Capitalism as our Truth Regime
Understanding the truth regime for students of business and economics

Degree project G3 Business Economics,
15 ECTS credits
Bachelor thesis, FE3913, VT 2009
Authors: Linda Karlsson 810629-2926
         Christian Blenner 840723-7471
         Kristoffer Lindkvist 830514-2716
Tutors: Anna Stafsudd and Senada Bahto
Examiner: Anna Stafsudd
- The ... is everywhere, it is all around us. Even now, in this very room, you can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, or when you go to church or when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.
- What truth?
- That you are a slave. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born inside a prison that you cannot smell, taste, or touch; a prison for your mind.

Unfortunately, no one can be told what the ... is. You have to see it for yourself. This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back.

- You take the blue pill and the story ends. You wake in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes.

The Matrix (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999)
Formalities

Degree: Bachelor thesis in business management
Degree project G3 Business Economics,
School of Management and Economics at Växjö University, FE3913, VT 2009

Institution: Växjö University

Course: FE 3913, spring semester 2009

Authors: Linda Karlsson lkcf04@student.vxu.se
         Christian Blenner cblim04@student.vxu.se
         Kristoffer Lindkvist kliep05@student.vxu.se

Examiner: Anna Stafsudd

Tutors: Anna Stafsudd and Senada Bahto

Key words: Regime of truth, discourse analysis, capitalism, interviews, students,
           individualism, socialism, Swedish model

Title: Capitalism as our Truth Regime
       - Understanding the truth regime for students of business and economics
Executive Summary

Introduction
People want to believe that they make their own choices and have freedom of thought even if social constructionists say that the self is created by power relations and discourses which are also created by power. The regime of truth serves power interest and pervades discourses. Since our thoughts are managed by discourse, the regime of truth is ascribing us our life goals. It is pronounced that capitalism is our current regime of truth and thus permeates our society in all kinds of areas. Since it is taken-for-granted people is unaware of it; it is normalized to the further most possible extent. We want to increase understandings of how Swedish students of business and economics are influenced by capitalism as the current regime of truth.

Theory
Base of the thesis is the concept of regime of truth, its control of discourses and the inseparable relation of power and knowledge. We define capitalism through classical writers as Milton Friedman and John Maynard Keynes. We follow up with a presentation of the Swedish model and education in order to get the socialistic background of Sweden together with the impact of education system.

Method
As starting point we use social constructionism when conducting a discourse analysis on the accounts gathered from fourteen interviews of business students from Växjö University, Sweden.

Result
When taking our findings into account, the complex mixture of discourses dominated by capitalism, together with the importance of income, revenue and costs in all kinds of areas in our civilization, we must pronounce that capitalism, perhaps together with individualism and socialism, are permeating our society to that extent that we perhaps speak of it as a regime of truth.
## Contents

1  Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 6  
   1.1  Preface ............................................................................................................................. 6  
   1.2  Problem discussion .......................................................................................................... 7  
   1.3  Problem formulation ....................................................................................................... 10  
   1.4  Purpose ............................................................................................................................ 10  
   1.5  Definition of concepts ..................................................................................................... 11  
2  Theory ..................................................................................................................................... 14  
   2.1  Michael Foucault ............................................................................................................. 14  
   2.2  The concept of power .................................................................................................... 16  
   2.3  Regime of truth ............................................................................................................... 22  
   2.4  Ideologies ....................................................................................................................... 24  
   2.5  Capitalism ....................................................................................................................... 26  
   2.6  Individualism .................................................................................................................. 36  
   2.7  Swedish Model ............................................................................................................... 38  
   2.8  Education system .......................................................................................................... 41  
3  Method ..................................................................................................................................... 45  
   3.1  Social Constructionism ................................................................................................... 45  
   3.2  Discourse Analysis ......................................................................................................... 51  
      3.2.1  Tools for discourse analysis ...................................................................................... 55  
      3.2.2  How to use Discourse Analysis ............................................................................... 56  
   3.3  Design of the study ......................................................................................................... 58  
      3.3.1  Respondents ............................................................................................................. 61  
      3.3.2  Interview guide ......................................................................................................... 62  
4  Analysis of empirical data ...................................................................................................... 69  
   4.1  Patterns of similarities and contradictions ................................................................... 69  
   4.2  Discussion from arguments and starting and ending of discourse statements ............... 80  
5  Conclusion and discussion ..................................................................................................... 89  
   5.1  Summary ........................................................................................................................ 89  
   5.2  Discussion and Conclusions ......................................................................................... 90  
6  Reflections ................................................................................................................................ 93  
7  Future research proposal ........................................................................................................ 94  
8  References ............................................................................................................................... 95
1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

While the sun was shining, flowers blossomed and the grass turned green we sat in a cube of concrete and tapped on our keyboards. Food came thru the door; it was in the majestic form of home delivery pizza. This is the final part on our bachelor degree. After a couple less successful attempts to write a bachelor thesis last year we are now finally done, we hope! We took a deep breath and dove into a world of subjectivities, discourses, power structures and capitalism. The literature we swam through almost got the best of us a couple of times, but we got out the other end full of new “knowledge”, much thanks to our tutors that threw us a couple of lifebuoys along the way. We began this metaphorical swim with a basic interest and healthy distrust of those in power. Now we are even more cynical, suspicious and aware of our surroundings and the powers at be, than ever before. We could not be happier that we took the red pill. And now we can never go back.

The last years has been a gradual political awakening, a formation of a more educated and critical viewpoint of politics. We have all been studying abroad were we have seen, heard and felt different outtakes of culture, views and life in general. We have read books and seen films that have affected us and/or enraged us in different ways. All these things, the Bush years, the last US election and the current financial crisis has been a build up towards the interest of writing a thesis such as this.

We would like to thank ourselves, since we did most the work. But we would also like to thank our respondents for their participation. Thanks, Magnus and Birgitta Blenner and Mr Andersson for taking time out of their busy lives to proofread our thesis as it got close to completion. Last but least, we would like to thank our tutors Senada Batho and Anna Stafsuudd that guided us and threw us the much needed lifelines.
1.2 Problem discussion

People often imagine themselves as being objective and part of a universal reality. By our own experience we have noticed that people tend to feel threatened when their reality is questioned. People tend to believe that what they see as reality is quite the same as what everybody else sees, and when this is being questioned, they feel threatened and get defensive. Social scientists has for some time now questioned this belief of an objective self and most are now unified about that the self is subjective and shattered. (Jackson & Carter, 2007) But people still want to believe that they make their own choices and have freedom of thought. We are of the opinion that there is no freedom of thought since we are all governed by the regime of truth and a multitude of discourses that control our line of thoughts. We cannot think outside discourses. (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008) They are the rule bound assemblage of expressions; collections of meaning compounded into thoughts and words. The same words in the same language can have different meanings in different discourses. The discourses decide not only what we say, but also what angle and path our thoughts take. Our perception and relation to reality can only be expressed though discourses. There are numerous discourses. These are sometimes in conflict and sometimes co-exist.

Our starting point of this thesis is that capitalism is our regime of truth. Modern research suggests that there are several conflicting regimes of truth (Weir, 2008) or at least several conflicting discourses (Nilsson, 2008). We will not focus on multiple regimes of truth but rather multiple discourses within the current regime of truth. We will do this by studying students of economics and business and by that measure try to uncover possible inclination towards that capitalism is the ruling truth regime.

The global economic systems are built upon markets. These markets are both physical marketplaces where one can buy fresh fish, fruit or other physical goods, and in modern economics more abstract, just in time electronic screens where buyers buy and sellers sell stocks, bonds, shares. Whatever market you visit, these markets presumably follow the same principal and act similarly; markets are built around
scarcity, which basically means that there is a shortage of everything. The fact that no one can have everything leads us to supply and demand which determines price.

The ultimate price for a product under a set of given circumstances is given when there is equilibrium between the supply and demand of a good and service. This is the basic idea of capitalism, this is what starts wars, gives hope to many of a decent future, traps people in a rat race to pay mortgages and rents, gives people the chance to challenge themselves and others, have led to destruction of the environment, can save the environment, and determines politics which more or less governs our lives.

What much of modern politics boils down to is “how much should we regulate the markets? And; who should get the proceeds?” Freidman, Marx, Keynes and all the other economists basically argue about these two questions.

To our knowledge there are no alternative market structures that compete with the one we have. That fact could be construed as ironic since one of the cornerstones of capitalism is competition. The Capitalist argues that to achieve the best price and quality for the end consumer you need competition, without competition the seller can set any price it wants and that is wrong and unfair, to simplify the language.  

(Friedman, 2005)

Now, if these are the fundamentals of our system, and there is no alternative, no competitor, no rival system. What does that say about our system? In the wake of the current economic crisis, huge protests are breaking out around the world. (BBC World News, 2009) They are angry with how Wall Street, bankers, and corporations in general have done business, or rather failed to do business, International Monetary Fund estimates there is an estimated 4trillion$ loss worldwide. (DPA , 2009)

The US is printing vast amounts of dollars in order to pay for the failures and of course Obama’s political agenda. European countries are doing the same; China is reported to pump 4-trillion Yuan in a stimulus package into its system to lay the foundation for next year’s growth. (Yan, 2009)
The crisis stems from the US housing market collapse. The collapse came from lack of oversight, deregulation and greed. Another irony with a system based on scarcity is the excess that brought it down, at least for the moment. *(Junior Achievement)*

The traditional Swedish model is based upon many years of social democratic rule and very different from the neo-liberal ideas of Freidman, whereby a certain economic structure was formed. The social democratic party and the labor union LO passed strict regulation laws regarding business practices and wage negotiation. There was a clear goal of the social democrats to decrease the income gap between the working class and the rich. Except from strict wage regulations, high incremental taxes were implemented. However, Sweden has joined the rest of the world towards liberalization since late 80’s. *(Menz, 2005)*. This progress has been a gradual process, with more pressure from corporate sector to de-centralize the wage negotiations. LO got competition for other white collar unions like TCO and SACO.

We believe it is possible that a more liberal value ground is slowly emerging alongside with economic liberalization, if so; our interviews with Swedish Business students might reveal a pattern of capitalistic discourse representations. The Curriculum for the Compulsory School System in Sweden states that one of school’s purposes is to represent and re-produce the values that are seen as good in society. Schools and universities are institutionalizing procedures that making different procedures in order to maintain the dominant discourse and its order. Power and knowledge can never be separated. The education system has a strong connection to regime of truth. Maybe we could find patterns that may imply that the value grounds that are reproduced in schools or society originate from capitalism as a regime of truth and its preferential discourses.

We are all using language to communicate information, meanings, feeling and behavior. Language is also the machine that generates and constitutes our social world, thus constitutes our social identities and social relations. We only access reality through language and it is from language that we create representations of reality, bound by discourses. These representations are not only reflections of a “pre-existing reality” but they contribute to construct the reality as we speak. Social contexts are
using language to communicate. The language in these contexts is always taken for granted and structured and ordered accordingly to the discourse in charge. When using discourse analyses we look for patterns within the language in a discourse. We use it to explore different social domains or areas. Since we are studying regime of truth a discourse analysis becomes a natural choice of methodology. To gain access to these representations in the language we have interviewed fourteen students of business and economics at Växjö University.

### 1.3 Problem formulation

It is implied that the capitalistic system we have today is true and right, if this is so, it would mean that capitalism is the current regime of truth. The regime of truth governs us, gives us a goal to aim for and lead us when we make decisions. The current regime of truth will make us understand how to act, how to decide and perform our societal duties. *(Jackson & Carter, 2007)* This means that the regime of truth dictates a great deal in our lives. It sets our values, ideas and beliefs; otherwise it would not be sustained and reproduced.

We do not have to be aware of the capitalism as a regime of truth because it is normalized and internalized to the furthest possible extent. It is built in the institutions of society and is there without being questioned. Because it is not questioned, but rather taken for granted, we feel that this is an area worth exploring.

We, the authors, have all been exchange students and subjected to different cultures. This was a kind of wakeup call because for the first time really we realized that our own way of doing things has alternatives. This has gotten us to reflect more on how Swedish mentality and society works, got to where it is and where we might be heading.

### 1.4 Purpose

Our purpose is to increase understandings of how Swedish students of business and economics are influenced by capitalism as the current regime of truth.
1.5 Definition of concepts

Account
The word account is a piece of talk and as a word it is synonym with report, describe, inform and declare. The interview respondents accounts is their talk, speak and communication in a verbal way. It is through the accounts that a discourse can be spotted. *(Hillclimbe Media) (Tracy, 2003)*

Biopower
Biopower is the power over peoples’ bodies and minds. It is technologies developed from science. The human science could be said to be biopower since it is developed to analyze, control and regulate our bodies and behaviors. Biopower assist capitalism since it provide a active disiplined and healthy workforce. Biopower also assist capitalism by arrange space and people in structures depending on details and function. An example of this arrangement is the schools. *(Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000)*

Capitalism
Capitalism is an idea of an economic system which is built on the principle of private property and ownership and a free exchange of products and services (free market), and minimum state involvement. The production and growth are governed by market mechanisms. *(NE)*

Discourse
Discourse is the assemblage of coherent expressions, accounts and concepts. It is a rule bound knowledge institution. Our perception and relation to reality can only be expressed though discourses. Discourses govern our insight of reality to the extent that we can never experience the world outside discourse. There are numerous amounts of discourses existing and we are bound by them, sometimes in conflict and sometimes side by side. The same words in the same language can have different meanings in different discourses. The discourses decide not only what we say, but also what angle and path our thoughts take. *(NE) (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008)*
Ideology
Ideology is a comprehensive collection of ideas, values and views of society. (NE) Laclau & Mouffe and Michael Foucault have deeper explanations of ideology which includes its relation to power and discourses. These will be explained in theory chapter.

Individualism
According to Oxford English Dictionary, Individualism is “The social theory which advocates the free and independent action of the individual, as opposed to communistic methods of organization and state interference.” Individualism is opposed to collectivism and socialism. As a feeling it is self centered as a principle. It is when” the individual pursues his own ends or follows out his own ideas; free and independent individual action or thought; egoism.” (Oxford University Press)

Neoliberalism
Neoliberalism is a branch of capitalism and liberalism that stresses the importance of a minimal state to an even further extent. It turns on the intervention ideas of John Maynard Keynes and Milton Freidman is often associated with these ideas. He believed almost all of society’s problems could be solved by the free market. (NE)

Power knowledge relation
Power and knowledge can never be separated. Knowledge is power and power produces knowledge. Power can not be asscribed to individuals or groups with specific interests, but rather a undefined force spread across diverse social practices. (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008)

Protestant work ethic
An ethic sprung from protestant Christianity. This ethic basically means that hard diligent work is valued as good in itself and should be strive for in order to be a good human and citizen. This ethic has obvious benefits for organizations in enhancing profit and a compliant work force. (Carter & Jackson, 2007)
Regime of truth
The regime of truth in every epoch that dictates what truth is. In extension it also
dictates whose interests can be served legitimacy. *(Nilsson, 2008)*

Representation
Representations are the words used to communicate through discourse. The words and
language are always representing a discourse and is never neutral. They contribute to
construct reality. *(Nilsson, 2008)*

Socialism
Socialism is largely ideas once based on Marxism. According to socialism is the
collective, the group, best equipped to solve political, economical and social problems.
A collective could be a state or a union etc. *(NE)*

Statements
Foucault’s basic unit of discourse and consists of the rules that decides how to speak
with meaning. *(Nilsson, 2008)*

Swedish model
The Swedish model for creating welfare and was Sweden’s socialistic system with its
peak in 1970’s. It developed after world war two with two primary goals, economic-
security and equality. Characteristics like a centralized structure, welfare financed by
taxes and large companies. *(Lindbeck, 1998)*
2 Theory

We start in the theory chapter with a description of Michael Foucault and then a discussion concept of power which is crucially linked to his work. Then follows a section which deals with truth regime, first as Foucault saw it and later how Lorna Weir sees it. Since our thesis starts with the assumption that capitalism is our current truth regime we review capitalism, both in a historical way and present thoughts. At last we find it important to narrow down the discussion in our context of study; Sweden and the university.

In order simplify for our readers and make it easier to understand the following chapter we will begin with a brief definition of the concept of discourse. We define discourse as an assemblage of coherent expressions, accounts and concepts. It is a rule bound knowledge institution. Our perception and relation to reality can only be expressed though discourses. Discourses govern our insight of reality to the extent that we can never experience the world outside discourse. There are numerous amounts of discourses existing and we are bound by them, sometimes in conflict and sometimes side by side. The same words in the same language can have different meanings in different discourses. The discourses decide not only what we say, but also what angle and path our thoughts take. (NE)

2.1 Michael Foucault

Foucault is a thinker that can inspire and encourage all of us to start thinking and begin to reflect over our past and present. He is a writer who was influenced by many different thinkers and philosophers which eventually made him come up with the idea of a regime of truth, which works as a foundation for this thesis, and on that basis it becomes very clear that it is important to acknowledge him and try to point out those concepts and theories that will act as part of this thesis foundation, as well some background to get the bigger picture. He grew up and studied in France during a time when its intellectual current where dominated by Marxism and phenomenology. Together with structuralism, Marxism and phenomenology the base on which Foucault should be read. It is important to realize that Foucault adopted and rejected parts of
these ideas, brought them further, questioned and evolved them. Many have tried label him but he really don’t mach a single idea frame. *(Nilsson, 2008, s. 20)*

In a political sense Foucault was never neutral and as a young intellectual ha was a member of the French communist party, but after some disagreements during the early 50’s he left the party in 1953. Foucault became repelled to speak about his time with the party and was politically inactive until the late 1960’s. After returning from Tunisia in 1969, were he he had worked as a guest professor for a couple of years, he joined the left wing movement in France, exploding in 1968 with the May-revolt. Foucault describes this event as his wakeup call for contexts of problems concerning power. *(Nilsson, 2008)*

Foucault was a head figure among the left wing-activists during the 1970is and took part in several actions and was even arrested a couple of times. After the may-revolt he wrote two books, “Discipline & Punish” (1975) and the “History of Sexuality” (1976), where he discusses thoughts on power. *(Nilsson, 2008)*

Foucault was one of the twentieth century’s most original thinkers and was at the same time difficult, brilliant, ambiguous and sometimes also clear. His work led to a whole new way of thinking and gave social science new approaches, concepts and innovations. His authoring have led to a shift regarding scientists focus towards objects like societies’ institutions, like prisons and mental hospitals, deviance, medicine and other power-knowledge figurations like psychology and ethnology. Many scientists have been influenced, inspired and provoked by Foucault, especially when it comes to question the political and epistemological assumptions that have ruled the western world. *(Nilsson, 2008)*

There are numerous secondary literatures that try to figure out how to relate to his texts and how to use them. In other words, there are many writers and thinkers that have tried to simplify and put his works within borders, which is exactly what he himself did not had in mind since his whole life work can be said to avoid becoming normalized by the very disciplines and discourses he put so much effort into studying. Foucault often gave ironic and elusive comments to any attempt putting him into a theoretical standpoint of any kind. *(Nilsson, 2008)*
2.2 The concept of power

Power can be said to be “the ability to get someone to do something that they do not particularly want to do” (Carter & Jackson, 2007, s. 94). From a more subjective point of view power can be said to be the authority to define significations; ascribe meanings to symbols. (Carter & Jackson, 2007) Power shapes our perception, since our perception is always interpreted through symbols.

The power discussions are crucial in Foucault’s work and have been used by many others since. Foucault meant that power is by nature evil and argued that power is by nature never ending and unlimited. (Paras, 2006) But this is only one side of the coin. Power has also a constructive side to it. We investigate this paradox further down in this chapter.

The impression of power is that it wants to control and regulate people’s acts, behaviors and thoughts. This is exactly what it does; it tries but never fully succeeds. Foucault argues that power never fully achieve what it is set out to do, or asserts to do (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) Also power cannot be ascribed to individuals or groups such as a state with specific interests, but rather an undefined force spread across diverse social practices. (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008) Power exists in relation between different fields or institutions and can quickly change and flow between practices. This view of power acquires for modern times or post renaissance times in contrary to, for example, the middle-aged where the king and queen possessed all the power since they were chosen by god. (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000)

Power and individuality

Foucault did not think that individuality was an instrument or a weapon against power. On the contrary he believed the individuality could be and are used as an approach to dominant and govern people. Foucault said at a conference in 1974: “I think that individuality is today completely controlled by power, and that we are individualized, at bottom, by power itself. In other words, I do not believe in the least that individualization is opposed to power, but on the contrary, I would say that our individuality – the obligatory identity of each of us – is the effect and instrument of
We cannot escape individuality since our subjects is ascribed to us by power from the moment we are born. Power surrounds us all through our lives, and we can never detach ourselves from it, therefore it is naïve to say or believe that individuality, our personalities, can be separated from it or put out of its context. Power does not have to be a master-slave relationship. The thought of a liberated self is not the origin or foundation of freedom from power. This idea is in itself evidence of the constant stream of power affecting the people. The power is constantly busy with documenting our lives, we all have a biography that is acknowledged and sorted by power. The concept of individuality is forced upon us and it would be irrational and stupid to try to free ourselves by emphasize our individuality (Paras, 2006)

People with high level of individuality might search for ways to show their uniqueness and progress from others. The power systems use a kind of examination to qualify, classify and punish people. For example the examination from high school qualifies you for further studies. In order to get excess to a university education, grades from high school are used as a measurement to see if you qualify. Society classifies us in many different ways. When someone’s small business goes bankrupt, this will be announced in the newspaper, which can be seen as an examination of power that classify the owner as unfit for business. This examination separates people which are good in an individualized way since you want to be unique. If you have graduated university you have a certain level of uniqueness and if you have a company car you have another. A trial is also an examination, a display for criminal behavior. The convicted is subjected to an examination of power that punishes him. Even this benefits individuality since the convict is now different from you but in a negative way. You do not have to compete with him or her anymore and the criminal has got identity of his own and now compete with other criminals. This examination is a mixture of normalization, revision and surveillance which creates supervision upon the individuals with the purpose to differentiate and categorize individuals in order to know if they are to be punished or rewarded. To constitute and show the significance of this categorization power will present this in a strong ritualized way. In the examination moment the power will show itself in all its glory. The relationship between those how are seen and
those how are not in the power system are during the examination, in a converted order. In a normal state the power is invisible and it is only the controlled people that are being seen. Disciplinary power wants the individual to be seen so that the individual can be controlled and held dependent of power. (Foucault M., 1975/1987/2003) The examination in school is a very clear and ritualized example. The students have now graduated from a long socialization process were they have attained knowledge sorted and selected by the power system.

How does then power work on the individual? It is a complex relationship between the body and the power. Foucault means that the power has no external effect on the body but rather an internal. The disciplinary power exists within the body during its development to different kinds of subjects. The power produces a picture, an ideal state of how to discipline our bodies. If we somehow differ from this ideal we will feel dreadful and unsatisfied. Power gives us a roll that it wants us to fulfill and if we fail to do so we can feel alienated and deviant. (Nilsson, 2008) For example, power wants us to be slim and healthy so if we eat too much junk food and exercise to little many of us will get a bad conscience. (Foucault M., 1975/1987/2003) The protestantic work ethics is also a good example. Hard labor is in itself good. During the creation of the subject we learn that work is very important and we are learned that hard work pays off. No one questions from where this view originates and for who we work so hard. If we have no work or perceived as lazy we will be seen as lower members of society and presumably feel bad about it, or at least we are expected to feel bad about it.

**The creative power**

Power is also a creative force. Foucault means that the people are disciplined thought a set of techniques used by the power systems to make singulars of individuals. But power can also make things happen that otherwise would not, like schools, hospitals and other institutions. (Paras, 2006) Even if Foucault refers to power as evil he also sees this constructive side of power. Power is not entirely oppressing but has a constructive side to it. Note that it is not “entirely oppressing” which also means that is
has an oppressing side as well. Power can produce discourses, knowledge, bodies and subjectivities. Power creates the social world and creates boundaries between objects so we can separate them from one other. A clear and significant example of the creative force within power is the university discourse. Power has gradually created the university as an institution and in this institution subjects in the form of students and teachers. Also the knowledge taught in the institution is derived from power. Foucault himself wrote: “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.” (Foucault 1980:119 (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008))

Biopower

Biopower is technologies, developed out of science and it has evolved parallel with science, used for the governance and management of certain populations and is carried out by collecting and calculating information about these populations. (Carlson, 2007) The purpose of biopower is to control the population’s behavior. This means that human sciences are developed in order to analyze, control, define and regulate the human bodies and their behavior. (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000)

Foucault claimed that individualization is a tactic and strategy to govern populations. (Carlson, 2007) We are categorized from day one. As an example on biopower in action, is when a baby is born, the mother and child gets a bracelet each in order to keep track of which child belongs to which mother. The bracelet is printed with a number in the order the child were born at that maternity ward that year. If your child is born as number 1003 this year, that number is printed on the bracelets. Blood samples are collected to check for any illness and a journal is created for the newborn child, and the child is registered at the tax office.

Biopower has not always existed as we know it today. Foucault pointed out that biopower needed two main things in history in order to be developed; state’s role as
we know it today and its ensuring to keep its people productive. Before the 17th century, the state was seen as the mean to get sovereignty and welfare to the people but during the middle of the 17th century the role of the state changed from a mean to an end towards the end itself. The emphasis was put on strength, wealth and power of the state. The means to get this was to think of the people as resources to be used and developed. The state had to develop a way to keep its population productive, make them healthy, strong, active, hard working and safe. In other words the state had to begin to regulate, watch over and control its people. The device to do this was to create a “body of knowledge” and an “administrative apparatus”. The body of knowledge consists of human or social science and Foucault suggests that it is “closely tied up with operating and maintaining political power” (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000, s. 65). The administrative apparatus is made from different ‘policing’ institutions and draws its theories and knowledge from the body of knowledge. It is important to notice that this happened fairly during the same time as power moved from the kings and queens to what Danaher, Schirato, & Webb describes as “the empty space of democracy”, which in practice was an invitation to power to hide itself. From this moment, power would be no one’s property but instead power now exists in relations within the state. These relations occur between different fields, institutions and groups such as private media and business. It is the flow and changing of the power that characterize these relations. Power is mobile and contingent and is depending on negotiations, alliances and circumstances. The reason to that fluctuation of power occurred is that a large number of new authors of discourses sprung up when the church and monarchs lost their pretty near monopoly on public communication. When someone spoke against them when they dictated the truth the consequences could be very harsh. The biopower is to protect the bodies of people rather than earlier eras of power which threatened with death. The Church and Monarchs owned the truth by divine authority. But times changed and alternative truths were presented. The problem that entailed by this was that there where so many actors and no one could really dictate truth, no one had divine authority like the church and monarchs had in past day. The new actors where constantly disputing and contesting each other, negotiate and building alliances to gain control and influence, and as a consequence creating this game of power. (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000)
The democratic idea that power comes from the people since they elect their leaders is an illusion, according to Danaher, Schirato, & Webb. Politicians and other groups are constantly inventing “the people” in order to get legitimate claim to power. An example they mention is that Hitler claimed to be the only true choice for any real German by heart. Many more scenarios like this are being or have been enacted through out history and in different locations on this earth. The catch with all these power owners it that sooner or later the people will realize that they do not represent them and the power will continue its way to a new candidate. Foucault was of the opinion that the people cannot hold power any more than politicians, businessmen or even the military can. The only thing one can have is more opportunities to influence the power game. (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) For example is the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi owner of a media conglomerate of Fininvest, which inter alia possess three nationwide TV-channels, a feature film producing company, the Milan soccer team and a book- and magazine group. (Fininvest) (Ketupa.net) One does not need much imagination to realize that Berlusconi had a lot of opportunities to influence people’s ways of thinking. “The way people come to understand the world, the way they behave, the values and aspirations they develop and the way in which they react to events: all these things are fashioned out the various apparatus and technologies of biopower. So it’s not as if people have independent minds and free will which might allow them to choose who will represent them, or what political system will best look after their interests, or even what their best interests are.” (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000, s. 74) Besides that politicians “invent” the people give Foucault one more reason to why power can not belong to anyone; everyone is subjected to the forces of biopower. Every single human is themselves products of biopower because that all of us is directly influenced by institutions, like the family, schools, universities, medical and health agencies, prisons, youth organizations and religion, and indirectly from the circulation of discourses in the culture and subcultures that we belong to or want to belong to. The state institutions and discourses are watching and controlling our thoughts and our behavior but the biopower also make us to self regulating objects. Once we have become docile, we start to continually regulate our own thinking and behavior. We will not be able to think outside the box because it is wrong and unhealthy. But since there are several competing discourses
out there in our world fighting to control us via the state and other interest groups we most likely get contradictive information of how we should be. This creates a crisis of how to act. Foucault was of the opinion that these crises make people able to resist the forces of power because one can recognize that it is not natural. This makes us “partly free to shop around for what we will believe or accept”. (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000)

2.3 Regime of truth

Regime of truth is the groundwork for our research. On principle this theory is the basis on which all other theories are built upon. The truth regime controls discourses that have power over us and our social world; we study this through analyzing the discourses that can be noticed among the language used by students. To make this research more graspable we favor the foucauldian view of one [dominant] truth regime even thus we recognize the more complex view of several co-existing truth regimes.

In extension it also dictates whose interests can be served legitimacy. Regime of truth gives prominence to certain discourses that serves the interest of power. (Jackson & Carter, 2007) Thus is the concept “regime of truth” is intensively linked with the relation of power and knowledge. Foucault wrote: “Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A régime of truth.” (Foucault & Gordon, 1980, s. 133) The regime of truth and its discourses serve significant and powerful groups in society. These groups influence the creation and acceptance of these discourses. Acceptance also evolves from social, political, economic, intellectual and cultural conditions. (Jackson & Carter, 2007)

It is the regime of truth that guides us when we exercise our little bit of power and that legitimize what we do. It governs us, gives us goals to aim for and lead us when we make decisions. We are not aware of it because it is normalized and internalized to the furthermost possible extent. The current regime of truth helps us understand how to
act, how to decide and our duties to society. (Jackson & Carter, 2007) This means that the regime of truth dictates a great deal in our lives.

Foucault was interested in how it comes that some thoughts are possible to think in one epoch but not in others. He came up with the idea that it is a regime of truth in every epoch that dictates what truth is. He pinpointed three epochs with different truths; the renaissance epoch, the classical epoch and the modern epoch. The feature of the renaissance regime of truth was to see things according to their internal likeliness. During the classical epoch was the regime of truth seeing things according to their differences and during our modern epoch is things’s historicity the fundamental structure of thinking. Today we want to believe that everything is accumulated through history and thus universal. (Nilsson, 2008)

Regimes of truth is long lasting and do not become exchanged over night. There are always some leftovers from old regimes of truths. The new regime wants to marginalize the old one. The Christian Church was in the past a very strong holder of truth and according to it Sundays where important. Today Sundays are still important even if Sundays has nothing to do with the current regime of truth. (Jackson & Carter, 2007)

While Foucault where of the opinion that there are only one regime of truth in every epoch, other social scientists claims that there can exists several conflicting truth regimes at the same time. One of the scientists that have evolved the theories of truth regimes is Lorna Weir. Foucault had a more narrow way of seeing regime of truth than Lorna Weir; she is of the opinion that the concept is much wider and its relation to power more various. Its derivation from past times is far more complex than Foucault’s three well defined truth regime epochs. Our modern times truth is characterized by numerous truths that is irreducible. They elaborate a recipe of truth that co-exists and sometimes compete for dominance. Lorna Weir write: “Our contemporary truth regime comprises radically heterogeneous truthful knowledges — science, governance, religion/politics, and common culture — that have distinct histories and relations to power.” (Weir, 2008, s. 367)
According to Foucault the power’s connection to knowledge have the effects that a universally truth cannot be found. The truth cannot be viewed from outside discourses. Jorgensen and Phillips write: “Foucault claims that it is not possible to gain access to universal truth since it is impossible to talk from a position outside discourse; there is no escape from representation. ‘Truth effects’ are created within discourses.” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 14) Representations are the words used to communicate trough discourse. The words and language are always representing a discourse and is never neural. There are no possibilities to get around the discourse and get access to a “truer” truth. Truth is according to Foucault best understood “as a system of procedures for the production, regulation and diffusion of statements.” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 14) Statements are Foucault’s basic unit of discourse and consist of the rule that decides how to speak with meaning. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)

Truth is embedded and produced by power systems. The question is not what is considered to be true or false, but how effects of truth are created in discourses. This process that construct discourses gives the impression of that some pictures of the world represent what is true or false. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)

2.4 Ideologies

Ideology is a comprehensive collection of ideas, values and views of society. (NE) Ideologies are the step down from Regime of truth to Discourse. Laclau & Mouffe’s discourse theory perceive the concept of ideology in another way. They define ideology as objectivity. What is perceived as objective is always defined by ideology and always historically derived. Ideology is solid discourse and so firmly established that its contingency is forgotten, the alternatives are forgotten and only this objectivity is seemed to exist. Other discursive theories such as critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology identify ideology as meaning in the service of power. Ideologies create, recreate and transform power relations but discourses can be more or less ideological which will structure a problem, pointed out by Jørgensen and Phillips. The problem at hand is to distinguish what is ideology and what is not within a discourse. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008) We use Laclau & Mouffe view on ideology; a
comprehensive collection of ideas, values and views of society that is perceived as objective because it so firmly established that both its contingency and alternatives are forgotten. Ideology is solid discourse and when belonging to an ideology it is the only objectivity that seems to exist.

Foucault description of power and ideology is very similar to the more modern researchers Laclau & Mouffe. Power cannot be owned but exercised. Power creates our knowledge and identity. It is the power that decides how we relate to one another, both as groups and as individuals. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008) When connecting the concept of power with the concept of ideology, Laclau & Mouffe claims that ideology is sediment power; the traces of the power has been wiped out; no one remembers that the world is social constructed by power and politics. When reasoning like Laclau & Mouffe ideology refers to the world we take for granted and not question its origin from power. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)
2.5 Capitalism

“Capitalism is based on the fundamental idea that money can be made to make more money. In this sense, the engine of capitalism is a conversion process and, therefore, the more efficient this conversion can be made to be, the more money is produced. Thus, what is truth under capitalism is what relates to improved efficiency in these terms. This is a regime of truth rather that a lesser, more specific, truth because… it permeates the whole of society.” (Jackson & Carter, 2007, s. 109) In this way is capitalism the regime of truth. It permeates more than one ideology. Efficiency of money making can be found spread across society. In present epoch is the historicity important so we start with a historical review of capitalism.

Historical review

The history of capitalism can be said to start some time during the 16th century. Its principle was easy; instead of using profit from trade to buy luxuries and investing in non-producing operations such as building churches, profit from trade was invested in undertakings that created more profit. Capitalism needs a steady supply of recourses thus is it as phenomena constantly expanding and growing. (NE) In the 19th century was Adam Smith was the first to write down the theory of capitalism as we know it today. Smith argued that there were three basic, interdependent mechanisms to the commercial system. These were, the division of labor, the mutual dependence of the separate parts and their consequent need to exchange their products (land, capital and labor) (Ingham, 2008)) In this complex system, a large number of mainly private enterprises, who would be working for their own interests would in turn be coordinated and to an extent be regulated by an “invisible hand”. This invisible hand, or the market, was to be determined by the interaction between supply and demand. According to Smith this system of interdependent private enterprises would create wealth to the population in the nation, but would also act as power for social integration that “(private vice) …were the source not only of public benefits, but also of public virtue” (Ingham, 2008) In Smiths version of a perfect liberty of exchanges states were not supposed to intervene other than upholding the rule of law to protect the markets, defend the territory
(sovereignty of the nation and its borders) in order to protect this market and build and maintain the nation’s infrastructure. According to Geoffrey Ingham (Capitalism, 2008) Adam Smiths’ book “The wealth of nations” is the most cited book of economics in modern society. Furthermore, Ingham states that “together with Friedrich Hayeks and Milton Freidman ‘The wealth of nations’ forms the basis for today’s economic neoliberalism, which favors deregulation, privatization and the government’s role in economic affairs.” (Ingham, 2008, s. 14)

The overall concept of capitalism is that capital used to generate more capital. In this way the capitalist, the owner of industry, land or production facility, has a personal interest in industrial development (Karl Polanyi, 2003). The capitalists belong to an economic elite class that controls the production and distribution process. (Takis, 2008)

This system would bring forward innovations and push industrial development forward. Polanyi argues that the era of industrial capitalism starts in England in 1834 with the introduction of the New Poor Law (labor laws for the lower classes in England. (Karl Polanyi, 2003) According to Polanyi, the market control of the economic system “means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market: instead of economy being embedded in social relations (as in the past), social relations are embedded in the economic system” (Karl Polanyi, 2003, s. 57) The motor of this economic system is competition and its main principle therefore becomes “Grow-or-die” (Takis, 2008) This principle forced the markets system either to continue its path towards an internationalized market economy or be replaced with a socially controlled economy. As we all know by now the market chose the path towards becoming internationalized.

The historical process that transformed the government controlled markets of the past to the market economy of today would not had happen if the market economy from the very beginning were not institutionalized and characterized by the economic elites’ attempt to control and reduce the markets protection of labor and environment, in order to maximize efficiency and profit. Their attempt led to a social struggle, with the rest of society that characterized the whole period of modernity. First there was a
period of liberal modernity between 1830s and 1880s. It gave rise to a strong socialist movement and a conflict between liberalism and socialism which it its turn gave rise to the statist modernity period that followed from approximately 1917 and ended around 1990. It is possible to divide the world in a western and an eastern part during this period. The western form of static modernity collapsed in the late 70s and the eastern a decade later. The collapse led to a catastrophe of markets because the social movement against the communism where taken over by liberals like Catholics (Poland) and technocrats (USSR and elsewhere), who never intended to create a socialistic democratic society. (Takis, 2008)

Instead they opened up the markets and created the period of Neoliberal Modernity. The opening of markets led to a fast growth of Transnational Corporations (TNCs). The internalization increased further with growth in technological innovations. These things gave rise to a radical modification in employment and class structure in advanced market economies. The labor- and socialist movement weakened, together with decimation of the working class and the information revolution it nourished the neoliberal movement that we see today. The collapse of socialism in the east also contributed (Takis, 2008)

If capitalism is seen as an ideology were the market is described as a supreme and righteous power for good and Government is only a peripheral figure with the sole purpose of maintain the integrity of that market and, write laws and uphold those laws, as long as they do not infringe on the free market and the almighty “invisible hand” that guides it. (Ingham, 2008) However, as with most ideologies and theories, when put into practice in real life and real time societies, they usually get altered or in other ways refined. One example of this statement is Keynes “The general theory of employment, interest and money” or Friedman’s neo-liberal thoughts which have, and still resonate in modern economies. For arguments sake even Marxism which rejects the capitalistic system is as free from Capitalism as Satanism is free from Christianity. What we mean by this is that Marxism would probably not been formulated without the prior creation of Capitalism. Even though Marxism is an ideology all by its self, it is a reaction to Capitalism (Stilwell, 2008)
Keynes

John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) was one of the 20th century most influential economists. He was accessory in the initiation of the Bretton Woods System, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. His book "The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" (1936) contained Keynes explanation of unemployment, too low demand for products, and the cure of unemployment, governmental spending. This laid the foundation to the economic research until the beginning of the 1970’s. (NE) According to Keynes, the government is a crucial part of the economic system. He saw the market and the government as two interdependent entities that were not in themselves complete, but in cooperating, they could compensate each other’s deficiencies. He believed that in order to stave off unemployment government spending was the key. This spending would act as wage increase for the workers. Keynes argued that this would increase consumption which would lead to more increased production and profits and companies would need more workers to keep up with the demand. (Keynes, 1936)

Keynes defined money as a link between the present and the future. He said that the only way we can speak of what the future holds is in respect to changes and expectations except from in monetary terms. (Keynes, 1936)

Freidman

Milton Freidman (1931-2006) began during the 60’s develop a theory based on the quantity of money. He was very critical to Keynes and his theories about governmental spending as a mean to fight unemployment and advocated minimal state interference in economics. (NE)

1968 Freidman put forward his theory that by increasing the money supply in the short run production and employment can be amplified but in the long run will expansive
monetary politics only affect inflation. This got huge impact on economic policies and battled down the Keynesianism as economic theory. *(NE)*

Friedman says in his book “Capitalism and Freedom” that the only road to true freedom is a system of free markets, where the state has a limited role. Like Adam Smith, his idea was a government that where restricted to uphold private contracts, law and order and defense against enemies within and from outside the nation’s borders. *(Friedman, 2005)*

He goes on by saying that sometimes the government could accomplish things that benefit the people, but one should be very careful of giving such power to the state, because the power to do well is also to do harm. Furthermore he states that no great progress of any kind has come as a result from governmental directives. He mentions Shakespeare, Einstein, Columbus, Isaac Newton and many others, though he conveniently forgets to mention the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Chinese, and of course NASA, ESA, the International space station and many other great technical achievements and social advancements that are an indirect or direct result of great states with powerful governments. Friedman also mentions in regards to his political view point, that he is a liberal in what he claims to be the right interpretation of the word. He says that the enemies of privately run companies have in a sense stolen the word “liberal”. He says that in the USA, the meaning of the word liberalism has come to differ from what is mean in continental Europe. *(Friedman, 2005)*

**Freidman’s connection to neo-liberalism**

We would argue that the essence of neo-liberalism is that of complete reliance on the free market as the key to both political and economic freedom. Furthermore, according to Friedman economic freedom also grants political freedom *(Friedman, 2005)* According to Jeff Madrick *(Madrick, 2007)* Milton Friedman, along with many other economists, economy was not just about prosperity and riches, it was/ is a moral vehicle towards attaining freedom and democracy. If people act out of self interest free markets would through competition produce goods and services for the “right” prize. Workers would get the wage, which they deserved in relation to the value of the...
finished product, their expertise, their “importance” in (lack of a better word) to the company and many other variables dictated by the market. Friedman envisioned a world very capitalism could solve pretty much all social problems, everything from wages, to schooling and healthcare to racial prejudices. Schools and hospitals would be subjected to the same competition as any other business and be forced to offer the best education/healthcare for the best prize. Friedman meant that racial prejudice and racism was a matter that business could solve, because in a “Friedmanite” world companies could not afford rejecting a good worker because of the color of his skin
(Madrick, 2007)

The neoliberal movement started in academia as the Chicago School, and because it fitted well with the transnational elites requirements, it got a considerable appeal among the Anglo-American political elite. (Takis, 2008) The elites agenda became more neoliberal because they felt the weight from the international competition and put pressure on the nation states to liberalize the financial markets and continue to deregulate the commodity markets, for instance through the GATT-rounds. Many of the institutions and international organizations like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and European Economic Community, which according to Takis, is controlled or at least highly influenced by the elites, also transformed, from the more Keynesian objectives that were set up during the static period when most of them where created, to the more neoliberal agenda that rules them today. In their search for competitive advantages, the elites felt that they had to minimize social control of themselves and their corporations. They imposed neoliberal politics in USA and elsewhere like tax cuts benefiting the rich, drastic cuts in employers’ insurance contribution, privatizations, dismantling of the welfare state and further on. (Takis, 2008) The ultimate goal where to make drastic cuts in production costs so that profit could be maximized.

Another effect of the imposed free trade and globalization is that if the trading partners are unequal, the most powerful will dominate others and this is a very good way to destroy the self-reliance of local economies and effect their embodiment in to the international market. (Takis, 2008) In countries with a strong statist tradition and a strong grassroots pressure to resist neo-liberalism, such as Germany and France, the
transnational elite had to put pressure on the local political elite to adopt the neoliberal agenda. (Beder, 2008)

We think that the big corporations and banks around the world put pressures on governments to make it easier to conduct their business as they see fit. We believe that it is possible that these companies, through lobbying, have succeeded in convincing the politicians that what is good for companies is also good for the people. There is also the possibility that politicians have succeeded in convincing the people that this is true. Milton Friedman had great influence on economics and politicians up until his death in 2006, and he has been, according to us, the advocate for free markets and the power of the invisible hand to solve every problem mankind have. All these things we think connects to our thesis that capitalism might be a truth regime.

All these capitalistic and neoliberal ideologies have to be conserved in the dominant social ideas to survive in the long run. The beliefs, ideas and the corresponding values that are dominant in a society and the main social institutions has to be consistent with the current regime of truth in order for them to survive (Takis, 2008) But the dominant social ideas usually express only the values and beliefs of the ruling elite, which own power and have interest in maintaining and expand.

Alternatives to Capitalism

We have searched for alternatives to capitalism and haven’t found any alternatives to be generally accepted, perhaps except for socialism and communism by some groups. We start with brief explanation of these two. We continue with a few lesser known alternatives that perhaps may compete with capitalism in the future, if they are much developed and expanded. We feel it is important to mention that there are alternatives to the one currently used. This is to show that there are forces working in opposition to the norm, and to show that some are trying to act as a power balance against the economic and social norms that comes with capitalism.

Communism

Communism is what first comes to mind when we think of finding alternatives to
capitalism, perhaps because it is capitalism’s opposite. Communism is a system where private enterprise or ownership is strictly prohibited. The state owns all the companies in the nation and plans every aspect of the economy itself. Detailed plans of how much, when and how products should be produced is the states responsibility to put forth. Totalitarianism is a common consequence of this approach to economic and social governance. Forms of this system have been tried with less than utopian results by Stalin, Lenin, Ho Che Minh, Fidel Castro are some of the most well known leaders who have communism as their “government of choice”, even though we believe that these leaders could not handle their dictatorship. (Thefreedictionary.com, 2009)

Socialism

According to (Britanica.com, Socialism, 2009), the ideas of socialism has its origins from the beginning of “recorded thought”, and up till today via the ancient Greeks, Moses, Christianity, and many other societal constructs. Politically it was formed in the early days of industrialism. Socialism is a form of government was there is no private property or ownership; the idea is that all people are collectively owners of everything within the nation via the state. The economy is centrally planned whereby you as a citizen are entitled to a share in any product or service the nation produces, as long as you yourself are contributing to the nation. There are of course many variations of socialism that has sprung up. There are those how say that everything except from the cloths on peoples backs should be public/state property, and there are those how think that some private property is OK, such as farms small shops and small- to medium-sized businesses. There is also social democracy where a gradual transition from capitalism towards socialism is preferred over revolution, using the democratic process. (Britanica.com, Social democracy, 2009; Thefreedictionary, 2009)

Basic income

A system with the intention to give every citizen a form of basic pay, regardless if they work or not. With this system all or most social benefits can be canceled. Ex: every adult (18+) gets a pay check of 1000$ per month whether they work or not. If he/she does works, he/she still gets the basic income from the state plus the pay from the work place. (Jansson, 2005)
Altruistic economy:

A system that is built upon personal relationships and reputation of how "good" a person is, how well you treat people will affect upon your ability to do business with others. There is no standard pricing rather a system where independent evaluation is the norm. In this system you will never deal with strangers but with friends of friends. (Altruistic economy and internet gift economy) (Altruists.org)

Anarchism

There are many varieties of anarchism, but the main goal of anarchism is to abolish the state and thus attain maximum amount of personal freedom. There are pacifist-revolutionist-, individualistic-, collectivist-, capitalistic- and socialistic- anarchism to name a few. These forms of anarchy obviously have different agendas to reach the goals. But the underlying ideology is freedom and liberty for all. (Anarchism.net, Anarchism) (Anarchism.net, Piotr Kropotkin)

The Venus project

“The Venus project “was founded by Jacque Fresco in the 70-ties. He envisions a future where we move from an economy based on scarcity and what he claims to be an inevitable section of mankind living in poverty to an economy based on abundance. Jacque claims that mankind is very close to reaching a technological sophistication where we can have machines do everything for us, where man is liberated from monotonous work. He believes that if machines can be made to do everything for us, humans can focus on science, and philosophy. In this utopian vision money is abolished, since there is an abundance of everything you cannot compete for market shares, and you cannot make a profit. There will not be any need for laws or jails, according to Jacque money, greed and envy is the chief motivator for violent crimes. People are basically free to wander around as they please and contribute to society in any way they feel is appropriate. (Fresco, 2009)
Effects of Capitalism

According to (Elaine, 2008) who built her research on interviews of migrants and use discourse analysis as method of choice, globalization has led to that many families are apart from one another more often. Separations over national borders are not uncommon, but that these families still manage to keep the feeling of what the author refers to as "family hood". This increase in transnational families is an effect of an increase in global supply and demand of workers, easier travel and more advanced communication technologies. Elaine states that many transnational migrants seek citizenship in other countries than from which they themselves come. They do this to attain higher degree of political security and international mobility, and or to "accumulate economic and cultural capital for themselves and their families." by doing this they can "stock up on" citizen and residency rights and benefits and at the same time avoid as many responsibilities as possible at the same time. (Elaine, 2008)

This implies that people use economic globalization as a way to "work the systems" of different nations. The flows of migrant workers all over the world can be related to the global capitalism. Capitalism is changing the way people relate to citizenship, it is apparently changing family structures, and people have a more flexible mindset in respect to where to work and live.

Another possibility we see is that people wait longer to settle down and start a family in order to get a career and money. We think that people generally believe one must have an education, then a good job, then a savings account and reach self actualization before family life can begin. In contrast to before the industrialization age when family life began much earlier in life.
### 2.6 Individualism

Individualism led to the rise of capitalism. It refers to the prioritization of individual goals before group goals. Individualism is often equated with independence and is often used in cultural studies. *(Mio, 2006)*

Individualism is often thought to be an important feature of western cultures and its first origins can be found in old Greco-Roman societies and Christianity. Its modern roots come from protestant sects from the seventeenth centuries *(Turner, 2004)* together with the French Revolution. In Protestant Christianity was the salvation up to the individual her/himself. The free will of all humans gives the responsibility of one’s own fate to each and every one. In order to be saved and salvaged had the individuals to be separated from each other and becoming responsible and stop relying on institutions such as the church and once social status (money to the church). *(Turner, 2004)* Its root from Christianity and the French Revolution resulted in the resistance of the “more common community and collective social structures of the world”. *(Mio, 2006)* But here lies a paradox, if the collective social structure where to be destroyed, the destruction of individuality will follow. Since the collective social structure in shape of the community is what protects the rights of the individuals. *(Mio, 2006)* Individualism was essential, when the theorists of economic theory, crossed the concept of individualism with the concepts reason and (economic) utility. This made individualism the fundamental ideology to capitalism. *(Turner, 2004)*

Thomas Hobbe and John Locke assumed that humans where equal when we were in the state of nature but we had since then created and supported a society where individualism and inequality colored our property relations. Locke legitimized private property rights and thus was individualism an essential circumstance for the growth of capitalist markets. *(Turner, 2004)* Both Hobbe and Locke ideas about individual rights and people’s ability to reason was seen one of the keys to modern society. Adam Smith continued their work with his linking of individualism to an order in society that could be self regulating. His book “The Wealth of Nations” introduced the concept of an invisible hand that guide people’s self-interested behavior of economical acts toward the public good. *(Jacobs, 2007)*
According to David Carroll Jacobs, are modern individualists still saluting Adam Smith’s Invisible Hand and use it to advocate the moral superiority of capitalists, despite Adam Smith own worries that selfishness could lead businessmen to conspire against public good. *(Jacobs, 2007)* J. S Mill (1806-1873) defended the rights of the individual to liberty and freedom and pushed for a political dimension into the individualism. Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) argued 1969 that negative liberty involves freedom from various constraints and that the modern perception of liberty was more positive and concerning self-realization and self-development. It is not the same thing as so called laissez-faire individualism which says that people can do what they want as long as it does not restrict the liberties of other peoples. *(Turner, 2004)*

Individualism has become integrated in our culture. Geert Hofstede’s famous study of cultural dimensions has been slightly modified by Harry Triandis when it comes to concerning the name of the individuality-collective dimension of a culture. What Hofstede called Masculine and Feminine individuality is Triandis calling Vertical and Horizontal individuality. According to Mio, Triandis’ terms are more common in current literature. Cultures that are vertically individualistic are achievement oriented, and focus on comparing success. This will result in hierarchy. In an academic context this will lead students competing for high grades via achievement and in a capitalistic context this competition will lead to that some that achieves more will make more money. At the other dimension of the individualistic scale (not confused with collectivism) are cultures that are labeled horizontally individualistic. A horizontal society is focused on uniqueness. This uniqueness is not compared; everyone’s individual uniqueness is valued equal. Mio pinpoints Sweden as a prototypical horizontally individualistic society and that we Swedes “prefer to be unique without being conspicuous”. *(Mio, 2006)*

Individualism is besides a cultural dimension also a political doctrine associated with liberalism. In this context is individualism emphasizing autonomy and importance and freedom of the individual from the state and society. It makes individualism a modern culture associated with private property, consumption and subjectivity. *(Turner, 2004)*
2.7 Swedish Model

After the Second World War, Sweden has been focusing on two broad economical and social-political goals; Economic Security, which includes full employment, and Economic Equality, which includes a common reduction in income differences and fight poverty. These two goals together created what now is commonly known as The Swedish model. (Lindbeck, 1998) The Swedish model is basically an idea which proclaimed that the state would draw guidelines for how the Swedish welfare state would be built, it contained rules for an incremental tax rate (the more you earn, the more you pay in taxes), rules and regulations to achieve a smaller gap between the rich and poor, and strong governmental involvement in the corporate sector. This will be explained in some detail below. (Lindbeck, 1998)

The Swedish Model’s most characteristic feature for institutions is that big and centralized structure for institutions is favored over small decentralized institutions. Important where to have big public spending and high taxes, intervening policy both to stabilize the economy so to steer it towards a full employment for the citizens, and to increase public savings, investment and credit supply and then allocate these through regulation of the taxes, subventions and capital market. The public sector became more centralized, because of the merging of counties (kommuner) from about 2000 in the middle of the 50-ies to about 280 in the middle of the 70-ies. Centralized where also the wage negotiation, in order to narrow the span of wages among citizens. And even the private corporation market where centralized, the producing companies was big and few and there were few companies that were allowed to commerce with stocks and bonds; four banks, about six insurance companies and a handful of investment companies. There was a sort of skepticism towards small private companies their markets and economic incitements to them. Add to this some spirit cooperativeness and a pronounced policy to trade free and you have the origin of Swedish Model as it developed from 1971. (Lindbeck, 1998) One important factor that differ The Swedish Model from other similar welfare creating models from the same time is that the Swedish Model intervenes in the private life of the individuals to a further extent. One example is the income insurance (inkomstförsäkring, A-kassa) which was a result of the down prioritization of private multiple options among
insurances. It is handled by the Labor Unions which thus get more members. More examples are the public kindergarten; both parents were expected to work, public hospitals, public apartments, and public geriatric care for our aging citizens. Private alternatives where not welcome in these areas. *(Lindbeck, 1998)*

The Social Democratic Party has run the Swedish government almost consistently since 1932, except for during three mandates; once in the 70’s, again in the early 90’s and since the latest election in 2006. It has been supported by the labor unions both with money and work and as a result has the SDP been giving support to the labor unions. *(Lindbeck, 1998)* The SDP has worked for a system where big domestic companies reinvested at least 40% of their profits into the companies instead of giving it to nominal shareholders (to achieve this, companies got tax incentives on these profits), they have also made sure that the banks that lend money to the companies have big stakes in these companies, thus making sure that the companies decisions are long term-based, hence more “useful” to the nation as a whole. *(Högfeldt, 2005)*

LO with its powerful labor unions has strong link with the SDP. In the early 70-ies did the labor unions manage to turn the law to their benefit with the LAS (Employment Protection Act) and MbL (Employment Co-Determination in the Workplace Act) LAS implemented among other things the “last in first out” policy that still today controls layoffs, cut backs and so on. The last person to get hired by the company is to be the first person out of the company. At the same time the LAS said that the only legitimate reasons for firing a person were a high level of misconduct or redundancy. This new law LAS was written in regards to the large companies, and no consideration was taken to the needs of small and medium sized companies to be more flexible. However adjustments were made in 1997 to se to smaller companies needs. *(Högfeldt, 2005)* MbL gave the unions more influence over the way companies organize the work for the employees. The implementation of the law is by a to a large extent being looked after by the labor unions, as a result making them stronger, both towards the companies and the workers, and then as a further result, making the LAS and MbL stronger. *(Lindbeck, 1998)*
The intention of the SDP economic platform has been to create an environment where capitalistic companies are run by non-capitalists who keep the workers and Swedes interest at hart, not the relative few (owners, board and shareholders). There have of course been differences of opinion between corporate Sweden on the one hand and unions and SDP on the other, but has most often been a consensus, “middle of the road” kind of solution to these disputes. This “middle of the road” spirit were initiated and almost institutionalized at a meeting at Saltsjöbaden 1938 between the Swedish confederation of employees and LO were rules for negotiations, conflict resolution, firings and layoffs and how to limit the effects of conflicts on third parties and society. (Högfeldt, 2005)

There was a high level of cooperation between the state and the big exporting companies in Sweden, as long as the companies accepted the political dominance and the state accepted that companies were privately owned. Smaller companies and entrepreneurs were more or less marginalized, as they were not considered important in the macro perspective. (Högfeldt, 2005)

In later years however, the SDP has made an almost “180” in their policies. Were they have gone from a more and more socialistic economy to privatizations of state owned companies (such as Telia, a well known flop were shares were set a value of 90 SEK, and as soon as the company was “set loose” from government ownership to private, the share plummeted whereby many Swedes lost a lot of money), stimulated the markets to a higher degree of competition and most importantly reactivation of very liberal equity markets with no regulation of foreign ownership of shares. (Högfeldt, 2005)

All these policies and practices that have been implemented in Sweden since the early 20th century up until today has of course had a great impact on how we Swedes think, act and reason when it comes to the economy, politics and so on. But we have not been isolated from the world; we have been heavily influenced by communist Soviet as well as The USA and the rest of Europe. We are all always influenced by and with others, it is human nature. In our minds, Solidarity and “jantelagen”, (an expression formed by a Dane named Aksel Sandemose in 1933 that basically states that one
should think that one is better than anyone else in any way, shape or form) had, and probably still have, are vital parts of Swedish mentality. (Hammar) But it has lately been influenced from the US. These things combined with the current meltdown in the global economy, we feel Sweden is a very interesting target for this kind of study. (Schmidt, 2004) (Dagensnyheter)

2.8 Education system

The schools are contributing to the creation and reproduction of the body of knowledge. It is scientific research’s fundamental function to question current knowledge and theories. But since regime of truth is normalized to the most possible extent, schools may be in its service, contributing to truth creation.

“Democracy forms the basis of the national school system. The Education Act (1985: 1100) stipulates that all school activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values and that each and everyone working in the school should encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person as well as for the environment we all share (Chapter I, §2). The school has the important task of imparting, instilling and forming in pupils those fundamental values on which our society is based. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school should represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is achieved by fostering in the individual a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility. Education in the school shall be non-denominational. The task of the school is to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby actively participate in social life by giving of their best in responsible freedom” (Lpo94 s. 1)

These are the first lines in the Swedish Curriculum for the Compulsory School System. This shows clearly that it is one of its main purposes is to represent and re-produce the values that are seen as good in society, i.e. it wants to affect our minds and mould our self. It pinpoints that it draws its historicity from Christian tradition and western
humanism. Note that this is a feature of our modern epoch according Foucault. The values that are written down above in Lpo 94 seem alright but it may be more values than the ones enounced above that are taught and thus reproduced.

Capitalism is according to Foucault assisted by biopower in two ways. First, biopower provides a healthy active and disciplined population that functions as a good workforce. Second, biopower arrange space and people in a detailed and function-specific order. This arrangement is made for institutions like schools and universities that in their turn provide organizational models for nineteen century production. (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000)

According to Erixon Arreman, Foucault did make a general assumption claiming that the academic disciplines are making different procedures in order to maintain the dominant discourse and its order. This is done by classification, organization and distribution of discourses and its purpose is to protect the order by controlling and excluding those discourses outside the borders of the academic disciplines. (Erixon Arreman, 2005) The non-dominant discourses available are sorted out from the creation of knowledge. For example, a hobby botanic club is organized as a club, classified as less competent than a botanic faculty and is not distributed to the same extent as an academic botanical discourse as one you can find in a botanic faculty.

Foucault says that this is to confirm the dominant discourse that rule the academic discipline and has the effect that it does not have to be recreated since it then consists of several assumptions that are taken for granted. (Erixon Arreman, 2005) In Discipline and punishment which is Foucault’s most prominent publication about disciplinary power, he investigates the connection between institutions and scientific discourses. This connection is a constitutional mark for the modern society. Foucault gave much critic to the traditional universities because he saw academic disciplines had tendencies to enclose and restrict all intellectual work. The universities were institutionalizing this. He was of the opinion that the academic disciplines rule and act like a police force towards them who do not comply with them. Nilsson writes that the academy disciplines acts like disciplines in double sense. “...in one sense, well defined rule governed areas for power-knowledge production and agent, and in another sense,
ground for the exercise of power in the modern society.” (quote translated by us, from Nilsson 2008: 14) The Bologna process that is taking place in the European educational system today aims to recast the systems in all countries in the EU so that for instance an engineering degree in Italy is worth the same as an engineering degree in Sweden, Poland France and so on.

J. Johansson (2007) writes that students who want to study in another EU-country from which they reside come across hurdles. One such obstacle is that a diploma from one EU-country might not be accepted by another country in the EU, which is to be counter acted by the above mentioned Bologna process. She goes on to say "This obviously also affected their chances of finding a job after graduation. Therefore one can say that education is also linked to free movement of workers... The Adonnino Committee also made reference to the importance of education and links it to the development of the economic sector. It argues for the development of vocational education and training as well as the need to encourage universities and research institutes to become more geared towards the commercial sector.” (Johansson, 2007, ss. 218-219) This last section basically says that politicians want the universities to be more flexible to what the market wants the Universities should adjust their curriculum and programs to what the market desires. This is a good example of capitalism "at work" and affecting all aspects of society, in this case education. Adonnino committee came out with a report in 1985 which was commissioned by which extended upon an idea of a “European citizen” were the youth would play a vital role in the development of the new Europe. (Johansson, 2007)

In recent years a new trend has emerged in the American education system, according to Spiros Protopsaltis the trend is less public funding to institutions of higher education, which is an effect of an ideological shift in politics, a liberal shift with deregulation and privatizations. The effect of this is a major transfer in risk towards the individuals that need student loans, especially in the lower class, people that are unlikely able to cope with the burden of further financial pressure. (Protopsaltis, 2008) If this trend continues its way to Sweden, our school system would see dramatic changes.
This development Protopsaltis and Johansson talk about brings to mind Friedman’s liberalization ideas. Friedman as we discuss in the capitalism chapter, wanted as much privatizations as possible in all aspects of society. It is hard to see how he would not be somewhat satisfied with the direction at least the education systems are heading. Here we can see papers written in two different regions (USA, Europe) with an educational system heading towards privatization and/or more adjustable to the markets desires.

As we have discussed above with individualization in the power chapter, where it’s stated that individualization is not a weapon against power, rather it diminishes the ability to fight the power, which has the result of a more collectively indoctrinated society and the individuals in it are powerless and defenseless. And if we are to believe Jonna Johansson and Spiros Protopsaltis in their claim that markets and educational systems are being liberalized and look at what Foucault says. This development will lead to less personal power hence freedom to rule once own life.
3 Method

Our scientific approach is the philosophy and values underpinning the research. Our research is based on social constructionism. We start with listing what social constructionist theories have in common, and then we continue with basic semiotics, meanings and end with subjectivity related to identity. When these foundations have been laid we continue with the concept of discourse and the analysis of discourses. At the end of this chapter we handle our collection of empirical material trough interviews.

3.1 Social Constructionism

We use discourse analysis which is a social constructionist theory that focus on deconstruct discourses to find patterns in used language. In order for readers to keep track we starts with the foundation of all social constructionist theories, followed by basic semiotics, in order to stress importance of the symbolic world and how processes of sense making is conducted. We then continue with how we create meaning in discourses and end with a piece which handles subjectivity and identity.

The foundation of all social constructionist theories

Social constructionist theories are an umbrella for theories about society and culture. (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008) This is a suitable approach since we study phenomenon in society. Common grounds for all these theories are that they from a critical point of view study different forms of social constructions. (Angelöw & Jonsson, 2000) Two examples of social constructions are genus and status.

Social constructionists have a critical approach towards what is taken for granted, both when it comes to ourselves and the world around us. Our observations of the world do not reflect reality; we cannot perceive the world objectively, in the sense that what we perceive is not natural but by us interpreted. We must always be skeptic and question our taken for granted understanding which only seems to be the natural world because of a normalization process we all have been exposed to. (Angelöw & Jonsson, 2000)
There are four grounds on which all social constructionist theories rests upon. (Burr, 1995) (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008)

- **A critical approached to taken-for-granted knowledge**
  There is no objective truth. The world as we perceive should never be taken for granted because everything should be viewed as subjective. We can never see the world as it is. Our knowledge and perception of the world is not the reality but products of our categorization of the world to make sense of it. We are in one sense addicted to our categories and without them we could not function. The categories are shades between you and the reality. These categories are the products of discourse.

- **Historical and cultural specificity**
  Culture and history has significant impact and power over us. Culture and history dictates our world view and knowledge about it. Humans are not static beings but rather ever-changing. According to discourse analysis, all knowledge is contingent from culture and history. All discourses are maintaining deferent social patterns and therefore act to producing our social world, which includes knowledge, identities and social relations. Humans develop into who they are, not by nature, but by discourse.

- **Link between knowledge and social processes**
  Social processes both create and maintain the way we understand the world. Through social interaction we create knowledge, what is true or false, right or wrong and this interaction is characterized by competition.

- **Link between knowledge and social action**
  Depending on the understanding of the world view some forms of action becomes natural when others unthinkable. Social construction of knowledge and truth will have social consequence since they will lead to behavior that is natural according to the current world view.

---

**Basic Semiotics**

The social world is of a symbolic nature and this perceptive is crucial for the understanding of human behavior as social phenomena. The only way we humans can understand the world is by the use of symbols. Language is symbols together with all sounds (words), gestures, pictures and mimics etc, we use for communication, these are all symbols that others will interpret. It is through symbols we make interpretations and make sense of the world around us. The symbols are symbolizing
something and have no content of its own. Symbols are the only mean we can communicate. Purpose of symbols is to convey meanings. People learn to ascribe meanings to symbols and the symbols do not inherit meanings in themselves. This is why symbols do not reflect or represent reality themselves. (Carter & Jackson, 2007)

Symbols have two basic roles, they hold pieces of information and they are a medium of communication. The information that is being spoken can either be intentionally or unintentionally communicated. Even not to speak is to communicate. What is true should not be confused with what is communicated and information should not be considered to be the truth. In extension the knowledge concerning what information that is considered to be the truth is always postponed. For example when you leave the examination, after a class, you never know until later if you had the right information during the examination. Also in communication with other people we can never fully know if we got it right. What the other person tells us might not be correct, not necessarily because they are lying but because of their feelings and complex relations. Secondly we might not interpret the message as the communicator thought we would. The interpretation is up to us and there are a lot of possible distractions, for example irony when you say something and mean another. There is a constant encoding from the transmitter and a constant decoding from the receiver, somewhat the same as an old telegraph but with a lot of birds disturbing the line. (Carter & Jackson, 2007)
The picture below is nothing but ink on a paper but the shape makes us interpret it as a symbol for a woman and a man. The meaning this symbol gives us may be different depending on how we interpret it. It can be a symbol for love or friendship since they are seemingly holding hands. It maybe is two men or two women, all depending on who is interpreting the symbol. The meanings can be as many as there are humans in this world and it is context dependent. For example if the left part of the symbol below is set up on a door, most of us will interpret the context and symbol to that there are a toilet or a dressing room for women behind the door. (Carter & Jackson, 2007)

Symbols have three main characteristics;
Absence – The signified that the symbol is signifying do not has to be present. For example a word that symbolizes something does not require this something to be present in order to be able to use the word.
Arbitrary – The symbols meanings is not fixed and they may take different forms. Symbols symbolize a meaning only when thing meaning is agreed by others. Humans that use different language use different symbols when they refer to the same object. Ex a Swedish use the symbol of “väg” and Chinese use the symbol of “lù” when they both want to refer to what English would name “road”; three different symbols with approximately the same meaning. The other way around is also possible. A symbol can have multiple meanings and it is up to the interpreter to interpret the meaning of the symbol.
Difference – Symbols are able to function as symbols depending on that they differ from other symbols. We decide what things is thorough differ it from what it is not. (Carter & Jackson, 2007)

We can never through symbols or other means get access to reality, we can only hope to interpret the symbolic world in the degree that we can function in everyday life. To make communication useful we have to agree what symbols such as language means. If we have not agreed for a meaning we will not understand each other and the
communication will fail, like speaking two different languages. This agreement is called intersubjectivity. Obvious this is essential for semiotics but it also creates a problem when we assume what others mean. Symbols can mean very different things for different people so when we assume what someone means with, for example, the word Christianity it can create a big misunderstanding. Like Jackson and Carter says: “intersubjectivity is about agreement to agree, rather than agreement about what is signified.” (Carter & Jackson, 2007, s. 31)

The communicated information can contain different layers of meaning. The first meaning is the direct interpretation of the sign and the second layer of meaning is for example if the sign gives a positive or negative feeling. Like a police sign stands for police authority in a direct sense but it might represent something dangerous and unwelcome in a highly corrupt country, as a secondary meaning. In contrast to what it should represent like order, security and justice. It is central to separate information from meaning. Information is only informative and neutral to its nature when meaning is affective and highly polymorphous.

The creation of meaning is a social process that according to Jorgensen and Phillips (2008) is about the fixation of meaning. They use the metaphor of a fishing-net. “All linguistic signs can be thought of as knots in a net, deriving their meaning from their difference from one another, that is, from being situated in a particular position in the net. ... We try to stretch out the fishing-net so that the meaning of each sign is locked into a specific relationship to the others.” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 25)

Meaning can never be fixed but that does not hinder us from always trying to fix them relatively to each other. Social phenomena can never be fixed. This inevitable leads to a struggle, concerning the correct definitions of society and identities, that gives social effects. It is the Discourse analysis’ task to plot this struggles to map out the processes of this struggle to fix the meanings and also the processes that actually fix some meanings to the extent that they become normalized and unquestioned. (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2008)
Subjectivity and Identity

Foucault was of the opinion that subjects are created in discourses and since he also had the idea that power is responsible for creating our social world and for the ways we can talk about it we can draw the line that power rules how we are and what we say. The discourse forms ourselves, our subjectivity, and also decides what objects we know anything about. Foucault is not the only researcher believing that subjects are created in discourses. Steinar Kvale agrees when he states: “the self no longer uses language to express itself; rather language speaks through the person. The individual self becomes a medium for the culture and its language.” (Kvale, 1992, s. 36) as quoted by (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 14).

It is the institutions of society that form fine nets of disciplinary influences that organize and keep up dominant relationships by setting up norms and regulation. Different forms of knowledge are in the service of these dominant relationships and are used to discipline the underdog in these relations, by among other ways, to establish normality and deviation. This establishing of what is normal, affects people’s consciousness of their own self, and therefore also affects their actions. According to this is an individual a product of power; subjectivity is created by the power game and its rules are never explained nor completely understood by the individuals. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000) Since us as subjects are influenced by several competition discourses our self, our personality, becomes shattered. Our minds may house several opinions and thoughts that may be seen as inconsistent views and thoughts. An example is a homosexual Christian. As long as the person her/himself does not believe the thoughts to be incompatible, they are not. The self is shattered. (Jackson and Carter, 2007)
3.2 Discourse Analysis

The word Discourse has been a rather fashionable term in the research community the last decades, sometimes used sloppy and sometimes used more précised but with different meanings in different contexts. Jorgensen and Phillips understanding of the term is “A discourse is understood as the fixation of meaning within a particular domain.” (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 26)

We define discourse as an assemblage of coherent expressions, accounts and concepts. It is a rule bound knowledge institution. Our perception and relation to reality can only be expressed though discourses. Discourses govern our insight of reality to the extent that we can never experience the world outside discourse. There are numerous amounts of discourses existing and we are bound by them, sometimes in conflict and sometimes side by side. The same words in the same language can have different meanings in different discourses. The discourses decide not only what we say, but also what angle and path our thoughts take. (NE)

Michael Foucault’s work plays an essential function in the development of theories of discourses and the analysis of them. Part of his archaeological work is formed by his discourse theory. In this archaeological phase of his, he studies ‘archaeologically’ the rules that determine which statements is regarded as true and meaningful in particular historic epochs. Foucault defines discourse as “We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation [...] Discourse is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form [...] It is, from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history [...] posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformation, the specific modes of its temporality.” (Foucault M., 1972, s. 117) as quoted by (Jörgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 12).

Discourses are thus driven from history and will not last forever. They evolve and change over time. Discourse is a social framework, a set of social boundaries within a group, communicated with language that defines reality. The statements in a discourse are similar to each other and quite repetitive but there are only some statements that can be accepted and that therefore is never spoken because they are viewed as
meaningless. They will be repetitive when they become institutionalized. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 13) The communication of language within a discourse will set up how the reality is perceived by those within it and also how the discourse will evolve into the future. For example, if it in the discipline of medicine is said, either indirect or direct, that the doctors are the most important profession in the hospital, this will lead to things as a higher paycheck and more social status for them than other professions in the hospital. This difference between doctors and others will be perceived as reality within the medical discourse.

Foucault along with the general constructionist premises that knowledge is not only a reflection of reality but different regime of knowledge decides what knowledge is true or false, discourse constructs truth. Jorgensen and Phillips (2008) writes that most discourse analytical approaches follow Foucault’s conception of that discourses are quite ruled and bound by the set of statements that decides what is presumed as meaningful and meaningless. They also usually comply with Foucault’s idea that truth is created by discourse, at least to a large extent. But it is important to note that most discourse analytical approaches disagree with Foucault when he claimed that there is only one knowledge-regime in every epoch, instead they see many different conflicting regimes that struggle and compete of the right to dictate truth. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 13) This has the effect that power becomes relevant in the study of truth and discourse. Once again have Michael Foucault had a big impact on Discourse Analysis, because his writings connect power to knowledge. Power is both a productive and constraining force that is involved in both creating our social world and restraining how it is formed and can be talked about.

Most social contexts use language to communicate. The language within these contexts is taken for granted and structured and ordered accordingly to the discourse in charge. When using discourse analyses you look for patterns within the language in a discourse. It is used to explore different social domains or areas. The term discourse is usually thought to have a vague definition and there are many different suggestions on how to perceive it and analyses it. One common approach for all discourse analyses methods are that language and our way of talking do not merely reflect our world perception, identities and social relationships. Instead our communication is not
neutral but active in transforming our world, identities and social relationships. What we suggest and say is not necessarily what we want and think, but it also forms what we want and think. Communication is a highly complex phenomenon, for example you might say something that you do not actually mean and the discourse you live in might influence you about how and what you are communicating and thinking. The discourse creates what we want and think and it also alter this. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 1f)

Discourse analysis begins with the claim that the only way to access reality is through language. We create representations of reality from our language. These representations are not just simple reflections of a “pre-existing reality” but they contribute to construct the reality. Representations are the words used to communicate through discourse. The words and language are always representing a discourse and is never neutral. Discourse Analysis do not mean that reality doesn’t exist, just that meanings and representations, along with physical objects, are real and do exist, but gain meaning through the discourse. It’s the attribution of meanings that compose and change our world. Language is used to communicate information about underlying meanings, feelings and behavior. It is also used to communicate facts of the world, but more important in this context, is the statement that language is a “machine” that generates and constitutes the social world. And that leads to in extension that since language constitutes the social world it also constitutes social identities and social relations. Language is structured in patterns or discourses, and there can be several systems of discourses, several systems of meanings. This means that meaning can change from discourse to discourse. If the discourse changes the social world and social reality also changes. Since the discourse constructs the social world it will also contribute to reproduce reality. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008) The practices of the discourse maintain and transform the discourse patterns. “The maintenance and transformation of the discourse patterns should be explored through analysis of the specific context in which language is in action” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 12).

According to Foucault knowledge cannot be separated from power which lead to the suspicion that it is no such thing as an objective and correct knowledge. Power and knowledge is two parallel concepts that are different but have an inseparable relation.
Knowledge creates the basis for power and power produces knowledge. Foucault has complex ideas about discourses but can widely be used to refer to the process and procedures of knowledge creation. Different fields of knowledge have different discourses. These discourses are usually relatively coherent and consist of the rules considered to be appropriate for creating good knowledge. They dictate prevailing norms, values, beliefs and relations of power. Foucault and Carter and Jackson have approximately the same ideas about discourses. (Foucault M., 1969/1972/2002) We choose to make them handable when we quote Jackson and Carter and say discourses is a question of “who can say what, where and how – and why?” (Jackson & Carter, 2007, s. 81) For example in a television news program may the reporter incorporate comments from people, can be anyone, and comments from people with a higher level of authority. The former comments are viewed and spoken of as opinions and the latter comments are viewed more truthful since they are spoken out by an expert. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)
3.2.1 Tools for discourse analysis

We choose tools from Laclau & Mouffe because they believe that all socially constructed phenomenons are driven from discourses. This contrasts to other discourse scientists as Furlough that distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive dimensions of social practice. He sees a dialectic relationship between dimensions. Laclau & Mouffe believe social practices are fully discursive. As a result is Furlough in need of two sets of theories, while Laclau & Mouffe only need one. Furlough way will be more problematic since he must decide what social phenomenon is discursive and which is not. Not only that we prefer their ideas of every social phenomenon as driven from discourses, Laclau & Mouffe’s concepts of Moments, Nodal Points, Field of Discoursivity, Elements and Closure are handable tools to use when search for discourse. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)

**Moment**

All signs in a discourse are Laclau & Mouffe calling Moments.

If we return to the fishing-net metaphor described in (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008) the knots in the net are all signs in a discourse, so called moments. “*They [Moments] are the knots in the fishing.net, their meaning being fixed through their differences from one another.*” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008, s. 26)

**Nodal points**

There are some signs that are privileged in the sense that other signs are ordered around them, i.e. signs that the discourse is organized around. These privileged signs are called Nodal Points and other signs acquire their meaning from their relationship to this privileged sign. For example the in the discourse of education, the sign “pupil” is a nodal point and other signs like books, black board and bench are relating to. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)

**The field of discoursivity**

While the discourses are struggling to fix meanings to each sign, all other possible meanings are excluded. The reason is that discourses want to create a unified system of meaning and keep the symbols on the right track in relationship to each other. All
possibilities that the discourse excludes is called the field of discoursivity. Of course signs make use of different meanings in difference discourses but to create a unified meaning we need to reject interpretations of symbols that are not in use in the discourse we momentarily confess to. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008) For example in the discourse of education the physical object that is assigned the sign bench look different from the bench we think of in the context of recreation parks. The field of discoursivity is to be understood as everything outside the discourse. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008)

**Elements and Closure**

Elements are signs whose meanings have not yet been fixed. They are polysemic, which mean that they can be interpreted in many different ways. Discourses struggle to reduce the multiple meanings of elements in order to make them into Moments. The transformation from Element to Moment is called Closure and it is never fully finished. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2008) A metaphor is that of glass. When the glass is hot it can take many forms but when it is cooled down (closed) it becomes fixed to a form, perhaps as a window, but it never stops moving down according to gravitation. Glass is never totally fixed. The Element makes a temporarily stop and becomes a Moment in a discourse.

### 3.2.2 How to use Discourse Analysis

We are all quite ok in interpreting other people’s way of talking in an everyday context. Then we are usually looking for a straightforward meaning and we do not look for underlying discourses in which the utterance is embedded. When we conduct an interview in order to make a discourse analysis we are trying to look for patterns, regularities and contradictions, in what our respondents answer depending on discourses that dominates different angels of the subject in question. Discourse analysis look upon the role that language has in constructing the social world we all live in. In discourse analysis we are to se interview data as social texts at a macro sociologic level. (Talja, 1999)
When conducting interviews the respondent sometimes give different stories and statements about the topic in question. When the researcher or the respondent her/himself change focus, a contradictorily utterance may be spoken. This view is equally authentic and fundamental as the former outspoken and will be supported will arguments. These variations are not only seen in interviews but also in questioners. *(Talja, 1999)*

Since the self is shattered and there are several competing discourses co-existing in the respondents mind, there often will be difficult to give a summarization of one participant, even if the same respondent give some similar statements. This is not desired anyway because it will simplify the person and the summary will be a product of the researcher rather than a result of the respondent’s discourses. Both the context-dependent nature and the cultural logic of the answers will be lost. *(Talja, 1999)*

When conducting a discourse analysis we must fist have in mind that we are not just listening to the answers and stories told by the respondents in order to get a clear message from them. We are looking for patterns of consistency and variations in their answers and stories, short to say in their representations. When fining any patterns of these we question; what is the starting point of this story, what limitations on their perspective does this story have, are there any other stories or statements that is build on the same perspective. We try to link descriptions, stories and arguments that have a common perspective and try to pinpoint the discourse behind the perception. Much of this linking in done by looking for nodal points, concepts that show up systematically when the question is looked upon from different angles. The different discourses that appear can be separated because of the conflicts and variation in the answers so we begin our analysis by looking for inconsistencies and internal contradictions in the respondents answers. This searching is first performed for each respondent and then compared in order to spot any patterns. We will then try to indentify regular patterns in the variability of accounts, or answers/stories. Are there repeatedly occurring descriptions, explanations and arguments in different respondents’ answers? Are there any frequently occurring metaphors, tropes, figures of speech or just frequently used words? But it is important to be aware that just because the word is used often, it does not have to belong to the same discourse every time. Many words are used in
several discourses, because the discourses usually interpret common concepts so it matches the discourse. Then we continue with argumentation and theorization about our findings. At the end we indentify the assumptions and starting points that underlie a particular approach of talking about a phenomenon. (Talja, 1999) By recognizing nodal points and their belonging elements we try to reveal the discourse that has created the representation.

### 3.3 Design of the study

This chapter is aiming to bridge the gap between method and empirical data.

Words and language show how the connection between power and knowledge and is activated and recreated in every social relation. The concept of discourse is usable when to understand the authority the words have over the attribution of characteristics to phenomena. To use interviews, as an empirical data source, will make the respondents more free to speak from discourse. They use elements connected to nodal points in different discourses and by spotting for patterns of similarities and contradictions we will try to see when discourses start and end.

---

*Power traps*

During interviews it is inevitable to establish a power relation. The power shifts back and forth between the interviewer and the interviewed. Because of this power created in the situation it is important to be aware of the dominant perspectives. It is important to acknowledge different power asymmetries during an interview such as gender, age, class and ethnicity. Wherever there is power there is resistance.

Since we conduct a subjective work it is important to reflect over the research and taking into account the researchers influence. The researcher must reflect over situations or concepts from various perspectives and consider his or her own changing positioning within the discursive circumstances.
If a respondent consider him selves to belong to a discourse that is in conflict with the discourse he believes we belong to he might feel threatened and alienated. This is why it is important to stay neutral and not tell what we do or belong to because the answers and stories from the interviewee may be affected.

**What to look for, patterns and contradictions**

We are searching for the normalized truth or discourse. The truth that is taken for granted and perceived as natural. If the respondents give a “normal” answer, we see patterns, it might imply that the respondent live in the general taken for granted world. The contradictions show discourse change.

**What is an interview**

An interview is form of dialog that provides primary data of words. With interviews you can reach aspects of how the respondents perceive the world. All kinds of methods where individuals tell a story, for example interviews, can be used, from the individual perspective, to understand and question many taken for granted value bases, especially with focus on genus, class and ethnicities. Even if interviews are conducted at a micro level the stories can describe different perspectives on power structures and implementations. The individual is guided in her actions by her experience and interpretation of the world and reality. This gives a detailed and individual picture of the phenomena in question but also is it limited to a certain social perspective. The respondent must also be understood in a historical and social context. *(Erixon Arreman, 2005)*

An interview can take many forms, for example personal dialog, phone call, internet chat etc. An interview can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. In a structured interview all questions and their order are predetermined. In a semi-structured interview the area of subject is predetermine but the questions are
formulated as the interview proceeds and are dependent on the respondent’s earlier reactions and answers. An interview can also take the form of a conversation where the questions are raised as the interview proceeds. This form is called unstructured interview.

When conducting interviews it is important to avoid leading questions. A big advantage with interviews is that they provide primary data and a deep understanding since you have the possibility to adopt the questions to each individual respondent and his or hers earlier answers.

**Why Universities and economic and business students.**

Since we are all students that conduct this study the university is a natural environment for us. It is at the same time very accessible and it is easy to find respondents to interview. The closeness to the university could both work to our advantage and disadvantage. Also in the context of our present society all research is done within the university so in this way it is not possible to study the universities from an outside view.

Foucault’s close relationship between power and knowledge suits us perfectly since the university is the only institution in society granted to produce official knowledge. Of course other information can be considered to be knowledge but it does not possess the same authority. The power floats between different institutions and the university is a big factor given that they hold the key to knowledge like the police-force can legitimately use violence.

The university is a perfect example of the creative power Foucault speaks about. It is a clear discourse, it has obvious connections to knowledge and it helps create subjects. Like Lorna Weir means that the truth regime consists of very heterogeneous “truthful” knowledge. The university could be said to be the number one servant of the regime for the reason that they can influence what is to be considered truth and proper knowing.
Foucault himself was very skeptical to traditional universities which makes it even more interesting to use his thoughts in a university context especially since we use discourse analyze which belongs to the critical methods.

Växjö University has a high focus on business and economics and was one of seven universities that were granted to examinant the new “civilekonom” degree. Business people is a kind of masters of companies, they work and study every aspect of companies and their markets. They do live in a world of money, diagrams and revenue. Since they are knower’s of companies they are more likely to get at high position and power within a company. A questioner made among members of the union “civilekonomerna”, a union for business and economics people, stated that 31% had responsibility for workers and 27% possessed the title boss (Civilekonomen). Other professions that are taught on the university, like Nurse in healthcare might not have the same power and influence over society as many of the business and economical students. Capitalism builds on at least three classes of citizens. The majority is the workers that produce gods and services. Second there must be capitalists that own the capital and employ the labor and finally politicians that regulates and control. The thought with choosing business and economical students was to cover the new generation of one group in capitalism. We find it appealing to see what structures this group takes for granted and perceive as natural. They maybe not become the future capitalists since only 1% of the business students is aiming for an entrepreneurial carrier but since 59% (Högskolebarometern, 2007) is aiming to become managers and supervisors many will be the agents of capitalism.

3.3.1 Respondents

We conducted fourteen interviews without tape recording but carefully transcription directly to digital form. We always conducted interviews in pair. One of us conducted the transcription and the other leading the interview. We only had one respondent present in our room at the same time. The person conducted the transcript occasionally filled in with questions or requests for details. They are all students of business and economics at Växjö University. Ten respondents were second year
students of the Business Program (BP), two studied Enterprise and Business (EB), one studied Marketing and Business (MB), one Information and Business (IB). No one that was asked to participate turned us down.

Number of interviews: 14 (8 men and 6 women)  
Average age: 23 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview nr</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2009-05-06</td>
<td>10.00-11.14</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2009-05-06</td>
<td>11.25-11.52</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2009-05-06</td>
<td>12.00-12.32</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2009-05-06</td>
<td>17.05-17.35</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2009-05-07</td>
<td>13.15-14.05</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>MB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2009-05-11</td>
<td>16.00-16.25</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2009-05-12</td>
<td>13.00-13.15</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>11.00-11.16</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>11.17-11.30</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>EB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>11.30-11.59</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>EB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>13.25-13.50</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>13.00-13.20</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>15.02-15.34</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2009-05-13</td>
<td>16.56-17.34</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>IB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.2 Interview guide

At first we did try out a draft interview on one try-out-respondent. During this interview we found various question with the same answer and some not suitable for our work. Also the order of the questions was reveling and inconsequent. After consulting our tutors and discoursed within the group we altered the guide and came up with this interview guide for our data collection.
The interview guide begins with simple, quick answered questions. If we do not find any variations between the first two questions and the other question we simply do not put any more effort in them. They are easy to ask and could be valuable for our work.

After the simple questions appears the central part of the questioner. These questions are more of an open kind and demands more argumentation and thoughtfulness. The respondent can here discuss more freely and this will hopefully reveal more of his or her thoughts about what is to be perceived as reality. We will hopefully be able to see what discourse the respondent connects with a presumable nodal point. It is up to the respondent to interpret our questions. This interpretation is crucial for our work; we want to know what pops up in the respondents head when confronted with different questions.

At last we finish the interview with some direct questions. These questions are approximately easier to interpret and could also work as guidelines for the open questions. The patterns in the open questions might be reflected in an easier way in these more specific questions. We take these questions in the end of the interview for the reason that the respondent should be kept unaware of our purpose with our work. Since our subject of choice is a taken for granted phenomena we want the respondent to answer without any coloring from us, such as we are business students or writing about capitalism.

1. Sex:

   Even if we do not conduct a gender study it could be interesting to see if there are any differences in people's views hence gender. There are obvious physical differences between sexes but if the physiological differences also where biological driven should men and woman act and behave in the same way irrespective of culture, community and place in history. This is evidently not the case, the differences are socially inherent and the values and attitudes are transferred down in the society. (Angelöw & Jonsson, 2000)Men and women might for example have different goals and objectives in life. If this would be the case, the cause is probably a genus product sprung from the regime of truth, the dominant discourses, and may constitute as a collective opinion
about how different sexes should subjectively interpret identification with pictures like success and high level of achievement. Our current regimes of truth may involve genus (social sex) variations between men and women. If we observe past powerful discourses, such as Christianity, they have large genus differences, with men and woman performing different work and granted different rights.

2. Age:
Age could be an important aspect not just for the case that you are more or less experienced but you are also raised in different times. The majority of both psychological and physical change happens in humans early years. The child takes on different rolls from individuals in its surrounding and as it learn to handle this roles the child generalize its role-models to a generalized other which equate with the sociality (Angelöw & Jonsson, 2000)We are internalized in the society and learn what it means to be a human in the current reality. Since the world and reality is in constant change there might be slightly different views of reality in different age-groups.

Since our interview-group are students we might not experience a great diversity in age but in we happen to find some older respondents, which is not that unlikely among students in Sweden, whey might observe a difference in how to perceive the world.

3. 
   a. Education (major, level, finished?)
   b. Why did you choose your education?
   c. What future do you expect because of it?
   d. What do you think about your education and the school?

We want to know what kind of education; economic or business. Have they studied side courses in other disciplines? Have they been abroad, as exchange
students, and experience other ways of doing things and been in contact with other discourses?

Since Foucault means that knowledge is power and power produces knowledge the education level and education institute is essential for our study. Different schools proclaim different realities and normalize different knowing. They are ruled by different discourses. Universities are among the few institutions that are allowed to produce general accepted knowledge and therefore can be argued to have a lot of power.

There can be several different discourses within a school, for example the art faculty might not have the same attitude and thoughts as the business faculty. Jackson and Carter (2007) explain that one way to view the term discourse it to define at as the processes and procedures of knowledge production. This view is driven from Foucault’s work. Jackson and Carter (2007) address five attributes of knowledge production - who can say what, where, how and why. First, who can speak legitimately for a discipline or subject? Not everybody can officially have opinions and be taken seriously. In different contexts there are different people that possess authority to utter themselves, often related to status or in reality power. Those who have power can regulate who is to enter the discourse and contribute to knowledge production. The second attribute is what opinions and knowledge are appropriate within the discourse. An essential spin-off of “what” are rules about how problems, within the discourse, are formulated. Depending on how the problems are presented there are certain answers to be proposed. You push the answer in what you consider to be the appropriate direction. The third attribute is where the knowledge is produced, where the institution is located. This can consolidate groups of individuals that are viewed as more knowledgeable or actual places on the map. For example is Oxford a more appropriate place to produce knowledge then Easter Island. The fourth attribute is how the knowledge is presented and in what form. For example a text in a scientific article will be of higher status than a TV-program or a blogg even if they where to contain the same information. The last attribute is why - rules about suitable motives for
speaking. What interest should be served with a specific knowledge production?

Since power and knowledge is so close related questions about education and how they perceive it are of great significance for our work.

4. Is it important to have goals? What goals? (What is important? Why?)
The goal aspect could be a good way to investigate how the respondent relates to capitalism. Are they relating goals to some other discourse? Maybe different discourses do approximately have different goals and different methods to reach them. It is up to the respondent how to interpret the meaning of goals, ether personal goals, governmental goals or other kinds of goals. What kind of goals the respondent chooses to speak about tells us a whole lot of the respondent’s priorities.

5. Tell about your background.
Even if education is important for students perception of the world one might argue that our background and growth is even more crucial. For example a school in a specific social area might have more in common with the local culture then the general school system. People belong to different discourses depending on social background, physical location, and economic wealth and so on. What the interview object choose to tell us about his or her background can send essential messages of how the person wishes to be perceived. If the person, for example, starts by telling about his or her roots in the working class we might assume that the person is valuing this heritage and cares for those values of the working class.

6. What do you consider to be freedom?
Napoleon Bonaparte is claimed to have said: nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide. Maybe freedom means something totally different for you, the concept of freedom is very vague and it
is used in many contexts. Maybe the hardest decision is to decide what freedom is. Is it not just what all ideologies and politics are about, to decide what freedom is? It is up to the respondent to interpret the question and answer in any way he or she may choose. Depending on what the respondent brings up as a freedom discussion we might glint his or her value basis, the way the individual wants things to be, a utopia, an ideal.

7. What do you think of then you hear the word “enterprise”?
8. What do you think of then you hear the word “efficiency”?
9. What do you think of then you hear the word “success”?

These are all words that are highly associated with capitalism and our daily society. They are also possible nodal points in capitalistic discourse. What feelings are brought up to surface when talking about these concepts? Does the respondent describe the concepts as negative or positive? Do they, for example, describe efficiency as a threat that puts pressure on people or do they perceive it is a natural phenomenon that is a base for modern society? If they speak about success as personal success it might say something about a high level of individualism which, according to Foucault, facilitates the power systems. Does the respondent perceive the concepts as natural and normalized part of reality?

10. To what extent are you politically active?

If the respondent is active in politics you could think they would have thought these things through in more detail, how to govern a state and other questions discursively connected to politics. Also if the respondent has chosen to take stand for a political party or ideology, he or she might try to proclaim the parties/ideology’s values and ideas. If there is something like an automatic argumentation switch, with already packaged arguments, we might turn it on now.
11. We ask the respondent to think of Sweden’s budget in a diagram and ask the interview object what he or she desires to change. Here we clearly see how the respondent wishes to alter the economic priorities. What do the respondent thinks should be substituted by the public? What it the role of the state? Do they want a minimized state as neoliberals or do they prefer a large socialistic state?

12. What does “free market” means for you? How do you think Sweden should handle the concept of free market?
Free market is a critical foundation for a capitalist society. What does the respondent think that free market is? What knowledge is being thought about the free market? What does the discourse in charge say about this? How are we raised to perceive the free market concept?

13. How should public institutions be govern and owed? Why?
An even more specific follow up question on question number 11.
4 Analysis of empirical data

Our discourse analysis is influenced by Sanna Taljas line of action. In the first part we are searching for similarities and contradictions among the interviews. In the last part we try pinpoint when a discourses starts and ends and what patterns belongs to which discourse.

4.1 Patterns of similarities and contradictions

We start with searching the account or stories for regular patterns. They could be repetitions, similar descriptions, explanations or arguments. There could also be patterns of contradictions. We try to think about which taken-for-granted assumptions that lies beneath the accounts.

Business is interesting and broad

A frequent answer during the start of the interviews is that the respondent is “interested in business”. This might be perceived as obvious when people themselves have chosen education. But we also remember that people wants to consider themselves as being consequent so this answer might just as well be constructed to legitimate their choice so dissonance will be prohibited.

Five respondents say they choose business due to its broad nature, “business/business education is broad/a broad education” they think they can work in many branches and with many different companies. This thinking might rise from the school as a powerful establishment. In Växjö University’s homepage for the Business Program1 “Business is a broad domain” (University). On the homepage we also can read “At our business program you will have many options to choose from regarding your major to fit your goals and interests. We give you the alternatives – you make the choice!” (University) The school is one institution in society that affects the power game and provides ideas for how to cope with education. Our currents education is in some way founded on a broad basis. You go through elementary school and in some sense high school on the

1Civilekonomprogrammet
basis to provide a broad foundation for education, knowledge and life. Later, if you study a three year program, on the university you have two general years before specialize. This, thinking of an extreme broad knowledge base, might shape the role that we want to possess. That this broad base is important is what the University of Växjö states “Working life requires a comprehensive view and this is mirrored in the curriculum... Independent of which major you choose you will need a broad foundation on which to stand on.” (University)

A pattern among the respondents that wants a broad education is that they want good jobs, high wage and high positions within companies. The thought is probably that if you have a broad education you can work in many fields and probably jump between jobs and climb on the carrier latter. If you have a narrow education you might lose the power to influence since there might only be one or few organizations to work for. You cannot quit or change job if there is nowhere to go. However this refers to as long as there is high supply of workers within your specialization.

One might question how business and economics has become such a popular education and field of science. Business as an academic discipline is in relation for instance natural science, a very young field of academia. Today there are many highly respected business schools all over the world.

Get a good job and a high wage or maybe a job I like

Six respondents said that they chose the education because they wanted a good job with a high wage and a career that bring them to a high position with more respect and status. Perhaps they are looking for a way to influence the power game or they are seeking for a reward of some kind. They perhaps presume that “good job” gives them high wage, high positioning in the company hierarchy and high respect and status. What have given them that idea? What makes them strive towards this high paycheck and position? Is it the paycheck and position that determines their status and the respect they earn? Are they judging, not only themselves, but also other people according to their wage and position at a company? Many of our respondents connect
success with career and money, although reaching goals topped their list of success. Many says that their goal is to “come somewhere” perhaps are this somewhere a high position in a company of some sort?

Only one respondent said she wanted a creative job, she mentioned it twice and then continued that she wanted a job at an international company so she could travel and evolve as a person. She did not want to be a worker; she had already done that and felt that it was not evolving her enough. She said that she did not want to work as a cashier or as a caretaker of elderly since she had already done that and it was not giving her enough. She later said that it is important to give more resources to the care of the elderly.

Three respondents said that they want a job that they can feel good about; they did not belong to the group of six that wanted the good career job we wrote about earlier in this part. These three respondents primary objective seems to be related to self actualization through their professional life. What these three respondents have in common demographically is that they are women between the ages 20-23 and they all come from villages/towns rather than cities. One thing that separates these three from the other fourteen respondents is that they explicitly say that they use goals to motivate themselves. Could it be so that this socio-demographical group wants to self actualizing themselves through their work?

One of those six respondents said that he did not want to be a worker “and drag his legs behind him” (be lazy). Why are workers associated with laziness? Perhaps he wants to be associated with the new generation of office-workers in contrast of the “old” manufacturing working class. This respondent had been working in a production plant in his home town before applying for university. Note he has never worked in an office and therefore he is only assuming that they should be more motivated and productive. How or what has created this picture for him? Two respondents said that the reason for choosing business as an education is that they want to start their own business. One wanted to start a bank and the other one was not sure in what kind of industry. The type of industry was of second importance. This respondent was born in Afghanistan, raised in India and went to high school and university in Sweden. So there
was only one Swede with these intentions and he had quite high flying plans for his business.

Three respondents were asked, as a follow up question, if they could find themselves working in the public sector. All three said “No” and then referred to the low wage and slow organization. These respondents seem to hold the picture of public sector as slow and rigid. These respondents also thought that the public sector would pay them too little in wage, perhaps less than they think they are worth.

Success is to get my exam and a career

Both social and professional success is said to be important. Most respondents relate back to their goal when thinking of success. Most have short term goals and relate to “graduation”, “exam” or “classes” after that is “getting a career” what comes next. “Social goals” are mentioned last, even if these are mentioned to be “important”. Note that almost all respondents relate to their own success, with no relation to social aspects of life. Notice that we never implied that they should talk about their own success, just about what they thought and felt about the word. Interestingly enough only one person said that success was to “feel needed”. We think it is interesting that this very basic human characteristic was barely mentioned. This could mean that feeling needed by others is an obsolete feeling that hampers your own and societal development, therefore only one person of our sample thought of this feeling as a base for success and the others were programmed to think in individualistic terms. Two of the respondents said “Status” and “Fame” was factors of success, and another said “Victory” was the key to gain success, both private and social, which he separated from each other. A general trend is that the self, “Me”, is very important and is always mentioned first and social success is mentioned last, the exemption is the respondent who said feeling needed was important.

What can be said to be a carrier in today’s society? It seems like it is most about getting a “good job” which gives you more money and more status than before, climbing the company ladder, up in hierarchy, and sometimes change the company
you work for in order to gain even more money and status. If you take a look in history a carrier might be nothing you decide for yourself. You did not even choose your job according to your own head. Your family might had a business that you where supposed to join or perhaps had they got you a place as a trainer in another small business or perhaps the church or military. Often these life decisions were made for you while you still where a child. A “career” could also mean a tactic marriage in order to get connections and opportunities either for yourself, your future children or your family. It is not difficult to notice that the assumptions regarding a carrier have made a significant turn as history has proceed.

Six respondents claims or indicates that they want to separate social life from professional life. One of them clearly states that he wants these two aspects of live to be separated and the other five respondents takes it for granted. When speaking about success they often speak of social- and professional life. Seven respondents, which do not mention this separation of life, due to a higher degree connect success with career goals, other goals and make profit. One might say that these respondents “forget” the social life and the importance of it.

Enterprise is a positive word and creates jobs, welfare and money, like Toyota and IKEA

A clear majority thinks and speaks of enterprise in positive terms. The words they use to describe this word they think of as positive. This we can tell be the tone of voice and body language. Words or phrases often used are; creates jobs, good for welfare, vision, money. Why are these words connected with enterprise? Could it be so that the thought of enterprises as forces of good is taken for granted?

Four respondents thought of specific companies or individuals when they thought of the word enterprise. Toyota, IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad. These are often mentioned and held up as role models in classes at Växjö University, according to our own experience. This we find interesting since it shows that what is being taught is remembered but not necessarily reflected upon, it seems like students get fed with information of what are “good” companies or entrepreneurs and they accept it at face value with no or less
further consideration. The general positive descriptions of enterprise can also be related back to the university teachings, since these are words that often reoccur in most classes and held up as positive goals or standards for society. “Vision” and “job creation” are very good examples of this.

One might question that big corporations like Toyota and IKEA is held as role models. Companies like these may have more power and more money than small countries.

Other than the fact that we interpreted their general attitude and associations towards this word, “enterprise”, as positive some of the respondents explicitly said that “enterprise” is a positive word, the deviation from the sample nor was one respondent that said that she thought of the word in two ways; She thought of Entrepreneurs (implicit positive) but also “inhumane behavior regarding big corporations”.

Freedom is to be able to do as I wish and make my own choices

Six respondents said that freedom for them where “to be able to make their own choices”. Eight respondents said that freedom where “to be able to do as one wish”, with a few ones changing the word “do” to speak, live and act as one wish. One of them said both do as you wish and to be able to make your own choices. This is quite a positive view of individualism. Individuality as a value is normalized in the Swedish society; it is probably taken for granted.

Most remarkable exception from this pattern is that one respondent did not say any of these words but instead made the associated freedom with “to freely walk the city without being fettered in chains” He then continued with “feels like walking in an empty corridor and if one has the key there is hope”. It seems like he is thinking about something entirely different than the other 13 respondents.

Two respondents, one from each big grouping above, said that freedom also was that no one tells you what to do. One respondent, the one which was born in Afghanistan and raised in India and later on Sweden, said that freedom is to be able to say what you wish and then expressed the freedom of speech. Then he followed it up with that
Sweden is not as free as we think and that the government rule as they wish without having its people with them. As an example he said that the public elections choose one thing but the government decides to do something else.

One respondent said that he feels free and one other that she feels free except from being tied up by her education. The others did not mentioned how they felt.

Four respondents said that there must be some sort of limitation to one’s own freedom otherwise others will end up suffering or there would be chaos. One expressed “liberty under responsibility”. It feels like freedom for 13 of our respondents are a very self centered concept and probably mirrors our Swedish society of today. If we ask people from other times or other places we may get different answers.

I vote – whatever I am interested or not

In the case if the respondent is politically active or not we see a wide spread. All the respondents said that they voted even if they were not interested in politics or knew nothing about it.

Seven respondents say that they are interested in politics but only two is politically active. Two also mention that they know less than they should.

Two of the respondents stated that they are active in the right wing parties in Sweden. Why are the only two respondents politically active in right wing parties? If we take a look back to the students at the sixties, the age of Foucault and others, maybe we would get an opposite answer? Since many respondents see enterprises as good for society and welfare, this may has a connection to the activity in right wing party. If the main opinion where that enterprises is selfish and opportunistic then we would perhaps had seen an opposing trend and activities in left wing parties. Perhaps is the biggest Swedish right wing party, Moderaterna, trying to get voters from the whole political scale? Their new slogan is “the new labor party” and on their official webpage we can read that “The Moderaterna is the new labor party of our time and we want to
give more people further freedom and opportunities to paddle one’s own canoe”

(Moderaterna) What this freedom means is perhaps interpreted differently by every one of us. We can also imagine that to be “a new worker” is appealing to the labor force that not wishes to be labeled as “the old worker” and associated with the Social Democratic Party.

Do it fast and make it good

The respondents connected “time saving”, and “good quality” with efficiency. If something is efficient one is performing a task “quickly and well” and “cutting costs”. One respondent thought that a definition of efficiency is to “seize opportunities” and “utilize new technologies”. This felt very positive for our respondents. Just like the positive feeling of enterprise perhaps these positive feelings towards efficiency contribute to the positive feelings to right wing politics?

Only one respondent said “cooperation” as a factor of efficiency, which we think this is an interesting deviation. To be exact; it is interesting because it’s a deviation. How come that efficiency is not synonymous with people cooperating and working together? Are people working together less efficient? More statements where “Utilize resources and opportunities” and “to complete a task fast and with good quality”.

One respondent were not as positive to efficiency as the others. “Within the business context I think [efficiency] is a lot of bull shit; a lot of demands that not needs to exist. Efficiency is a word to hide behind. They hide humanity behind strange words.” This respondent is in opposition to the rest, is highly skeptic towards corporations. If we take a look at other statements she has done we see a pattern that is colored more by left politics than others. She is also the only respondent studying information and business. But we have to little data to say if this has anything to do with her opinions.

---

2 “Moderaterna är vår tids arbetarparti och vill ge fler människor större frihet och möjligheten att stå på egna ben”
I want to change the budget according to my experiences

When asked what, if anything, to change in Sweden’s budget the respondents give a wide range of answers. From a total of 14 interviews we got approximately 22 different categories of things to change in the Swedish budget. The pattern is that the answers are highly influenced by which experiences the respondent has. For example, one thought to support new business and he wanted to start his own business after school, one had a handicapped brother and wanted to give more resource to the handicapped, one had worked with elderly people and she wanted more money to elderly care and so on.

The most frequent answer was more resources to school and students and they are all student themselves. People view their reality from their experiences and in one way, things they have not seen or experienced for they do not exist in the same way. When comparing the answers from a genus standpoint we could see some differences what to prior. In general the women’s had slightly more opinions about the budget, than men, per capita. As classical genus stereotypes might suggest we find in our responses, the women’s wanted to help weak groups in society like elderly, children, outsiders, care and handicapped while men was more into agriculture sector, students, small business, less money to governmental departments, large business, harder pressure on immigrants and so on. Men wanted also to save money while women’s wanted to give to higher degree.

Taken for granted assumptions about how men and women should think and work with is also a part of our contingently changing society.

Free market or not – as long as people get health care and education with quality

Three respondents said that Sweden should “have as free market as possible” and four other respondents said explicitly that they “do not believe in the free market” a couple of more respondents said approximately the same with different phasing like “I do not understand the thought of private run [public institutions] it does not work” and “It is
good with state governing”. Our answers where otherwise phrased in very different ways. Many answers that regarded the public institutions in Sweden where usually concerning health care and schools or monopolies like Systembolaget and Apoteket.

One respondent that wanted free market in Sweden later said “monopolies give me bad vibes”. Two respondents said “the monopoly of Systembolaget is good” One respondent that wanted “as free market as possible” also said that she/he wants the “Apoteket should be governed by the state”. One of these then said that health care “can be run privately but there should exist a warranty from the state”

Another respondent that also wanted a free market said that “everyone have right to free health care”. This is a general opinion theme among the respondents. Only three respondents thought that health care and schools should be privatized but even they had some restrictions for quality control. One of them proposed that hospitals and schools should not be ran for profit, another thought the government should provide some sort of warranty and the last one was pro a free market but stated that quality was not to be compromised in schools and health care.

Two respondents mentioned that free market was “the right way, according to the business faculty, to maximize welfare and best run a nation”. This implies that the school teaches free market as the groundwork for a wealthy society.

In this context we have found our greatest pattern of contradictions with 9 respondents. 7 respondents is positive towards a free market in Sweden but later on they either want it to be more or less regulated or thinks that some public institutions should be governed by the state. Two quotes from the accounts; “Free competition might be good, but I do not think it works” and “Free market is kind of good and Sweden should have it this way, I think. I think it is good with the monopoly of Systembolaget... If school where to be privatized there will be term fees that can be very expensive. The health care should also be free.” We also have two respondents who say the opposite, that free market is not good but that public institutions should be more privatized than today. “I do not think a totally free market is healthy. It was good that they privatized Vin & Sprit and I think that the gambling monopoly should be reregulated. Health care should be run privately but with a governmental warranty”.
Our respondents do not seem to reflect upon the fact that “free market”, by definition differ from “free trade”. Free trade is included in the larger concept of “free market”. Furthermore, since we believe they do not reflect much over the fact that there is a big difference between these two concepts, and that the possible political and social consequences by implementation of a free market or free trade is likely to differ considerably, we feel there is some cause of alarm. A misinformed population is not a good precondition for what is considered a healthy democracy. What have caused this misunderstanding to occur? Remember that knowledge and power is inseparable and that power only exists in relations.

None of the respondents mentioned that any, now private, parts of society should be socialized. This was taken-for-granted and not an option. Even if many of the respondents want to keep part of the socialized society none of them want to become more socialized.
4.2 Discussion from arguments and starting and ending of discourse statements

In this last section of the analysis we are to examine where different discourses start and another takes on. First we line up the different discourses we thought we found among the accounts. We have chosen to exclude Christian- and gender discourses and merge socialism with the Swedish model since it could be hard to separate this two without deeper theorizing. We have also included any neoliberal angles that may be raised into the capitalistic discourse. We explain what nodal points and elements we think belong to the different discourses. Then we argue where one discourse starts and ends within the patterns of accounts.

Discussion from arguments

The answer that “business is interesting” could be said to originate from two ways. Either that the students want to legitimize their choice of education and reduce dissonance, or they actually find business interesting. We would like to favor this latter view because their personality is formed by society. Society does probably imply this opinion; business is interesting and important. We ask ourselves, why does society imply this? The answer might be found in the capitalistic discourse which influences our society. Capitalism is built upon business, market and money and the capitalistic discourse wants to make itself important, that it why it is experienced as interesting. If the capitalism is the regime of truth then it will possess a lot of power and opportunities to make itself interesting and important. We can see in today’s society that business as a discipline and profession is viewed with much legitimacy and high status. Business is a quite young discipline that has developed rapidly and is now permeating, not only large parts of society and its own academic discipline, but also other academic disciplines. For example are the students of the Art Science Program in Växjö University also study business to some extent. This line of thinking, that business is needed in more disciplines is in opposition to the thinking of the enlightenment period when education was good in itself and was, to a large extent, separated from work. Today students study business even if their subject of science has nothing to do with business all in order to manage their future living and get a job. These students, of for example Art Science, sees business as a way to broaden their education and
prepare them for the life after school, perhaps as entrepreneurs. Perhaps it is the field of business that in itself is perceived as broad, since this is what our respondents says. Business as a subject and science is permeating even the healthcare with its budgets and price tags on people’s health.

Seven respondents showed indications on a protestantic work ethic. For example was one respondent saying “self-actualization is good but not too much”, indicating that one should not have fun to the extent that it overrides, what is more important, namely work. One other respondent stressed the importance of “not mucking around” but immediately after that account he continued with stressing the importance of “have as fun as possible”. Both respondents recognize both individualism and work ethics, almost at the same time.

There were four respondents’ answers where we found that we can connect work ethics with individualism, but there were six answers were we can connect work ethics with capitalism. There were nine answers that we can connect capitalism with individualism. An example of the latter was when talking about why they chose their business education “Reach a high position in a company” Another almost identical where “A high position in a company”.

Many respondents spoke highly of entrepreneurs, even if only two wished to become one. This may very well come from the capitalistic discourse, which most probably promotes entrepreneurs, since capitalism builds on businesses which owns the capital and employs the labor force. Even if only two respondents wishes to become entrepreneurs many other respondents wants to get a good job which in their thinking generates a high wage and a good career. This good career will bring them up to a high position in order to gain respect and status. The urge to receive high status and be better than other may come from vertical individuality while the way to reach this state is likely taught by capitalism. This is interesting since according to both Geert Hofstede and Harry Triandis, Sweden is a country with very little competing individuality, so called horizontal or feminine individuality. Could it be so that these studies are out of date, Hofstede’s study originates from 1967-73 (Geert Hofstede Cultural Dimensions), and the society of Sweden has become more vertical.
individualistic since then? Perhaps it is because our respondents still live in the school environment and competing for graded while Hofstede conducted his study on respondents that was working and did not feel this competing spirit at their work place? We are afraid that it is the former reason that lies behind this change in individuality. This eventual increase in vertical individuality may also be connected to the fact that only one respondent said that that success was to “feel needed”. We think it is interesting that this very basic human characteristic was barely mentioned. This could be related to the capitalistic discourse in the sense that capitalism desires more freedom of movement; movement of resources and people, capitalism sees individuality as an important value. This could mean that feeling needed by others is an obsolete feeling that hampers your own and societal development, therefore only one person of our sample thought of this feeling as a base for success and the others were programmed to think in individualistic terms. In addition, power theory says that individuality is exploited as a tool by power in order to control people. It would therefore be in the interest of the power(s) at being to enhance individuality to gain more power and control. Also in the concept of career we can observe possible signs of individualism and capitalism. The respondents urge a career with high wage, status, fame and in two cases develop as a person. Fame is today encouraged by media, like MTV, reality shows, gossip magazines and even the daily press. To be famous is today to be successful. People wants to be seen, just like Foucault said that power wants us to be, so power can stay hidden and control us.

Five respondents mention the upcoming school-exam as a goal. It is a way to be certified and categorized and the next step on the career ladder. They want to be labeled at least as “Master of business” or “economics”. One respondent even said that it is good to have an academic exam since the employer finds it easier to know how you are and what you can. This categorization is done by power in order to gain control over us and regulate our thoughts and behavior. The grip of biopower, the power of technology and categorization becomes quite clear in this context.

When respondents speak about career they implicitly speak of job career at a private corporation. Besides the question of success they also speak of private large corporations when asked of thoughts on enterprises. According to the respondents
and our own experiences Växjö University speaks highly of IKEA and Toyota. It seems like the University is part of creating large company role models thus increase the positive image for companies. It is not only enterprises but also the word efficiency. Efficiency is in our respondents accounts associated with time saving, good quality, cut costs and perform tasks quickly and well. Hence both role models and efficiency seen as positive, we think of recreation of values for the sake of power. Power wants its ideas to live on and therefore they must be renewed and recreated. This can be linked to the capitalistic discourse in the way that capitalism suggests that corporations are the base of society and must be accepted among the people. It is in the interest of those in power to reproduce their values and their power base. Their power relies on the survival and stability of the current social structure. If people were to be told that companies are bad and corporate visions are nothing important and jobs are boring and unfulfilling, people would likely begin to think so, which could lead to a population that does not want a job, they might go fishing, sleep all day or neglect to pay their bills, instead. If this were to happen, those in power would no longer have control over the population and they would lose their power. They would lose power because power will continue. One respondent was positive to entrepreneurs but associated large corporations with inhuman behavior. This individual might be an example of when one power structure (or discourse) has lost its grip only to lose it to one other power structure (or discourse). One other interesting fact is that only one person even mentioned “cooperation” when asked what he/she associated with the word enterprise.

The similarities in the perception on freedom “to be able to make their own choices” and “to be able to do as one wish” is remarkable. Thirteen of fourteen respondents gave similar variations of these responses. Individuality feels important here and since it is used to govern people we must recognize that it may have been very successful. Power creates subjects that wishes to be individuals, which also create boundaries that separates people from each other. Individuality as a value is normalized in society, it may be taken for granted, although some groups and discourses may be exceptions. Language sets up reality and is influencing people’s minds and the future evolving of the discourse. On the contrary if people are totally free to do what they want but do
not care for the freedom of others, some people will have their freedom limited and they will not be totally free. To solve this contradiction there is the so called laizzes-faire individualism, which is precisely what these four respondent where thinking of even if none of them said its name. The pattern we have found seems to have few alternatives, it is firmly established and the alternatives to this viewing of freedom may have been forgotten. But one thing that we are quite sure of is that freedom to live as you wish and to make your own choices in life is a so frequently occurring representation in our respondents’ accounts that we believe it to be institutionalized. From an early age the school is part of affecting our subjects. This is even an official statement from the Swedish Curriculum for the Compulsory School System: “The task of the school is to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals and thereby actively participate in social life by giving of their best in responsible freedom” (Lpo 94).

Another example of school influencing us is that it in the Swedish Curriculum for the Compulsory School System also says that:”all school activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values“ (Lpo 94). We can draw this as an example of that democracy is valued high and it could be said that the democratic values could include a significance to vote, it is said to be very important to practice democratic rights. Not to vote is maybe seen as an opposition against democracy. All of our respondents vote, even if they claim to not know anything about politics. We can see how powerful the democratic discourse can be since you would not pick a cake, at the café, at random but choose the one cake you like, in contrast to respondents that vote for a politic party without knowing much and being highly uncommitted. In a critical way this can be viewed as the power wants us to vote and feel a part of the system because if we stand up for a party it may make it harder to oppose their opinions since it would create dissonance within the individual. A few respondents say they are politically interested but do not want to stand up for all the opinions of a party. This could be seen as a clear example of this fear to commit to a party. Seven respondents say that they are interested in politics but only two is politically active. The urge to be interested in politics might come from some sort of discourse where the role of a good person includes to be political interested. Two also
said that they know less than they should which also is an indication of some kind of force is existing.

Almost all the respondents wanted to change the budget according to their experience. This could be an example of that the discourse you been exposed to effect what you consider important. A person seems to view their reality from their experiences and things they have not been exposed to do not exist in the same way. There are tendencies towards that men are slightly more influenced by the capitalistic discourse than women that perhaps have a more humanistic approach may be due to more influence from a socialistic discourse.

The amount of nine respondents that had contradictions in the questions of free market and public institutions insinuates that it is here we can find signs of discourse change. The difficulty lies in finding the starts and ends of the discourse representations. Those seven respondents that said that they were positive to free market in Sweden but later changed opinion when the angle changed to Sweden’s public institutions. “Free competition might be good, but I do not think it works” and “Free market is kind of good and Sweden should have it this way, I think. I think it is good with the monopoly of Systembolaget... If school where to be privatized there will be term fees that can be very expensive. Health care should also be free.” Here we can see possible signs of the capitalistic discourse losing ground in favor to a more socialistic discourse when the angle swifts. The same kind of change but reverse may be found in two other respondents’ accounts. “I do not think a totally free market is healthy. It was good that they privatized Vin & Sprit and I think that the gambling monopoly should be reregulated. Health care should be run privately but with a governmental warranty”. The none-existing idea of more socialization together with the seven respondents that wanted more or all privatization might be sign of the socialistic discourse losing ground to the capitalistic discourse.
The word “business/economics” is most likely a nodal point for capitalistic discourse but probably also a nodal point for all other economical systems and discourses. Four respondents said that they found “business interesting”, two said “business is funny”, one was “interested in the business education”, one “studied business in senior high school and found it amusing” and one respondent said that “the courses was funny”. One person, not belonging to any above mentioned group, thought that “figures where funny” and one more respondent said she/he had found it “easy to handle numbers”.

When we asked our respondents about their thoughts on success we realized that the word “success” is a nodal point in itself. Most of our respondents spoke about reaching goals. This may be derived from any discourse and very hard to pinpoint. However, many examples they gave of their goals can be viewed as capitalistic or at least individualistic goals. The word “success” may in itself be a nodal point that in the capitalistic discourse has elements like “getting a career” and get “high wage”.

The word “enterprise” can be seen as a nodal point in many different discourses. The crucial mark here will be the elements spoken of when mention the word enterprise. We find words like “profit-driven, own business owner, business market, money, business plan and profit interest” which initiate that the nodal point “enterprise” is spoken about from a capitalistic discourse.

Our sample group generally thinks efficiency is a positive word that is closely linked to “time saving”, and “good quality”, if something is efficient one is performing a task “quickly and well” which “cut costs”. One respondent thought that a definition of efficiency is to “seize opportunities” and “utilize new technologies”. These thoughts can be derived from capitalistic discourse. Of course it is very possible that there is mix of a number of different discourses, but we get the feeling that our respondents are very much of a “time is money “ mentality, and that most of them perceive the bottom line as the end, to which the means should be applied. A couple of the respondents

---

3 The same word in Swedish - Ekonomi
thought of “Toyota” and “lean production” when they thought of efficiency. We think this has a very strong connection to capitalistic discourse; high degree of cost- and time saving, specific companies held as role models for how to be efficient and make money, and a “me” mentality we sense through out the interview that might alienate people from one another.

Free market could be said to be a nodal point in both capitalistic discourse and socialistic discourse. When our respondents first listening to our question what they think free market is, most of them recognize it to be free trade without any trade barriers or restrictions. When we then ask them to continue with how public institutions in Sweden should be governed and own they often change discourse and connect free market with free trade with some restrictions and regulations.

“[Free market...] Free to sell goods and services and not so many limitations. And that is like good and Sweden should have it I think” She/he continues with the next question about how public institutions should be governed and own; “It is good that the system is governed by the state. As the Apoteket is turning private we will see how that goes. If schools are becoming private we will have term fee that can be expensive. Health care should also be free”. Another respondent said “[Free market] is good when handled the right way, it is good with trade and free and fair trade”. When we continued with the nest question she/he said “[Public institutions] should be owned by publicity. Bad idea to sell out schools and hospitals”.

---

**Nodal points in Individualistic discourse**

The nodal point “success” may in the individualistic discourse have elements like “Status” “Fame” and “Victory”. But the elements in this discourse may perhaps say nothing about how to get success.

We believe that freedom is a nodal point for a diverse set of discourses but probably significant for individuality and in extension for capitalism. We discovered two very common phrases; “to be able to make my own choices” and “to be able to do as one wish” where, where elements sometimes were change to “do” to speak, live and act as one wish. We think these elements indicate that the nodal point was mainly connected to individualism.
Nodal points in Swedish model and socialistic discourse

The pattern in which only two respondents wanted a company of their own, even though several more thought highly of entrepreneurs, may very well be derived from the Swedish model with its promoting of the worker role.

The nodal point “success” in a socialistic discourse may have elements like “feeling needed” since it implement a more cooperative approach. This element has probably nothing to do with the capitalistic discourse or individuality.

In “Capitalistic discourse” we showed how the socialistic discourse take charge over the nodal point “free market” when the focus shift from free trade to public institutions.
5 Conclusion and discussion

5.1 Summary

The expression “think outside the box” is commonly known. We believe it is more difficult than then first imagine. People are brought up to a society already equipped with rules for how to behave, and rules for what is truth and real. We do not choose for ourselves how to perceive the world. The intangible rule book regarding what truth is called the regime of truth. For our contemporary time the regime of truth is said to be capitalism. This was first suggested by the French philosopher Michel Foucault during the 1960’s and 70’s. This truth regime permeates society and sets up rules for what are legitimate goals.

During the 1970’s the Swedish model was at its peak, sprung from a long era of social democracy. Primary goals for this model was to equate class distinctions, promote equality between sexes and extinguish poverty. Since the 1980’s we have moved towards neo-liberalism, an ideology with strong connections to capitalism and the idea that the free market can solve most of society’s problems. This led us to suspect that students of business and economics are highly influenced by capitalism today. We wanted to increase understanding in to what extent capitalism is or is not a truth regime of today among these students. The methodology we felt was most appropriate for this thesis was discourse analysis. This is because the best way we felt we could get access to students thoughts were through language (interviews), and language is the key in discourse analysis because it is governed by discourse which constitutes our social world.

We interviewed 14 students at the University of Växjö. The empirical data we gathered from this was analyzed to detected patterns of similarities and contradictions.

We think we can connect many accounts to a capitalistic discourse. We also found that individualism can be connected to many other accounts, sometimes the same accounts that are connected with capitalism. Some accounts belong more to the socialistic discourse, especially when the respondents’ thoughts are in the area of health care and education. This occur often right after the respondent talked about free market, often as a good thing.
We suggest that individualism is highly connected to capitalism, not only because the theory and history says they are connected but also because individuality is a tool that the power uses to control people and that respondent’ individualistic representations often go hand in hand with or is spoken just before capitalistic representations. When taking our findings into account, together with the importance of income, revenue and costs in all kinds of areas in our civilization, we must pronounce that capitalism, perhaps together with individualism, is permeating our society to that extent that we perhaps speak of it as a regime of truth, at least in our group of respondents.

5.2 Discussion and Conclusions

When we first started our research we thought that capitalism could very well be the regime of truth in the lives of our respondents, but as our research progressed and we got deeper into the subject we started to realize that it was not that simple. We have found several discourses that speak through our respondents; which one of the discourses becomes more prominent than the others depends much on the angle of conversation.

We have found many accounts that we can connect to the capitalistic discourse, others more to individualism and some that come from a socialistic discourse. We may even have found a few remnants from Protestantic work ethic, often in forms of the importance of diligent work as more important than self-actualization. We suggest that individualism is highly connected to capitalism, not only because the theory and history says they are connected but also because individuality is a tool that the power uses to control people and that respondent’ individualistic representations often go hand in hand with or is spoken just before capitalistic representations.

One important result we got from our study is that capitalism occasionally has to step aside because socialism sometimes is stronger. This was discovered when we found that the nodal point; “free market” has multiple meanings depending on which discourse speaks through the respondent. If it is spoken through the capitalistic discourse it means free market with no regulations or other major restrictions. When asked specifically about what “free market means to you” some respondents give text
book capitalistic explanations, saying that there should be no involvement from the state and so on, and they often have a positive attitude towards this concept. But we have discovered that our respondents, when they stop defining free market as taught in school, use it as a kind of synonym to market economy and as an autonom to plan economy. When asked how Sweden should relate to free market, the respondents become more apprehensive and say that government involvement is probably not so bad after all (free school and health care and so on). Our respondents have been raised in Sweden and have lived in the Swedish model as it have been developed the last thirty years or so. We need further study to know if this is a parallel strong discourse or if it’s merely leftovers from an old regime of truth.

The regime of truth dictates what truth is, it supplies us with taken-for-granted knowledge. Knowledge can never be separated from power. In extension it also dictates whose interests can be legitimately served. We believe that the current regime of truth, among business and economical students, is to a large extent influenced by capitalism. Much of their taken-for-granted knowledge originates mainly from capitalistic discourse, like for example getting a degree in order to get a well paid job with high status. The business education is broad which gives lot of opportunities to get return on the invested time and capital (student loans) referring to university studies. But we also believe that the regime of truth is not singly, as in our starting statement, based upon the capitalistic discourse. We also found taken-for-granted truth supplied by the individualistic discourse since freedom is to self actualize one self.

We feel that our current regime of truth might be constructed of several of discourses that perhaps vary with education, class, experience, religious beliefs and so on. We found that our group of respondents, students of business and economics at the University of Växjö, is influenced by capitalism. It is to a far extent capitalism that dictates their goals of high wage and status through a high position at a private company. The power of this regime of truth favors discourses like capitalism and individuality in order to serve and reproduce values that benefits power (power is here referred to as being a separate entity that surrounds and incorporates all aspects of society). Power uses a strong capitalistic discourse to legitimatize concepts like “money
making” and “time saving”. These concepts become legitimate and essential goals of the entrepreneurs and companies, who are also seen as role models by many of our respondents. But as we wrote earlier, the legitimacy of these goals are also questioned by other discourses since they have other goals like for example that all citizens have the right to free and qualitative health care.

Looking back at what we have found in our research, there are a few interesting effects that might arise in the future due to contradictions and misunderstandings. First, as we mentioned before we have noticed that students tend to mistake free trade for free market, either that or they think it’s the same thing. We find this very disturbing because if they go to the voting booths, thinking they’re voting for free trade among counties, higher mobility for individuals and so on, but are actually voting for, sure free trade, but also deregulation and other antics (that seems to be the reason the world is in the mess it’s currently in) neo-liberalism stand for there is a clear discrepancy between what politicians are saying and what the people think they are saying. This discrepancy gets even more serious and the possible consequences even more dire when we look at what our respondents really want; free national healthcare, free education, continued monopoly of the “Systembolaget” and so on. None of these concepts come close to being in alignment of free market and neo-liberal discourse, this information/ knowledge gap is really serious from a democratic viewpoint. Now, keep in mind that most of these respondents are business student in their second year of their education, the university seems to have failed in informing their students in what free market really is. If students have not understood the differences between these basic concepts in capitalism, what about the general population as a whole? We do not want to favor or disfavor any economic system or political party in particular, we merely want to stress the importance of knowledge and information, knowing who and what you vote for in order to sustain a functional democracy, if that is your regime of choice.

When taking our findings into account, the complex mixture of discourses dominated by capitalism, together with the importance of income, revenue and costs in all kinds of areas in our civilization, we must pronounce that capitalism, perhaps together with the second in command discourse, individualism, is permeating our society to that
extent that we perhaps speak of it as a regime of truth, at least in our group of respondents.

6 Reflections

This is our bachelor thesis and thus the first time we have really got deep into the complex ideas of social constructionism. For us it has been a true journey into the minds of ourselves and our fellow business students.

We have asked ourselves if the order of questions during interviews affected the outcome. We asked for education and presumable future before asking for goals. Perhaps this has influenced the answers about goals in direction to examine and career. If we had asked for goals before education and future, the answers might have been different. Another thought that struck our minds was if the questions of enterprise, efficiency and success did make respondents to think of capitalism, markets and the business education which they all belong to. This is not a problem in itself; it is just indications of capitalistic discourses. The problem arise when we ask following questions of free market and how institutions in sociality should be own. Now the respondents presumably are already influenced by capitalistic thinking which would color the answers to these questions.

When asked about freedom, many respondents argued for the right to do what they want. Now in retrospect we would want to ask a follow up question.” Do you allow other people to do what they want?” Certainly many would say that they do. This could be a way to see how the respondents perceive themselves. We find it hard to believe that someone would accept others behavior to a full extent. People often have opinions on how others should live.

If we were to write another thesis on D-level, following the same concepts, we would include more of Lorna Weirs work with several truth regimes. We would really enjoy having more time and opportunity in get involved in her ideas of a more complex evolving of truth regimes. Perhaps we then also could include more about how the self is created by power and discourses.
7 Future research proposal

We would be very interested in the result of a more comprehensive research that study and compare several different groups in society, not just students of business and economics. This would be very good for really deepening the understanding of regime of truth in our society. At the same time we would like to recommend using Lorna Weirs more complex theories about how the regimes of truth are evolved. If the researchers also have the opportunity to alter the interview, into two or more different kinds, in order to study the affect the order of the questions have in the respondents accounts, the understanding how discourses compete may also increase.
8 References


Takis, F. (2008, 1). Values, the dominant social paradigm and neoliberal globalization. The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY.


