at citizens not only affect the possible content of the campaign but also gambles the very form of the state, including the relationship between administration and citizen. This relationship is gambled because the independent forms of the chosen media in the 'Healthy through play' campaign are apparently stronger than the campaign's adaptation of them. The relation between campaign and medium becomes reversible so that the campaign does not simply form the concept of play as medium. The concept of play transposes the relationship and becomes a form that plays with the campaign. It turns out that the concept of play as form is so forceful that it refuses to be a mere medium for a state-run campaign. The definition of form is reversed, and the result seems to be a state describing itself through the language of play as playmate for at-risk families, who in turn are portrayed as hungry for cheap amusement and voluntary entertainment. This is so pronounced that the state has even been replaced in the campaign with a cute childish cartoon character called Yum-Yum. The character Yum-Yum emerges as political self-description. It is the apparent articulation of what we might for now refer to as the cartoon state.

### *Previous research*

The changes in the relationship between play and organized power have not gone unnoticed in the literature internationally. Some people see play as a positive figure of resistance. Jerzy Kociatkiewicz, for example, has studied so-called role play, where participants, directed by a game master, create a story together and make the game move along. Kociatkiewicz's point is that during the game, a creative, poetic, and non-linear form of self-organization takes place, which modern organizations can learn from, particularly in relation to the question of creativity (Kociatkiewicz, 2000). This perspective is also taken by Daniel Hjorth, who sees a close link between entrepreneurship and organizational spaces for play and creation (Hjorth, 2004: 43; 2005), and by Charalampos Mainemelis and Sarah Ronson for whom play represents the cradle of creativity. They see the role of play as a way 'to help organizations maintain more flexible and more sophisticated forms of consistency by encouraging their members to occasionally experiment with possible realities, behaviors, or identities' (Mainemelis and Ronson, 2006: 117). Still others link art and play in

questions of productive play with identity and innovation (Meisiek and Hatch, 2008; de Monthoux and Statler, 2008).

Peter Fleming takes a more sceptical view in his critique of fun programs in modern organizations (Fleming, 2005), as do Bogdan Costea et al. (2005) in their conceptual-historical studies of the relationship between play and work. The authors state:

It seems that, after a hundred years of apparently very rational ‘Apollonian’ approaches to efficiency and productivity, management itself has entered into a kind of ‘Dionysian’ mode, a spirit of playful transgression and destruction of boundaries, a new bond between economic grammars of production and consumption, and cultural grammars of the modern self. This, we argue, is what might lie behind the increased use of ludic technologies in management. (Costea et al., 2005: 141; Costea et al., 2006)

What this literature has in common, however, is that ‘management’ is assumed to refer to management in private companies. They leave out reflections of how play is incorporated into the state and public administration as a steering tool and overlook, therefore, the fact that new ludic technologies affect not only the concept of work but also the very form of the state and the relationship between state and citizen. It is in this realm that the present article seeks to make its contribution.

#### *A brief introduction to the campaign*

The campaign in question is from 2008 and is the result of collaboration between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries and the National Board of Health. The campaign is designed to motivate Danish families with young children aged 1-6 to live a healthier lifestyle. The campaign motto is ‘to make it easy, fun, and manageable to live a healthy lifestyle’ (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008a).

The campaign ‘Health through play’ is not the only current health campaign that relates to play. ‘Health through play’ makes reference to ‘The kid box’, which is a health-promoting campaign designed for pre-schools. Through the kid box, institutions can access boxes of games that incorporate health-promoting issues. ‘The kid box’ was created by a partnership between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, Danish Meat Association, FDB, the food industry, and Suhr’s seminary (The kid box, 2009). Additionally, together with the Association School and Society, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries and the National Board of Health have designed and promoted the game ‘Playing for health – dialogue and collaboration about the health of the class’. The game was introduced in 2007 and its stated purpose is to promote dialogue among school, parents, and students in the school and formulate and make agreements about food and meals, movement, drugs and alcohol, knowledge and attitudes (National Board of Health 2007, Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries 2008a-c, Andersen 2009). In addition, The National Board of Health organized a campaign in 2005 aimed at young men using cell phone tests. The young men were rewarded with a ‘hot babe’ on the telephone if they did well on the test. As the company behind the campaign writes: ‘The test contains informal and humoristic elements – it is supposed to be fun to participate. That is why everyone’s index is translated into a ‘babe’ who is more or less inviting depending on the individual score’ (Wellware, 2006).

Denmark is not the only place where play is used as a tool in health campaigns. England and the USA have similar campaigns. In the USA, there is even a website for the discussion of different serious health games, 'Public health games – Serious games and Simulations for Public Health and related Fields' (PublicHealthGames.com). Other sites combine film, information, and games for children, e.g. the site 'Kidshealth' (KidsHealth.org). Another site is 'Health Finder' which is located on the US Department of Health and Human Services website (Healthfinder.gov).

These campaigns bear witness to a discursive shift towards health promotion that has taken place in the health care system over the past twenty years (Højlund and Larsen, 2001; Joyce, 2001; Roy, 2008; Michailakis and Schirmer, 2010). In a Danish context, The Public Health Program marks this shift: 'The Public Health Program is meant to ensure political responsibility for an effective prioritization and coordination of preventive efforts across sectors, administrative levels and competencies' (Sundhedsministeriet 1999: 6; Højlund and Larsen, 2001).

The public health program identifies the Danish people as one body, which needs to be healthy, and, paradoxically, the construction of this imaginary collective body produces a new form of individualization according to which the individual is expected to create and administer her or himself in relation to the health system. The campaign organizers, The National Council for Public Health, define it this way:

Central to health promotion is the notion that the individual needs to be good at mastering his or her life, and, as public authorities, we need to help create the best possible framework. The ability to master one's life is not always a private matter. (National Council for Public Health, 2002: 11)

As a whole, the campaign 'Health through play' can be characterized as a third-order campaign. The campaign does not address its final target group directly, which are socially at-risk families, although it is available to this group, since its media includes a publicly accessible website where children can play online games and where parents can find recipes and play an online game. The campaign primarily addresses public institutions and health professionals who come into contact with at-risk families, and the campaign's message is that these professionals need to campaign to 'their' families. Thus, it is a campaign for campaigns, which is why it includes possibilities and different tools that can be used in the campaigns that address the families directly. As the website says: "Health through play" is a health-pedagogical tool for the health professional (health visitor, consultation nurse, health consultant, dietician, etc.) working with families and the improvement of food and movement habits' (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008b). The professions that the campaign addresses do not answer directly to the campaign. In terms of employment, those who perform services within the campaign's sphere of interest may belong to a wide range of different organizations both regionally and in municipalities. The campaign aims to link functions, roles, and employees in a shared health promotion effort across formal divisions. And the common aim is defined as running a specific campaign in relation to families. The campaign basically places itself in a situation, therefore, where its diverse target group is responsible for judging whether it is relevant or imposing. However, the campaign contains another segment. The goal is not only to make the targeted families change their behavior. The goal is to convince the families to run internal health campaigns in relation to themselves! In this sense the campaign share a lot of

characteristics with diverse self-technologies as described in governmentality studies (Dean, 1999; Rose, 1999; Cruikshank, 1999; Villadsen, 2008). The families are asked to define goals and make internal agreements about food and exercise, and these agreements should be modeled after the campaign. The idea is for the families to continually enter into self-agreements, one after another, where each agreement has a narrow focus and is limited to a specific time period and then a new theme becomes the focus. What we have, then, is a state-run campaign for professional campaigns for family-driven self-campaigns.

The campaign introduces itself on its website [www.legdigsund.dk](http://www.legdigsund.dk). The campaign is made up of a number of elements, including:

1. A comprehensive design based around the cartoon character Yum-Yum.
2. The family's agreement page designed for families to make internal agreements about food and movement.
3. 'Cooking with Yum-Yum': a cookbook with healthy family meals.
4. The Yum-Yum plate: A contest in which the prize is a special divided plate, which ensures a healthy distribution of meat, greeneries, and condiments.
5. 'Get moving with Yum-Yum': A catalogue for families with healthy games for inside and outside.
6. Poster – Healthy through play with Yum-Yum: A 'spin-the-bottle' game based on eight health tips.
7. 'This is what others have done': Interviews in writing and on audio file with four families about their efforts to live a healthier lifestyle. Translated into several languages.
8. 'Everyday dilemmas': An online game for parents in which they are confronted with everyday dilemmas about food and shopping.
9. Yum-Yum's kitchen: A page with several online games for children about what is healthy and less healthy, e.g. memory and fruit game.

## Play in the campaign

I will begin my analysis by looking at the way in which the campaign observes play and health; the way that play is articulated as a theme relevant to the campaign and is integrated into the different elements of the campaign. The campaign designates play as an aspect of health. It is considered healthy to play, both because play often incorporates movement and physical activity, which is healthy, and because play creates social relations and friendships, which are also considered healthy. This is not something I am going to discuss. Instead, I am going to focus on the way in which the campaign is linked semantically to play, that is, the way in which play becomes articulated as a necessary medium for the dissemination of information about health promotion to at-risk families. I am going to do this in three steps. First, I will describe the way in which 'fun' has already been reflected in an earlier report about at-risk groups. Then, I will take a look at particular elements of the campaign, which the campaign describes as edutainment. And finally, I will look at the way in which certain elements of the campaign, which were not initially defined as play, still end up being

subjected to the logic of play. The materials I discuss are the public reports that precede the campaign as well as the campaign website and its various elements.

Semantics is defined, as the stock of generalized forms of differences (e.g. concepts, ideas, images, and symbols), which can be used in the selection of meaning within the communication systems. In other words, semantics are condensed and repeatable forms of meaning and expectations available to communication. These generalized forms are relatively dependent upon the specific situation and obtain their specific content from the communication that selects them (Luhmann, 1993: 9-72; Koselleck, 2004; Andersen, 2011). Initially, therefore, the semantic analysis is a relatively simple analysis of asymmetrical distinctions between concept and counterconcept and the way they shape expectations – in this case expectations about the connections between play, campaigns, citizen, and health professionals.

### **The health of socially at-risk citizens 2007**

On the website for the campaign, ‘Healthy through play’, is a link to a report that precedes the campaign. The report is entitled ‘The health of socially at-risk citizens – barriers, motivation, and possibilities.’ It was initiated by the National Board of Health and carried out by SFI (The Danish National Center for Social Research). The report is an interview study of a number of citizens from different at-risk groups and a number of employees, who are in frequent contact with the target groups. The point of departure for the report is a previous report, which stressed the importance of including target groups in planning and implementation processes. The interviews with the citizens are about their perception of health and their experience of the public sector and its activities aimed at citizens. The interviews with the employees are primarily about their experience of citizens’ experience with the activities of the public sector, including the employees’ own activities in relation to citizens. Basically, therefore, the report is an attempt to identify with the way citizens experience the world and in particular the public sector. It represents an attempt to construct public sensitivity to the citizens’ construction of their environment.

#### *Opposition*

One of the consistent themes in the report is the opposition the system is met with by citizens. The report says:

Many (employees) are aware of the barrier present in socially at-risk citizens as a general skepticism and antipathy towards anything that they associate with the public system. To avoid that health-promoting initiatives are met with reluctance by citizens, employees are proposing these principles for their effort: 1) Employees need to show that they are ‘like the citizens’, meaning that they need to be open about their own difficulties with living a healthy lifestyle. 2) Employees need to act as role models but in a way so that they are not perceived as perfect and as unattainable ideals. 3) Employees must proceed slowly and should not pressure the citizens. (National Board of Health, 2007: 28)

This is a remarkable way to perceive opposition since it avoids the obvious equivalence between opposition and opponent. From the perspective of the National Board of Health, ‘opponents’ almost functions as counterconcept to ‘opposition’. A citizen who

opposes the system is precisely not conceived as an opponent of the system. According to the National Board of Health, employees should not meet opposition as upfront and counter opposition with opposition. Instead, they must avoid and evade the opposition that they know is present. This produces a strange non-position for the citizen since his or her opposition is recognized but without the recognition of her or him as an opponent. The employee knows that the citizen feels pressured and understands therefore the opposition and resistance. On the other hand, the citizen is not recognized as an actual opponent with everything that goes along with it in terms of subject status: independent will, motives, interests, etc. This is because the National Board of Health wishes not to oppose the citizen but to stand next to him. This is achieved by *simulating* citizen. As the quote states, the employees must show that they are *like* the citizen. The quote does not say that employees are also citizens, but that they are *like* them. The quote also does not say that the employees are not perfect. Rather, they should not *appear* perfect. Here is another quote:

Moreover, employees in one of the re-training centers report using humor and self-irony during physical activities with citizens. By making fun of their own lacking fitness, employees can help create an informal atmosphere that leaves room for everybody. (National Board of Health, 2007: 40)

Again, we are told that the employee is to simulate the citizen. The concomitant difference is ‘strong system’ versus ‘weak citizen’. The quotes do not suggest that the system needs to show weakness. The system and its employees have to *play* that they are weak *like* the citizens.

### *The systems must not look like a system*

What is at stake is the fact that the public system does not want to look like a system. Therefore, those who are being regulated have to be able to voluntarily respond to regulation and public activities and they have to have the appearance of an offer. Preferably, they should take the form of a gift; they have to be able to be offered in a way so that the receiver can turn them down and they have to be able to be given without the expectation of repayment:

However, most employees prefer for the different health-promoting activities to be available services, not compulsory activities. They believe that more can be accomplished with their respective user groups by encouraging them to participate and by illustrating the benefits of the free services. Imposing health projects on people should be avoided, because it might increase the opposition to – rather than interest in – health. (National Board of Health, 2007: 31)

So, the ambition is to make users accept the offered activities knowing that it is exactly this ambition that may lead to the users’ rejection of the offer. The services have to be voluntary, not because the system loves voluntariness but because it is the best form of regulation. The basic self-observation is that the system’s form of regulation does not work if it looks like regulation. Only regulation that is not visible as regulation can be expected to work as regulation without detrimental opposition from citizens (see also Pors, 2009: 42-47). To regulate, regulation has to suspend itself.

### *Health promotion must not look like health promotion*

These things also affect the system's communication of enthusiasm about health promotion. The report says:

It is important to take 'baby steps' when working with health in relation to at-risk groups (...) Taking baby steps means that citizens should not be pressured into living a healthier lifestyle. According to the employees, it is important to proceed slowly otherwise the citizens will back out (...) Many show a certain 'resistance to the system', which means that they will presumably also be skeptical about health-promoting initiatives. In relation to these groups, employees believe that it is important not to focus too heavily on health. It has to be integrated as part of everyday life by making a healthier choice easily accessible, e.g. with fruit bowls on the lunch table etc. (National Board of Health, 2007: 30)

Health promotion, thus, should not focus too heavily on health. Focus on health does not promote health! Health promotion needs to be integrated into everyday life. Everyday life is not health promotion. Integrating an element into a whole means that the element in question no longer appears as itself but as a part of something else. Arguing in favor of integrating health promotion into everyday life is the same as arguing that health-promoting efforts have to be made invisible as an independent effort. Health promotion needs to vanish into everyday living. It is okay to see the fruit bowl but not the effort it is a sign of. This introduces another distinction, which I will pursue later, that is, a distinction between health promotion as weighty seriousness and the fruit bowl as light and accessible. Health promotion seeks to be what it is not: Light and accessible.

### *It has to be fun*

These observations lead the report to a focus on fun and enjoyment. The report says:

According to citizens whom we have talked with, in order for different health-promoting offers to be successful, it is important that people do not feel pressured into participating but can decide on a voluntary basis whether or not they want to participate. Moreover, it is important to incorporate fun and enjoyment into health-promoting projects so it does not become a unwanted responsibility or yet another requirement that they cannot honor. (National Board of Health, 2007: 8)

Health promotion should not be an unwanted responsibility for citizens and it should also not be difficult. Health promotion should equal enjoyment and fun. These words are repeated in the following quotes, which extends the chain of equivalence: 'collective fun' ≈ 'snowball fight' ≈ 'wiffle ball' ≈ 'cooking' ≈ 'laughter' ≈ 'humor' ≈ 'street performance':

Finally, several employees point out that fun and enjoyment ought to be an important element of health-promoting efforts. By stressing that it should be fun to exercise and live a healthy lifestyle they hope to be able to break down some of the barriers that citizens and employees might experience. Some employees provide examples of activities that have caused collective enjoyment such as snow ball fights, wiffle ball, and cooking. (National Board of Health, 2007: 31)

That is why it is important to reflect on physical activities rather broadly. This might take the form of exercises during breaks at re-training facilities and other activities that brings out laughter. Generally, it makes sense to consider how to improve people's health through humor and enjoyment. One interviewed person tells about how her retraining process included participating in a street performance workshop. They concluded the workshop with an hour-long performance for

their children to the great amusement of the children, themselves, and the employees. (National Board of Health, 2007: 40)

The quote emphasizes the importance of thinking health-promoting activities ‘rather broadly’, that is, not ‘narrowly’. Again, health promotion is not supposed to look like health promotion. ‘Narrowly’ is what we all recognize as health promotion. ‘Rather broadly’, in turn, is everything that can be considered health promoting but which does not immediately appear as such.

Health promotion is supposed to be fun, playful, and voluntary and above all should not look like health promoting work characterized by seriousness, responsibility, and duty.

### *This is what others have done*

This figure of ease is also expressed in the communication of certain families’ health efforts on the website ‘legdigsund.dk’. Under the heading ‘This is what others have done’, four families from different parts of the country relate their experiences of changing their everyday habits. The families all express that the responsibility for their health is in fact easy to take on but also that they do sometimes eat less healthy food. One family talks about the ease like this: ‘It is no more difficult to cook low-fat food; it is merely a question of taking it into consideration and cutting down on fat content wherever you can’. Another family tells: ‘I often sit down with the kids and peel our afternoon fruit while talking with them – and then the fruit goes down much easier’. A third family:

I used to often think about whether she [the daughter] actually liked broccoli, cauliflower, leaks, or other more ‘exotic’ vegetables, but now I just cook the food – and she eats it. Our food is now arranged so it looks a little more appealing, and this has made it easier for me to get her to eat whatever is served. The recipes have been easy and hands-on.

## **Edutainment**

Play and ease is the name of the game. This is reflected in ‘healthy through play’, which makes extensive use of games and play. The campaign refers to it as ‘edutainment’, which combines ‘education’ and ‘entertainment’. I am going to explore in the cases I study here how these ‘edutainments’ describe themselves as play but do not necessarily make play possible. It is a question of a health pedagogy that plays that its activities are play.

### *Spin-the-bottle*

This game is distributed to a number of pre-schools. In the material the game is describes as ‘an edutainment game (play and learning) that incorporates knowledge about food and movement through play’ (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008b). The game consists of a large poster (see below) on top of which you spin a bottle. The game thus makes reference to the classic game ‘spin-the-bottle’, but instead of having the bottle point to a child it points to a field on the poster. The children take turn spinning the bottle, and the child whose turn it is has to either perform a physical activity or answer a question depending on whether the bottle point to a green or a white

field. Some of the activities are: ‘walk like a penguin’ or ‘hop like a bunny’. Some of the questions are: ‘where do fish live?’; ‘where does meat come from?’; or ‘which drink contains no sugar? A: soda, B: water, C: juice.’



Figure 1: Spin the bottle.

The activities clearly incorporate play, e.g. when walking like a penguin. This means to play something you are not – a penguin – and they incorporate excitement since

walking like a penguin makes you realize that there are many different ways in which to walk. The questions, however, do not incorporate play. They have an unambiguous pedagogical aim, where the answer can be either better or worse (although it seems somewhat superfluous; the answers to the questions are printed upside down at the bottom of the poster. They are to ensure that the facts of the game are perceived as such and not as play). This makes for a rather odd game where a green field indicates play and a white field indicates instruction. The game is designed in a way so that it oscillates between play and pedagogy depending on where the bottle lands. So the spinning of the bottle is a game about whether we are playing a game or not.

### *Everyday dilemmas*

'Everyday dilemmas' is described as a game about 'the choices you make when you shop'. It is an online game aimed at the family's housewife. The reason I stress housewife instead of simply the person who does the shopping in the family is that the main character in the game is consistently portrayed as a woman faced with a range of dilemmas when shopping for food. Basically, the game introduces the player to a number of shopping dilemmas, and for each dilemma you are given three possible answers. Once you have solved one dilemma, you can move on to the next one until you have been through all of them.

One dilemma goes like this:

Your shopping list says: Onions, carrots, red peppers, and mushrooms. It will take a long time to cut up all these vegetables. I could instead buy frozen vegetables even though I am not able to buy all of them in one bag. *What would you do? Click on a picture.*

The possible answers are: 1. Fresh vegetables; 2. Frozen vegetables; 3. Fresh and frozen. Another dilemma is: 'Hanne has written fish down on the shopping list and is considering what kind of fish to buy'. Possible answers: 1. Fresh fish and minced fish meat; 2. Frozen; 3. Canned fish. Finally, a third dilemma: 'It is important that children try many different kinds of food. Some children need to taste food many times before they will eat it'. Possible answers: 1. Something familiar; 2. 'Hidden' vegetables; 3. Vary what they like. None of the situations represent an actual dilemma. They are simply choices among alternatives. The only reason for calling them dilemmas must be as a way to make it look like a game.

You are given a set of optional answers and once you have clicked on one, you are presented with the game's rating of your choice from a health perspective. If you answered 'canned fish' in response to the second dilemma, you are told that 'canned fish is as healthy as fresh fish but pay attention to how much fish and how many other ingredients are in it'. If you answered 'something familiar' to the third dilemma, the response is: 'Children who try many different foods while they are young will be more open to new tastes as they grow older. Sometimes children have to try new food many times before they get used to it'.

Once you have clicked your choice, you are directed to a page where you not only receive the response to your selection but also see a new drawing of a housewife and her thoughts. If you clicked 'Canned fish' you see a housewife thinking to herself: 'tuna –

with some pasta, cottage cheese, and a bag of frozen peas, that takes care of dinner'. If you clicked 'something familiar' you see her thinking: 'Emil does not really like fish, but fish cakes make it easier'. A consistent theme is that food should be easy. Everything has to be easy. The game suggests that it does not expect its target group to want to work hard. We might say that the game works hard to make anything appear easy. There is a different logic here; that is, if advice is easy to follow (in the end, this is not actually a game but counseling for someone who is thought to be unwilling to receive counseling), then there is no excuse not to follow it. That means that it includes a certain kind of responsibility. The game takes responsibility for giving the citizen the possibility of taking on a health responsibility by making the health responsibility so easy to bear that there is no way around it. The question is if the effect does not become the unbearable lightness of the health responsibility. But lightness does not exclude guilt, quite the reverse: The harder it is to come up with personal excuses for not doing the right thing, the greater the sense of guilt when you fail to live up to your responsibility.

In conclusion, although 'Everyday dilemmas' presents itself as a game, it really is not. Rather, it is a pedagogical pamphlet filled with patronizing advice and dressed up as a game: Patronizing because it so clearly communicates its low expectations of the citizens.

## Serious forms become play

The campaign also incorporates forms that are not initially play-like but which it seeks to make playful. It includes, for example, a cookbook called 'Cooking with Yum-Yum', which, like any cookbook, contains recipes and also weekly plans and shopping lists. But the cookbook wants to also be fun, easy, and playful. In a note to health consultants it says:

The cookbook is designed as a tool that you can use in your dialogue with the families – particularly to encourage them to prepare easy dishes. The book is filled with images of food that you can use as a point of departure in your conversations. The book also contains ideas for how to make children participate in the preparation of food (...) which it can be fun and instructive for the whole family to get together around. (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008b)

The recipes use a particular logic of naming. The all have double names. First are the funny names such as 'Dragon-cakes with green swords and rescue boats'; 'Fiery spears with dragon teeth in white sea fog'; 'Red princess soup with veil'; and 'Knight pasta sprinkled with flames'. Second are names which more signify the content of the recipe. The first name appeals to fantasy. It brings excitement to the food and its preparation, reaching in to a world of adventure. An example of this double naming logic is: 'Knight-cakes with golden eggs and fiery sprinkles', which without the fantasy reference is called 'Fish-cakes with potatoes, carrot salad, and remoulade sauce'. Admittedly, golden eggs sound more interesting than potatoes. The citizens are offered a doubling of the world where in the rational health promoting food preparation is united with play and adventure.

Anything that is perceived as boring is translated into something that sounds fun and attractive. Cooking and eating should be like playing. This cookbook even encourages playing with your food. The fundamental perspective throughout the cookbook is that its users are basically uninterested in food and cannot be motivated to cooking on the terms of cooking, which is why cooking has to be made to look like something else. Here is a recipe example:

**Knight-cakes with golden eggs and fiery sprinkles**  
Fish-cakes with potatoes, carrot salad, and remoulade sauce

**This is what you need:**  
800 gr of cream of fish  
4 large leeks – finely cut up  
2 tablespoons of rape-seed oil  
600 gr of potatoes  
3-4 large carrots – grated  
½ dl of remoulade  
2 dl of soured whole milk (1,5%)



**This is how you do:**

- Wash and peel the potatoes and boil them for 20 min.
- Wash, peel and grate the carrots
- Mix the cream of fish with the finely cut leeks
- Fry the fish cakes in oil on a hot pan
- Mix remoulade with soured whole milk
- Serv the fried fish cakes with boiled potatoes, grated carrots and remoulade sauce

**Safe half of the fish cakes for the next day**

Figure 2: Fish-cake recipe.

## Fun and sporty agreements

More interesting, however, are the so-called agreement pages. There are eight agreement pages, one for each type of nutritional advice in the campaign. The basic idea

of the agreements is that parents and children in individual families should make agreements with one another about food and movement. The role of the health professionals is to sell the idea and supervise the agreement conversation. The agreements cannot be about just anything. The eight agreement pages each contain their theme, which needs to be discussed. These have been taken from the eight nutritional advice points in the campaign. Another element is that the agreements have a limited duration so that the family makes an agreement about a new piece of advice when the first agreement expires, etc.

The campaign addresses itself to health professionals: 'As a health professional, the agreement pages allow you, through dialogue with the family, to find out which nutritional advice would be particularly pertinent for the family to focus on'. The family then writes down the agreement as a concrete goal, e.g. 'take a thirty minute walk twice a week' (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008b). This form of agreement is interesting. It is not only a question of health professionals interfering in the individual family's eating habits. It is a question of intervening in the family members' mutual social relations by providing a special form within which sociality can exist – the form of contract – without opening up a dialogue about the fact that the contract is also a particularly value-laden form. It affects the social space. Having shared norms in a family, e.g. about not putting sugar on the breakfast table, means something entirely different than making an agreement about the very same thing. Agreements indicate that someone is seeking to contractualize internal family relations (see also Andersen, 2003; 2007; 2008). This contributes to creating the family as a negotiating family. But why does the campaign do this? It is done in order to make unambiguous regulatory ambitions look like voluntariness. It is meant to look as if it is the family's own initiative to take on particular health prescriptions. The campaign does not like coercion and wagging fingers. It has to appear as if the family has formulated the contract on their own, that it has emerged from below, and denotes a horizontal relation of mutuality among the family members.

Figure 3 shows two examples of agreements, where one focuses on sugar and the other on fruit and vegetables. On the right-hand side of the page is the campaign's nutritional advice combined with other nutritional information. The right-hand side is where the health professional begins his or her 'dialogue' with the family by introducing a piece of advice and providing information about health. It is basically one-sided communication about what is healthy and unhealthy. A clear line marks the distinction between the right and left-hand side of the page. The right-hand side represents one-sided communication, framing the creation of reciprocity, which is later supposed to be found on the left-hand side of the page. It is on the left-hand side that the agreement is to be written, in the field at the bottom of the page entitled 'Our agreement'. At the top middle of the page it says 'tear here'. The idea is that once the agreement has been made, the family tears of the right-hand side of the page whereas the left-hand side can be posted on the refrigerator. Why not post the entire page? It is precisely because the agreement has to appear as if it has emerged from within the family itself. The unambiguously defined framework for the agreement, which appears on the right-hand side of the page, has fulfilled its function and can be disposed of, in part so that we may forget the one-sided regulatory origins of the agreement.

Below the agreement is a monthly plan. When a family member contributes something towards the objectives in the agreement, it can be written here. As the material says: ‘The children can post a sticker on the agreement table on the page every time they do something that benefits the agreement’ (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008b). We could say that what you write or post on the agreement table constitutes the actual signature of the agreement (Derrida, 1988: 124-26). It is when the family shows that it observes the agreement that it attains its afterlife and becomes an actual agreement (Derrida, 2007: 213). At the same time, the ongoing filling in of the table allows the family to monitor itself and keep track of their food and movement habits. Does the family become better at eating six servings of greeneries a day because it is part of the agreement?

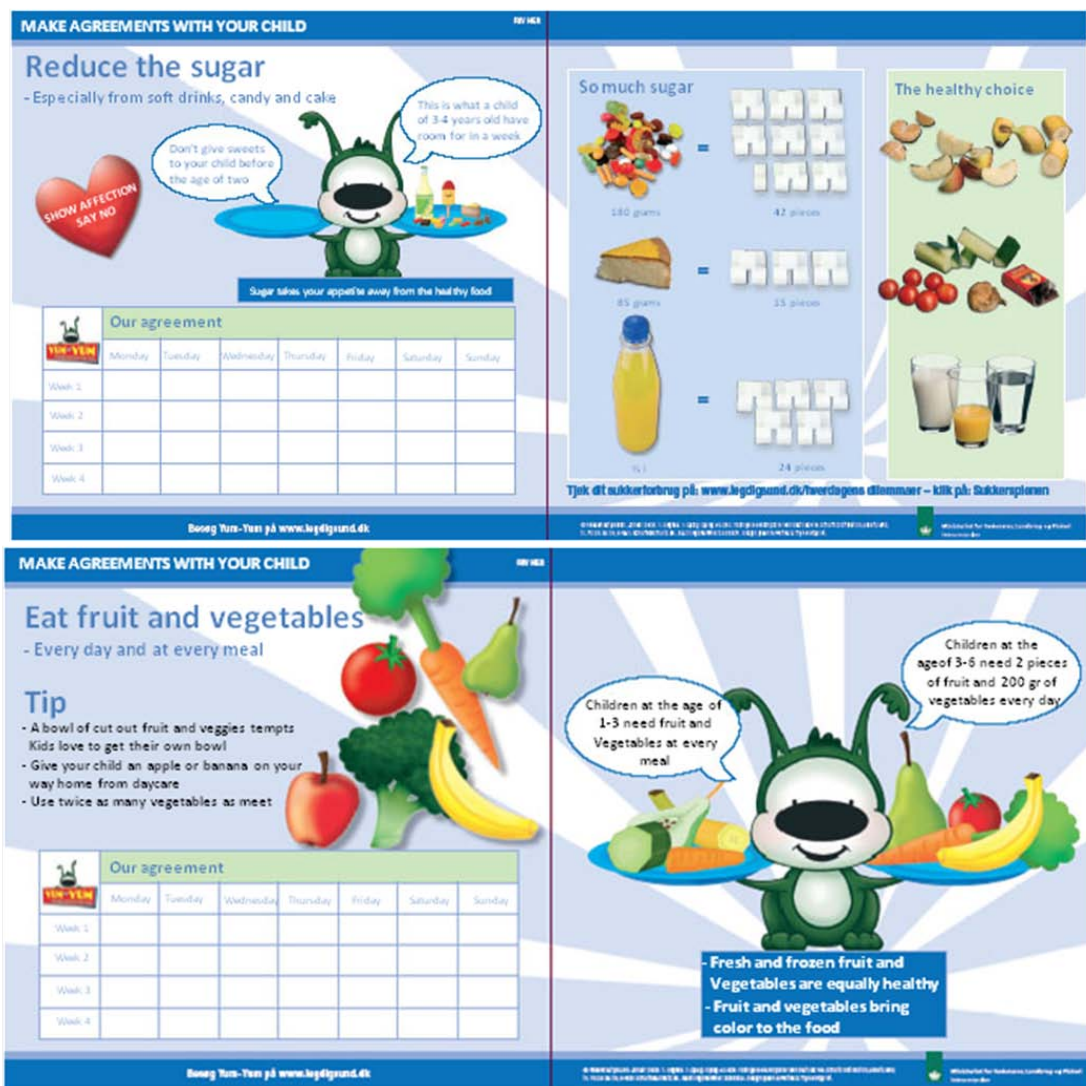


Figure 3: Examples of agreements.

But the agreements are not only formally odd. The campaign also expresses a certain embarrassment in relation to the form of the agreements. The agreement pages have been designed to not look like actual agreements, and colours and drawings create a fun, childish, and inviting appearance. Despite the fact that these agreements are about the

promotion of health in at-risk families, whose health is often threatened by poor nutrition and lack of physical exercise, this seriousness is lacking from the agreement pages. What is important is ‘promoting’, not health risks. They support the positive energy and motivation, not the obligation inherent in any contract. Addressing the family, the material says:

Make agreements with your child. Your child sees you and uses your habits as a mirror – also in relation to food and movement (...) It is a good idea to create little rituals in your daily routines, e.g. to tick off the agreement table every day after you pick up the children. Many children take agreements very seriously, which makes it fun and a game to keep the agreements. (Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, 2008c)

Here, the embarrassment associated with contracts is transformed into the notion that contracts are in fact fun. They are a game. And keeping a promise is like playing a game. This creates a strange form of double communication according to which the contract is on one hand a contract with mutual responsibilities and on the other hand a contractual game, where it is fun to fill out the table. There is, in fact, a difference between breaking a promise made as part of an agreement and losing a game by not scoring a certain number of vegetables for the week.

## **Campaigns and the tension between form and medium**

Traditional media theorists perceive campaigns as planned communication efforts that strategically choose the medium or media expected to fit the target group most effectively. Since Shannon and Weaver (1963), media have been perceived as communication channels and media theory often imply media as technical media for the transportation of messages and information. These media include newspapers, radio, and television. In recent years, the concept of what can be perceived as a media has exploded, not least because of the Internet. But also computer games are seen as a new media, and the incorporation of computer games as an independent media has led to the discovery of play and games as communication media, and many communication programs offer instruction in the design of computer games for the prevention of stress and other issues. However, while the concept of medium has exploded and become more nuanced in recent years, the distinction between communication effort and medium has been maintained, a distinction asymmetrical in nature since focus is on the media while the effort is constituted by the interest with which they are being observed.

If we observe ‘Healthy through Play’ from a media-theoretical perspective, we immediately see that it employs a range of different media such as the Internet, pamphlets, and cookbooks. And if we extend the concept of medium slightly, we are able to also include agreements and regulation as media employed by the campaign.

I am going to replace the distinction between communication effort and medium with the distinction between form and medium and reserve the original distinction for the description of campaign communication. The distinction between form and medium was originally suggested by Heider in 1925 (Heider, 1925/1959). And Niklas Luhmann has subsequently integrated it into his theory about social systems.

What distinguishes this distinction is that it defines forms and media as without essence. It is not a particular essence that decides whether or not something can be said to have the quality of medium. Form and medium are defined in relation to each other and only in relation to each other. This means that something becomes a medium if it is defined as such by a form, and a form, in turn, is only a form to the extent that it makes itself manifest through a medium. The advantage of this kind of empty distinction is that the question of what is form and medium becomes empirical. The question is: 'How elements of a medium are linked to forms and not whether a form represents something external to the medium' (Stäheli, 1997: 116). Thus, what is perceived as form and medium respectively depends on the observer.

A *medium* consists of loosely coupled elements, and *form*, on the contrary, consists of fixed coupling of elements. Media are characterized by a high degree of dissolution and are receptive to Gestalt fixations (Luhmann, 1987: 101). In a medium, elements are independent of one another. When a form shapes a medium, the otherwise independent elements are condensed into a context in which they become more or less dependent on one another: 'Forms (...) arise through the concentration of relations of dependence between elements, i.e. through selections from the possibilities offered by a medium' (Luhmann, 1987: 102). Moreover, media always consist of many elements while forms reduce down to an entity that it can order: 'No medium gives only a single form, for then it would be absorbed as medium and disappear' (Luhmann, 1987: 103).

The relationship between form and medium is itself a form. And as Stäheli notes:

Each element of a medium is itself a form, i.e. the tight coupling of another medium's elements. Thus form and medium are self-referentially entangled: the elements of a medium are forms of another medium. There is neither a last medium, notwithstanding the supermedium of meaning, nor a last form. (Stäheli, 1997: 111)

Forms only emerge if a medium makes itself available, but the form, in turn, asserts itself vis-à-vis the medium, which cannot do anything to resist the rigidity of the form. However, the difference between form and medium is relative in the sense that the coupling of elements in the forms can be more or less tight, which leaves room for a greater or smaller level of elasticity. Heider provides the following example in which writing is the form and the alphabet the medium: In writing, for instance, a multitude of forms is produced by different combinations of relatively few elements, the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. The letters can be combined because they are independent of each other. (Heider, 1959: 7)

He provides another example where the shaping does not happen in space but in time:

The telegraphic code represents an extreme case. Its manifold of signs is produced by different combinations of just two elements. It's a script which employs only two letters. Again, the elements, that is, the dots and dashes, have to be independent of each other. (...) If a combination in time is used, the temporal position of one element has to be independent of the temporal positions of the other elements. (Heider, 1959: 7-8)

Luhmann points out that there are, however, restrictions on the shaping of media, and these restrictions emerge precisely because the elements of a medium are themselves forms. Thus, restrictions develop when the formation processes mutually disturb one

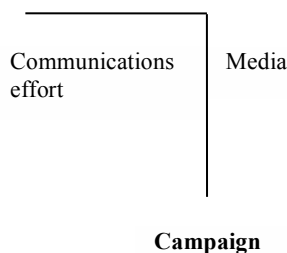
another (Luhmann, 1987: 102). Speech happens when air molecules are put into formed vibrations. That is only possible if the molecules themselves do not vibrate. But in the case of strong wind or even hurricane the medium is destroyed because it assumes forms, which deform the formation of speech. Stäheli goes on to discuss this problem in his dissertation and points out that Luhmann presupposes that ‘Elements of the same medium are equivalent which grants them a certain *Selbigkeit (sameness)*’ (Stäheli, 1997: 112). He considers the implications of a non-pure equivalency between a medium’s elements. Without unfortunately exploring the idea in depth, he arrives at the idea of the *deformation* of form (Stäheli, 1997: 113). This is an idea I will draw on below.

What I believe to be able to observe is that the ‘Healthy through Play’ campaign treats certain asymmetrical forms as ranking equally and that these forms provide resistance in such a way that it creates reversibility in the relationship between form and medium so that the medium comes to shape the form and the campaign form becomes the medium.

If we choose to see the campaign as a communication form, everything that the campaign tries to make manifest through its form turns into media, that is, Internet, play, regulation, posters, contracts, etc. Play, agreements, posters, etc. are independent media which are condensed into mutual inter-dependency within the form of the campaign. Internet, play, regulation, posters, contracts are media because they can be formed by entirely different campaigns with entirely different messages.

What functions as medium for one form can, from a different point of observation, be seen as independent forms that relate to other media. There are always restrictions for the way a medium is formed and these restrictions have to do with the forms of the independent elements.

Perceived as a particular form of communication, campaigns can be observed, I suggest, as a form that both differentiate and unite ‘communications efforts’ and ‘media’. Campaign is the unity of a specific difference, which can be formalized in this way:



Figur 4: The form of campaign.

Thus, campaigns constitute a form of communication whose every communicative operation divides the world into the formulation of specific communicative efforts on one hand and media perceived as potential means of dissemination for the effort on the other hand – and this is all there is in the campaign optics. Each time a communication

effort is formulated, it is precisely only an effort in relation to a possible medium, and from the perspective of the campaign, media, in turn, are only media for an effort.

Thus, from the perspective of the campaign, play, agreements, Internet, health, cookbooks, etc. are either a message or a medium. The campaign perspective is blind to the fact that, for example agreements could be a form of itself and not just a medium.

But what are considered media by the campaign are perceived, from other points of observation, as forms with their own media. And in relation to the 'Healthy through Play' campaign, I am going to focus on play as an independent form of communication in order to then discuss the relationship between campaign and play in 'Healthy through Play'.

## The form of play

In his book *Homo Ludens* from 1936, Johan Huizinga describes play as an independent cultural form, which cannot be reduced to other forms. The first part of the book explores the possibility of seeing play as an aspect of other forms. 'The more we try to mark off the form we call "play" from other forms apparently related to it, the more the absolute independence of the play-concept stands out' (Huizinga, 1971: 6). Play, says Huizinga, is characterized as being fundamentally superfluous (Huizinga, 1971: 8). By this he means precisely that the meaning of play derives from play itself. It is not a function of another form. It is not a task.

While Huizinga observes play as cultural form, Bateson observes play as a distinctive form of communication, which always involves meta-communication about whether or not play is taking place. Bateson explores the specific difference that is being drawn when play communicates the fact that 'this is play'. He suggests that play is the unity of the difference between 'These actions in which we now engage do not denote what those actions *for which they stand* would denote' (Bateson, 2000: 180) and 'these actions in which we now engage, denote what these actions denote'. When children play-fight, for example, they draw a continual distinction between play-fighting and actual fighting by letting the feigned strike signify the strike of actual fighting but not signify that which an actual strike would signify in a real fist fight. The form of play can be formalized in this way:

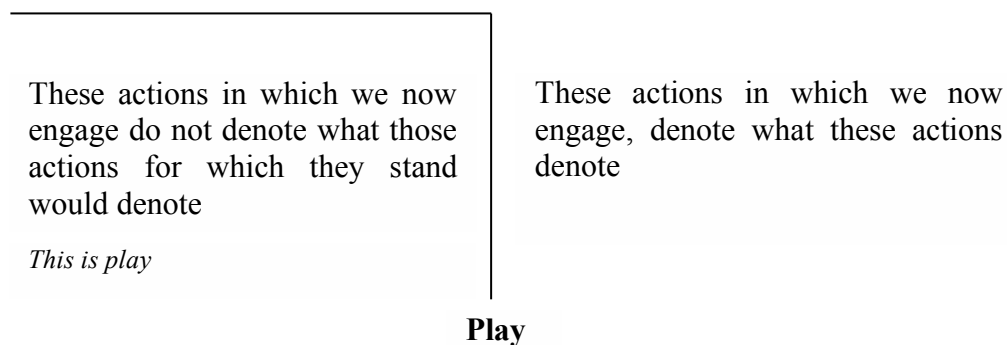


Figure 5: The form of play.

The outside of the distinction represents that with which you can play but which play cannot be. The outside is, perceived from within play, the reality in which the representational figures of language apply and in which signs and actions mean what they say. Someone who puts out fires is a fireman and does not merely play that he is. Play toys with the outside of representational figures but has to remain on the inside where representation, sign, and actions, always assume a 'as if' quality. It is play with signs, representations, and actions through signs, representations, and actions, which point in the game to the meaning of these in 'real life' without possessing that meaning in the game.

Play doubles the world into the world of play and a 'real' world, and the doubling takes place on the side of the play. Dirk Baecker formulates it in this way:

In play, socialness is constituted by ways of reflection onto itself as the other side of itself. In play, socialness is experienced as what it is, namely as contingent, roughly meaning that it is neither necessary nor impossible, or again, given yet changeable. Play in general reveals the form of the social by which the play infects the world. (Baecker 1999: 103)

Thus, play represents a communicative socialness characterized by its doubling of this socialness so that the contingency of the social reality becomes visible in play. This doubling of the world in a fantasy world and a real world on the fantasy side of the distinction applies to the playing subject as well. As playing subject, you must be prepared to play along, and playing along also means doubling yourself into the playing self and the self outside of the game. As a player, you have to be prepared not only to observe the contingency of the world but to see yourself as contingent. The 'playing self' puts 'the real self' in parenthesis and that makes it possible to freely act out different roles in play without being held responsible at the end of the game. You are able to play with your self and thus see the contingency of the manifestation of the self.

## **The relationship between form and medium in the 'Healthy through Play' campaign**

I have shown the way in which the 'Healthy through Play' campaign observes play as a medium for its communications effort. The question remains whether and how play lets itself be formed within the specific forms established by the campaign, particularly the agreement pages discussed earlier. Since my material is campaign material rather than specific interactions between health professionals and at-risk families, the foci of my analysis are the conditions for possible relations between form and medium.

Here, the first thing that strikes me is the campaign's third-order character; a state-run campaign designed for health professionals to campaign to at-risk families, who are meant to campaign to themselves. This means that the 'Healthy through Play' campaign can only link its elements to the extent that they maintain a certain level of plasticity in relation to further formation in the first and second order. Because of its third-order status, the state-run campaign can only shape its material to the extent that the formation process can be continued in varied form, first by the health professionals in relation to the families and subsequently by the families in relation to themselves. For example, agreements in 'Healthy through play' are clearly created as a medium, which

is supposed to carry the campaign message about health-promotion into the families. However, what qualifies the agreements as medium from the perspective of the campaign is that they still function as medium in the health professionals' encounter with the at-risk families. So the National Board of Health forms the medium of agreements through the formation of standardized agreement pages, which open up for further manifestations in the relationship between health professionals and families. The element 'agreement', in other words, is variable and adaptable to different conditions of interaction between health professional and family.

Moreover, the campaign leaves open the choice of communication medium. This is the case in 'Spin-the-bottle' which oscillates between play and pedagogy depending on which field the bottle point to. But it is particularly obvious in the case of the agreement pages. The agreement pages could function as the form for the communication between health professionals and family in relation to rather different media. It could be *the medium of power* with the form superior (regulator)/inferior (regulated) where the family is defined as the regulated inferior and the professionals as the regulating superiors. In this case, communication is about how health professionals use the agreement pages to regulate the family with regard to its self-regulation according to the health advice. Here, the agreement pages are perceived as a regulatory tool for health professionals as well as for the family. It could be *the medium of contract* with the form obligation/freedom. In this case, communication would be about making an agreement between health professionals and the family about the family's self-agreement to transform the health advice into contractual obligations. The agreement page then takes on the quality of standardized agreements, which can be further specified. Moreover, it could be *the medium of pedagogy* with the form better/worse in terms of learning where the family is conceived as a moldable child who needs to learn about health and where the professionals are seen as instructive health pedagogues. Here, the agreement page becomes a pedagogical illustrative tool. Finally, it could be *the medium of play* with the form play/ 'reality'. The health professionals and the family are then seen as playmates, and the agreement page attains the quality of a game that provides a variety of possibilities for play. In this communication, nothing is what it pretends to be. The health professionals are not simply counselors but invite the families to play through fun and voluntary offers. The health advice is precisely given by Yum-Yum, and while it is good advice it is also fun. Agreements do not represent tedious responsibilities but an agreement game where we fulfill the terms of the agreement in a playful spirit as long as it remains fun. The communication effort of the campaign here relates to a heterogeneity of different alternative media whose choices are not given. It is a campaign that withholds its choice of medium until a recursive attributing of the communication that actually happens around the agreement pages.

It is, however, more complex than this since the campaign does not simply reintroduce the distinction between form and medium so that the choice of medium is 'decentralized' and placed in the specific interactions between professional and family. The campaign's recursive attribution of the medium for communication does not in fact have to confirm the communication's actual formation of a medium. The campaign is constructed in such a way so that the health professionals can always respond to opposition from families by saying that something else is going on than what the families are saying. A health professional can suggest regulation by using the agreement

pages, and if the family then opposes regulation, he or she is able to argue that they merely represent a voluntary agreement, which the family is invited to make with itself. The communication implies that the agreements constitute voluntary surrender of freedom. And if the family feels that the agreements are too unpleasant, the agreements are really just a play-agreement where it is important to remember that children often find such games fun. A scene for interaction is constructed, therefore, which allows for a constant oscillation among heterogeneous forms of communication. The contract sheets make up a machine of displacement in relation to communicative expectations. The result is that at-risk families never fully know whether they are partaking in play, regulation, negotiation of an agreement, or pedagogically organized learning processes, and each form implies a different selection of expectations, which cannot all be met at the same time. And it is a point in the campaign that seriousness whether defined within the form of agreement, pedagogy, or regulation momentarily turns into play with seriousness. It becomes impossible for the participants to determine whether they are dealing with a moment of seriousness or responsibility or play, particularly because the next moment might be one of reversal. The point is therefore not, that the agreement sheets are just play. The point is that the sheets are designed in such a way that is not possible to determine in advance how they structure expectations. With the help of the agreement sheets the health professionals can always deny what they are doing, retreating to play. The campaign makers have creating particular opportunities to get around emerging resistance by the citizens (where the alternative would have been to meet the resistance and recognizing citizen as legitimate opponent).

And it is important to pay attention to what it also means to refer to something as play. When play itself says 'it is play', it doubles the world and defines 'reality' as that with which we can play. Thus we must assume that the autopoiesis of play defines the campaign as its outside, that is, as what is played. The result is that we all act as we normally do in campaigns, but these actions do not mean what they normally would in a regular campaign. Play as a medium creates the rather peculiar situation that play is in fact only possible when it resists its external manifestation. If the campaign was successful at instrumentally designing play in a way so that it becomes the unambiguous carrier of the campaign message, it is no longer play but power parasiting on power. This means that the campaign loses the sense of voluntariness and dedication, which initially was the reason that the campaign chose play as medium. However, if the campaign is successful at allowing play to be constitutive and recruit participants to its activities, then the campaign message has been turned into something that play plays with and that it can place in parenthesis.

All this seems to point to the fact that the 'Healthy through Play' campaign struggles to select play as its medium without violently affecting the very form of the campaign. This is a campaign that does not want to be recognized as campaign, regulation that does not want to be seen as regulation, contracts that do not care for obligations but only freedom, and a pedagogy that seek not to be instructive. The 'Healthy through Play' campaign wants neither to be recognized as campaign not to be rejected as such. Perhaps the most probable result is that the campaign itself becomes a game. It is play-campaigning with the benefit of being able to quickly and easily suspend the campaign's quality of regulation, pedagogy, and obligation if it senses opposition from citizens. However, this causes play to be the dominant form, which places the campaign

in parenthesis as something we are merely playing! The relationship between campaign as form and play as medium is deformed or even becomes reversible so that what used to be form (the campaign) suddenly becomes the medium of play. And this happens while the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries and the National Board of Health continue to play that they are running campaigns.

## **Conclusion: The cartoon state**

Perhaps our conclusion may extend these ideas. Niklas Luhmann, in his book about the welfare state, criticizes a number of ideas about the state as a substantial framework for politics. He reverses the relation and talks about the political system of communication as communicating in a particular code and assigning itself a particular functionality without being tied to a specific locality or set of institutions, people, etc. The political system is everywhere where political communication takes place, that is, through the code of politics. The political system, therefore, is highly differentiated into sub-systems or different political cases, participants, etc. The state is not a prescribed framework for politics. Instead, in a differentiated political system, the state becomes the self-description of the political system, that is, the attempt by the political system to describe its unity despite its divisions, but this unity remains a mere semantic artifact for the political system:

The state then does not enjoy the form of an immediately accessible fact, of a section of the world, of the people, of a collection of persons that stand to one another in a relation that needs to be specified further (...) The state is the formula for the self-description of the political system of society. (...) Politics is not determined as state but in reference to the state. (Luhmann 1990: 122-123)

This makes it possible to explore the way in which the political system is constantly struggling with its unity through the description of itself as state. The state becomes a central research object, not as substantial locality but as important political self-description and hence as passport to the political system's struggle to create its own conditions. It makes a difference whether the political communication shapes itself through reference to a semantics of the constitutional state, the welfare state, or the security state. My question is which unity for the political system is outlined in the 'Healthy through Play' campaign? What is the state that the campaign is referring to?

Let me repeat the question from the article's title: Who is Yum-Yum, who supplies us, in the below picture, with nutritional advice?



Figure 6: Yum-Yum's nutritional advice.

Yum-Yum is the consistent reference in the campaign. Yum-Yum is the campaign's description of itself. Yum-Yum seems to emerge as a semantics of self-description of the political in 'Healthy through play'. With Yum-Yum, the state is turned into a cartoon character with long plushy ears, widely spaced eyes, and a very large and soft nose. Yum-Yum is cute, friendly, inviting, and above all completely harmless. He is neither adult nor child. Or more precisely: He is an adult who knows what is right and good for everyone, but he is also an innocent child. He is a hybrid between adult and child and between responsibility and innocence. He gives advice. He means well and there are no catches.

This poses certain questions:

- Does the state become a type of game master in such campaigns?
- Or is the state gambled and merely playing that it is a state?
- Is the cartoon state a self-deconstructive state, dissolving its own conditions for being a state?

I do not hold the answers to these questions. In fact, they are probably the political system's own questions when it organizes campaigns such as 'Healthy through play'. The cartoon state seems to be a state that gets in the way of itself. It is a state whose impotence consists precisely in the fact that it is state. The state would rather be (civil) society. In order to work as state and have power over the self-relation of it citizens, it

has to look different than a state. The state plays that it is (not) a state and hopes that someone will play along so that it may yet work as state.

This is, obviously, not an innocent game for when the state plays that it is not a state but simply seeks to play with its citizens in a serious way, then its citizens not longer need rights. When the political system describes itself as constitutional state, the self-limitation of the political system vis-à-vis the citizen becomes an unavoidable theme. Describing itself as constitutional state implies protecting the citizen against the state itself. But when the state is drawn as Yum-Yum, how might we begin to describe any need for protection in relation to the citizen? The state describes itself as one that does not take itself seriously as state and therefore cannot take seriously possible opposition from its citizens. There is no reason for opposition when the state is Yum-Yum, so that when citizens do oppose the health-promotion initiatives, they lose their status as subject. The health professionals should not meet opposition by recognizing the opponent. Opposition is something to evade or move around since it is not a sign of a reasonable will (see also Knudsen 2009). Only when the citizen agrees to play along is he or she recognized as subjects with a will and reason. The result is a state without boundaries.

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