The Therapeutization of Work

The Psychological Toolbox as Rationalization Device during the Third Industrial Revolution in Sweden

Hans Tunestad
Who gives you work, and why should you do it?

*The Clash*

The soul is the prison of the body.

*Micel Foucault*

I can't go on. I'll go on.

*Samuel Beckett*
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Sammanfattning på svenska

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Hans
As I was in a hurry, I so hastily pulled the door open that everybody in the room turned their heads and stared at me. For a moment I hesitated; the chairs had been arranged in the form of a horseshoe, and I could sense what was coming.

All the same, I entered the room and sat down on the last available of the ten chairs – and the seminar started. The two speakers presented themselves as psychotherapy students who had just finished a project on how to diminish sick leave among the teachers in a school in a small town in southern Sweden. And then – as I had foreseen – before they told us more about their project, they wanted to hear about us and why we had come to their seminar!

I immediately started sweating. It was the first days of May and while pondering how I should present myself to this very specific audience, I kept thinking that I should not have walked so fast when getting there. I was at a gathering called the Psychotherapy Fair, which takes place every second year in Stockholm, and though I certainly had an interest in psychotherapy, this interest was of a rather indirect character. For some time I had been pursuing a research project about management consultancy, which had taken some unforeseen turns, including my appearance at this seminar. Through these unforeseen turns I had, however, started to sense that I could take my project in a more both challenging and rewarding direction. This promise, however, was still just a promise. I had not yet been able to conceive exactly where this challenging and rewarding direction would lead, and was not really sure if this was it. But now I unexpectedly had to lay out my plans in the open although they were still in an experimental stage and, moreover, to an audience of non-anthropologists – who would probably view them from perspectives different from my own, perhaps even misunderstand what I was about to say. Suddenly feeling trapped in a professional gathering of this kind, I felt I knew nothing about psychotherapy and would probably be seen as an intruder in the group.

As I sat in the middle, four people presented themselves before me. I heard mentions of ‘teacher’, ‘counsellor’ – all persons involved in some kind of therapeutic or pedagogical work – as I tried to think about what I was going to say and, above all, how this would make the others react. However, the importance of some kind of personal development for efficient interaction was often stressed in management discourse. That sounded therapeutic enough.

Suddenly it was my turn, and I heard myself saying that I was a PhD student in social anthropology involved in a research project that was at least
partly about how efficiency and personal development can be joined together. I had hardly shut my mouth before one of the speakers pointed her finger at me, smiled, and said: ‘That’s right! That’s right!’ She wrote my words on the whiteboard and said that it is not only about personal development, but also about health. ‘And’, her colleague added, ‘well-being!’

I suddenly realized that we had moved on to the next person who was now presenting herself and that what I had said did not appear strange at all – that is, not even in this context. On the contrary: I had obviously managed to say something very important!

An hour later we had heard all about this project, which dealt with a school in southern Sweden that, like many other schools, had had a problem with stress-related illness among the teachers. The aim of the project had been to give the personnel the relevant knowledge and skills to cope with their own stress reactions. The sick leave was in this way diminished by 30 per cent in a year. The whole project had thus been an economic success, since the cost had already been earned. While the statistics showing this were displayed, I once again found a finger pointing at me, and then at the statistics: ‘There you have it!’

Afterwards, while pondering this experience, what I found most fascinating was that my words, which had been so ‘right’ in describing this therapeutic project, had been inspired by the books I had read and the courses I had taken part in about the management of groups and teams. Moreover, the reason I had come to know about, and visit, this seminar was that it took place at a gathering – the Psychotherapy Fair – which I had come to visit mainly to hear some presentations about a new way of managing schools, based on the idea of emotional intelligence, which I had first learned about through writings in the mass media.

At that point my whole project came together. It was evident that organizational management and psychotherapy today had something in common, and that this ‘something’ could be found not only in management courses and rehabilitation, but also in the schooling of children, as well as in the mass media.

The problem: an intertwinement of the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’

This book is about the intertwinement of the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’ in present day Sweden. The purpose of the study is to investigate and understand the cultural constructs – discourses and practices – constituting this intertwinement, as well as their wider societal contexts and consequences. Accordingly, the study describes, on the one hand, how psychotherapeutic ideas, techniques, methods, as well as a more general psychotherapeutic understanding of interpersonal functioning, are all employed in managerial thinking and practice today. This incorporation of therapeutic technologies and understandings in the management of social interaction at
work has, on the other hand, its counterpart in the economistic perspective under which psychotherapy in Sweden today exists. The latter means that any therapy which cannot stand for assessment (including a cost-benefit analysis) will in the end be rejected by the health care apparatus, also implying that rehabilitation has adjusted itself to prevalent management ideology.

A basic assumption in this thesis is that this intertwining of the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’ takes place through a widespread dissemination of psychological tools.¹ The book thereby deals with the social construction of what will here be called a toolbox psychology, that is, the inclination in much of contemporary psychology towards a sort of guided self-help. Potential recipients are here offered an assortment of know-how (that is, a set of ‘tools’) for how to achieve a more functional existence – at work as well as in life more generally. In this toolbox psychology, work and well-being merges – efficient work is seen as demanding well-being and well-being is seen as demanding work on the self. Since work here becomes indispensable, something good in itself, yet which is enacted through psychological means, the therapeutization of work equals the rise of a psychological work ethic in present day Sweden.

The thesis investigates the process of therapeutization of work, by looking at the dissemination and use of psychological tools, in the above mentioned arenas – that is, not only organizational management and psychotherapy, but also the schooling of children as well as, in relation to all these, the mass media. More specifically I will look at management courses, the healing of stress-related illnesses, the teachings of Emotional Intelligence in schools, and the representation of psychological tools in the mass media. What these different arenas, or subfields, have in common is that they all represent a sort of guided self-help, where the recipients are offered the possibility of becoming more able at work or, if they are seriously ill, simply become able to work at all once again. The field of investigation could therefore be called work-enabling self-help psychology. This label is not an emic one, but an analytical term constructed to capture this field.

In the self-help practices of this field, people’s everyday lives and actions are ‘translated’ (Callon 1986) into a psychological prose. At least a partial acceptance of this language by the recipients is a necessary, but also sufficient, requirement for this type of guided self-help to start materializing. During fieldwork I noticed that critique was occasionally given voice by different actors in the different subfields, yet only regarding specific theories, methods, aims, etc., which opened up discussions. Since such specific criticism is itself expressed in a psychological language, it poses no threat to the process of translation more generally. On the contrary, it is a way of accepting the process, and thus of entering the field. The ‘enrolment’ (ibid.) of individuals into this way of thinking and acting is, in other words, eased by

¹ The term ‘tool’ is an emic term. In the field it was used to describe psychological theories, methods, techniques, or even larger assemblages such as EQ, imagined to be of an instrumental nature. I here follow that usage. The ‘psychological toolbox’ and ‘toolbox psychology’ are analytical concepts constructed to capture the emic idea that a diversity – making up a set – of tools is useful to accomplish things with psychological means.
the playful and consumption-like character of the field, where discussion is encouraged and where it is ultimately up to each and every individual to decide what he or she considers useful (cf. Dumit 2001).

The field of work-enabling self-help psychology is but a part of a more encompassing movement in organizational management – well known to organizational theorists and researchers – away from the ‘visible hand’ (Chandler 2002) and towards more open forms of managing based on flexibility. The ideal of strict organizational structures with a hierarchical control and command system has given way to that of smaller self-governing units organized in networks (see e.g. Castells 1997). Work here gets a more ‘projective’ character (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: Chapter 2), demanding social skills, with co-workers who may be anything from full-time employees to ‘temps’ to consultants (see e.g. Garsten 2008, Furusten 2003). Altogether this shift has meant that the ‘person’ has become a more important part of organizing. The ideal participant in a work organization is no longer simply a toiler following orders from above, but a reflexive, responsible, agentic individual (Meyer and Jepperson 2000). Such a person is imagined to find the motivation for work less outside of work (such as payment) and more inside the boundaries of work, such as the possibility of personal development, as well as health and well-being in the work situation.

Yet it is hardly self-evident that work promotes personal development, health and well-being. On the contrary, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries workers, unions, politicians, even managers and management consultants, often stressed the hardships of work (Kanigel 1997, Rabinbach 1992), as did many social theorists, viewing work as an arena for exploitation and alienation (see e.g. Marx and Engels 2002 [1848], Braverman 1974, cf. Fleming 2009: 2). So what has happened? How did work become something with therapeutic connotations?

The preliminary answer: a new spirit of capitalism

A preliminary answer to the social scientific problem of the therapeutization of work is presented by Boltanski and Chiapello in The New Spirit of Capitalism (2005). As the title suggests this work starts out in the footsteps of Max Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Following Weber, Boltanski and Chiapello define capitalism as ‘an imperative to unlimited accumulation of capital by formally peaceful means’ (2005: 4, italics in original). This is, they argue, a system where it is not enough to simply pay people for their work. Some grease other than just money is needed to get this complex system working. People must also identify with the system, or at least those managing it must – that is, a ‘spirit of capitalism’ is necessary for the system to work. Boltanski and Chiapello define the ‘spirit of capitalism’ as ‘the ideology that justifies engagement in capitalism’ (2005: 8, italics in original). Weber described the spirit of capitalism as coming out of a religious conviction that work was a sign of blessing and thus something good in itself. Drawing on Hirschman (1977), Boltanski and Chiapello prob-
lematize the Weberian perspective by suggesting that to engage people the system must offer both autonomy and security, as well as appear as in the service of the common good. These are the crucial issues, the lack of which leads to a crisis for the system. Boltanski and Chiapello identifying three consecutive spirits of capitalism which have, since the nineteenth century, replaced each other as dominant in the industrialized world. These consecutive spirits have all presented their own specific answers to the issues of autonomy, security and the common good.

The first spirit is associated with the entrepreneur, the ‘captain of industry’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 17). Through the monetary economy and the new means of communication, capitalism at this stage breaks down the traditional bonds that tied people to the family and the land. Yet economic enterprises remain small, largely being extensions of the household economy of the owner. Security is therefore provided within the firm through paternalistic relationships resembling family ties, and otherwise through charity. A seemingly steady progress in all spheres of society was believed to benefit all. The second spirit is associated with the ‘large, centralized, and bureaucratized firm’ (2005: 17-18), which emerges in the early twentieth century. The general population was gradually freed from poverty through an increasing prosperity distributed throughout society, the latter through interventions by the state. The large firms meant career opportunities, not least for the growing numbers of salaried managers running them. The new, third, spirit of capitalism is seen by Boltanski and Chiapello as materialized in the network, an organizational form that frees people from the dehumanizing constraints of the bureaucratic ‘machines’. Career opportunities are here replaced by a succession of projects, in the end making everyone his or her own ultimate project. There is, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, no common good in this connexionist world, since ties are interpersonal relationships, yet the network is justified by the view that it is a natural form of relating.

By specifying the original Weberian perspective, Boltanski and Chiapello provide a more complex view of the capitalist system, opening up for a perspective where internal change as a response to external critique is a part of the system itself. The development of the consecutive spirits of capitalism is seen as driven by the consecutive crises of capitalism, the latter which by readjusting itself proves the steadfastness of the system and its ability to reform itself in line with current critiques. Boltanski and Chiapello do not delve deeply into the causes for the reformation of the first spirit of capitalism into the second, but follow writers such as Chandler who described the emergence of the ‘visible hand’ of management – that is, the replacement of market integration with the integration of the production process in the large corporation. In the latter planning became important and firms tended to grow into large bureaucratic structures where the design and execution of work were separated.

The new, third, spirit of capitalism, as depicted by Boltanski and Chiapello, emerged from the 1970s and onwards when the capitalist system tried to readjust itself as an answer to the leftist critique of the 1960s. According to
Boltanski and Chiapello, there have been two major types of critique against capitalism over the last two centuries, which they label the ‘artistic critique’ and the ‘social critique’. The first stressed the need for liberation from inauthenticity, and found an early expression in the bohemian milieu of the late nineteenth century with figures such as Baudelaire. The second was directed against the egoism in the distribution of the wealth from the accumulation process which led to hardships and suffering for the many. In other words, the artistic critique stressed the need to get beyond alienation, whereas the social critique was directed against exploitation. Both these types of critique were prevalent in the late 1960s. Put simply, Boltanski and Chiapello argue that the capitalistic system from the 1970s and onwards absorbed the artistic critique which made it possible to circumvent the social. Managerial thought and practice started stressing autonomy and self-governance as important values to promote in the workplace. By thus refashioning itself into more of a network character, the capitalist system took the edge off the social critique which during the twentieth century had been directed against the shortcomings of the bureaucratic firm.

As will become evident in the pages to come, the different techniques for managing social interaction in work-enabling self-help psychology (including those originating and being put to use in psychotherapy) are of a character which resonates intimately with the so-called artistic critique. Values such as self-awareness and self-esteem, as well as group development and the need to reach synergy, are all directed towards the forming of authentic autonomous units with the ability of exercising self-direction. There are, however, a few circumstances in *The New Spirit of Capitalism* which makes it merely a preliminary answer to the problems raised by the empirical material in this thesis. First, the context of investigation is France. Second, the first-hand empirical material is limited to management literature, mainly from the 1990s. Third, it has little to say about technological transformations, though these may be regarded as important forces pushing for societal change in recent decades (see e.g. Castells 1997), and though Boltanski and Chiappello admit that these may have a transformative character on the system (2005: 42). I have therefore borrowed the concept of ‘third industrial revolution’ (Kaplinsky and Cooper 1989, Finkelstein 1989, Greenwood 1997, Magnusson 2000a, Magnusson 2000b: 266, Schön 2012, Lundh 2010, Isacson and Morell 2002, see also Piore and Sabel 1984) to denote the wider context of the study, since this concept tries to capture both organizational changes (in the way described by Boltanski and Chiapello) and technological transformations, which are viewed as interlinked (a theme here treated in Chapter Four and the Conclusion).

Has a similar development taken place in Sweden, as that described by Boltanski and Chiapello regarding France? I argue that it has, and that this process is still in motion. To better understand the particularities of this process, how it has unfolded in Sweden and the social and cultural consequenc-

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2 For the sake of clarity, I spell out the numbers when referring to the chapters in this thesis and use numerals when referring to chapters in other books.
es it has, I conducted fieldwork investigating the dissemination of managerial know-how in diverse organizational settings.

The research perspective: rationalization efforts

As a social phenomenon, psychological tools stretch out into a range of contexts, and may thus be studied from a number of more or less well-established perspectives. They may, for example, be researched as a form of emotion discourse (see e.g. Wulff 2007, Lutz and White 1986), as part of an emotionalization of society at large (Furedi 2004), or of organizations more specifically (Fineman 2003). More generally they may be seen as a psychologization of society (Rose 1999a, Ward 2002, Hansen et al. 2003), or even as part of a long term struggle to transform science in a holistic direction (Harrington 1996). When viewed as part of a new spirit of capitalism, where the focus is on organizational management, toolbox psychology emerges as a practical management philosophy. This thesis can thereby be seen as part of a growing anthropological body of knowledge about contemporary management thinking and practice and the way it affects, and is affected by, wider societal transformations (see e.g. Garsten 2008, Krause-Jensen 2010, Lane 2011, Molé 2012, Mirchandani 2012). Accordingly, my perspective is to investigate the dissemination of psychological tools as rationalization efforts, that is, ways to enhance productivity.

In Sweden during the twentieth century, as in many other industrialized countries, rationalization was part of a ‘productivist ideology’ (Maier 1987, see also Merkle 1980). Rationalization was here not just an idea about how to effectivize production, but also seen as a way to realize a new harmonious society. A managerial way of thinking borrowing its language from engineering – and thus upholding values such as efficiency, calculation, order, planning – came to constitute a role model for the organization of a diversity of social, political and economic activities (Alexander 2008, Björck 2008, Jordan 1994, Kanigel 1997). When rationalization efforts were increasingly questioned in the late 1960s and 1970s, by being portrayed as dehumanizing, this productivist ideology lost its force in Sweden. Yet an updated, less outspoken, version made a comeback with the new spirit of capitalism: work-enabling self-help psychology can arguably be seen as a continuation of these efforts to simultaneously create a better functioning and more harmonious work life and society for all through enhanced efficiency.

The rationalization movement

In Germany the term rationalisierung had become established in the late nineteenth century to denote ways of increasing efficiency in industrial enterprises. In the German context the term soon got a wide definition and was used in relation to any kind of measure that increased efficiency, from rational business administration within the small scale company to interna-
tional economic cooperation. Informed by the German efforts the so-called rationalization movement gained momentum in Sweden in the first decades of the twentieth century, yet also found its influences in American sources: primarily the strict Taylorism with its piece-work, but also modern business administration, psychotechnics, and the view represented by Elton Mayo of the workplace as composed of human relations where the feeling of inclusion and cooperation was what motivated workers (De Geer 1978).

There was soon a wide acceptance of rationalization efforts in Sweden, even in the labour movement (Björck 2008). Everyone seemed to benefit from a ‘scientific management’, yet only if such efforts were carried out not just in the interest of business and industry. The Austrian socialist politician Otto Bauer had in 1931 coined the term ‘misguided rationalization’ (Fehlrationalisierung) for the state of affairs where rationalization resulted in unemployment or ill-health for workers, implying that from a wider perspective it was neither efficient nor rational for business and industry to use up people and then let society carry the costs. Rationalization efforts should, according to Bauer, serve the interest of the whole of society. In this wide meaning the term was also appropriated by the Swedish Social Democratic Party (Björck 208: 101, 136), in power from 1932-1976. In line with this view a widely embraced societal consensus gradually emerged around the so-called Work Strategy, which stated that unemployment should be as low, and employment rates as high, as possible (Junestav 2004).

With the wide meaning of the term ‘rationalization’ it became possible, in a sense even rational, to think of industrial enterprises as but a part of a larger societal organization. In this productivist ideology, continuously enhanced productivity would not only mean increased profits, or higher wages, but through these two in combination also a development that would overcome class struggle and social instability, since prosperity and well-being would become a possibility for all. With these positive connotations established rationalization ideas spread to other spheres of society. A managerial way of thinking, borrowing its language from engineering, had by mid-century invaded all sorts of activities in Sweden – even consumption, household work, leisure activities – and had thus formed a sort of collective

3 At the same time, the American engineer Frederick Taylor created a system, called ‘scientific management’, to increase efficiency in factory production. The general idea was to establish a division between the workers of the mind and the workers of the hand, between those who designed the tasks and those who executed them. Through this distinction, Taylorism meant the deskilling of the labour force in general. Taylor’s approach was criticized by psychologists such as Mayo for lacking a perspective on, and thereby the tools to handle, the social relations of the work place. Taylorism was, Mayo stated, as much cause as solution to any problems of inefficiency. Other psychologists however, such as Münsterberg, viewed Taylorism differently and saw a chance for psychologists to contribute to the system for example by creating psychological methods for personnel selection and by developing personality tests, a set of activities at the time known as psychotechnics. In Sweden, the German and American influences merged (De Geer 1978, Lundh 2010: 166).

4 Consumption was rationalized through the introduction of supermarkets, farming was rationalized, the rationalization of household work got its own research institute (see e.g. Giertz 2008, Hirdman 1993).

The gradual computerization of society meant yet new alternatives for the rationalization of business and industry. In the 1970s there were in Swedish industry mainly two competing views: automation and the socio-technical approach (Sandkull and Johansson 2000: 71). The first continued on the path of ‘scientific management’ and basically meant the use of digital technologies for a continuing mechanization and thus deskilling of workers. Yet such efforts now faced an increasing resistance, in business and industry as well as in society more generally. Rationalization was no longer seen as a way of creating a harmonious society, but rather associated with exploitation and alienation. However, the second perspective – which gained much attention both in Sweden and internationally through the way it was applied by car manufacturer Volvo from the 1970s and onwards (see e.g. Womack et al. 1990) – initiated a new perspective on control where workers gained more autonomy since based on self-governing groups, and where the new technology was used to support the workers in their efforts, thus counteracting the tendency towards deskilling. The socio-technical approach thereby favoured decentralization, which became a widespread rationalization strategy in the 1980s.

In an investigation of the transformation of work in eight (medium-size and large) companies in Sweden during the 1980s, Bäcklund (1994) identified three types of rationalization strategies beyond mere technical development. These were – largely following different international trends – rationalization of capital, customization and decentralization. The first means reduction of stock, through the delivery of components and resources ‘just-in-time’. The second means that the personnel encountering the customers are given increased responsibility, not just selling a finished product but negotiating a deal where the customer’s demands will affect the very production of goods and services. The third case, decentralization, is partly related to the former two. Through the rationalization of capital and customization the whole production process becomes more flexible, meaning that employees on all levels are given greater responsibility for their work and must therefore have a wider understanding of the whole production process, as well as be able to execute a number of different tasks. Instead of minute division of work, there is an integration of tasks. Through their stress on personal responsibility, flexibility and interactive skills, these types of rationalization strategies altogether demand, according to Bäcklund (1994: 86), personnel with ‘social competence’. In other words, in these new rationalization strategies the personnel not only need knowledge and tools directly related to their specific work tasks, but also benefit from tools enabling a more efficient interaction – that is, psychological tools.

Human capital
The greater autonomy of the personnel in later rationalization strategies represented a new view on the employees, who were here seen as an important
asset rather than merely a cost. This view is today captured by the label Human Resource Management (or HRM). In HRM the employees have become ‘human capital’ (van Drunen et al. 2004: 158, Weiskopf and Munro 2012). The focus in HRM is on how to maximize the revenue from this capital, that is, how make the knowledgeable and responsible personnel give the most. An assemblage of psychological theories and methods are here made use of. Since this knowledge is centred around how to make people want to work as efficiently as possible, van Drunen et al. argue that what Weber once called the ‘Protestant ethic’ has now been replaced by a ‘psychological ethic’ (2004: 161). In this thesis I approach this psychological work ethic through the work-enabling self-help psychology investigated in the different chapters, where a self-management based on psychologically grounded reflection has become an important part of organizational management. Whereas Weber (1978) described a situation where economic rationality was an effect, a sort of by-product, of a spiritual conviction, the ‘spiritual’ dimension is here consciously introduced as a way of accomplishing a more efficient work process. Managing by making use of psychological tools, thus attempting to instil a psychological work ethic, thereby comes to resemble what Rudnyckyj (2009) has termed a ‘spiritual economy’.

The rise of the idea of human capital can be seen as part of a more wide ranging neoliberal transformation of society since the 1970s (Weiskopf and Munro 2012). Work-enabling self-help psychology can here be seen as a part of the ‘enterprise culture’ of neoliberalism (cf. Rose 1998: 150, Weiskopf and Munro 2012). Yet, through its particular way of linking individuals, groups, and organizations, and even the state and society more generally, as outlined in the following chapters, toolbox psychology make the enterprise culture of neoliberalism appear as less of a way of stressing the ‘individual’ on behalf of the ‘social’ and more as an alternative way of configuring these two (cf. Collier 2011: 1, see also Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 129-132). By revealing the psycho-social benefits of efficient work – that is, how work and well-being are each other’s underpinnings – this toolbox psychology depicts efficient work as something that everyone benefits from and thus something that is in the service of the common good (cf. Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 16), and especially so in a society such as Sweden with tax-funded health care through which the work of all citizens become linked (see Chapter Three). Neoliberal transformations in Sweden can thereby be analysed, as Collier has it, ‘not beyond but within the history of … biopolitics’, that is, as yet another ‘attempt to govern a population’s health, welfare, and conditions of existence’ (2011: 3), through an alternative way of integrating individual and collective action. That the latter appears to be the case in Sweden becomes even more evident when looking at how the idea of human capital was here linked to the well-established idea and practice of extensive popular education, so-called folkbildning.

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5 With the term ‘spiritual economy’ Rudnyckyj (2009) means the use of religious values to create a work ethic.
Based on the assumption that that the value of the ‘human capital’ increases with education, contemporary society is often described as a knowledge society, characterized by a ‘close relationship between the social processes of creating and manipulating symbols (the culture of society) and the capacity to produce and distribute goods and services (the productive forces)’ (Castells 1997: 32). In the 1990s the Swedish social democratic government adopted the ideas of knowledge society and human capital and launched a number of political initiatives related to education and knowledge. Education was believed to erase the distinction between labour and capital, since the most important form of capital – that is, knowledge – becomes the property of the employees. In Sweden the so-called knowledge society was often seen by leading social democrats as a continuation of the Swedish tradition of *folkbildning*, that is, the extensive public education through study circles (Andersson 2009). And indeed, the kind of courses and therapies described in this thesis do resemble study circles, with education in groups and with the active participation of the ‘students’. Given the content of these educative efforts they can, borrowing a concept from psychotherapy, be seen as different forms of ‘psychoeducation’. Moreover, as I intend to show in this thesis, with the dissemination of psychological tools through different mass media, psychoeducation in Sweden has today in the most specific sense become a form of public education, that is, an education of the public through the public domain.

**Analysing rationalization in the third industrial revolution: communication and control technologies**

Today, people’s lives are ‘permeated by media’ (Hannerz 1993: 8); people to a large extent live with and by the media (Castells 1997: 334). Different media today contribute to contemporary rationalization efforts by spreading psychological know-how to the general public. In this thesis I will not only describe mediations directed to specific audiences (such as in management courses and psychotherapy based on psychoeducation) but also the mass mediated distribution of psychological tools – arguably an important part of ‘the social processes of creating and manipulating symbols’ (Castells 1997: 32, cf. above) – and how these have become interlinked with (other) productive processes. Given this intimate link, mediation will here not only to be viewed as a form for the dissemination of information and knowledge – that is, as a form of communication – but also as (a way of enabling) a form of control.

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6 In Sweden the social democratic government launched political initiatives related to education and knowledge: new universities were inaugurated, unemployed were supposed to be ‘uplifted’ by being educated in a program called the ‘Knowledge Lift’ (*Kunskapslyftet*), the importance of lifelong learning and an infrastructure of ‘electronic highways’ were stressed. It was often repeated that knowledge increased when it was shared, thus making human capital differ from other types of capital since you could both have it and share it at the same time, giving this version of capital almost socialist connotations (Andersson 2009).
The period investigated in this book, the third industrial revolution, has largely been characterized by the on-going ‘computerization of society’ (Lyotard 1984). As Lyotard has shown, computerization is not only a quantitative change, bringing about an increasing number of more forceful computers, but also a qualitative change.\(^7\) Among the first to theorize the coming computerization of society was Norbert Wiener, who also was one of the crucial figures in setting it in motion. Wiener coined the term ‘cybernetics’ to describe what he saw as the new industrial revolution yet to come. He first outlined these ideas in a book simply called *Cybernetics* (1948), which he gave the subtitle ‘control and communication in the animal and the machine’. For Wiener control and communication were two sides of the same coin: *a system of communication would always also be a system of control* (Wiener 1954: 16).

Yet when this new industrial revolution gained momentum during the 1980s, few if any of those theorizing it followed exactly in the footsteps of Wiener. Instead, communication and control were largely dealt with separately. The term ‘information and communication technologies’, or simply ICT, became established for the new industrial paradigm, not least through the work of Piore and Sabel (1984), whereas another cluster of research came to circulate around the issue of surveillance, often inspired by the work of Foucault (1979), aiming to understand how the new technology was increasingly used for such purposes (see e.g. Lyon 2007).

It is, however, my intention in this book to follow the original line of theorizing drawn up by Wiener. From such a perspective the new technologies are not just information and communication technologies (or for that matter surveillance technologies), but communication and control technologies. This is not really at odds with the view of ICT delivered by, for example, Piore and Sabel (1984), or writers specifically looking at the Swedish situation, such as Magnusson (2000a) and Schön (2012). In all these writings the intimate relationship between new technologies and new ways of organizing work are emphasized, that is, between technological advances and new ways of managing. In other words, this new industrial revolution not only involves silicon based technologies but also, if using the terminology favoured by Rose (1998), specific ‘human technologies’ enabling more efficient social interaction – and through this a rationalization of work efforts. The psychological toolbox thus emerges here as a rationalization ‘device’ (Muniesa, Millo and Callon 2007: 2).\(^8\)

\(^7\) In Lyotard’s view computerization means the end of the ‘metanarratives’, which are ‘being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements’ (1984: xxiv). A technological view of knowledge comes to dominate, an ‘echo of contemporary managerialism’ (Lyon 1999: 55).

\(^8\) ‘The notion of “device” is useful. With this notion … objects can be considered as objects with an agency: whether they might just help (in a minimalist, instrumental version) or force (in a maximalist determinist version), devices do things. They articulate actions; they act or they make others act’ (Muniesa, Millo and Callon 2007: 2). As will be evident in this book, this ‘distribution of agency’ (2007: 3) suggested by the notion of device is characteristic of toolbox psychology.
Indeed, thinking in terms of communication and control technologies is very rewarding when taking the paradigm of ICT down to the ground, so to speak, by investigating the human technologies of the new industrial revolution. In this book I do just that, by looking at the practical skills and knowledge of managing groups and individuals and how these are disseminated at the micro level. When thus dissecting the psychological work ethic it becomes apparent that the psychological know-how disseminated in diverse organizations aims at accomplishing both a more efficient communication and a specific kind of control. The latter here largely equals self-governance, where the proper types of communication makes possible the construction of autonomous and flexible individuals and groups. The rationalization of interaction in organizations is thus achieved through the enactment of the values constituting the new spirit of capitalism. Investigating this work-enabling self-help psychology opens up one way of understanding, I argue, how Swedish society as well has embraced this new spirit of capitalism in recent decades.

This transformation of Swedish society in line with a new spirit of capitalism may even have been eased by toolbox psychology. Psychological tools not only enable a specific way of organizing work, based on self-management and autonomy, but through their content also open up for existential reflection. To the extent that people find such a reflection relevant, they will concern themselves with what are today also managerial issues. And as many social scientists have noticed (Castells 1997, Baumann 2007, Lindquist 2009), these are turbulent times, characterized by uncertainty about the direction of society – concerning the world of work and beyond. In these times of uncertainty, psychological tools offer individuals structured ways of thinking and communicating about their ‘spiritual’ problems and through this also the prospect of getting a grip on themselves, to take charge of their lives, a possibility to ‘take your power back’, to borrow an expression of TV-therapist Phillip McGraw (see Chapter Three).

Existential anthropology has shown how storytelling can function as a means for understanding and making sense of life ‘in the face of disempowering circumstances’ (Jackson 2002: 15, see also Finnström 2008). If stretching the concept a bit, the discursive tools of work-enabling self-help psychology can be seen as a sort of storytelling, in which individuals are encouraged to take part in the telling, even enactment, of a set of stories about human existence. Any such story is, arguably, ‘deeply embedded within various institutional structures that influence its production’ (Saris 1995: 39). These narratives are therefore about the constitution of your ‘inner’ life, how to make it manifest in outward action, how to rethink your situation in order to turn ill-being into well-being, what roles you may assume in social interaction, how to turn interpersonal conflicts into mutual understanding and cooperation through efficient communication – in short, what and who you are as a human being and even what you may hope for. Through the communication and control technologies of work-enabling self-help psychology people are thus offered the means to understand and make sense of their lives in a turbulent time. All in all, by incorporating existential reflections
into organizational management work-enabling self-help psychology opens up a vision of self-control where the ‘ethical pathway for the self’ (Rose 1998: 93) and the path towards efficiency – or in other words, the ‘therapeutic’ and the ‘managerial’ – coincide.

Some notes on method

How to study this field with anthropological methods? What kind of fieldwork approach could best be used to pin down present-day work-enabling self-help psychology? Or in other words, how to make evident the intertwinement of the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’?

Constructing a field

The empirical material used in this thesis has been collected through various forms of engagements inspired by the forceful development of the anthropological method of fieldwork since the 1980s. This development has been spurred by a change of metaphors in the anthropological imagination, where the mosaic metaphor has been replaced by that of globalization, which also has meant that the view of society as a structure largely has been replaced by the investigation of societal processes. The classical one-group-one-year approach of doing ethnography, well fit for the type of face-to-face interaction that anthropologists have often been studying, has been complemented with new forms of engaging with people, words and things. Arguably, such a ‘polymorphous engagement’ (Gusterson 1997) can capture more of the complex interaction that one finds in present day industrial society.

In line with the recent developments in the fieldwork tradition I have in different ways engaged with a variety of actors and settings, relevant for the understanding of my topic, and thus collected a diversity of empirical material. Participant observation in different localities has naturally played an important part here. Yet, taking part in face-to-face interaction has needless to say not only been a question of looking, as the term ‘observation’ suggests. Perhaps even more important has been ‘engaged listening’ (Forsey 2010), crucial for example during participation in different seminars, in discussions at courses and elsewhere, but also when I have later followed up on some acquaintances made in different localities by interviewing them, preferably at their respective work places. These interviews have had a more conversational character and have covered a range of topics, as well as captured more of the larger social situation that the interviewees are involved in (cf. Hannerz 2004, Rubin and Rubin 2012, Roulston 2008).9 I have thus conducted ‘interviews with an ethnographic imaginary, aimed at revealing the cultural context of individual lives’ (Forsey 2010: 567), an important aspect of which is to ‘probe biography, seeking to locate the cultural influences on

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9 I conducted about twenty such in-depth interviews. That is, apart from the numerous chats and conversation of varying length during the other parts of fieldwork.
a person’s life’ (Forsey 2010: 568). Given that the interview today is a common way of interacting that most people are familiar with (2010: 568-569), the conversations initiated earlier have here merely continued. And given that we have talked about subjects that the informants are, more or less, accustomed to discuss in their daily lives, I have through these interviews, as well as through the other types of engagements, tried to make myself part of ‘a long conversation’, something Malinowski saw as one of the main aims of fieldwork (Silverstone et al. 1991: 204, Forsey 2010: 562). To some extent I have also continued these conversations by involving myself in virtual interaction through e-mail and telephone (cf. Norman 2000).

I have also tried to cover the mass media. I have followed a number of newspapers and journals, as well as an assortment of television shows, on and off for longer periods (in some cases years), but also made an in-depth study of some of these during a few selected periods (cf. Gusterson 1997). Other types of archive material has also played an important part in constructing the field, such as reports from different governmental organizations, and a diversity of therapeutic and managerial works of different genres. All of which arguably also can be seen as taking part of ‘a long conversation’.

Making use of a range of methodological procedures, such as those described above, seemed legitimate since the study not only involves some contexts which are hard to access by long term participant observation but also tries to map and understand similarities in practices in different types of institutions. A partial aim of the different types of engagements has been to end up in what Martin, following Baudrillard, calls ‘implosions’, that is, ‘places where different elements of the system come into energetic contact and collapse in on themselves’ (Martin 1994: 11). The seminar described in the introductory vignette is an example of such an implosion. I have in this way tried to involve myself in different types of activities and ‘conversations’ where the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’ meet, by just following the discourses and persons where they take me.

In order to delimit the field, I have focused on what seems to be one of the most central concerns in both work life and psychotherapy today – emotions. Needless to say, the aim has not been to present a theory on emotions, or to get a better understanding of emotions, or anything such, since this is rather a study of psychology, than in psychology. In my fieldwork I have simply tried to trace out different techniques and ideas related to emotion management, yet the tracking of emotion discourse has merely been a way to find different settings where a ‘toolbox psychology’ exists and is put to use. So the focus throughout this fieldwork has been ‘emotion talk’ (Heelas 1996). Whenever this kind of ‘talk’ seemed to get silenced by other voices I backtracked and started on another route.

During the fieldwork, I got a few proposals regarding interesting events in different places in Sweden. Yet, I early on decided to restrict my fieldwork to the greater Stockholm area and therefore not to venture beyond where I could go with Storstockholms Lokaltrafik, the public transportation company in Stockholm (cf. Passaro 1997). Stockholm appears as a strategic
place to do fieldwork on the dissemination of psychological know-how, a hub in a wider network (cf. Lindquist 2009: 8-9), since many institutions for such dissemination are localized here – such as important management consultancies, major hospitals and universities, schools pioneering education in socio-emotional issues, a Psychotherapy Fair, as well as newspapers with a national reach (and for older issues the archive at the National Library collecting virtually everything published in Sweden). Stockholm may not exactly be a Sweden in miniature (cf. Martin 1994), but the processes occurring there are not confined to the place itself.

The parameter of time

Yet Stockholm, as it emerges in this thesis, is not just a place but also a time. It is, in other words, here seen as a place where a particular time – the time of the third industrial revolution – is evidently manifested. Yet only so since in important aspects diverging from the time preceding it. As opposed to the time of the so-called Swedish model, when the country was fully into the second industrial revolution with its tendencies towards a hierarchical and bureaucratic way of organizing, the transformation or even dissolution of the Swedish model the last decades can be seen as a part of the third industrial revolution.10 In organizing more generally self-management now becomes important, and managerial technologies are distributed more widely in society, not least through the mass media. Since fieldwork has been of the intermittent character common today (see e.g. Hannerz 2004, Garsten 2008, Wulff 2009, Ullberg 2013), thus encompassing a longer period of time, I could observe how some transformations, such as in the mass media, almost materialized in front of my very eyes. The field thereby took on a processual character, and the fieldwork became ‘transtemporal’ (Ullberg 2013: 24), which I try to convey in the chapters to follow.11

The parameter of time also came to the fore, though in a different way, when trying to make sense of the complex and specific character of the empirical material collected. The knowledge enacted in courses, educations and treatments, as well as disseminated through the mass media, had a close affinity with anthropological knowledge, since it consisted of psychological

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10 The “second industrial revolution”... was based on mass production, heavy industry, electricity and new means of transport (Magnusson 2000b: 267). It roughly corresponds to the rise of what Boltanski and Chiapello calls the second spirit of capitalism (see above). The so-called Swedish model is by Thullberg and Östberg (1994) summed up as consisting of Folkhemmet (the modern welfare state), Saltsjöbadsandan (the institutionalized cooperation between the parts on the labour market), and Harpsundsdemokratin (the political decision making process involving a diversity of institutions and organizations, considered to represent a wide diversity of societal interests, in order to reach broad agreements and compromises).

11 Fieldwork stretched out intermittently over the better part of the 2000s, with some low intensity long term engagements, and a few instances of strategically chosen participant observation and focused archive studies. For more details see Chapters One to Three. As described in the introductory vignette above, as well as in the following chapters, the focus shifted during fieldwork as new connections were constantly made – empirically and analytically (cf. Marcus 2009: 22).
discourse, often based on scientific research about human interaction. Moreover, the interaction observed frequently consisted of attempts to apply models for how to think and act, attempts which appeared to occasionally come about smoothly, occasionally less so. It was therefore hard to start building models for understanding the interaction I took part in without at the same time either evaluating, or even competing with, those models that the informants tried to make use of. There was, in other words, a close relationship between what I saw as my job as anthropologist and what the informants tried to do. Not only were they methodologically close, in some instances making use of the distinction between observation and participation in exercises and work processes, as well as occasionally even theorizing the relationship between these two, but they also had a lot to say about what it means to be human, building this knowledge (directly or indirectly) on scientific investigations. All this seemed less surprising when I understood that much of the work observed had come out of a psychological approach which saw as its main aim to try to construct an ‘experimental cultural anthropology’ (Lewin 1948: 35, see also Chapter Four).

To be able to think about, and not just along with, the field, I therefore turned to historizing, which became a necessary methodological ingredient. It gradually became evident that the ideas and practices I encountered were only partially formed in the interaction I took part in, meaning that the usual hermeneutical process of a fieldwork did not work out that well in this case. In other words, if socio-cultural anthropology tries to understand how people’s ideas and practices are formed in social interaction, then that understanding could in my case not be accomplished simply by the common anthropological method of participant observation – even if extended into some kind of ‘polymorphous engagement’ (Gusterson 1997). Yet through historizing, I could distance myself from the field material and start to understand what was there taken for granted. I could pinpoint how certain concepts that in the field appeared as self-evident – such as feedback, groups, emotions – had been socially constructed, mainly during the post-war decades. In the field, these concepts were now applied and elaborated by the informants to fit the case in question, thus becoming tools for facilitating interaction.

Finding a context
Taking into account the parameter of time in this thesis has meant making rather extensive use of both first- and second-hand historical material. This material is not used the way it commonly is in ethnographically based anthropological monographs. Historizing is in the present investigation used to delimit the field by finding the relevant contexts. Just as the field has gradually been constructed out of the different connections mapped during fieldwork, so its extensions in time has been mapped by archive studies and the use of second hand historical sources. This research process is here reflected in the text. Ethnographically based anthropological monographs have often made use of historical sources, yet mostly as a sort of background material presented in the first chapter and then, more or less, left behind when the
ethnographic investigation starts. History is in such accounts seen as merely something past. It is something that the anthropologist leaves behind in order to focus on the real object of investigation, that is, the present.

The historical material is in the present investigation not merely seen as a way of introducing the fieldwork, but rather as an integrated part of what is to be analysed. Put otherwise, the investigation does not start when history ends. Instead, historizing is used to seek various possible points of departure for the present. In spirit, though not in its particulars, such a method comes close to what Foucault termed ‘archaeology’ (see for example 2000, 2002), that is, the digging down to a different cultural layer, which thereby also draws the limits for the present one. In other words, the aim of historizing is to map both the invariant and change. Yet the complex nature of the present also makes necessary an equal complexity when historizing it. By thus establishing how the different variables of the present stretches out in time, different societal processes are made to appear. The historical narratives told in the different chapters of the thesis are thus intimately related to the particular sub-field presented in the chapter and take the particular fieldwork material of the chapter in question as their starting point, and thus become fully comprehensible only after the presentation of, and in relation to, that particular fieldwork material. In this way a more complex temporality is allowed for than what the ‘background material’-view of history makes possible. Put otherwise, the past is given to the investigation through the mapping of the present.

This investigation thereby takes the perspective delivered by Ricoeur, viewing history as something we narrate, rather than as something that has happened. The aim of historizing is thus to ‘re-open the past’ (1990b: 216). The past then emerges as something just as open and contingent, indeed living, as the future. Such a view of history is also close to how the past is sometimes treated in ethnographically based anthropological monographs, although this view is often implicit. Yet it is actually hard to find an ethnographically based anthropological monograph which does not somewhere in the presentation of the ethnographic material include at least a brief historical narrative which is used to contextualize the present. Such historical narratives are invited into the ethnography in various ways, for instance through the telling of life-histories, different types of organizational histories, references to textual works of emic importance and their immediate context – really any kind of information about the past that is of relevance to the present and thereby the ethnographic situation. Ethnographically based anthropological monographs thereby not often manage to leave the past behind, but make it come alive in its entanglements with the present, which is also the aim in this one.12

The change in overarching research perspective from the mosaic metaphor to globalization, and from structure to process, arguably makes the ‘background material’-view of history in anthropology less relevant. When

12 Some monographs indeed take this perspective further (see for example Gusterson 1998, Verdery 1999, Luhrman 2001). For a more elaborated presentation of the view of temporality in ethnographically based anthropological monographs, see Tunestad (2013).
the field is no longer even imagined to be neatly delineated, but rather arduously constructed in and through the research process, there is no longer any general history – more or less self-evidently belonging to the field – to be recounted, but merely histories which are just as particular and situated as the knowledge produced through fieldwork (cf. Haraway 1988). This thesis therefore does not start in a dead past dealt with in an introductory chapter and then largely forgotten – thus indeed turned into something past! – but with different perspectives of the ‘ethnographic present’ and from there constructs relevant contexts by working its way backwards in time.

The outline of the thesis

The overall structure of the thesis is simple. Chapters One to Three are largely structured in the same way: first the usage of psychological tools in a specific arena is pinned down, then the immediate institutional context is outlined in a historizing narrative, which is followed by an analysis and conclusion. This approach is then used on the investigation as a whole. Chapter Four therefore seeks out the similarities in the psychological tools used in the different arenas, and tries to understand the common context, which is then followed by an analysis and summary in the Conclusion. More specifically, the chapters look as follows.

Chapter One investigates the case of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) as a school subject. In the 1990s psychology was given a new role in some Swedish schools. It no longer only constituted a theoretical subject, but was also made the foundation of a few practically oriented courses with different names, of which EQ was one. These courses were not introduced into the curriculum from ‘above’, that is, by governmental directives, but from ‘below’, by a small number of enthusiasts. This development was made possible by a few fundamental changes in the organization of the Swedish school system. The chapter describes the content of the subject, what the lessons look like, and how EQ became a legitimate subject in the lower grades of the Swedish school system.

Chapter Two investigates courses given by management consultants that deal with how to manage groups and teams. The participants at these courses are given the practical opportunity to learn different theories and methods for how to improve personal and group functionality; they are offered a ‘psychological toolbox’ based on popular and workable concepts such as ‘self-esteem’, ‘group development’, ‘emotions’. This psychological know-how also finds resonance in the mass media, such as in popular management books and articles in the press. The chapter outlines both contemporary management ideals – that is, autonomous and responsibilized individuals and groups – as well as the know-how apparently demanded to enact them.

Chapter Three looks at the new methods worked out to deal with the so-called burnout epidemic, that around the turn of the century had become a major public concern in Sweden, not least since the tax funded health care system spent large sums on health care benefits for those afflicted. In these
projects the patients are given responsibility for their own well-being and health. It seems that psychotherapeutic ways of healing rather easily can involve the patients/clients in the actual therapy, for example by educating them in the psychology of stress and emotion so as to give them the tools to cope with their own stress reactions. Since these tools find resonance outside of these therapies – such as in contemporary management ideals and health care policies more generally – the introduction of self-help techniques in therapy has enabled an expansion of the ‘psychotherapeutic’ in Sweden, both inside and outside of clinical contexts.

Chapter Four looks at the commonalities in the different tools described in earlier chapters. Since only making use of a limited number of concepts and forms of interaction, the different tools of work-enabling popular psychology share certain fundamental similarities. These shared conceptual formations, including adherent practices, are here first outlined and then set in relation to the technologies and overarching ways of organizing work dominating the present phase of industrial development. In so doing, a sort of genealogy of work-enabling self-help psychology is accomplished by which it is shown how this assemblage of concepts and practices has come together the last decades in a dynamic relationship with wider societal forces.

In the Conclusion, the problem of the intertwinement of the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’ will be addressed at a more fundamental level. Drawing on the empirical material as a whole, it is suggested that this intertwinement has come about through, and in a sense even makes up, the development of a common root metaphor in the respective subfields. This metaphor – the self-regulating system – becomes visible when analysing the first hand empirical material presented in the thesis, yet is not confined to the sometimes rather narrow fields investigated. On the contrary, the wider contextual material presented suggests that this root metaphor has to a large degree become dominant in organizational thinking altogether over the last decades. Replacing the formerly dominant view of organizations as hierarchical machineries, and management as thus best enacted through a hierarchical control and command structure, is now a view of management as the creation and upholding of self-regulating systems, constituted by feedback. Given that these systems involve humans who thereby will have to work on their selves, the use of psychological tools appear – in line with Heidegger’s view of modern technology as not merely instrumental but demanding – as a form of self-exploitation.
1. A Vision of the Productive Citizen

In the late 1990s, a new type of psychologically inspired education was introduced into some Swedish schools. The ‘psychological’ had in different forms been present in the Swedish school system for decades – personified in the expertise of a school psychologist, but also as a strictly theoretical course subject possible to choose in high school. The new type of education – manifested in courses called Emotional Intelligence, Socio-emotional Training, or ‘Knowledge of life’ (Livskunskap) – taught practical psychology. The pupils were here supposed to development of a set of psychological skills, which were often summarized under the heading of ‘emotional intelligence’, or EQ. However, EQ here constituted more than just a school subject; it was seen as a fundamental part of a set of ideas about the work and life in, and of, a school. The subject of EQ was not introduced into the curriculum from ‘above’, by legislation or general directives, but from ‘below’, starting in a limited number of particular schools, by a few enthusiasts that wanted to change what they believed to be a severe lack in the curriculum and who made use of new organizational opportunities appearing at the time.

This chapter deals with the school subject called Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, and the set of ideas formed around it. The chapter begins with a presentation of the discourse on emotional intelligence from four different perspectives: first as it occurs in the mass media; second, as it appears in the lessons in the school subject of EQ; third, through an examination of the words used by proponents of the subject of EQ when describing its benefits; and fourth, through a look at the diverse ways in which different categories of persons become involved in the school subject. This is followed by an outline of the developments within schooling in Sweden in recent decades in an attempt to understand the societal context in which the subject was created and what made it possible. When analysed in the light of these broader societal developments the subject of EQ, with its dissemination of psychological skills to pupils and personnel, arguably appears to be in agreement with both the latest version of the Swedish school system and contemporary management philosophy, both of which uphold the ideal of a governing through self-governance (Lundahl 2005, Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).
A new concept

In 1995 the mediated public sphere in Sweden was enriched with a new concept – emotional intelligence (EQ). At first, a few articles in the newspapers announced that the concept existed and tried to explain it briefly. You could read that ‘you’re smarter than your IQ’ (*Aftonbladet* 1995-11-19), that ‘IQ is out, EQ is in’ (*Expressen* 1995-12-31), and then that ‘the term of the day in the USA is emotional intelligence’ (*Svenska Dagbladet* 1996-11-18). Later on you could read that EQ was said to be all around: in the newspapers, on the radio, in the bookstores (*Aftonbladet* 1997-07-12). The concept was described as an outcome of new psychological research. Yet it was not explicitly stated in these articles exactly what the concept tried to capture more than the usefulness of self-awareness and social skills in general. Some articles stated that many people had always intuitively known that something like emotional intelligence existed (*Dagens Nyheter* 1997-05-20, *Svenska Dagbladet* 2001-08-17).

Many articles made a connection to work life and personnel selection, discussing the usefulness of emotional intelligence for both companies and their employees, sometimes mentioning the possibility of measuring EQ in much the same way as IQ. Such articles could be found in the economy pages of the newspapers, or in business or union journals. In 1997 the magazine *Chef* (Nr. 8: 39, 41), a journal for a union of managers called Ledarna, predicted that emotional intelligence would be the next management fad. The possible importance of emotional intelligence in work life remained a theme in the writings about EQ for the years to come. In articles of this type, the concept was given more strict definitions, such as the ability ‘to manage stressful situations, get through difficulties and function together with other people’ (*Svenska Dagbladet* 1996-05-07), or ‘to identify both your own and other people’s emotions, manage them and use them in a constructive way, as well as the ability to get past difficulties’ (ibid.), or the ability to ‘motivate yourself, understand the emotions of other people, and manage your own’ (*Svenska Dagbladet* 1997-06-03).

A few names recurred in the Swedish mass media discourse on emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman was most often recognized as the popularizer of the concept and generally given the credit for its immediate and wide

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13 All translations from Swedish newspapers, journals, governmental reports, etc, are mine, unless otherwise stated.
14 Since such statements were found in the cultural sections, it seems that the concept primarily appealed to the ‘humanistic’ part of the educated middle class, rather than the ‘technocratic’. Gusterson (1998) describes these two parts of the (American) middle class as involved in a constant battle over hegemony. The ‘technocratic’ wing has usually had the upper hand and the ‘humanistic’ has fought to make their alternative world-view dominant.
15 It is interesting to notice that, whereas EQ never became an important management concept in Sweden, the concept of ESQ (Emotional Spiritual Quotient) during the 2000s formed the basis for a very successful consultancy business in Indonesia that fused popular management knowledge with Islamic practices (Rudnyckyj 2009).
societal impact. In some articles this impact was quantified in sales statistics: in 1997 his book *Emotional Intelligence* had sold 2.5 million copies worldwide and the first Swedish edition of 5000 copies the same year had been sold out in a month (*Svenska Dagbladet* 1997-05-29), in 2001 the book and its follow up, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, had been translated into thirty languages and sold more than five million copies (*Svenska Dagbladet* 2001-08-17). Two other psychologists, Peter Salovey and John Mayer, were sometimes mentioned as creators of the concept of emotional intelligence after having worked a number of years in schools with severe problems outside New York. In 1998 John Gottman’s book *The Heart of Parenting: How to Raise an Emotionally Intelligent Child*, which at the time was published in Swedish as *EQ för föräldrar* (‘EQ for parents’), received some media attention. Gottman based his knowledge on his own research on a number of families, studies that had been going on for years. An interesting position had Agneta Lagercrantz, who as a journalist published a number of pieces on emotional intelligence from different perspectives, among them an interview with Daniel Goleman (*Svenska Dagbladet* 1997-05-29). In 1999 she published a book of her own on emotional intelligence called *Hjärtans hjärna*, which was subsequently reviewed in the evening papers (*Aftonbladet* 1999-03-24, *Expressen* 1999-10-24).

Right from the start, there were also articles that treated the newly created school subject, called Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, taught in some Swedish schools. These articles could be found in the newspapers, in journals on school issues (often but not only union journals), as well as in publications of a more general character (such as *ICA-kuriren*, 2000, #45, and *Vår bostad*, 1999, #5). The main character portrayed here was Bodil Wennberg, a

16 The first edition of *Emotional Intelligence* was published in 1995, and translated into Swedish in 1997. The book was fat and synthesising; it was wide ranging, full of examples from all parts of life such as work, health, family matters – and grounded in the latest research in brain science (e.g. that of Antonio Damasio). The subtitle of *Emotional Intelligence* was ‘why it can matter more than IQ’. Goleman’s aim was apparently to contribute to the old discussion about the determinants of real-life performance. After WW I, where intelligence tests had been used by the US Army without particular success, a consensus quickly developed among psychologists that intelligence was only one of the determinants of real-life performance. In the search among psychologists for the determinants of real-life performance – beside intelligence – other suggested traits were ‘character’ and ‘personality’ (Danziger 1990: 158). In 1920 E. L. Thorndike defined ‘social intelligence as ability to understand and manage people’, an idea which gained some limited support at the time (Thorndike and Stein 1937). In the 1980s a few American psychologists once again formulated theories about *different kinds* of intelligence. Gardner (1983) postulated no less than seven different types of intelligence. The ideas about emotional intelligence, a term not used by Gardner, were however first presented in a consistent and exhaustive manner by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Goleman contributed to the old discussion of what makes people successful by stating that emotional intelligence is what characterizes achievers – which however has been contested (Mabon 2004: 75-77).

17 *Hjärtans hjärna* roughly means ‘the brains of hearts’, but is also an allusion to the expression *hjärtans gärna* which is a strong way of saying ‘yes, please’, that is, more in the sense of ‘I am delighted’.
Swedish psychologist who had worked out teaching material for the subject. A couple of primary schools from different parts of Sweden were described as pioneers in institutionalizing this subject. The reporters writing these articles seemed just as engaged in the subject of EQ as those teaching it. Some writings were very ambitious, consisting of several related articles in the same issue portraying the phenomenon from different perspectives – delivering interviews (for example with teachers, headmasters, Bodil Wennberg), descriptions of what the lessons were like, of encounters with children in the schoolyard, and often also some basic facts about emotional intelligence (such as how the concept is defined, a description of the teaching material, etc.) These texts tended to take the perspective of the proponents of EQ, almost giving the impression of EQ as a sort of panacea – or even destiny. They mentioned how problematic life at school can be, with bullying, violence, anxieties. Since those who are emotionally intelligent have an increased ability to manage both their own emotions and interpersonal conflicts, it seemed a logical conclusion that both teachers and pupils should embrace EQ. And as underlined in these texts, emotional intelligence can, as opposed to IQ, be enhanced through training – altogether making it an apparently ideal school subject.

Performing emotional intelligence

In the spring of 2004 I followed the trail of journalists and visited one of the schools mentioned in a couple of articles, and situated in a rather well-off area in the northern parts of greater Stockholm. The EQ program is generally directed to the lower grades of the school system. This school served children up until eleven years of age. My aim was to get a personal experience of what the lessons in EQ looked like and interview some of the teachers, but also to get a general sense of the atmosphere at the school and to look at whatever else that could be of ethnographic interest. When I first arrived at the school I was welcomed by one of the teachers who showed me the facilit-
ties and told me about their work with the Emotional Intelligence classes. We then entered a small, almost empty room, where the lessons in EQ were held. I sat down on a sofa along one of the walls and the teacher sat down on a chair. Then the children arrived, greeted us, and sat down on the floor in front of the teacher. At these lessons the classes are split into small groups – the present one consisting of eight children in third grade (9-10 years old) – since in the view of the teachers, the nature of these lessons demand it. I was briefly introduced and then the lesson I had been invited to watch began.

A lesson

As I later understood, this was a ‘typical’ lesson, composed of a number of representative exercises to show the visitor what lessons in EQ can be like (see below). What then does such a typical lesson look like? The lesson began with an exercise called ‘Today’s emotion’. The children first got a minute to contemplate how they felt. Then everyone, including the teacher, told the others what their basic emotion that day was, and then a short discussion about this emotion took place: it turned out that they were all rather excited because of an upcoming event. All lessons in EQ at this school begin with this exercise, I was later told.

The next exercise was about the interpretation of bodily and facial expressions. The children looked at photographs of different characters in different situations. Each pupil drew a card and told the others what the person on the card felt. Then the others got to comment on the card. This was followed by an exercise about what to do when you are angry. The pupils gave examples of what you can do when you are angry. The teacher wrote them down. Then a discussion followed about which of these actions that are acceptable and which that are not. The last exercise was called ‘Emotions on line’. One end of the room got to represent ‘very much so’, the other end ‘not at all’. The teacher then read statements like ‘I can show others when I’m angry’, ‘I can show others when I’m sad’, ‘I’m a happy person’, ‘I’m a helpful person’, ‘I like to do my homework’, ‘I made up my bed today’. For every statement the pupils positioned themselves on the line according to their own ideas of themselves. Then it was the children’s turn. Statements like ‘I support Djurgården’, ‘I have nice friends’, ‘I often play computer games’, ‘I’m a tired person’, ‘I like gymnastics’ were delivered, as the children positioned and repositioned themselves. Then time was up. The lesson was over and the pupils ran off to other lessons.

At this school, each class has one lesson in Emotional Intelligence a week. On my direct request to come back and take part of more of the EQ work, I was invited to watch the next lesson for the group I had just encountered. So a week later I arrived at the school again. As usual, the lesson began with ‘Today’s emotion’. Just as last time, the children got a minute to

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19 A local sports club.
contemplate how they felt before telling the others about their basic emotion that day. This time the answers varied from happy and energetic to bored and tired (although the last was by the group not acknowledged as an emotion). The rest of the time was dedicated to an exercise called ‘This is my area!’ This exercise is about bodily and relational distances and how they are associated. The children first did a practical exercise where they tested how close they can stand next to someone they talk to and still feel comfortable. This was done by letting someone stand still and another person approach. When the approaching person got too close, the one who stood still said ‘stop’. Then the person who had approached stood still and the other one approached. All children did this exercise, first in same-gendered pairs, then in mixed ones. After this, a rather lengthy discussion took place about the exercise and the way the different pupils experienced it, during which the teacher introduced concepts such as ‘integrity’, ‘comfort area’, and ‘threat’. Throughout this discussion, the children not only got a chance to reflect in public on their personal experiences, including those of the others, but these personal reflections were also – at least implicitly through the time and effort put into the exercise and the following reflection – acknowledged as valuable. When the lesson was over two pupils lingered on and asked the teacher if they could have more or and longer lessons in EQ. The teacher later told me that ‘most children love EQ’.

The material

Before visiting the school, I had met up with Bodil Wennberg, who told me extensively about her work with emotional intelligence in general and more particularly about how she had worked out the EQ program for schools. In the mid-2000s she had sold this program to about 30 schools in the greater Stockholm area and about 100 in the whole of Sweden.²⁰ According to Wennberg the program had been distributed to a variety of schools in a diversity of areas. She also provided me with the teaching material, collected in a file, which is the standard material provided to those schools that choose to introduce the subject.

The material used in the lessons in EQ is organized according to five levels called the EQ staircase.²¹ These levels are Self-awareness, Empathy, Responsibility, Communication, and Conflict Management. The first level, Self-awareness, consists of six abilities: to be able to identify your own feelings when they arise; to be able to name them; to be able to communicate to others what you feel; to be able to/dare to express your feelings, or voluntarily choose not to do so; to be able to physically recognise emotional expres-

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²⁰ Wennberg’s statements referred to in the rest of this chapter were collected during this interview, unless otherwise stated.
²¹ These levels are also described in Wennberg (2003). The file used as teaching material in schools has been revised several times.
sions; to be able to handle and contain your own emotions. The second level, Empathy, consists of four abilities: to be able to identify what others feel and recognise the different ways in which they express their emotions; to be able to understand and feel other people’s emotions; to be able to understand your own role in relation to other peoples’ emotional life; to be able to handle your own and others’ charged emotions in different situations. The third level, Responsibility, consists of three abilities: to be able to take responsibility for your own emotional life; to be able to see the consequences of your own actions; to have the ability to see alternatives and to dare choosing new patterns of action. The fourth level, Communication, consists of two abilities: to be able to take responsibility for your own communication; to understand the effects on yourself and others of both positive and negative communication patterns. The fifth and last level, Conflict Management, consists of just one ability: to be able to use different tools to solve everyday conflicts and problems. For each level, the material comprises between 15 and 18 different exercises. The material is constructed in such a way that each level has both basic and more complex exercises. The education of the younger children concentrates on the basic ones. The older they get, the more complex exercises they are invited to do.

Of the above mentioned exercises the first one, ‘Today’s emotion’, belongs to level one on the EQ staircase, Self-awareness, and so does ‘This is my area!’ as well as ‘Emotions on line’. The identification of emotional expressions is level two. The discussion about what you actually do, and what you may and may not do, when you are angry belongs to level three. The fourth level of the EQ staircase, Communication, consists of exercises like ‘Chain of gossip’, where the pupils sit in a ring and the teacher whispers a message to the first person, who whispers it to the second, who whispers it to the third, etc., until the last person finally tells everyone what he or she has been told. For those unfamiliar with this game, the message that is delivered by the last person never corresponds to what the teacher said initially. This exercise ends with a general discussion about gossip, where it comes from, its consequences, etc. Another exercise is ‘Strength bombardment’, where a person sits quietly and is ‘bombarded’ with positive comments. A discussion then follows about the positive and negative consequences of telling others nice things, about how it feels to be told nice things, and about how it feels telling them.

The uppermost level, Conflict Management, consists of different exercises that focus on a method for conflict management called ‘The stop light’. Through these exercises the children are supposed to learn to visualise a traffic light that turns red, meaning ‘stop’, that is, inaction, when they get angry. They thus wait until they calm down, visualizing how the light turns yellow and then green, before they take action. The basic message is to think before you act. The most advanced form of reflection, therefore, that the

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22 The expression used here is *kunna leva sig in i andras känslor*. 
program gives the teachers and pupils an opportunity to work with impulse control. At the school I was told that by practicing this technique, bullying and ill treatment tend to go down drastically. This is also what you can read in a number of articles (see e.g. *Fritidspedagogen* 3-4, 2003; *Skolvärlden* #3, 1999; *Aftonbladet* 1998-08-22). The EQ program thus not only takes aim at the actual school work, but in a sense encapsulates the whole situation at school, including what happens in the school yard during breaks.

From what I was told, the material is seen, and is used, by the teachers more as an outline than an absolute. And the above-mentioned exercises at the EQ lessons are either modifications of exercises from the work file, or assemblages of several different exercises, or both. I was also told that those who teach EQ on a regular basis tend to work out their own additional material.

A limited spectrum of possible statements

What I encountered at the school did not differ substantially from what can be read in the articles about the subject. In fact there was a striking similarity between, on the one hand, what I saw during the lessons and what I heard people say when interviewing them, and on the other hand what I had already encountered in the mass media. This suggests that EQ is a set of possibilities, that the EQ discourse (like any discourse) offers a wide yet limited spectrum of possible statements (cf. Foucault 2002), thus showing the features of an assemblage of scripts. In relation to a lesson about how to avoid uttering degrading comments, an article (*Lärarnas tidning* 8/99) describes how the children do role playing as a means to find out new less degrading ways of delivering critique. Taking this perspective, and twisting it just a little bit, one can see every activity related to EQ as a kind of performance.

At the time of my visit, the school was actually a ‘show school’ for the municipality in question. Lots of visitors, mostly students from the School of Education, came here and watched the lessons. According to one of the teachers, the pupils were so accustomed to having visitors at EQ lessons that they did not even notice them. It actually happened that they had as much as 20 visitors at a lesson. That time the teacher had to move the lesson to the drama room where eight children and one teacher enacted an EQ lesson in front of the audience of twenty people sitting in the rows above. The impression of a performance had actually already struck me immediately at the first lesson I visited, since the teacher occasionally referred to the observing anthropologist in sentences like ‘Shall we tell Hans why we feel like this?’ and ‘We must do this exercise so Hans can see’. At the lesson a week later I was only referred to once. Perhaps these children were so accustomed to visitors that they did not usually notice them, thus making the visitor a ‘fly on the wall’. It also seemed evident, however, that the children had no problem
with performing emotional intelligence in the presence of outsiders even when the outsider became a part of the ‘show’.

Needless to say, to speak of EQ activities as ‘performances’ is of course *not* to imply that such activities are ‘mere play-acting’, in the sense just a pastime with neither serious intent nor effects. On the contrary, in the sense of performances these activities also take on a ritualistic character (cf. Bell 2009). Not only may the group thereby confirm itself as a group (in the Durkheimian sense), but, as seen above, these sessions also convey a message about, and to, those who take part in them (cf. Geertz 1993: 448 and Turner 1992: 23). At the lessons in EQ – even at the most basic exercises such as ‘Today’s emotion’ – these children are again and again encouraged to talk about their personal feelings. In the more complex exercises they are also encouraged to discuss and try out ways of interacting. They are thereby initiated into the common language of the Emotional Intelligence subject, which encourages them to *reflect on themselves as selves in interaction with other selves*. They are, moreover, given techniques to make these kinds of reflections a part of everyday life at the school. At least some of these techniques, such as ‘The stop light’, are made explicit to the pupils, who even may refer to such tools when interacting (at least according to some teachers, and a number of articles). Considering that they have lessons in EQ once a week for about six years of primary schooling, it seems rather likely that they should eventually acquire such skills. Put briefly, the pupils are trained in the ability to *perform* emotional intelligence.

Noticeable here is that both adults and children are – at school and elsewhere – ‘performing’ within a wider environment where EQ is seen as having a number of advantages. From this perspective, the subject of EQ in the end comes into being through what Rose (1999b) calls the ‘powers of freedom’. Rose’s idea is simply that freedom is not essentially opposed to power, but rather a form of power. Because of the high regard for freedom of choice in liberal-democratic societies, those who can control what choices are legitimate exercise power. To choose an emotionally intelligent way of being, for example, has become an attractive choice. What then is EQ believed to accomplish?

### Tools and values

When talking to some of the proponents of EQ, I noticed that the term ‘tool’ was occasionally used. In some articles about emotional intelligence it is suggested that the subject of EQ is a tool. Other articles refer to techniques taught at the lessons in EQ as tools. In the material on the subject the most advanced level is described as learning how to use different tools for handling conflicts and problems. Yet, harder than establishing that emotional

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23 See for example *Skolvärlden* #16, 1999; *Fritidspedagogen* 3-4/2003.
intelligence and the teachings in EQ are believed by its proponents to be of an instrumental nature, is to understand exactly what these tools are supposed to accomplish. Actually, a number of answers are provided to the question of the imagined ‘tool-like’ nature of emotional intelligence. EQ can be seen as a way of enhancing self-esteem, of preventing bullying and violence, of upholding the value foundation of the Swedish school system, of creating health and well-being, and last but not least as a way of increasing the efficiency of school work in general.

Self-esteem

In the late 1990s a couple of enthusiasts founded an association for the promotion of EQ teaching in Swedish schools called The National Association for EQ (Riksföreningen EQ). Just a few weeks after my visit to the school in 2004, the association gave four seminars at a gathering called the Psychotherapy Fair, which takes place every second year in Stockholm. The first two of these seminars offered general presentations about the teaching of EQ in schools in Sweden as a way of preventing violence and creating a better working environment. These seminars were given by Wennberg, along with Sophia Norberg, Wennberg’s colleague in her consultancy, and Birgitta Ekmark, who had been headmaster at the school I had visited at the time of the subject’s inception.

I could recognize much of what was said at these two seminars. They were the same statements I had already encountered in the mass media, in books, at the school, in interviews. For instance, one of the many themes touched upon at these seminars was that of self-esteem. Self-esteem was here characterized as a sort of sediment at the bottom of our insides. People who appear to be secure may seem to be filled with self-esteem, yet those who are too secure give the impression of being more like a balloon, all pumped up with not much inside. When you meet such people, we were told, you almost want to poke a hole in their balloon. But generally you do not

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24 These enthusiasts were teachers, researchers, psychologists – that is, persons who were already involved in schooling and management. The initiative for the association, however, appears to have come from an ‘outsider’ who simply became committed to these issues when hearing a few lectures on the subject and through her work with the association became an ‘insider’ (Lodén 2010). Initially, the full name of the association was Riksföreningen EQ – för ett tryggare samhälle (The National Association for EQ – for a safer society). The ‘subtitle’ or ‘slogan’ was later changed, and the association became Riksföreningen EQ – för socialt och emotionellt lärande (The National Association for EQ – for Social and Emotional Learning), sometimes shortened REQ.

25 For a more detailed description of the Psychotherapy Fair, see Chapter Three.

26 It was Ekmark who, during an interview, invited me to visit their seminars at the Psychotherapy Fair. Unless otherwise stated, Ekmark’s quotations come from this interview.
have to, because emotional development makes the pumped-up balloon shrink by itself.\textsuperscript{27}

One rationale, then, for teaching EQ is the acquisition of self-esteem. At least by some of its proponents, EQ is seen mainly as an instrument for the development of individual self-esteem. One of the teachers I talked to during my visit to the school, for example, voiced such an opinion. Moreover, the slogan that you have the right to feel whatever you feel, but not to do whatever you feel like – which seems like a sort of mantra, continuously repeated in the EQ discourse – is believed to strengthen the self-esteem of the pupils, since it tells them that their feelings are to be respected.\textsuperscript{28}

In one of her books (2003: 39), Wennberg discusses how self-esteem is related to self-confidence. Self-confidence grows out of successful achievements. It increases when we manage to do what we strive for. This, however, is of limited importance to our self-esteem. We can be great performers, yet lack self-esteem. Self-confidence may momentarily fill the hole left by a lack of self-esteem, but only in a superficial and inadequate way. In the long run we will never feel well about ourselves just by accomplishing different tasks, no matter what they are – all according to Wennberg.

It is interesting to notice that Goleman, the main populariser of the term ‘emotional intelligence’ (1995, 1998, cf. above), does not use the term self-esteem at all, yet discusses the related term ‘self-efficacy’ (1998), which is defined as the belief we have in our own ability to accomplish things. Self-efficacy, a term borrowed from Bandura (1986), is not about how well we actually accomplish tasks (as measured in some objective way), but about our own belief in ourselves as accomplishers. Both self-esteem and self-efficacy, then, are described by these two authors as related to our own opinions about ourselves. Yet, whereas self-efficacy relates to our own appreciation of ourselves as accomplishers, self-esteem relates to our appreciation of ourselves for just being who we are. Wennberg calls her book \textit{EQ på svenska} (EQ in Swedish); perhaps as a response to Goleman whose writings have an American bias. She makes the point that that self-esteem in Swedish is called \textit{självkänsla}, meaning ‘self-feeling’, stating that we can hardly ‘think ourselves’ into a higher self-esteem since this ‘self-feeling’ is related to our feelings. Self-esteem is the ability to really like yourself for who you are (2003: 35).\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} This presentation of what characterizes a person lacking self-esteem has similarities with Adler’s influential theory about feelings of inferiority. Such feelings, if evolving into an inferiority complex, may be compensated through the development of feelings of superiority (Saugstad 2001).

\textsuperscript{28} See for example Wennberg (2003: 192); \textit{Skolvärlden} #3, 1999.

\textsuperscript{29} That emotional intelligence ‘in Swedish’ becomes a matter of self-esteem rather than self-efficacy suggests that ‘Americans’ and ‘Swedes’ are here constructed in different ways. ‘Americans’ are here, implicitly, portrayed as stressing the need for individual accomplishing, whereas ‘Swedes’ are seen as believing that you should be valued for who you are rather than for what you do.
At the seminars at the Psychotherapy Fair self-esteem was also explicitly defined as the ability to like yourself for who you are, and self-confidence was defined as the ability to like yourself for what you accomplish. This, we were told, also means that self-esteem is linked to self-awareness, since we must know ourselves to like ourselves.

After the last of these two seminars I lingered on, since I wanted to chat a bit with the speakers. They were, however, very busy; several others had obviously arrived at the same idea as me. Instead I started chatting with the person next to me, whom I knew was a member of the association. I asked her what the long-term goal of the association was. She said that it was to get all schools in Sweden to give their pupils an education in EQ. She asked me if I understood what would happen if all children growing up would get to learn this — that it would actually change our entire society! At that point it was lunch time, and so I left the seminar, indeed somewhat overwhelmed by these grand scenarios. After lunch, when I was at the next seminar, I once again encountered these plans, though in a less outspoken way.

Preventing violence

According to Wennberg (2003: 35), and as discussed at the seminars mentioned above, people with low self-esteem are not always shy and unobtrusive. On the contrary, they can be both cocky and violent. Training children in emotional intelligence is therefore also a way of preventing violence at school, and elsewhere. The four seminars given by The National Association for EQ at the Psychotherapy Fair had a somewhat diverse content but an overarching theme that could not be mistaken — emotional intelligence is a necessity for efficient conflict resolution, a way of preventing violence. In line with this, the third seminar presented by the association promoting EQ was about violent criminals. The speaker, Joakim Volckerts, had been invited by, but was not a member of, the association. A representative for the association introduced him, stating that in ‘the best of all worlds’ where children get to learn about emotions, and where their emotions are confirmed, there would perhaps not be so many that were recruited to the criminal world.

Volckerts started out by saying that he had worked as a psychologist in many prisons in Sweden, where he had met many violent convicts. He has edited a book called Våldets psykologi (The Psychology of Violence, Bogren and Volckerts 2002). He declared that much of what he would say at the seminar was based on a chapter in this book, which in turn was based on his work as a therapist for these violent criminals in Swedish prisons (see Volckerts 2002). The seminar turned out to be a description of these people, who often share both backgrounds and characteristics, as well as of what kind of treatment that is effective.
Volckerts described the typical violent criminal, who tends to describe his own upbringing as quite ordinary, and not dramatic at all. During therapy, though, other facts surface. Oftentimes, the person has experienced a childhood of violence and abuse; perhaps he has been beaten himself, perhaps he has witnessed his father beating up his mother, or raping her. During these occasions he has been terrified. Now he has problems with his own emotional numbness, a numbness that has increased during his career of violence. He feels like he has internalized the prison, like he is carrying it with him. He feels trapped, but often longs to go back into prison when he is released. During his time inside he has often felt like a ticking bomb. He has been given medication, but it has not had any effect. It makes him dizzy, which in turn just makes him even angrier. He works out a lot; he runs at the track or lifts weights. During his exercises he lets the fantasies flow freely; often they involve violence against the guards at the prison.

Volckerts stated that when such a person becomes violent, it often starts with him feeling ill (in the sense of emotionally unstable). He then starts to drink to feel better. But the alcohol only breaks down the mechanisms that keep the violence in check. He often seeks out situations where violence can occur, but without understanding it himself. He is often very provocative, and very easy to provoke – just looking at him may be enough – but does not understand it himself.

According to Volckerts, these people can never get entirely well. The only thing therapy can do is make them more aware of themselves and their own behaviour, and give them, so to speak, a space where they can reflect for a moment before the impulses take over. The problem is that violence makes them feel well, it is a kind of trance, and afterwards they get tired, sometimes even lying down to sleep at the scene of the crime, where the police sometimes find them.

Volckerts stated that Sweden is an underdeveloped country when it comes to research on violent criminals, arguing that from what we know, we can tell that Swedish society is moving in the wrong direction. Alcohol and drug use increases violence, and is getting more abundant. Biochemical explanations also lessen the possibilities of treatment and prevention. As children, these people have been exposed, left alone, denied help, or no one has understood their problems. There are however, according to Volckerts, some organizations that work in the right direction, The National Association for EQ being one of them.\textsuperscript{30}

As seen above, the most advanced level in the EQ program was called Conflict Management. This level taught the pupils a technique for impulse control in order to reduce bullying and violence in social interaction. Just like the work of the National Association for EQ, Volckert’s work also dealt with how to prevent violence by more efficient impulse control. The slight

\textsuperscript{30} The fourth seminar given by the association – which I unfortunately could not attend – was a presentation of a centre working with young victims of violence.
but important difference is that the work with the EQ program in schools is for children and is mainly preventive, whereas Volckerts’s work is therapy for adults who have never acquired any real impulse control, which has caused them severe problems.

Upholding the values of the liberal-democratic society

In the mid-2000s EQ had also become a way of upholding the values of the liberal-democratic society. One of the main objectives of the Swedish school system is to create a common set of values among the future citizens of society. This set of values is called the value foundation of schooling (skolans värdegrund). This concept was formulated during the liberal-conservative government at the beginning of the 1990s and made a basis for the Swedish school system when it was installed in the major directive for Swedish schools called Lpo 94 (Egidius 2001a: Chapter 7; Zackari and Modigh 2000: 34).

According to Lpo 94, the basic values that Swedish schools should enact and convey\textsuperscript{31} are ‘the inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal worth of all people, the equality between men and women, and solidarity with the weak and exposed’.\textsuperscript{32} It seems that the EQ education has become a way of actively engaging with this value foundation. Schools that have this kind of education are discussed in positive terms by school inspectors in their reports. In the autumn of 2004, a couple of months after I had visited the school, it was visited by two inspectors. They wrote the following about the education in emotional intelligence:

The school works actively with the value foundation by the so-called EQ method. … According to coherent judgements the work with the value foundation at the school makes the pupils better at naming their emotions and gives them an increased understanding of how others feel. The relations among the pupils are affected positively and they learn to observe if someone is ill-treated and to stop this treatment, often with the aid of an adult. The work increases the pupils’ ability to empathize, to take responsibility and to show consideration, and contributes to the development of self-awareness and self-trust. It develops the pupils’ communication skills and gives them a model for handling conflicts.

The report also states that the school inspectors believe that the work with the value foundation makes the school a work place suffused by safety, comfort and good relations.

\textsuperscript{31} The words used are gestalta och förmedla.
\textsuperscript{32} In the original: Människolivets okränkbarhet, individens frihet och integritet, alla människors lika värde, jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män, samt solidaritet med svaga och utsatta.
The work strengthens the foundational democratic values, among both pupils and personnel, and comprises a path to deeper insights in the values and norms of schooling.\(^\text{33}\)

**Health and well-being**

Yet another reason for teaching socio-emotional skills is that such skills are seen as furthering health and well-being. In a report from The Swedish National Institute for Public Health (*Statens Folkhälsoinstitut*) it is stated that ‘social competence can promote health’ (Ogden 2005: 107). The Swedish school system is criticized for lacking a consistent policy for the advancement of social competence. Although such training is virtually impossible to avoid in school, the advancement of such skills has not become an institutionalized part of the curriculum in the manner of other subjects (2005: 102).\(^\text{34}\) According to the report the school system could, and should, be seen as ‘an arena for the prevention of personal, social, and health-related problems’. School could become a ‘platform’ for ‘health promoting activities’.

From a social and health-related perspective school is a suitable institution for the dissemination of information, attitudes and skills that can prevent or moderate a negative development concerning drug abuse, violence and criminality and health problems. This report shows that school can play an important preventive and ‘building’ role for children and youngsters, but the research also shows that there is a considerable potential for improvement in this area (2005: 99).

In an interview in one of the largest Swedish dailies, *Dagens Nyheter*, the author of the report criticizes the Swedish school system for being hopelessly out-of-date in that it teaches subjects that the pupils do not understand, whereas it does not teach them what is most useful in today’s society. He rhetorically asks why the children should know about the Kalmar Union and Moses. He stresses that the important subjects are those like ‘Knowledge of life’ (*Livskunskap*). Unfortunately though, these subjects are not a part of the curriculum at any of the institutes of education, but something created and upheld by a few enthusiasts (*DN* 2006-03-28).

**Efficient work**

Bodil Wennberg, the main architect behind the EQ program discussed in this chapter, nevertheless stresses that she does not see Emotional Intelligence as

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34 The report discusses research on the outcome of a number of programs. Apparently there is virtually no research about such programs in Sweden, since few cases are discussed. The report, however, contains discussions about programs such Agression Replacement Training (ART) and others which also are used in certain schools in Sweden.
the most important subject at school. She believes that what the children really need to learn are basic skills like how to read, write, and count. EQ is from her perspective merely a way of making the acquisition of such skills in school easier and more efficient. As she puts it: ‘EQ is a tool!’ This way of looking at things does not, of course, make EQ a subject of less importance. The school inspectors, for example, agree with Wennberg that the subject contributes to a more productive working environment. In the above-mentioned report from the school inspection, in relation to a discussion about the pedagogical environment at the school, it is stated that the education in emotional intelligence affects the school work in a positive direction:

A calm and harmonic atmosphere prevails in the class room. The pupils cooperate and take responsibility for their work. They seem aware of the importance of good relations with each other in the class.\textsuperscript{35}

To sum up this section, the subject of EQ is by its proponents grounded in a number of rationales. There is no common understanding of the ultimate purpose of EQ. The diversity of people involved stress a diversity of purposes for the subject. It may be seen as merely a tool for creating and upholding other ‘tools’, such as the abilities to read, write, and count. In a similar way it is also seen as a good way of giving the children the socio-emotional capacities necessary in life, such as a solid self-esteem, the ability to understand and manage emotions and the ability to communicate efficiently. These capacities are further seen as necessities for living a healthy life. By giving the children the opportunity to build up these capacities, EQ also becomes a way of preventing violence through efficient conflict resolution. Last but not least the subject is also seen as a way of upholding and promoting the fundamental values of Swedish educational policy.

What becomes evident here is that the answer to a number of urgent societal problems can be, and in some cases have been, phrased in the language of Emotional Intelligence. In some cases the proponents of EQ education have managed to make use of different attempts to ‘do good’ by channelling them in a certain direction. In other cases the EQ program has been constructed in such a way, and set up in such a context, that it appears as an answer to these problems. All in all, a number of professional and scientific interests have been ‘translated’ (Callon 1986) into the language of Emotional Intelligence. In this way the subject has found support in wider society.

\textsuperscript{35} Quoted from: \textit{Utbildningsinspektion i Täby kommun, Ellagårdsskolan, Dnr 53-2004:1413, page 7, see http://siris.skolverket.se/siris/f?p=SIRIS:1:0.}
A framework for involvement

In the mid-2000s there were no state directives saying that schools must teach the subject of Emotional Intelligence. The subject existed only in so far as a number of schools chose to teach it. The ‘enrolment’ (Callon 1986) of as great a number of actors as possible in the EQ work thereby became the very precondition for the subject’s existence. To position the subject as an answer to a number of urgent societal problems was one way of achieving a wider support, whereas another was to seek the more or less active cooperation from those who could affect the choices of different schools. The subject was thus characterized by its openness towards the surrounding society, as well as towards other subjects in school. Through this, the subject became a framework for involvement, in the end the centre piece of a ‘discourse coalition’ (Hajer 1997).

Engaging pupils, parents, and personnel

The subject of emotional intelligence tries to make evident the social order of the school. EQ is not seen by the people working with it – or at least those who are propagating it – as merely a subject in the same way as mathematics or geography, or other subjects are. EQ is seen as something that must permeate all work at the school. Everyone who spends their days at the school is integrated into this order through an education in emotional intelligence; the first thing that happens when a school decides to start up lessons in emotional intelligence is that the staff is educated – not just the teachers, but everyone working at the school. Since EQ is – or at least is supposed to be – not just a subject to be taught, but a perspective, a way of being and relating, which is meant to penetrate all activities at the school, it also becomes a way of involving both personnel and pupils in the management of the school.\(^\text{36}\)

The parents are also involved in the training of emotional intelligence. In so far as EQ becomes part of the official profile of the school, it can be a reason for the pupils, along with their parents, to choose that school. The parents may also be invited to lectures about emotional intelligence, which was the case in the school I visited. For some, such lectures may not be a total novelty. Ekmark, for example (personal communication), believes that since programs a bit similar to the EQ subject have for many years been a part of the life of commercial organisations, parents working in such organisations have been able to see the benefits of the subject once they have understood what it is about.

In a way even the school inspectors are schooled (albeit informally through the experience). No matter what education they have, they are most

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\(^{36}\) The view that EQ is a perspective which ideally should penetrate all work at the school was a recurrent theme in a number of interviews. Statements like this can also be found in a number of articles about the subject. See for example Skolvärlden nr 3, 1999; Skolvärlden nr 16, 1999; Fritidspedagogen 3-4/2003.
likely not officially trained in EQ. At least in the mid-2000s there were few, if any, institutionalized formal education in the subject apart from that which was given in certain schools.

Involvements in and through the mass media

The common set of values, or common language, of the school subject of Emotional Intelligence is not only imagined to be achieved through an openness towards the ‘inside’ of the school – that is, through an explicitness about both content and objectives towards everyone working there or directly associated with that work – but also through an openness towards its ‘outside’, that is, the surrounding society. This openness is evident when looking at the different types of involvements in and through the mass media. Both the idea that EQ is not a subject like other subjects and that it is not compulsory for schools to teach EQ has oriented the proponents of EQ towards a frame of mind where it is beneficial, perhaps even necessary, to get the mass media involved in the subject. The following story, told to me by the assistant headmaster at the school I visited, may illuminate how the mass media are imagined to affect the work at the school.

When the first schools in Sweden started to try out EQ as a subject in 1997, the concept of emotional intelligence was still, at least in its details, largely unknown to the wider public. At the school I visited, some of the personnel first seemed sceptical, but changed to a more positive attitude towards the program when they heard Wennberg present it. But some of the parents did not want their children to take part in the education. At the same time as the teachings in EQ were about to begin, however, a newspaper called Svenska Dagbladet, read by many citizens in the area, published a series of articles where emotional intelligence was presented as the ‘new thing’, an inevitable component of the work life to come (see above). In one of the articles the school in question was mentioned as a pioneer in implementing the subject. After that, no one aired any concerns. ‘Sometimes things change quickly’, as the assistant headmaster put it.

As seen here and above, engaged reporters writing in-depth articles about the subject make the mass media an arena for the dissemination of the knowledge about emotional intelligence and the subject of EQ. Especially around 1997-1998, when the subject was still in its infancy, there were a lot of writings about it. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the proponents of EQ gave a lot of interviews as well. They also wrote some articles themselves. In 1997 a whole issue of Förskoltidningen (1997, #5) was devoted to emotional intelligence. Wennberg herself wrote five of the articles, making up half the issue. Wennberg and Birgitta Ekmark also wrote two articles about EQ in Att undervisa (2001, #2).37 The number of articles on the subject

37 Subtitle: Tidskrift för Svenska Förbundet för Specialpedagogik (Journal for the Swedish Association of Special Education).
stayed on a fairly constant level for a couple of years. The themes also remained the same.

The broader public has not been informed about EQ through the writings in the press only. Since there were, at the time, a large number of popular books published about emotional intelligence in Swedish, these became a part of the regular mass media flow. Some books discussed emotional intelligence from a range of perspectives – mainly work, school, parenting, and relationships – though others focused on just one of these topics. Writers such as Goleman and Wennberg appeared in the press not least because of the steady stream of books they produced, many of which were reviewed or referred to in a number of articles in the daily press as well as in a diversity of journals. Wennberg even became somewhat of a minor celebrity in the first years of the new millennium due to weekly appearances on national television, in a program called Go’kväll (Good Evening). In this program she was part of a counselling panel, giving advice to viewers and discussing problems of social interaction.

Movementization

Wennberg states that there is really nothing special about the knowledge that has now been assembled under the heading of ‘emotional intelligence’. What can be found there are things that psychologists have known for years, but that they have not been very articulate about. She believes (personal communication) that the popularity of the idea of emotional intelligence is due to the fact that the concept makes it possible to organize this knowledge in such a way that even lay persons can understand it. The conclusion one may draw from Wennberg’s assertions, then, is that not just professionals with a socio-

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38 All the perspectives of work, school, parenting and relationships are found in Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence as well as in Wennberg’s EQ på svenska (EQ in Swedish). There are also books with a more narrow focus. Gottman’s The Heart of Parenting (in Swedish as EQ för föräldrar), is directed explicitly to parents. Kimber’s Att främja barns och ungdomars utveckling av social och emotionell kompetens (To Further the Development of Social and Emotional Competence in Children and Youngsters) is directed to teachers. There are of course also those which are explicitly about work life, such as Goleman’s Working with Emotional Intelligence (in Swedish as Känslans intelligens och arbetet) and Noyes’s The Art of Leading Yourself: Tap the Power of your Emotional Intelligence (in Swedish as Konsten att leda sig själv). Wennberg publications include Spelet kring självkänslan: ett osynligt styrmedium i arbetslivet (1995) (The Game around Self-esteem: an InVISIBLE Governing Tool in Work Life), EQ på svenska: Emotionell intelligens i föräldrarollen, i relationen, på arbetsplatsen, i skolan (2000) (EQ in Swedish: Emotional Intelligence in Parenting, in Relationships, at Work, in School), and Makt, känslor och ledarskap i klassrummet: hur EQ kan ge arbetstro i skolan (2004) (Power, Emotions and Leadership in the Classroom: How EQ Can Establish Peace at School). After Emotional Intelligence, Goleman published Working with Emotional Intelligence (1997) and Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them? A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama (2003). In 2006 he published Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships, a sort of update of Emotional Intelligence, since it is, allegedly, based on neuroscientific findings made after the publication of his 1995 book.
emotional training, such as therapists, psychologists, social workers, and also leisure-time pedagogues, journalists specialized in psychological and management issues, but indeed anyone – really any one person – can understand and become engaged in the subject of Emotional Intelligence.

The colloquialization of psychological discourse in the form of EQ has opened up for the creation of a collective with a common aim, set out to change schooling and through this even the wider society (as mentioned above). Since EQ is included in the teachings only because the school itself decides so, the existence of the subject is dependent on the active commitment of those involved. This becomes a question of engaging others as well as oneself. Ekmark, for example, although retired from her work as headmaster, continued giving lectures about the transforming power of EQ classes. The proponents seemed to be well aware of the advantage of engaging as great a number of categories of people as possible in the subject of EQ. The people I met actually seemed like ideal informants. I felt more than welcome to interview people, to visit the classes, I was provided with contacts, invited to the seminars about EQ at the Psychotherapy Fair, and so on. In trying to involve not only teachers, pupils and parents, but anyone possibly interested, into this allegedly transformative work – for example, by giving seminars in different locations, by producing a steady stream of writings on the subject, and by inviting outsiders to the classes – the EQ program with those working in and for it, takes on some of the characteristics of a movement, the latter which to a certain extent is institutionalized in the form of The National Association for EQ.

A discourse coalition

The subject of EQ is in a sense institutionalized through its ability to make a host of interested parties speak the language of emotional intelligence, as well as by widening the support for the subject by involving a number of persons in diverse positions in society into the discussions about, and the teachings in, the subject. The amassment of support has been a way of institutionalizing the subject. However, this institutionalization does not give it more institution-like qualities. On the contrary, by being institutionalized in this particular way, the subject strives to make particular schools anything but institutions in the most conspicuous sense of the term, that is, what Goffman (1991) called ‘total institutions’ where everyone inside is disciplined into a certain way of being. Total institutions are characterized by the walls that separate them from the surrounding world, making the disciplinary regime of the institution possible. The school subject of Emotional Intelli-

39 In a way then, this experience was something other than the classical ethnographical experience where ‘getting in’ – that is, past the ‘gatekeepers’ – is the problem. Here no one tried to prevent access, everyone rather opened up for access, but access leading in certain specific directions.
gence is, on the contrary, rather characterized by its openness towards the surrounding society, thus making up more of an ‘environment’ than an ‘institution’. This EQ environment thrives to the extent that the actual school work becomes the centre piece of a wider interactional network that in its entirety comes to resemble a ‘partial public sphere’ (Fraser 1992).

Hauser (1998) suggests that the ‘analysis of publics and their opinions … begins with an understanding of publics as discursive formations’ (1998: 104), where ‘dialogues are conducted in a montage of settings and with a variety of partners who, in some way, are linked in civil society’s network of associations’. Though the dialogue on EQ creates a network going beyond ‘civil society’, Hauser’s view nevertheless seems an accurate way of approaching the public, or ‘partial public sphere’, formed around the subject of EQ, since the involvement in this public is rather due to an interest in the discussions about a specific subject – and thus based on ‘membership by mere attention’, as Warner (2002: 62) calls it in his analyses of what constitutes a public.

By being assembled through and around the discourse of emotional intelligence this public amounts to a ‘discourse coalition’ (Hajer 1997). In the story-lines of self-esteem, impulse control, the values of a liberal-democratic society, psychic well-being, etc., ‘elements from many different domains are combined … that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding’ (1997: 62), and through their alignments ‘previously independent practices are being actively related to one another’ (1997: 65).

EQ is distinctive in relation to other subjects by being made up of material concerning how to behave. The subject thereby addresses the issue of social order. By being open towards both the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of the school – that is, both towards other subjects and personnel at the school as well as the surrounding society – the subject of EQ establishes an inclusive perspective on the order at the school. The school is integrated within a wider societal framework where not only parents and school inspectors, but also journalists, entrepreneurs, and psychologists and other experts on children’s development and schooling, as well as really anyone willing to make a contribution, are invited to take part in the discussions about this way of ordering.

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40 Fraser’s point is that during the last centuries, those who have felt excluded from the hegemonic public sphere have shaped their own. However, the interactional network created around the subject of EQ does not really amount to what Fraser calls a ‘counter public sphere’, since participation is not due to identification with an excluded group based on age, gender, ethnicity, or class, etc. Some of those involved occupy positions as teachers and psychologists, the latter who also function as expertise, and in the case of Wennberg also as a private entrepreneur, or even work for governmental authorities on different levels (state and municipal). Altogether these different people, with the aid of journalists who through their writings on the subject help create links between them, rather make up a ‘partial public sphere’ (Fraser 1992).
Order as a hidden curriculum

Since the 1970s, the question of order in school has occasionally been seen as a ‘hidden curriculum’. In Sweden, Broady raised the issue of this ‘hidden curriculum’ by suggesting that ‘socialization’ (fostran) during the post-war years disappeared from the curriculum, yet remained an important issue in school. In Broady’s (2007 [1981]) description of the school of the 1970s, the ‘hidden curriculum’ consisted in a number of abilities related to the order in the school, such as the ability to wait for your turn, and the ability to sit in silence at your desk and work with things you are not interested in. And you were, moreover, supposed to do this according to a schedule decided on by someone else, where you therefore learn to start without knowing why and to finish without having completed your task (2007: 14-15). If such abilities are not explicitly stated in any curricula, yet important for functioning in school as a pupil, they instead become part of a hidden curriculum.\footnote{Fostran roughly means ‘socialization’, although the matter is complicated by the fact that when used in the context of schooling, the meaning of fostran has changed during the twentieth century, from connotations of both moral education and bodily discipline in the early decades to a psychologically guided personal development in the latter (Bartholdsson 2007: 21-27). Broady (2007: 22) states that fostran (mostly in the disciplinary sense) was an explicit aim in schooling up until the middle of the twentieth century. With the breakthrough for the so-called progressivism in Sweden after WW II these ideas became less outspoken, thus being, in a sense, hidden away (2007: 27) – which did not mean that they by necessity disappeared from educational practice (2007: 72). According to Bartholdsson (2007: 25) the actual term fostran never entirely disappeared from policy documents: the first curriculum it was absent from was Lgr 69 (from 1969), but reappeared eleven years later in Lgr 80. The term is also foundational in Skolans arbetsmiljö (SOU 1974: 53), the report from the SIA comission.}

According to Bartholdsson, the reason the ‘hidden curriculum’ came into being is because the road from policy formulation to actual implementation is ‘long and winding’ (2007: 27). General directives for schooling, such as the words about the value foundation in Lpo 94, line up elegant and abstract formulations about the importance of conveying the values of ‘individual freedom and integrity’ and ‘solidarity with the weak and exposed’. Yet in the everyday life at a school, teachers must first of all accomplish some kind of order. The pupils soon understand, perhaps even internalize, the type of ‘pupilship’ (Bartholdsson 2007: 17) which is required of them. The ‘hidden curriculum’ may be hidden in the sense of not being explicit, but for pupils and teachers alike it is a reality (2007: 28).\footnote{That the teachings in ‘pupilship’ may be hidden for outsiders, yet most tangible to insiders, also means that interaction in school cannot be understood by studying plans, or policy statements, or even curricula. The meanings of ‘pupilship’ comes together through the interaction at school between teachers and pupils and can, because of this, only be captured by direct field studies then and there. Based on my personal experience as a teacher and substitute for almost two years in a number of schools in Stockholm in the late 1980s and early 1990s I certainly agree with this perspective, yet would like to qualify it somewhat. Both my work as substitute, but perhaps even more my position as a resource teacher for a few month, assisting other teachers when needed, made it evident to me how the interaction in a class could be totally transformed by the change of teacher – even though the teacher could have been work-}
However, since EQ tries to establish a specific order in the school, and is rather explicit about the means for how to accomplish this, does this mean that the subject, so to speak, opens up or makes visible the ‘hidden curriculum’? For example, since the ability to wait is a sign of emotional intelligence, teaching the children to wait becomes less of a ‘hidden curriculum’ than a way of enhancing their emotional intelligence. And as seen above, the school inspectors view the children schooled in EQ as almost ideal pupils, who take both individual and collective responsibility for their work. The EQ work is even seen by these inspectors as way of applying the fundamental democratic values.

If order in the classroom has for decades mainly been a question for the teachers to solve together with the pupils as best they can, how did a subject like EQ, that explicitly addresses the issue of social order, appear? What kinds of schemes and ideas have made the development of EQ possible? These issues can, I suggest, best be understood by looking at the development of schooling in Sweden in recent decades.

Towards the internal work

When I first entered the school where I was to take part in a lesson in the subject of EQ I immediately got lost. The building resembled none of the schools I had previously been to – and in my work as a teacher and substitute during the late 1980s and early 1990s I had visited around 20 different schools situated in diverse parts of the city of Stockholm. Being used to the orderly structure of mid-twentieth century schools with their appearance as public spaces, this building – which resembled a large bungalow with a diversity of rooms and where you had to take off your shoes before entering – appeared to me as more of a ‘leisure-time centre’ (fritidshem) than a place for schooling. When later mentioning my confusion to one of the teachers, she just laughed and said that a lot had changed in school since the 1980s, 43

43 The schools I had worked in during the late 1980s and early 1990s, mostly built during mid-century, were all constructed according to a rather coherent logic, most often with stairs leading to different floors where corridors then led to different classrooms. They were all rather easy to navigate in, even for someone who had never been there. The school where EQ was taught had nothing of this. To me it had more of a labyrinthine structure: at first a room where you were supposed to take of your shoes, then other rooms leading to still other rooms of an uncertain character, and just one floor giving the whole building more of the form of a large bungalow, yet with a corridor somewhere inside.
for example that leisure-time centres were now integrated with schools, in line with a new direction in schooling towards more of socio-emotional issues. Emotional Intelligence has only existed as a subject in certain Swedish schools since the late 1990s. Yet the rapid spread of the subject – when Wennberg in a few years had sold the concept to about a hundred schools (see above) – indicates that a perceived need for something like it was already in place at the time of its inception. I will here try to outline how such a demand came into place during the post-war years.

In an attempt to give all children good and equal opportunities there was, for the better part of the twentieth century, a strong tendency towards integration in the development of the Swedish school system. The objective, gradually approached, was to reconstruct the diversity of educational forms into a nine-grade comprehensive school. In the late 1960s this objective had been accomplished; the Swedish school system was at this time generally seen as a finished product. From then on only minor changes would be made (Richardson 1994: 81-84).

The accomplishment of the comprehensive school, however, opened up for discussions about other problems that had so far been neglected, or perhaps even created, by the striving towards integration. What actually happened in school during the school days had so far not been up for public debate. In the late 1960s, public debate about school issues shifted from the question of unification to issues regarding methodology and forms of work. For example, many teachers felt that there was a lack of both order and well-being in school, and their unions pushed for reforms in this area (1994: 107). At the same time, urbanization caused very different conditions in terms of residence and resources in large cities compared with the countryside. Another urgent problem at the time was the need for schools to provide extra-curricular activities. This widened responsibility was an increasing necessity since ever more parents sold their labour on the market at the end of the 1960s (in line with the interests of the welfare state, see Esping-Andersen 1990). Schools therefore had to provide some kind of activities for the children throughout the whole day.

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44 See below for a brief summary of this development, which took place in the 1990s.
45 It is here interesting to compare shifts in popular culture, for example some films about school which have fuelled contemporary debates. Whereas the film Torment (US) or Frenzy (UK) (originally titled Hets), released in 1944, and directed by Alf Sjöberg and with a manuscript by Ingmar Bergman, depicted the absolute discipline in high school (with an authoritarian teacher nicknamed Caligula), Jan Troell’s film Who Saw Him Die? (in Swedish named Ole Dole Doff), released in 1968, depicted a teacher lacking control and suffering a nervous breakdown. A decade later the need for organizational development at school was the theme of a very popular TV-series with the ironic title Lära för livet (Learn for Life). The series was a congenial illustration of the whole SIA school debate (see below), showing the problems with compartmentalization and ‘piece work’ at school, the importance of committed teachers, but also how the dull existence in the concrete landscape of post-functionalist suburbs affected school work.
Two parliamentary commissions

Around 1970 two parliamentary commissions were given the task to work out solutions for these problems. The first was Barnstugeutredningen (The Child Care Commission), set up to come to terms with the problems of childcare outside of schooling. Initially the commission’s directives concerned children of pre-school age, and later on they were altered to include also the care of school-age children before and after school. In 1970, a parliamentary commission was given the task to come up with a plan for how to deal with the lack of efficiency, order, and well-being in school, or in other words a plan for the ‘internal work of the school’ (Skolans inre arbete). Mostly referred to by its acronym, this group was called the ‘SIA Commission’ (Richardson 1994: 108).

These commissions worked within the, by then, well-established Swedish political tradition to institute reforms based on societal consensus. The commissions therefore had a broad parliamentary basis, worked for about half a decade, involved numerous experts in the work, and requested a number of scientific investigations to base their reports on. They then produced reports which were published in the series called Swedish Government Official Reports (Statens offentliga utredningar) and subsequently circulated for comments to a large number of organizations which had their say, before eventually new laws and directives were decided on. The work of the SIA and Child Care Commissions resulted in four thick reports. The Child Care Commission produced three reports called Förskolan (Pre-school), part one and two, (SOU 1972: 26 and SOU 1972: 27), and Barns fritid (Children’s Leisure Time, SOU 1974: 42). SIA produced a report called Skolan arbetsmiljö (The Work Environment of School, SOU 1974: 53). These reports altogether (though not including appendices in the form of scientific investigations and others) made up about 2500 closely written pages. In many ways, the reforms of the school system over the next three decades would follow the general guidelines drawn up by these reports.46

There is no room here for an exhaustive description of all the changes these reports suggested, or the laws and regulations they resulted in. I here just want to highlight a few of the answers they presented to the perceived organizational problems in Swedish schools at the time. Of interest here are four general types of answers that the two commissions came up with to the societal problem of how to organize school work. These types will here be called the economic-political, the spatio-temporal, the societal and the psychological. Because of the theme of this book I will here treat the first three answers only briefly, and then more explicitly look at the psychological answer.

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46 This way of undertaking structural reforms is sometimes called Harpsundsdemokrati and seen as an important part of the ‘Swedish model’, along with the welfare system (Folkhemmet), and the institutionalized negotiations between the parts on the labour market (Saltsjöbadsandan) (Richardson 2010: 153, Thullberg and Östberg 1994, Trägårdh 2007).
From an economic-political point of view, the commissions asked for more flexibility in the use of resources and a widened responsibility for schools regarding extra-curricular activities (Richardson 1994: 97, 108ff.). The aim in both cases seems to have been to accomplish a more efficient welfare state. More flexibility in the use of resources would lead to more efficient use of resources, since the conditions were very different in small villages as compared to large cities. Such flexibility would also mean shifting the immediate responsibility for the allocation of resources from the state to the lower levels of government, such as municipalities (SOU 1974: 53: Chapters 16 and 25, p.752).

The spatio-temporal answers suggested that schools needed to provide some kind of activities for the children throughout the whole day (since most parents now sold their labour on the market). For this purpose the so-called *fritidshemmen* (the leisure-time centres) should be established, where a new category of teachers, *fritidspedagogerna* (leisure-time teachers) would provide the children with meaningful leisure activities before and after the actual lessons, and also assist them with their homework. This answer thus spoke in favour of what became known as the integrated school day. For the care of the younger children day-care centres should be established. These two would replace what had up until then been known as *barnstugor* (day nurseries).

The societal answer stressed the need to tear down the walls between school and the rest of society. An efficient system for learning should take into account the total societal context in which the children exist. The report from the SIA Commission recognized that one of the main objectives of the school system was to educate or form citizens (SOU 1974: 53: 97, 806). It was seen as a fact that school is a preparation for a societal existence, that school is a part of society. The commission put forth a number of suggestions for how to create more links with the surrounding society, for example by inviting parents into the school boards, or mobilizing organizations from outside to participate in voluntary activities during the school day. In *Barns fritid*, this discussion was influenced by the so-called de-schooling debate at

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47 That schools had to provide care for the children throughout the whole day seems to have been a general problem in industrialized countries at the time. The answer, discussed through examples from Great Britain, the USA, Poland, Denmark and the Soviet Union, was, borrowing a British term, called the ‘integrated school day’ (*samlad skoldag*) (see also Egidius 2001a: 104). Yet the integrated schoolday also meant integrating different subjects, even with hobbies and leisure activities, and was therefore also an answer to the problem of ‘piece work’ (see below), since the pupils would get a more integrated education when different subjects could be taught together.

48 The original terms used are *medborgerlig fostran* and *fostra medborgare*. As mentioned above, the term *fostran* shifted meanings during the twentieth century, from strict discipline and moral education to psychologically informed personal development.

49 Which would be called *Bestyrelsen*, a rather awkward word even in Swedish.
The report states that learning is not something that takes place just during lessons, but that the leisure-time centre and other environments outside of school also provide many opportunities for learning. In line with this kind of reasoning, it is also stated that it is important that the leisure-time centre must be characterized by open communication with other parts of society. It must not be experienced as ‘an institution in the narrow sense of the term’ (SOU 1974: 42: 61), but should rather be ‘an open child environment’ (SOU 1974: 42: 60), where the child’s own initiative and industriousness, directed towards activities outside of the leisure-time centre, are encouraged by the adults. As stated in a passage by Margaret Mead, quoted in its totality in the report (SOU 1974: 42: 58):

We must create new models for adults who can teach their children not what to learn, but how to learn and not what they should be committed to, but the value of commitment.\(^{51}\)

The psychological answer

The psychological answer presented by the two parliamentary commissions was mainly concerned with the issues of industriousness and motivation and how to combine them with the two values of autonomy and cooperation, and based its reasoning on the psychological theories at hand during this time. The issue of motivation is mainly discussed in the report Skolans arbetsmiljö (SOU 1974: 53), where it is a recurrent theme. For example, a central discussion in Skolans arbetsmiljö concerns the importance of motivation for efficient work at school. This discussion is carried on in a number of places. Issues discussed here are both pupil motivation and teacher motivation. The former is here related to Maslow’s discussions about the satisfaction of needs (SOU 1974: 53: 290), the latter also to Herzberg’s ‘application of the humanistic psychological tradition to the study of work satisfaction’ (1974: 53: 738). In the case of the pupils, motivation is not only seen as simply a relationship between the child and his or her own work, but as involving a wider social environment. This assumption, too, is based on Maslow’s theory of a hierarchy of needs, from basic physiological needs to the need for self-actualization.\(^{52}\) If the basic needs are not satisfied, those higher up in the hierarchy will, according to the theory, not even present themselves as needs, in this case meaning (according to the report) that if a child is hungry or tired or feeling insecure he or she will hardly feel motivated to study

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\(^{50}\) The de-schooling debate emerged out of works such as Ivan Illich’s Deschooling Society (Marklund 1984: 53).

\(^{51}\) This quote is from Culture and Commitment (Mead 1970: 92).

\(^{52}\) Maslow states that there are five types of needs. These are the physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs. They are hierarchically arranged (in the order mentioned here), in the sense that the higher needs do not appear as needs until the lower ones are satisfied (Maslow 1943).
Since the teacher’s work satisfaction (according to a study based on Herzberg’s two-factor theory) is intimately tied to the behaviour of the pupils, accomplishing student motivation will also give the teachers a more satisfying work situation.\(^{53}\) The accomplishment of a more satisfying overall work situation at school must therefore to be based on cooperation with other authorities, voluntary associations, and parents, since the total situation of the children in the community will affect their motivation to study (1974: 53: 754).

The reasons for invoking these humanistic theories about motivation are not specified more than in rather general terms. It is suggested that Maslow’s theory represents a ‘development in motivational theory’ as compared to older ones suggesting that humans are guided by inborn instincts (1974: 53: 19), that the theory is ‘of interest’ (1974: 53: 290), and is useful (1974: 53: 291). In Hertzberg’s case it is stated that his theory has been used in an investigation requested by the commission about teacher’s work satisfaction (1974: 53: 737). About both theories it is simply stated that they are those that ‘have attracted the most attention’ (ibid.). It is further stated that the organization (that is, of the school) is perhaps the most important factor for motivation. It is essential that the objectives of the individuals and the organization harmonize. In an organization constructed to enable individuals to find satisfaction in their tasks and to realize their possibilities as human beings, individuals will also contribute the most to the realization of the objectives of the organization. In contrast, the ‘individual’s possibilities for self-actualization are very limited in a work environment that is characterized by traditional organizational principles such as a detailed division of labour, surveillance, hierarchical control systems, “piece work”, coercion, etc.’ (1974: 53: 334). Enabling the objectives of individuals, groups and the organization to support each other must be the foundation for any attempt to come to terms with the motivational problems at school – an approach usually called ‘organizational development’ (ibid.). Though no reference is cited in the report, for anyone acquainted with management theory, this appears to be an attempt to shape the school system in accordance with the organizational ideas that Douglas McGregor called ‘Theory Y’. The basic assumption of Theory Y is ‘that people will exercise self-direction and self-control in the achievement of organizational objectives to the degree that they are committed to those objectives’ (McGregor 1960: 56). McGregor’s theory draws heavily on Maslow’s ideas about a hierarchy of needs with self-actualization as the highest (Gabor 2000). It seems that when discussing efficiency in the 1970s, the theories of humanistic psychology were both easily at hand and considered modern and useful, to the degree that they had become a sort of common sense, meaning that references were not even always necessary.

The issues of autonomy and industriousness are discussed in all four reports. In Förskolan, the two first reports from Barnstugeutredningen, the

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53 For an account of Herzberg’s two factor theory, see Chapter Four.
The theoretical focus is developmental psychology. Two theories are here integrated: Piaget’s theory of cognitive development with Erikson’s theory of socio-emotional development (1972: 26: 40, 59). The latter is discussed as a description of how a child achieves the coping abilities necessary in life. The earliest periods of life (until puberty) are discussed as stages where the child may develop trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry if given the right responses from the social environment. If treated in the wrong way the child may on the contrary develop mistrust, shame or doubt, guilt and feelings of inferiority. These basic suppositions are repeated throughout the discussions in this report, apparently since they go well together with the overarching objectives of public child care. Much is said about self-esteem, self-confidence, industry and autonomy, or as it is called in one instance ‘fundamental independence socialization’ (grundläggande självständighetsfostran). This type of socialization is basically about backing the necessary ‘will to try [which] precedes children’s ability to manage different skills’ (1972: 26: 166).

It is also suggested that this wanted development can be stimulated if children learn to identify their emotions, and if all emotions are accepted, if they learn to express their emotions verbally instead of giving them free bodily expression, and especially so in the case of anger. Learning non-violent ways of efficient conflict resolution is also aspired to. Yet the report does not give any specific techniques for how to accomplish all this.

The discussion about how to form autonomous and industrious children is echoed in Barns fritid, the other report from the commission. Since Barns fritid deals with the spare time of 7- to 12-year-old children, the report follows the general theoretical guidelines developed in Förskolan for children of this age. The purpose of the activities at the leisure time centre should therefore be ‘to support and stimulate the growth of the active, reflective human being’, who needs to develop the skills ‘to solve the problems which arise in the opposition between the individual abilities and the demands of the environment’ (SOU 1974: 42: 47). It is therefore important that activities correspond to the developmental level of the children so that they are given ‘possibilities for expansion’ (SOU 1974: 42: 49). It is assumed that if they are not given the opportunities to use their energy in constructive ways, they may instead become destructive or passive.

In Skolans arbetsmiljö the striving towards industriousness and autonomy is, in a seemingly roundabout way, given concrete form in the ideas of group exercises and work units. The logic seems to have been that autonomy and cooperation were both opposed to ‘traditional organizational principles’ based on ‘surveillance and hierarchical control’ (SOU 174: 53: 334). If chil-

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54 The overarching objectives of förskolan are, put briefly, to give children the possibilities to develop their emotional and cognitive assets, and to aid them in becoming empathic and knowledge seeking in order to enhance their abilities to solve problems and improve living conditions (SOU 1972: 26: 63).
Children are supposed to learn to tread their own path in their knowledge seeking, they cannot be told exactly what to do all the time. Group exercises, moreover, would not only increase the pupils’ social skills, but they were also regarded as a more efficient way of learning. The integrated school day also made an integration of subjects possible. To promote holism and avoid ‘piece work’, that is, a fragmentation of knowledge, it was therefore deemed necessary that teachers from different subjects work together. All teachers should be part of a work group which would be responsible for two or more classes. The teachers and the classes would then make up a work unit (SOU 174: 53: 334-338, 340-342, see also Egidius 2001a: 102-104).

The SIA school

The Swedish school system turned out to be a colossus which was not so easily moved by a few pen strokes, although these filled an impressive number of pages. In 1976 the Swedish parliament decided to implement what was by then known as the ‘SIA school’ (SIA-skolan). There had been massive protests from the teachers, who objected to the idea of work units. The basic organizational structure in Swedish schools at the time can perhaps be summarized as ‘one teacher, one class, one room, one subject’. This organizational arrangement was well established (SOU 1974: 53: 565) and hard to change. Because of the opposition from the teachers, the parliament decided that it should be voluntary to join the work groups (Egidius 2001a: 105). As a result, the work units never really materialized in Swedish schools at that time.

That the resistance of the teachers to the work units was allowed to alter the reform in a fundamental way was in itself a sign of decentralization of power (2001a: 105), but led to the abolishment of a vital part of the reform package. In a similar manner, the attempts at shifting the immediate responsibility for schooling ‘downwards’ to municipalities only hindered the introduction of the integrated school day. In the final reform it was decided that the municipalities should be responsible for the implementation of the integrated school day. However, since many municipalities had financial problems the reform was delayed (Richardson 1994: 111).

In the SIA school reform, cooperation and motivation should be accomplished because of directions from above. The SIA Commission was a parliamentary commission headed by the director-general of the Swedish National Board of Education (Skolverstyrelsen). The latter was the ‘research and development’ organization for Swedish education during the post-war years, constructed in accordance with the prevalent philosophy of social engineering (Egidius 2001a: 99, 106). The SIA report really came from ‘above’, yet aimed at implementing autonomy and cooperation. It suggested setting a process of ‘organizational development’ in motion, yet the only means for execution available were the ‘traditional organizational principles’ of ‘surveillance and hierarchical control’ (cf. above).
When eventually implemented, the SIA school was no longer a straightforward answer to the problems that the SIA Commission had been set up to solve. The SIA Commission was originally set up to come to terms with the organizational problems of order and well-being, yet the SIA school was gradually seen as mainly being about the integrated school day (Richardson 1994: 111). The reforms which were implemented were those that were of a spatio-temporal nature, and which therefore could be realized through a rather hands-on approach to organizational alterations; the building of day care centres and the leisure-time centres proceeded steadily (Rohlin 2000: 18). Those changes which depended on the active consent of teachers and other groups working at school were obviously harder to implement, and had to await a new generation of teachers (Richardson 1994: 111).

Starting with the work of the SIA and Child Care Commissions, a wide societal consensus gradually seems to have emerged that the state-run school system of industrial modernity, based on a large and hierarchical organization, would not be adequate in the future. The call for diversity and flexibility – which meant shifting the responsibility for schooling downwards to municipalities, schools, and ultimately teachers and pupils – was an answer to a host of perceived problems: the state no longer would have to administer a mechanical and expensive system (Richardson 1994: 108), the employer’s associations pushed for a school system which would foster individuals who could take responsibility for their own work (Egidius 2001a: 102), and radical teachers called for a change of a school system which they saw as an inhuman machine, totally in compliance with that of industrial capitalism (Richardson 1994: 95). From different perspectives, all these forces worked towards diversity and flexibility – although of course no one at the time knew exactly what such changes would mean in the future.

The New Public Management reform in schooling

From the 1980s and onwards, the public sector was gradually reformed in Sweden. These reforms were part of a trend, ‘a fast-spreading desire to make government more business-like – to save money, increase efficiency, and simultaneously oblige bureaucracies to act more responsive to their citizen-users’ (Pollit and Bouckaert 2011: 6). This trend ‘later became known as the New Public Management (NPM)’ (ibid.). As a part of this wave of reform, the Swedish school system in the early 1990s went through a number of significant changes. The results of these changes were very much in line with the suggestions from the SIA and Child Care Commissions.55

55 As hinted at here, public management reform first started out as a national issue in a number of countries. By becoming a part of the agenda of organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD in the 1990s it also became an international issue with the common label of NPM (SOU 2007: 75, Wahlström 2009: 87, Pollit and Bouckaert 2011: 9). The concept of NPM was created as both descriptive and normative – a description of what had been carried out so far and of what ought to be done in the future. Defining NPM is thus a complex task.
The first of these changes corresponded to the economic-political changes suggested by the SIA Commission. Local authorities were given full responsibility for the practical workings of the nine-year compulsory school. From then on the state would simply set the objectives – in terms of laws, directives, curricula, criteria for the grading system, and so on – but it would be the responsibility for each municipality that these objectives were actually conformed to. This 1991 change in the government of the Swedish school system was popularly known as the municipalization (*kommunaliseringen*) (Alexanderson 1999, Bartholdsson 2007: 23).

Some years later, the spatio-temporal changes of the SIA-school were taken a step further by the integration of the leisure-time centres into the school system. Whereas the staff at these centres – *fritidspedagogerna* – had formerly only been working with the children before or after school, they now worked with them intermittently throughout the whole day. Teachers with different qualifications thus began to work together. The work groups that the SIA Commission had envisioned were in this way put into practice. Many children spent more and more time at school where, at the same time, the boundaries between work and leisure tended to get blurred (Rohlin 2000).

A third change, also occurring in the beginning of the 1990s, that also had some effects of interest here was *friskolereformen*, a reform that made it possible for private actors to compete in the market on equal terms with the municipal schools. This meant that private schools, owned by cooperatives, foundations or even private enterprises, could be financed by the state as long as they adhered to the common objectives. Although of a structural nature, since directed against the unified school system (Richardson 2010: 167), the reform also spoke the language of the SIA-school, more precisely the societal type of answer, in that it opened up the school system towards

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‘There is now a substantial branch industry in defining how NPM should be conceptualized and how NPM has changed’ (Dunleavy et al. 2006, quoted in Pollit and Bouckaert 2011:10). Power (1999: 43) suggests the following: ‘Broadly speaking the NPM consists of a cluster of ideas borrowed from the conceptual framework of private sector administrative practices. It emphasizes cost-control, financial transparency, the autonomization of organizational sub-units, the decentralization of management authority, the creation of market and quasi-market mechanisms, separating purchasing and providing functions and their linkage via contracts, and the enhancement of accountability to customers for the quality of service via the creation of performance indicators.’ In Sweden public management reform was seen as necessary by both the left and right, yet for different reasons and with different aims. The social democratic party wanted to make the public sector more decentralized and move decision making closer to the ‘users’. The liberal and conservative parties stressed the need for privatizations in the public sector (Wahlström 2009: 78). The restructurings of the Swedish school system shows that at least here reforms became possible because a common ground appeared where both the ‘New Left’ and the ‘New Right’ could see their strivings fulfilled. In this situation it was not easy to understand ‘who was conservative …, who was progressive’. In the new curriculum called *Lgr 80* ‘all the dreams of left wing radical teachers were realized’, yet in a curriculum ‘written and signed’ by a Minister for Education from the conservative party (Egidius 2001a: 111).
the surrounding society. Along with this reform it became possible for pupils to choose their own school, whereas they formerly had been directed to a certain school on the basis of place of residence. This opened up for more diversity in the Swedish school system. Different schools had to create their own specific profile in order to attract as many pupils as desired – the more pupils, the more money. Sweden now saw religious schools, international schools, schools prioritizing specific subjects or teaching methods, or anything that might seem attractive to the pupils or that a sufficient number of parents would find valuable for their children (Richardson 2010: 167-168).

The above-mentioned reforms also made it easier for different schools to set up their own curricula, as long as they were within the boundaries defined by state objectives. Whether the schools conformed to these state objectives or not was controlled by school inspectors who visited the schools on a regular basis and wrote official reports on them, which were available to read by anyone who wanted to.\(^56\) Teaching a specific subject, in some instances perhaps even creating it, could also be a way for a school to try to create a specific kind of working environment – which also could become a way of profiling the school. At the school I visited EQ was introduced to improve the working and learning environment. But later on the subject had become, as one of the teachers put it, the profile of the school.

All in all, the Swedish school system went through a number of significant changes during the 1990s, well in line with three of the answers (the economic-political, the societal, and the spatio-temporal) of the SIA and Child Care Commissions. Together with the creation of the new concept of emotional intelligence, these changes opened up for a realization of the fourth answer – the psychological. In other words, Emotional Intelligence as a class subject has profited from the decentralization of power, and has made use of both the possibility of engaging the wider society in the work and the creation of leisure-time centres and leisure-time teachers, to create an environment where psychological knowledge of a specific kind can become the organizing principle of the school that chooses to teach the subject.\(^57\)

Realizing the psychological answer

In *Skolans arbetsmiljö* (SOU 1974: 53: 64, 97, 215, 664, 806), the Swedish school system is described as having two main tasks: to prepare the pupils for work life and to educate or form citizens. These tasks were once again problematized in the two reports from the SIA and Child Care Commissions in the 1970s. The reports both questioned whether the system worked, that is


\(^{57}\) It therefore seems adequate to characterize the ideal EQ school as an ‘environment’ rather than an ‘institution’, in the manner suggested already by the report from the Child Care Commission (see above).
to say actually fulfilled its tasks, and outlined a few specific solutions for the alleged problems – three of which were largely followed in the decades to come. The fourth of these solutions focused on the psychological well-being of the pupils, on how to increase their self-esteem, motivation, autonomy, ability to communicate, etc. With the changes in line with NPM that the Swedish school system went through in the 1990s, it became possible for actors on a local level to create and implement new class subjects. The subject of EQ, displaying a psychological content resembling the psychological answer outlined by the two committees, was in such a way created. The subject did, however, not come into being until the hype of the late 1990s, through which the idea of emotional intelligence became widely known and through which it became possible to amass a wide enough support for it. The EQ program thus continues on the path that the school system had already been redirected onto in the 1970s.

A knowledge well known to psychologists

The psychological answer to the question of how to accomplish efficiency, order, and well-being in school – as presented in the reports from the SIA and Child Care Commissions – had a few specific features. By cutting down on individually centred ‘piece work’ in favour of group and project work, and by taking control over more of the environment by redirecting schooling more towards socio-emotional issues, the basic needs of the pupils could be satisfied – altogether opening up for self-actualization in and through the actual studies. The subject of EQ largely follows these prescriptions, yet gives the psychological issues a totally different weight by focusing solely and directly on these issues.

The stress on developing self-esteem in the EQ discourse appears as an answer to the emphasis in the reports from the two commissions on the importance of avoiding the disruptive feelings of inferiority. The suggestion from the Child Care Commission that children will develop self-esteem and become more autonomous and industrious if they learn to identify their emotions, if all emotions are accepted, and if they learn to express their emotions verbally instead of giving them free bodily expression, finds a realization in much of the EQ discourse, from the simple exercise called ‘Today’s Emotion’ to the complex method of ‘The stop light’. (Incidentally, the suggestion from the Child Care Commission about the importance of learning to identify emotions, etc., is also almost literally the same as the introduction to the seminar on violent criminals given by The National Association for EQ at the Psychotherapy Fair.) Learning non-violent ways of efficient conflict resolution is also strongly emphasized in one of the reports from the Child Care Commission. The report does not provide any specific techniques for how to accomplish all this. But the subject of EQ certainly does, in the rather elaborate method called ‘The stop light’. To support and stimulate the growth of the active, reflective human being is also stated as important in the
same report. This is basically what the EQ program as a whole is about, from the elementary identification of emotions to the more complex ones when stepping up the EQ staircase. And by giving the pupils the possibility of satisfying their basic needs of health, well-being, good social relations, and self-esteem, they allegedly become more productive in their studies – and (ideally) fulfilled as human beings.

When looking at the way the EQ program overlaps with what the SIA and Child Care Commissions recommended, and which already at the time of the two commissions constituted somewhat of a psychological common sense, it is evident that the knowledge that has been assembled under the heading of ‘emotional intelligence’ is, to quote Bodil Wennberg, ‘well-known to psychologists’, and has been so for a long time. The implementation of the school subject of EQ is largely a realization of the psychological answer of the two commissions to the reformation of the ‘internal work of the school’.

The ideal of self-regulation

How then does a subject such as Emotional Intelligence fulfil the two main purposes of the school system: to prepare the pupils for work life, and to educate or form citizens? Ideally they become used to a work situation where work is not only directed outwards – towards objects or even other persons – but also inwards. Work here involves the ability to reflect and handle one’s own emotions, as well as the ability to motivate oneself and take responsibility for one’s work. This ‘internal’ work also extends to other selves in the sense that it involves the ability to communicate, cooperate, and handle conflicts. The person given training in EQ is, ideally, used to a working environment where there are no absolute boundaries between work and leisure, in the sense that the same interactional processes are imagined to take place in the school yard as in the classroom and where these processes need to be, so to speak, continuously worked upon. In other words, in an EQ environment some objectives and methods ideally characterize all activities.

EQ is also a way of forming citizens. The type of work that the person schooled in EQ is used to is imagined to be a way of upholding certain values. The subject of EQ teaches the importance of values such as autonomy and integrity, equality and solidarity. These values are foundational in liberal-democratic societies as described in Lpo 94. Here they are also given a psychological foundation in the sense that their rationality is spelled out in psychological concepts and trained in a psychologically grounded education. Self-esteem and empathy are believed to create autonomy and solidarity. An ability to communicate efficiently, also meaning that the children learn to speak out, builds integrity; proponents seem convinced that emotionally intelligent children are not ‘obedient’, but sometimes rather demanding.

To achieve public recognition – and thus symbolic power – through the display of ‘refined manners’ has a long history in European society (Elias 1978, cf. Bourdieu 1984). In Sweden the bourgeoisie and the labour move-
ment got involved in a symbolic power struggle from the late nineteenth century and onwards, where both classes tried achieve public recognition by – both inwardly and outwardly – depicting themselves as decent, industrious and responsible, or in one word: civilized (Frykman and Löffgren 1979, Ambjörnsson 1988). In the Swedish school system today, a subject such as EQ has become, and not least because of the favourable evaluations by school inspectors, an implicit display on behalf of the school of a high regard of values such as industriousness, autonomy and integrity. In the EQ teachings there is a thin line between what the pupils can do and what they are. Upholding the EQ values also means moulding the pupils into a certain type of person – empathic, communicative, and with high self-esteem. Since these abilities are generally seen as decisive in determining a person’s psychological make-up, the line between doing and being is blurred. Put otherwise, the sum of techniques and ideas constituting the school subject of Emotional Intelligence becomes a value in itself – to make use of them is seen as an ideal way of being. The type of individual which is imagined in the EQ discourse not only constitutes a person fit for a ‘post-industrial’ labour market58 but also an ideal citizen – an empathic individual with high self-esteem who can communicate in productive ways, an incarnation of the values of a liberal-democratic society. By making EQ its profile a school will thus have a competitive advantage in the competition over pupils. The importance of this type of power display has increased with the restructurings of the Swedish school system the last decades.

Out of the teachings in EQ thus emerges an ideal person who is capable of making his or her own decisions about how to act based on psychologically grounded reflection, or in other words, an individual capable of self-regulation (of a psychological kind). This ideal – this way of creating order, of organizing work – today finds resonance in the Swedish school system at large. In an attempt to describe the ‘reconstruction of Swedish educational policy’ in later decades Lundahl suggests that the ‘devolution of state governance has meant … increased expectations for school-level actors to be responsible and autonomous decision makers’. This goes not only for teachers and school leaders, but also pupils who ‘are increasingly expected to take responsibility for their own learning’ (2005: 10-11). Lundahl thus draws the conclusion that with the transformation of the school system ‘the ambition to govern by self-governance has increased considerably’ (2005: 24). In a similar attempt to ‘analyse changes in the governance of education’, Lindblad et al. come to the conclusion that a ‘new hegemony’ has emerged ‘in the culture of education in Sweden, with a focus on efficiency and individual agency’. Based on a number of interviews with teachers and a survey of 413 students about to finish school, they found that both teachers and students alike describe the successful student as ‘responsible, committed and self-

58 See Chapter Two and Chapter Four for discussions about work organizations in contemporary society.
regulating’ (2002: 284, 300). Personal responsibility and self-regulation has become so important in school today since school work often amounts to both designing and executing one’s own tasks. The problematic pupils today are therefore those who plan to do either too much or too little (Wahlström 2009: 195). Gunilla Granath, a journalist and researcher on educational issues, in an interview suggests that today the ‘dream of the autonomous creature is a discursive subtext in school’. She even asserts that the present hidden curriculum therefore consists of the ‘self-mobilizing (självgående), self-governing, autonomous … pupil’ (Höglund and Wigerfelt 2007). This ‘hidden curriculum’ – upholding the values of autonomy and responsibility – arguably finds resonance in contemporary management theory and practice, since these values are also foundational in the ethos of ‘enterprise’ (Rose 1998) making up the ‘new spirit of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

Yet if the implementation of the idea of self-regulation is a ‘hidden curriculum’, it is only so in its most simple meaning – that is, as absent from any curriculum. In schooling today, the idea is, as seen above, anything but hidden. And as becomes obvious when reading the reports from the SIA and Child Care Commissions, the ideal of the self-mobilizing and self-governing pupil dates back to at least the early 1970s, and was already then somewhat of a common sense.

In the school subject of Emotional Intelligence this common sense is not directly outspoken, but rather put into practice through the use and distribution of rather basic psychological know-how. The ways of implementing order in school in the 1970s – the ‘hidden curriculum’ of that time – was criticized already by the SIA Commission as ‘piece work’ and seen as detrimental to efficient work. The commission suggested a number of alternative ways of organizing work at school. Today these suggestions have largely materialized.

To sum up, the attempts in the school subject of EQ to cultivate the pupils to be empathic individuals with high self-esteem who can communicate in productive ways, is simply a specific way of answering the two basic ration-

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59 Bartholdsson (2007: 21-22) suggests that aspects of this development can be traced back to an even earlier date. As mentioned above, the committees of the SOU-type express (or at least did during this time) a wide societal and science-based consensus in their reports, and even more so in the legislation based on these reports when all concerned parties (individuals, organizations, etc) had had their say.

60 Interesting to note is that the ideal of the self-mobilizing and self-governing pupil who is good at communicating and cooperating is close to how Broady (2007 [1981]: 78-79) described the hidden curriculum of ‘progressivism’, the teaching ideology that emerged in the USA during the early twentieth century and in Sweden during the post-war years, yet which Broady saw as still a marginal phenomenon in the 1970s, being merely an ‘ideological superstructure’ (2007: 72). Broady predicted that the lack of strict discipline in the progressivist ideas would demand more of a general consensus around how to exist in school which, ironically, would mean even less tolerance for deviance. Even the thoughts, emotions and values of the pupils would have to be controlled (2007: 86-87). The latter is also largely what Bartholdsson (2007) found in her ethnography of schooling in the early 2000s.
ales of the Swedish school system: to prepare the pupils for work life, and to educate or form citizens. This idea of self-regulation as a most fundamental and valuable characteristic in the future workers and citizens is, as seen here, moreover very contemporary. It finds resonance not only in contemporary management philosophy but also in the everyday lives of most people who spend a lot of time at school; to achieve self-regulation is a generally understood basic objective in schooling among both teachers and pupils. What the subject of Emotional Intelligence amounts to is then merely a more hands-on way of putting into practice this specific vision of the productive citizen.

Conclusion

Genrally speaking, by giving the pupils tools for self-governance and social interaction the subject of EQ makes them well-equipped for both a life in school and contemporary work life. In both environments, values such as autonomy, responsibility and commitment are foundational (Lindblad et al. 2002, Lundahl 2005, Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). More specifically, I would here like to highlight four features that are discussed above, and that are of importance for the discussions in the chapters to come.

First, Emotional Intelligence is a practical school subject. Although to a certain extent based on sophisticated neuropsychological theories, it aims at teaching the pupils certain practical skills. The education in emotional intelligence is designed to make the pupils reflect – on their own emotions, thoughts, actions, ways of communicating and interacting, as well as on the ways other people may manage all this. The EQ program, if efficiently implemented, tends to give the future workers and citizens of society a certain kind of perspective. Ideally, they develop a kind of double gaze, pointed inwards and outwards at the same time. They come to view themselves as selves – in relation to others. That is, as individuals in social interaction. They begin to reflect in a certain way. They become ready and able to think and act in accordance with psychologically created realities.

Second, Emotional Intelligence is by its proponents believed to integrate the whole person into a more productive existence. It gives the pupils a chance of ‘getting in touch’ with, and of understanding, their emotions, presumably leading to a more fulfilling existence, where they can avoid destructive activities such as violence, and later on criminality, at the same time as it helps them to stay healthy. The development of socio-emotional skills also makes them able to communicate in a more effectice ways, which is also believed to enhance their competences in ‘core’ subjects, such as Swedish (here meaning being able to read and write) and mathematics. The subject of EQ is not only directed at individuals and individual productivity, however, but also at creating a more productive working and learning climate as a whole, leading to more efficient work at school. It offers a common language and a set of shared values for all those who spend their
work day at the school. And as the EQ staircase tells, the aim is nothing less than to develop a way of managing conflicts. In the end, if all goes well, this means a peaceful, and therefore more productive, school environment.

Third, the implementation of Emotional Intelligence teaching in Swedish schools is intimately linked to the development of a new way of organizing schooling, in itself part of a wave of public management reform. Much of what Emotional Intelligence is about is discussed already in the four reports from the SIA and Child Care Commissions launched in the early 1970s. Yet it was not until the school system was reorganized in line with the principles of the New Public Management that the subject of EQ materialized. It was only then that the ideals of autonomy and self-governing that are fundamental in the EQ discourse also became more generally practiced ideals in the organization of schooling, which opened up for a few enthusiasts to start implementing the subject.

Fourth, the way the school subject of EQ was created and spread institutionalized the very idea of emotional intelligence in a certain way in Sweden. In 1997 the magazine Chef predicted that emotional intelligence would become the next management fad in business and industry (Nr. 8: 39, 41). It never happened. Instead EQ became a subject in Swedish schools. The dynamic interplay of global forces and local conditions out of which the subject of EQ was formed and institutionalized involved an ideational space that stretched well beyond both the idea of emotional intelligence and any kind of institutionalization in the Swedish school system. Similar ideas had been part of the world of psychology for almost a century. The subject of EQ, however, with its distribution of psychological techniques, did not come into being until the late 1990s – which was also when a management consultant, who had previously worked in a number of business organizations, was allowed into the system. And, as Birgitta Ekmark stated, in the management of business organizations the use of practices similar to those on the EQ curriculum had in the 1990s been a reality for some time – which is the subject of the next chapter.
2. Striving for Synergy

In work life today, more and more employees are educated in the psychology of individual and group functioning, for example by taking part in group dynamic management courses. In line with the general ‘enterprise culture’ permeating much of contemporary liberal democratic states (Rose 1998: 150-151), such courses are seen as beneficial not only for those holding a managerial position, but for anyone who wants to make a difference in work life. These courses can be seen as a type of psychological interventions, since they involve teaching psychological theories and methods with the aim of changing perspectives and patterns of action of the participants. This is a part of the ‘new spirit of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), where many organizations depend less on a thoroughgoing division of work, and more on a synchronization of the interaction capabilities of autonomous employees and groups, organized in networks. The psychological schooling in courses may be of a rudimentary kind, yet it has no absolute end, but rather a continuous prolongation exercised partly through diverse mass media. Coming full circle, some people even get so knowledgeable that they may themselves start redistributing their own practical knowledge on market conditions. They become management consultants, creating and selling courses to those willing to pay for them.

In this chapter, I will investigate such attempts at disseminating managerial knowledge and skills of a psychological character. I will first look at two group dynamical courses given by consultancy firms, and outline some characteristics that seem to define such courses. This is followed by a discussion about what distinguishes the described courses from earlier attempts in the same direction. I then describe some publications of the so-called management theory industry where popular psychological managerial knowledge is presented to a wider audience, thus giving the mass media consumer in general some advice on how to manage everyday life and work (as well as make him or her ready and able to take part in a management course). I will, in other words, here outline some of the know-how one, allegedly, needs to acquire to become the autonomous and responsible worker resonating with contemporary managerial ideals (cf. Rose 1998, Olds and Thrift 2005, Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). Understanding and incorporating the latter ideals may, however, require some awkward detours – reminiscent, as it happens, of those of a certain medieval poet.
Teambuilding

As Dante put it:

Midway upon the journey of our life
I found myself within a forest dark
For the straightforward pathway had been lost. 61

More precisely, I was way up in the treetops, my arms tightly wrapped around a trunk, my feet on the end of a thin stick lashed between two trees, with nothing but air between me and the dirt some ten meters below. I could feel the old pine swaying gently in the breeze as I tried to breathe slowly.

Since I have always been terribly afraid of heights, I could not but question my own judgement. Why had I been so persistent to go there? Why had I put myself in a situation so full of existential anxiety that it was, I later realized, most accurately described by a fourteenth century poet on an allegorical journey down to hell? Questioning my judgement was, on the other hand, all I could do. Move, for instance, I could not. I had frozen. 62

Luckily for me, though, it was not only the age and the trees and the confusion that I had in common with that poet. Very much like him I also had a coach – although of a somewhat different kind.

‘How does it feel’, the coach asked me.

Hugging the tree, hardly moving my lips, I answered: ‘It feels like it’s very high…’

‘Is that an emotion?’ he then asked me. 63

I immediately responded: ‘It feels unpleasant.’

These two little questions by the coach forced me to confront my own emotions, which, I suddenly understood, I had unconsciously tried to distance myself from, since I did not really fancy them. Or, as Dante continues,

… this forest savage, rough, and stern,
Which in the very thought renew the fear.
So bitter is it, death is little more …

This, I later realized, was basically the very idea of this ‘forest’. I was trying to make my way through a so-called High Ropes Track, designed to make it possible for the participants to confront their own fears, in order to do ‘edge

61 The opening lines of Dante Alighieri’s The Divine Comedy, translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. According to the medieval Christian tradition, as interpreted by Dante, life expectancy was 70 years (Dante Aligierhi 1990: 418). Midway upon the journey of life was, therefore, the age of 35. While lost in the dark forest Dante meets his predecessor Vergil who guides him on the first two parts (that is, through hell and purgatory) of his journey out of sin and into salvation.

62 As it happens, in Dante’s version of hell, the centre-piece is made out of ice.

63 The coach here used the verb käänna and the noun känsla, the latter also translatable as ‘feeling’.
work’.\textsuperscript{64} This kind of work is supposed to make you conscious of your own limits, as well as the possibility of transgressing them, and thereby once again finding ‘the straightforward pathway’. The track itself has no important content to be mastered; it is, as the coach put it, ‘just a metaphor’, a means of raising the awareness of those who do it – or, as it feels, dare it. The ‘forest’ that you climb through when doing the track thus has no content beyond the fear, and perhaps bitterness, it produces. In other words, I was \textit{supposed} to get ‘lost’ in it. This was the reason it was there, because only then could I ‘find’ myself again. The point is that it turned out to be a specific type of self that I was to find when guided out of this forest.

The track was part of a three-day teambuilding course that I took part in, mainly as an observer. It was given by a management consultancy, here called Alfa, based in the greater Stockholm area. This particular course had been bought by a group from a large company in southern Sweden. Not unlike the work of anthropologists, or poets, such courses to a large degree are about capturing people’s experiences in words. Yet the words of these courses are of a specific kind, and their aim is not only to describe or interpret the world, but actually to change it.\textsuperscript{65} More precisely, they are about changing the world \textit{by} interpreting it. Here follows a brief summary of what happened during the course.\textsuperscript{66}

The first day

At mid-day I meet up with Dennis who is going to lead the course. Since the course will take place out in the woods, at a camp owned by the consultancy firm he is a part of, and to where there are no public transportation, we go there together in his car. Dennis tells me that the group that has bought the course comes from manufacturer of car parts in southern Sweden. His idea about my participation in this event is that I should be like an assistant to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{64} See Martin (1994) for another field experience of a High Ropes Track.
  \item \textsuperscript{65} Teambuilding comes in many shapes. In the early 2000s there were mainly two different types in Sweden, those that concern themselves with how to put a team together and those which deal in how to remake an existing group into a team. The first type looks at what different kinds of persons are needed in a team to make it efficient (see for example Belbin 1981). The second type – the one I encountered when following my methodological delimitation to track down emotion discourse – is based on the idea of groups being dynamical units.
  \item \textsuperscript{66} These events took place in 2001. I had tried to locate some of the management educations in emotional intelligence that ‘should’ have been there since emotional intelligence was supposed to have become the new management fad (see Chapter One). Mainly conducting this search on the Internet, using a tool called \textit{Konsultguiden}, supplied by a business journal called \textit{Affärsvärlden}, I found none. \textit{Konsultguiden} lists management consultants according to specific types. I mainly searched the categories such as ‘teambuilding’, and the likes. I did find some consultants, however, that gave courses which seemed to make use of the concept of emotions in a way not wholly unlike the discourse of emotional intelligence. One of these consultancies even had a series of articles on their homepage, written by one of the consultants, that discussed the importance of understanding and handling emotions when managing organizations. This consultant was Alfa.
\end{itemize}
him. He has, however, hesitated on what to say to the group about me, so he has said nothing. When we arrive at the camp and he shows me around, we both get unsure of what I can do. I realize that my role will be mainly that of an observer, standing beside and watching. I will not be able to participate in the same sense as the group members, nor in the sense of the coach.

The group arrives in the afternoon. The first thing the participants learn is that they are going to sleep on the ground, in a tent similar to those used by the Sami population in the northern parts of Scandinavia. If it gets chilly during the night, there is a fireplace in the middle of the tent. The meals, though, will be prepared by a cook from a local restaurant and served at the tables outside the tent.

The course itself starts with a lecture on the Outward Bound concept, some words about the difference between product and process, and also about Experiential Learning. Outward Bound was developed for the British Navy during WW II. The basic idea of this concept, as used by Alfa, is that teambuilding exercises, and the environment in which they take place, ought to be different from the contexts the participants are used to work in. The habitual practices of the group members, not least their habitual roles in the group, should be eliminated or altered so that the processes taking place in the group will become visible. The idea of the Outward Bound concept, at least as it is used by Alfa, is thus to make evident the internal dynamics of the group. The focus during the exercises, and indeed during the whole teambuilding experience, will be on process, not outcome.

Dennis then states that the difference between product and process is the difference between the questions ‘what’ and ‘how’. We often focus on what we are going to do. We ought to focus more on how we do it. Because without a well-functioning work process, we will not be able to accomplish what we strive for. At least not in an efficient way. In this context, the idea of Experiential Learning is that practical knowledge is best learnt in a practical manner. If you want to learn how to function in a group, and learn how groups function, you must practice teamwork. Theories about groups will not make sense to you if you have not, so to speak, lived them.

Then everybody gets to introduce themselves. This may seem odd since the participants work together. But now they are to accomplish a self-presentation by using symbols they can find on the island. With the aid of these the participants will describe who they are, what their team skills are, and what they are afraid of. As he has already told me he would, Dennis begins with a long self-presentation in order to show the others that it is alright to open up. To me he has appeared as a rather typical middle aged middle class business person – friendly and easy, but rather straight forward – yet one who, which he later also tells me, feels more comfortable at the camp than behind a desk. Now he shows a flower, a dandelion, holding a brief speech about how he has sometimes felt like someone that others did not want around. Then the group participants introduce themselves one after another, also using flowers that represent difficulty in opening up (a flower
not yet out in bloom), or the belief that life should be fun, or forgetfulness (he had forgotten what his own flower was to represent). Stones are also popular, representing someone who does not display emotions (a ‘stone face’), or that one is hard because one has become empty inside (also displaying an empty beer can). No one puts much emphasis on team skills. I introduce myself last of all, showing the others my notebook saying that this is who I am right now: a researcher in social anthropology who tries to do fieldwork. Then I state that what I am most afraid of is to be misunderstood, which makes Dennis burst out into laughter. One of the participants ask if I am going to take part in the exercises, but Dennis denies this, stating that I will only observe, and mostly him.

The rest of the evening, the group is left to itself.

When wandering off from the site, in the mellow dusk of the early Swedish summer, with the silence only broken by the group’s distant voices and the occasional crackling from the fireplace, Dennis confides to me that this went off pretty smooth, that it does happen that people start arguing right away when they introduce themselves, because they have never been able to speak freely at work before.

The second day

The next day starts with a discussion about what happened yesterday. First in pairs, then all together. One of the participants, however, a middle aged man called Anders, starts by declaring that he does not want to do the High Ropes track. The answer from Dennis turns into a lecture about the importance of being open to new experiences.

A series of exercises then follows. First an exercise in trust. This is the, for many probably well known, exercise where you are supposed to fall backwards into someone else’s arms. The scope of the exercise is gradually escalated, making the participants dare more and more. In the end each person falls backwards through the air from a small rock for about a meter, and into the arms of the colleagues below. Everyone does this. The exercise in trust ends with a brief lecture about trust and control and the ability of just letting go, where Dennis states that: ‘Trust is also a form of control.’

The rest of the day is spent doing different rather playful exercises, like crossing a ‘river’ (where the shores are marked by two logs on the ground) by using a few ‘floating stones’ (small pieces of plank) that will drift away unless somebody stands on them. When the team starts by throwing a few ‘stones’ into the ‘river’, Dennis immediately kicks them away and the team has to start all over again. During all these exercises the team has to use their imagination to envision the scene that Dennis tells them about where the exercise is imagined to take place. But most of all they will have to use their

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67 According to Schutz (1994), this exercise was used in sensitivity training groups (see below) already in the 1950s.
imagination to understand how they will go about it. Many exercises involve awkward bodily postures, for example when the participants stand on the trunk of a fallen tree behind each other in a certain order and then are supposed to reverse the order without touching the ground. Or when they are supposed to get through a giant ‘spider’s web’ made out of ropes without touching the net.

All the time there is an ongoing discussion in the group about what to do. At some of the exercises, however, the participants are only allowed to talk before the exercise starts. During all these exercises, Dennis observes the group closely. After each exercise he then initiates another kind of discussion about the process in the group; about who did what, how they reasoned, and how they felt about it. The latter in order to make the participants aware of the importance of their feelings when working. Dennis points out that it is important to feel that the work, that is, the co-operation in the group, is going well. When asked how it feels one must be able to say ‘Good!’’, and not just ‘Okay…’. That it feels good means that you are committed, which is a necessary predisposition for both the individual member and the group to function well. According to Dennis, this is also the difference between consensus and concordance. Consensus means that everyone accepts, for example, a decision. Concordance means that all are whole-heartedly in, which makes the group much more action oriented. I later realize that this distinction is a paraphrase of some words by Will Schutz (1994), whom Dennis holds in high regard.

The third day

The big event the last day is the High Ropes track. In line with the Outward Bound concept, the track is built way up in the tree tops, at most ten meters above the ground. The day starts with a brief lecture about this track where you get the chance to test your limits and try to push them. The purpose, according to Dennis, is to make evident that it is possible to do things that you are afraid of, and that you can overcome your fears and adopt the formerly frightening phenomenon into your normal repertoire of behaviours. This has two consequences. First you expand your ‘safety zone’, that is the situations where you feel safe. Second, you learn how to get on top of your fears. The latter is accomplished by the fact that you get to recognize how it feels when fear comes creeping along (and this you get many chances to do during the track). This means that you learn to recognize the feeling building up and thus will be able to identify the signal telling you when it is really time to keep cool and not panic.

According to Dennis the track is to be seen as a metaphor. Like the exercises, what you actually do on the track is not important, the track in itself has no content to be learnt or mastered, it is the processes that is generated that is of interest; few people working in an office tend to find themselves jumping around in the tree tops, at least not during work, nor will they, hope-
fully, find themselves on the verge of a panic attack experiencing how it feels when fear comes creeping along. The purpose of the track is rather to learn how to master yourself by learning how to manage your emotions, especially in situations of stress.

In a way, the purpose thus is to get to know your self. Everyone does the track from the perspective of their own emotions. You must all the time be attentive to your own emotions. If, or in most cases when, you get frightened you also get the possibility to try to overcome your fear. Dennis states that it is important to reflect on what emotions that guide your choices. By not letting fear guide your life, you will strengthen yourself.

After a discussion about the track, Dennis starts talking about the FIRO-theory. FIRO stands for Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation, and is a theory about the functioning of groups constructed by the psychologist Will Schutz. During the Korean War, the American Navy had a problem with uneven performance. Though the crew on certain ships had the same competence, the actual performance of a ship in battle could not be predicted. Schutz was hired to find out the reason for this. His answer was the FIRO-theory.

According to this theory every group develops through three phases, where the group in each phase tries to solve the problems of, in turn, inclusion, control, and affection. Briefly summarized this means that when a group first is formed, the participants are insecure. They first of all want to know that everyone wants to be a part of the group. When this is settled power struggles will occur. When the smoke clears everyone in the group will have found their role. Not until now will the group be ready to go to work. The group will act in a spirit of respect, openness, and trust. At this stage synergy will appear; the group together will be more efficient then the members by themselves.

Dennis mentions that FIRO is just one theory about group development, one among many. But that it is useful because it is so simple. He further states that in the first phase 80 per cent of the energy is put into questions of ‘how’. In the control phase 100 per cent of the energy goes into the ‘how’. In the last phase 80 per cent of the energy is put into questions of ‘what’ and only 20 per cent into questions of ‘how’. It is thus important to get to the last phase. This can actually be accomplished in two ways. Power struggle is the hard way. Openness is the easy way. These phases can be seen as the phases of a boat trip. In the Inclusion phase you get on the boat, in the Control phase you row in different directions, in Affection you row in the same direction and one person steers. Dennis ends the lecture with the words: ‘From now on, this will cost you nothing. It’s for free to develop a good group.’

The course then ends with people hugging trees – including Anders. The High Ropes track is a construction of wires and ropes and logs way up in the tree tops, connecting one tree to the other. You will have to walk across a log, climb across a net, balance on a wire, and so on, to get from the beginning to the end. You enter the track from a rock, and immediately find your-
self five, six meters above the ground, and then it just gets worse. At most you will be ten meters above the ground. In theory though, there is nothing to be afraid of, because you are secured by two ropes to a wire above your head. If you fall, you will fall half a meter, so you can just get back on the track and continue. In practice though, if you are just a bit afraid of heights, the wire securing you will mean nothing. After having done the track myself, I found it fascinating how a broad log could transform itself into a thin stick once you are balancing on it six, seven, or even ten meters above the ground. Especially at the end the track was so unpleasant, and I was so full of dread, that I had to concentrate on not feeling at all – but just had to breathe slowly – to be able to get through it. There was really nothing to be afraid of, yet it almost felt like dying. Indeed, ‘so bitter is it, death is little more …’.

Everyone walks the track with a personal coach, that is, another participant on the ground asking question about ‘how’, ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘why’. According to Dennis, coaching is a method to help someone reflect on his or her own present state. Asking questions which in this way direct attention to the mental processes has, Dennis states, been developed as a psychotherapeutic method in a type of family therapy called the Milan model. When hearing him delivering this lecture before doing the track, it strikes me that coaching is pretty much what he has been doing all along. He has held a few lectures, but mostly he has just been trying to make the participants reflect on their own situation. When I ask Dennis if I can do the track, he says that he will coach me himself.

In the last exercise of the course, the participants are told to summarize the whole experience in a few words that they should bring home and think about. The resulting words were ‘happiness’, ‘openness’, ‘objectives’, and ‘planning’.

Some annoying conclusions

What remained most vividly in my mind after the course was an incident I felt I could not get past. The only exercise I had been able to participate in during the course was the High Ropes Track, since it was an individual exercise that everyone did for themselves with a coach and not as a team. During

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68 At the time of this event, the term ‘coaching’ was not widely used in Sweden. Since then matters have changed and the term ‘coach’ is now a part of the common vocabulary. There are (at the time of writing) a diversity of coaches for a diversity of purposes. Foundational in the Milan model of therapy, referred to by Dennis, is the idea of the family as a self-regulating system. The symptom is seen as ‘a solution to a current threat to the family’s transactional rules’. The therapist therefore asks questions out of a circular rather than linear conception of causality. Rather than saying, for example, that the mother in a family “is depressed”, or even that she “gets depressed” in response to a particular situation, they say that she “shows depression”. This leads inquiry away from internal factors in the depression and toward the function of the depression in the ongoing system’ (Wachtel and Wachtel 1986: 64-65).
the other exercises I had simply been an observer, just standing by, taking notes, saying nothing. Already at the presentation the first day, some of the participants had raised their eyebrows when they heard that they were going to be observed by a researcher. And directly after the exercise in trust, which was the first in the row of exercises the second day, one of the participants, named Benny, said that ‘it would be interesting to hear what Hans gets out of all this’. All the others seemed to agree. I suddenly found a bunch of faces turned towards me, awaiting my reply. I was a bit surprised by the sudden request, but nevertheless gave a few examples of what I had seen.

When Dennis heard my descriptions he immediately remarked that this was dangerous. My description had, he stated, too much focus on the ‘what’ and too little on the ‘how’. I had described what happened, not the process in the group. For a moment there was nothing but silence. Then, addressing the others just as much as me, Benny said:

‘You can never get the gut feeling unless you have yourself taken part in these exercises.’

The others uttered some appreciating remarks to this analysis. It was now obvious that I was not a part of the team. I did not share their experiences.

For the team this was probably good news. Together they created something that separated them from others who did not share their experiences. They were all, so to speak, together on the boat. Personally, though, I found these remarks quite devastating. As an anthropologist I wanted to do participant observation. Now it had been shoved down my throat that I was anything but participating, and that I moreover did not and could not understand what the group was experiencing. For me as an anthropologist, it also felt more than just a bit awkward to be lectured on the difference between observation and participation. During the rest of the day I really felt that I stood beside, watching.

The argument that Benny had put forth seemed irrefutable. As I understood it, he had managed to grasp exactly what this course was supposed to be about. Teambuilding was a practice. You had to do it yourself to understand it, since this understanding was not of an intellectual kind but rather about gut feelings, which only afterwards could be verbalized in an intellectual manner. Unfortunately, my only personal experience of something close to gut feelings during this course was the High Ropes Track, but that felt more like the intestines were moving about all by themselves, with no relation to the group at all. It seemed no accident that Benny was the one who uttered these words. He had been through a similar course called UGL. Moreover, all consultants employed by Alfa had been through that course as well.

The teambuilding course had given me a lot of useful information. Not least had it made me notice the similarities between participating in a group dynamic course, such as this one in teambuilding, and the ethnographic method of participant observation. Yet that information in itself did not take me past the imagined insider/outsider boundary in this case. The ‘inside’ of
this insider’s perspective also, from what I had learnt, had bodily connotations. To achieve an insider perspective I would have to, at least momentarily, step into the territory of ‘carnal sociology’ (Wacquant 2011: 90), where the habitus becomes as much tool as topic and where thus, in a way, my own ‘gut’ would become an informant, since it would reveal the feelings of an inside to me. In other words, if I wanted to acquire more of an insider’s perspective I would have to take my gut and participate myself in some sort of teambuilding experience. I took the easy way out and simply bought my way in.

UGL

UGL, short for *Utveckling av grupp och ledare* (Development of group and leader),\(^{69}\) is a widely spread leadership course in Sweden, used in both the private and the public sector. According to *Chef*, a journal for Ledarna (The Leaders), a union of managers, it was the most popular management course in Sweden at the end of the 1990s (Chef 1997: 8: 41). At the turn of the century, 5000 persons participated in a UGL course each year (Andersson 2001: 190). The course is given by a number of different consultancy firms, yet is standardized. The exercises are the same at all courses and given in a certain order defined by the leadership institution at The Swedish National Defence College (*Försvarshögskolan*), which owns the course concept. The instructors leading the courses have all participated in the standardized instructor education. Since the mid-2000s, the course is given in an English version, too. There are both closed and open courses. Some are for military officers, police officers, medical students, or bought by different companies directly for their staff, and therefore not possible to take part in unless you belong to one of these categories. To join an open course, however, you just have to pay the fee. Which was exactly what I did, just a few weeks after the teambuilding course described above. For me UGL represented a possibility of getting both an insider view of a teambuilding course and a better understanding of contemporary management ideas and practices more generally.

UGL has a duration of one work week, that is, five days. There are 10 to 12 participants in each course. This is the number that according to group dynamics theory defines a group. The group is led by two tutors (*handlare*), functioning as both instructors and coaches. It is stated on the diploma that the participants receive after attending that the course is group dynamical and contains self-awareness, Situational Leadership Theory, communi-

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\(^{69}\) A direct translation of *Utveckling av grupp och ledare* would be ‘Development of group and leader’. For a couple of years the course has also been given in English version called Understanding Group and Leader.
cation, feedback, conflict management and group development. The latter is, at UGL, synonymous with the practice of teambuilding.

A row of exercises

In the summer of 2001 I participated in a UGL course. This was held at a hotel outside of Stockholm. It was a typical conference setting – comfortable, good food, nice rooms, not overly expensive, but a typical middle class hotel. As participants we were not allowed to leave the setting during the course. Everyone stayed there overnight. Apart from telephones there was no connection with the outside world; you could not interact with your friends, relatives, usual colleagues during the course. UGL is, as the course papers have it, a ‘laboratory situation’. Here follows a description of the course.

I arrive after lunch on Monday, like the other participants, and soon we are gathered in a conference room where we all, including the coaches, make a short self-presentation. It turns out that the participants come from a variety of work places in both the private and public sector. What they have in common is that they either have an official managerial position or are involved in some kind of teamwork. The group is constructed to be a so-called out group, where people do not know each other and do not immediately identify with each other. It consists of twelve people: equal numbers of men and women of various ages, and where two of the participants are immigrants – a diversity reflecting Swedish society. Later on the participants also present various reasons for participating: some have been sent there by their employers, some have heard about the course elsewhere and managed to get their employer to pay for the course. As will be the case throughout the course when the whole group is gathered, we sit on chairs arranged in a ring in the middle of the room. During some of the exercises the group is split

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70 This description is based on my own attendance at a course, as well as interviews with others who have attended a course, the same one as me as well as other ones. It is also based on written material concerning the different exercises, which is handed out during the course. The objectives are explicitly stated by the coaches during the course – in line, it seems, with the idea of openness. UGL is constantly updated. The version of UGL described here was replaced by another one in 2008, and so on. To become a UGL coach you first have to participate in a UGL course, then in two more courses called FUGL (Fördjupning UGL, that is ‘Deepening UGL’), and HUGL (Handledarutbildning, which is the education certifying you as a UGL coach). Altogether these three courses take five weeks of education. Anyone can go FUGL, but to go HUGL you have to first pass a test at the Swedish Defence College, which certifies the coaches (see http://www.fhs.se/sv/utbildning/uppdragsutbildningar/ledarskap/ugl/kurser-ugl/hugl-handledarutbildning/#content and http://www.fhs.se/sv/utbildning/uppdragsutbildningar/ledarskap/ugl/om-ugl/ugl-2008/#content, 2012-06-29; see also the article by Jane Bergstedt on UGL 2008 in the union journal Position, Nr. 4, 2009). For some basic statistics on the numbers of people participating in UGL, as well as some comments on the popularity of the course, see below.

71 All translations from Swedish – that is, from programs, reports, journals, newspapers, etc. – are my own, unless otherwise stated.
two or three subgroups, which then gather together to discuss the results of the exercise.

At UGL the focus is on the exercises. These are of two kinds, group exercises and individual exercises. Most of the group exercises are unpretentious when it comes to the content. The focus here is on process, not product. That is, the exercises have no content to be mastered; their only function is to start up a group process that can be dissected afterwards.

For instance, the first exercise in the course is an exercise called ‘The train trip’. The participants are divided into two groups consisting of six people, where each group is to discuss which of the given statements about a text describing a train trip are true, false, or impossible to decide on. The outcome of the discussion depends on how the group interprets the statements, which all are somewhat ambiguous. After fifteen minutes the whole group gathers again and compares what has happened in the two small groups. In my group the discussion went on for the whole fifteen minutes and we had hardly any time at all to decide on the last two statements. In the other group they had decided on all the statements after ten minutes and then just sat there waiting the last five minutes.

The coaches then presented the idea of Experiential Learning and discussed the difference between content and process in group work, also known as the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of the work (altogether sometimes labelled the ‘Walnut’), stating that how a decision is reached in a group will decide the efficiency of the group in the work to come. If all members of the group feel that they have contributed to the decision-making process and support the final decision the group will function well, otherwise not.

The method of Experiential Learning is, the coaches then tell us, meant to function in the following way. The participants start with a concrete experience, often some kind of task to be solved. When this is done, the group, together with the coaches, discusses what has happened. The participants share and compare their experiences. After a while the participants will be ready to draw some general conclusions. The coaches then launch a theory that is based on the experiences. The discussion continues about how well the theory describes what has happened. If the participants believe that the theory matches the experience, they will try to understand it and get ready to apply it, that is, they will develop a new pattern of behaviour. During the following exercises they will get the chance to try out this behaviour – after which the whole process starts again. For the method to work, we are further told, it is necessary that the participants are willing to experiment with their behaviour, that they are willing to try out new ways of acting, of being, that they do not just want to go on as usual.

As seen here then, the first exercise presented the type of learning that the course is based on and the main focus of the entire course – that is, the focus on group processes, and specifically decision making – through a practical down-to-earth exercise, followed up with a discussion of what has happened, how the group has acted, how the different participants have acted and react-
ed, all leading to a relevant theoretical and methodological discussion. All group exercises at UGL are conducted and function in a way similar to this one. There is however at least one exercise where the focus is on both content and process – where the process is the content, so to speak – and that is an exercise called Active Listening.\footnote{Active Listening is a method of aiding someone in accomplishing a thoroughgoing personal reflection, for instance when trying to come to terms with personal difficulties, or when trying to make a difficult decision. It consists in posing a specific type of questions to the person in need. The listener is not supposed to advise the help seeker, but merely help him or her reflect.} As in the other exercises the participants are here supposed to learn a technique for interaction in order to enhance their team skills.

The individual exercises at UGL, of which there are two, have as a focus to determine an individual psychological profile of each of the participants. These two profiles are, first, a learning profile, aiming at an understanding of how you tend to learn things, and second, a device called Strength Deployment Inventory. The latter is used to determine a profile of motivating needs and corresponding behaviour, and how this behaviour changes when interpersonal conflict arises. By increasing the self-awareness of the participants in this way, they will supposedly become better team players, and in general gain a better understanding of people’s actions, including their own, in the interpersonal relationships in which they are involved.

As a participant, you are also given a course file. But only after each exercise are you handed the papers relating to that particular exercise to put in the file, so that you that you can read more about the theories and methods related to the exercise – all in line with the practice of Experiential Learning.

### Group development

The theory most relevant to understand the workings of a group presented at UGL is the FIRO-theory. Just as at Alfa (see above), the three stages of FIRO (Inclusion, Control and Affection) are associated with a crew on a rowboat. When people first meet – that is, when a new group is formed – the participants do not know each other and wonder whether they will fit in, if they even want to belong to the group, and if they will be accepted by the others. The important question in the Inclusion phase is whether everyone will board the boat. When this has happened – metaphorically – the group moves on to the next stage, the Control phase, which is characterized by role seeking. Questions of power become important. The important issue is to get everyone to row in the same direction, and to get someone to steer the boat. When this is accomplished the group moves on to the last stage, the Affection phase. Here, at last, the group starts to cooperate efficiently; the group has become a team. Unfortunately, many groups never reach this phase – but UGL is an opportunity to experience what it is like to go there. The group, we are told, should try to reach that stage, that is, should therefore try to
transform itself from a group to a team. When the participants return to their everyday life they will, as a consequence of these experiences, be able to identify these different phases the next time they encounter them.

There are also two intermediate phases, we are told, situated between Inclusion and Control, and between Control and Affection. These phases are both characterized by a calm atmosphere in the group, where everyone feels relieved because of having left the uncomfortable previous phase. However, the group must keep developing to become really productive. The pleasantness of these intermediate phases is a hindrance to productivity.

Of all the theories delivered during an UGL course FIRO is fundamental to the course in that it functions as a sort of framework for many of the other theories. Techniques regarding feedback and self-awareness may be valuable in themselves, but also as ways to further group development. Not least in the intermediate phases, which are so pleasant, is it important that the group keep up communication and become aware of what is happening in the group so as not to get stuck. Nevertheless, many groups never move beyond the Control phase. Different causes are possible. One problem is that the group is reconstituted every time a person disappears from or enters it, something that is rather common in war – the environment in which FIRO was first created – but in certain work places as well. However, if the group members have reached the Affection phase before, they will find it easier to get there again.

Leadership may be a reason behind stagnation or retardation in the group’s development. To get to the Affection phase it is, in any group, important that the right kind of leadership is administered. At UGL a model called Situational Leadership Theory is used. According to this model – based on the work of Hershey and Blanchard (1977) – leadership has to vary according to which phase of development the group is in. In the Inclusion phase the leader is strict and governing, in the control phase supportive, a coach, and in the affection phase the leader just delegates the tasks to be done.

When – or rather if – the group has arrived at the final stage in its development, it will solve problems more efficiently than what each individual is capable of on his or her own. This state of effortless cooperation – in the sense that (almost) all effort is put into the task, since intra-group struggle has ceased – is called synergy.

A cycle of participant observation
At UGL one day follows the other as one exercise is delivered after the other. The course starts after lunch on Monday and goes on until Friday afternoon. Already on Tuesday night my field notes – written at around midnight – declare that ‘we are stuffed with theories’, ‘the day turns into a haze’, ‘am dead tired’. Once the course has started there is no spare time until it finishes – except for a drinking session the last evening. Directly after breakfast eve-
ry day the first exercise of the day begins, goes on until lunch, then other exercises continue until supper, and the day does not end until ten o’clock in the evening. After that the participants have time for themselves until breakfast the next day.

In the evenings, that is, sometime after ten o’clock, I sit down in my room to write field notes. During the day I have on some occasions, when it has not seemed inappropriate, jotted down a few notable comments and happenings. I have tried to memorize others and now I sum them up. I try to be systematic by writing down every exercise, adding ethnographic depth by quoting comments and describing incidents within this framework.

An interesting aspect of my fieldwork situation is that I know I am not alone in writing these kinds of notes. As a part of the course, the participants are supposed to write down what has happened during the day according to a specific pattern. We are supposed to write down what happened during each exercise, how we felt or reacted during the exercise, our own actions or inactions, what we learned about ourselves from it, and about the other participants as well as about the situation, and lastly, how we can apply this knowledge in real life situations. These notes are then made the basis for the first exercise each day, which is called the Rear-View Mirror, and is a reflection – in the form of a common discussion – on the day before. This ethnographic-like exercise thus goes beyond the ‘para-ethnographic’ – that is, the ‘self-conscious critical faculty that operates in any expert domain as a way of dealing with contradiction, exception, facts that are fugitive’ (Holmes and Marcus 2005: 236-237) – since it is an integrated part of the course.

At the same time my field notes are more extensive than those of the other participants. Waquant (2011: 89) states that any ethnographer should try to ‘double the dose of reflexivity’. Yet, here I am forced to do it. I have to reflect not only on myself as a participant in the course but also – being an anthropologist doing participant observation – on a participant reflecting on himself. As the events unfold, it becomes difficult for me to keep the two roles of reflecting participant and anthropologist reflecting on reflecting participant separate. On the third day these two roles definitely collapse into each other. Yet it had been difficult from the beginning.

Already the first day when we presented ourselves – and the others got to know that I was there just as a part of a research project – the two roles of participant and researcher became problematic. Later on, when we were giving feedback as part of an exercise, I was characterized by almost everyone as something like ‘thoughtful researcher’, a laid back person scrutinizing the others. The question, at least as I sensed it, seemed to be: would I get on the boat or not? The next day, during another feedback exercise, I was given the same kind of feedback. I had expected it, yet it really hit me hard in a way I was obviously not really prepared for.

After a night of little sleep and much brooding I still entered the conference room the third day with a conviction not to tell anyone about it – but in the end did exactly the opposite. It had struck me that the group now was
characterized by a very nice but formal atmosphere. According to the FIRO-theory, this was a sign that the group had entered an intermediate phase. Since I had joined the course as a part of my fieldwork I was almost desperate for something to happen, in this case meaning group development. As we had learnt the previous day during the presentation of FIRO, and as I knew from my experience at Alfa, there were different ways of getting the group through the different phases of group development. One way was for one of the participants to simply move on and be open with his or her thoughts and feelings. I believe I tried not to, but I simply burst. And well aided by the coaches, one might add, professionals as they were.

I do not remember how it started, what I first said, but the coaches suddenly started asking me questions that led me into a confession about how hard it had hit me when I got feedback the day before, and then on to my thoughts about the very formal atmosphere in the group. At that point there were some reactions in the group and they were – from my point of view – not very positive. A discussion even emerged in which it was questioned whether I was a part of the group or not, a statement that from my point of view seemed absurd, since I was now really emotionally involved in the group process, for the moment probably more than any of the others. Yet the discussion moved on and – looking at it afterwards – something probably happened to the group at that point, although this undercurrent that now had been set in motion did not surface until later that day. The coaches, anyway, seemed very pleased with my little confession, even stating that here we had seen an example of someone opening himself up.

Afterwards, I almost felt sick from this dirty mixture of honesty and deception that I felt I had brewed for myself and the others. I had opened myself and truthfully confessed what I thought and felt about the group. But why did I do it? For the sake of the group’s development? Of course. But why did I so desperately want the group to move on? Because I was a participant in the course? Or because it was an important part of my fieldwork? Both, I guess. At that moment – no matter what Bourdieu says – the roles of participant and observer really collapsed into each other.73

73 Bourdieu puts some effort into proving that the idea of ‘participant observation’ is really an oxymoron. Because participation means acting out of a ‘feel for the game’, whereas observation implies distancing oneself from what is going on (see for example Bourdieu 1990: 33-34, 66). Waquant (2011) suggests that ethnography should rather be about ‘observant participation’, meaning that you ‘go native armed’, that is, ‘with the full store of problematics inherited from your discipline’ (2011: 87). Whether that is something different from what ethnographers have always done or not, it is nevertheless a rather accurate description of what I was more or less forced into by doing fieldwork on a course with a teambuilding effort which included the Rear-view Mirror.
Feedback

At UGL people actually meet for the first time, so the relatively strict and formal behaviour that is a part of the Inclusion phase at first becomes very obvious. The other phases, however, are less obvious. When I participated in the course, I had doubts that anyone of us realized that we had entered the Control phase until one of the coaches told us so. But then – on Wednesday afternoon, just a few hours after my little confession – it was easy to see that we actually had been involved in a power struggle.

A sign indicating that the group has entered this second phase is, according to the coaches, that people suddenly start talking in a different way. They tend to use a rather harsh language, full of sarcasm that some of the participants will laugh at while others will not. The politeness of the Inclusion phase is all blown away – interaction can become quite emotional, and not in a very pretty way. Since you are a part of what happens you do not notice it unless you know what signs to look for.

When this kind of experience is put into a psychological framework it gives you a new perspective. Not only do you get to understand the actions of others in new way, but also your own way of acting. In this and other ways UGL is also about self-awareness. The idea seems to be that you can only function well in a group if you know yourself. By understanding how you relate to other types of persons you get to understand the interaction in the group. This will also make it possible for you to understand how you react in certain situations, for example conflicts. The more self-aware the members are, the better the group will function.

A point where self-awareness and group development are seen to coincide is feedback, since feedback, as the coaches during an exercise told us, is a way to enhance the ‘arena’, that is, what all group members know about each other, including what you know about yourself – all in accordance with the terminology of the Johari window model.74 A large common arena indicates a high level of mutual trust in the group. No one feels the need to keep secrets about themselves.

Basically, the idea of feedback is that constant communication about interpersonal processes in the group will make the group function more efficiently. Everyone in the group must constantly try to deliver to the others how they feel about what is going on in the group. Since knowing how others react to your actions will make it possible for you to act more efficiently, feedback is a way to help others function better at work. With the right kind of feedback the energy of the group is channelled into productive work in-

The Johari window, developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is the basic theory presented at UGL concerning openness. It is usually depicted as a square – a “window” – made up of four smaller squares. Each of these smaller squares represents a type of, or lack of, openness: the unknown (what no-one knows about a person), the façade (what you know about yourself but do not reveal to others), the blind spot (what others but not you know about yourself), the arena (what everyone knows about you).
instead of intra-group struggle. Feedback plays a decisive role in how the group is turned into a team. If, however, the members keep, for example, their emotions to themselves, the group will never be able to function efficiently, other than by chance. By regularly giving feedback everyone will know where everyone else stands. By respecting everyone’s emotions in this way, all members will become committed to the work of the group.

At the course a possible problem with feedback is also pointed out, which is that it is often given the wrong way. Whoever gives feedback may give it in a way that hurts or is misinterpreted by the one who receives it. If this happens feedback can be counterproductive. At UGL there is a method to avoid such things: feedback should be given in the form of an expression of how one feels when another person behaves in a certain way. This method called ‘I-messages’ works well, according to the coaches, since your emotions cannot be questioned. No one can tell you that the emotion is incorrect or that you are wrong. Yet, it is not always that easy to declare what you feel, as is described in detail in the course file. Often we tell somebody what we feel when we don’t really feel it, but rather think it. For example, ‘I feel that I am right.’ This is one way, of many, to isolate yourself from your own feelings. Sometimes we describe what somebody does to us instead of describing what we feel. For instance, ‘I feel deceived,’ instead of maybe, ‘I feel angry and sad.’ To try to describe what we think someone else does to us is, according to this relatively lengthy description in the course file, a way of handing away the responsibility over our own emotions to someone else. However, no one else decides what we feel, it is stated. We ourselves decide what we feel, although it is not always a conscious decision.

On Thursday morning, during the usual Rear-View Mirror, one of the participants – named Cecilia – was given feedback. It seemed that many of the others had found it hard to understand her behaviour, especially during the exercise the day before when the group had entered the Control phase. Now they tried to verbalize how they had felt. She responded to the feedback, but did not follow the technique that had been taught earlier on. One of the coaches urged her – in line with the idea to be open to new ways of being – to try to follow the recommended technique. She did not. Instead she started crying. This was – I believe for all of us – totally unexpected. It triggered a response where the other participants tried to express their sympathy with her, perhaps even their shame for having been responsible for this outbreak of tears through a too harsh criticism. Although – as one of the coaches had put it earlier on – ‘there is no negative feedback’ since feedback given in the right way is always given in order to achieve something positive, the full range of feedback she had been given may have been experienced as an attack. It was a very emotional moment.

After a while, the situation settled. The coaches started asking people how they felt. One of the participants said, while putting her fist on her stomach, that she had an emotion-monster inside that she had not yet been able to dissect.
Another participant answered that he felt bad because Cecilia felt bad. One of the coaches then asked him:

‘How do we know that Cecilia feels bad?’
‘She’s crying.’
‘Do you always feel bad when you’re crying?’
(Short pause. Deafening silence.)
‘Eh … no.’

One of the other participants said that he felt sympathy with Cecilia, but that perhaps too much focus was put on her. The coach asked him:

‘What do you think Cecilia thinks?’
‘I don’t know.’
‘How can we find out what Cecilia thinks?’
(Short pause.)
‘… I don’t know.’

Then again the coach, with a firm but calm voice:

‘Have you tried asking her?’

While the impact of this rhetorical question – obviously begging for more communication even in emotional moments – sunk into the participants, Cecilia herself responded that she wanted the others to talk about something else. And this is also what happened. After a while we moved on to the next exercise. Cecilia then participated in the rest of the course as everyone else, yet with less fortitude than before.

Throughout this event and the following discussion everyone remained seated. The whole situation was sorted out verbally.

A laboratory setting
It is sometimes stated that UGL is demanding.\(^{75}\) You do a lot of exercises in an intense tempo from early morning to late in the evening, and these exercises are of a kind that may set you into an emotional turmoil; at the course you go through processes of social interaction that are much more intense than in everyday work life situation. If you are psychologically unstable you may find this problematic. If you are not prepared, then, the course may be disastrous for you. Though the coaches have a specific certification, and may also have more extensive therapeutic training of some kind, the course is not group psychotherapy. It is rather the other way around. You have to be in good mental condition to participate in the course.

It happens that participants have to leave the course. One informant, whom I knew from before, and who had participated in another UGL course than I did, described such an occasion when I interviewed her. She took part in a course where yet another participant could not handle the intense inter-

\(^{75}\) For example by the Swedish National Defence College, who owns the concept of UGL (http://www.fhs.se/sv/utbildning/uppdragsutbildningar/ledarskap/ugl/om-ugl/#content, 2012-06-29).
action and had to leave. When this happened the group started functioning better and they reached a phase where everything worked as smooth as it possibly could. Whether this was an intermediate phase or the Affection phase, or if the group even had started all over again, is for a UGL coach to tell. Another informant, who had participated in yet another course, described the feelings at the latter stages of a UGL course as similar to a sort of infatuation; a sense of easiness paired with strong feelings of belonging, a kind of spiritual lightness, of joy, a sense that everything was possible. An interesting parallel here is Back (1972) who, in his discussion about sensitivity training groups (see below), called the participants ‘modern pilgrims’. He believed that the intense interaction in these groups may give rise to similar feelings of spiritual healing and fulfilment as the medieval pilgrims sought on their religious journeys.

The course papers state that when participating in UGL you often reach a level of emotional engagement that is seldom found outside of what is here called a ‘laboratory’ setting. When the course ends, which it does rather abruptly, and you get home, people there will – it is stated in this document – have difficulty understanding your attitude. They will not be able to understand what you are talking about since they have not shared your experiences. Just like divers who cautiously prepare their surfacing, that is, their entrance into another type of environment, the participants must also prepare their homecoming – at least according to the metaphor used in the course papers.

Early on in the course one of the coaches said: ‘How each and everyone in the group feels will affect how the group deals with the task the next time.’ Such a statement points to the extremely complex reality of the sum of emotional processes in a group, which must nevertheless be handled if a group is to function well. On a more general level, however, the statement also seems to suggest the rather basic fact that if people feel well, they will work well, and if they don’t they won’t. This rather simple idea, though, is easier to preach than practice – and especially so in a work group. UGL is an attempt to not only preach, but also offer people a chance to practice it.

To what extent people integrate the general insights from UGL into their everyday lives, and thus practice them outside of the ‘laboratory’ setting, is hard to tell (and certainly a question that goes beyond the scope of this thesis). Noticeable is that three months after the course, when I interviewed some of the participants, none of them had even opened the file from the course. Yet, there seems to be a kind of shared understanding that UGL has a lot to offer, although participants do not readily agree upon what it is that makes the course a good one. When talking to people who have participated in a course, it is obvious that they find different parts of the course valuable. Based on their prior experiences they not only relate in different ways to the same exercises, but also stress different exercises as ‘eye-openers’, that is,
parts of the course that they have been thinking about afterwards. These differences should not be overstated, but they certainly do exist.\textsuperscript{76}

### Interpretation in action

The courses described above share a similar aim of enhancing organizational functioning by increasing the efficiency of human interaction. Such a rationalization is achieved by a sort of guided self-help, where the participants are offered methods for solving everyday interactional problems on their own. Yet for these methods to be useful the participants must first learn how to use them, and that is what they are invited to do in a course. Presenting these methods to the participants starts with an interpretation, in the sense that the social reality that the participants are involved in is theorized in a course. These theories are however not only, or even mainly, attempts at “unveiling” reality, at laying bare the structures and processes of the participant’s interaction, but are primarily attempts to facilitate this interaction. The theorization, in other words, is merely the necessary groundwork for the further presentation of models for how to act. Yet, it seems reasonable to assume that only if interpretations appear to uncover somewhat of the truth will the adherent models for interaction seem useful to the participants. To achieve this, interpretations are at a course set up in a specific context by the use of (at least) two specific techniques. This kind of guided self-help gains its force I suggest – that is, constructs interpretations as meaningful and thereby methods as useful (so that they may be accepted by the participants) – by the techniques of destabilization and timing. The appropriation of a whole apparatus to set up interpretations so that they will be accepted as accurate arguably make the work of interpretation, from an analytical point of view, a form of ‘translation’ (Callon 1986, see also Rose 1998: 55-56). Translation is, put simply, how some acquire the right to speak in the name of others, that is, how some manage to establish control over others by getting their version of reality accepted as a legitimate description of other people’s experiences.

\textsuperscript{76} This view is also expressed in Karlsson et al. (2000). Regardless of the different views on what makes the course valuable, or perhaps just because there are a diversity of views, UGL remained popular throughout the 2000s. About 5000 persons participated in a course in the late 1990s and about 4000 a decade later (Karlsson et al. 2000, Position Nr. 4, 2009). Perhaps the answer to the popularity of the course can – at least partially – be found in the simplicity of the theories and methods used. Such a possibility is suggested in the marketing of the major personality test used at UGL called Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI). Personal Strength Publishing, the company selling SDI, markets the test with the following words: ‘Because people remember and identify with the results, they can easily integrate their insights into their lives and improve their relationships’ (http://www.personalstrengths.com/main.html, 2006-09-05). A similar line of argument was put forth by the coach at Alfa who suggested that FIRO was such a useful theory because of its simplicity. He had seen a row of theories about group development, but FIRO combined simplicity and accuracy like no other.
Destabilizing

In *The Cry for Myth* (1991) May uses the first part of Dante’s journey in *The Divine Comedy* as a metaphor for what happens during psychotherapy. The patient’s ‘journey’, guided by the therapist, into his or her personal problems and then onto the path of a new healthier life is seen by May as metaphorically described by Dante’s experience of being guided by Vergil down into the underworld and then through Purgatory and back onto the ‘straightforward pathway’ leading to Paradise.

Turner suggests that the dominant symbols of a culture can make themselves known through various channels, such as myth, ritual, or literature (1992: 87-88). Whether a ‘dominant’ symbol or not, the journey into the unknown is nevertheless used as an ‘indigenous’ metaphor for psychological interventions not only in May’s discussion of psychoanalysis, but also at courses such as those described above (although it is not their most obvious characteristic). For example, the metaphor of going down into the unknown and then again surfacing in the well-known, which by this detour is now seen from a new perspective and thereby in a sense has become a new world, is used in UGL when the participants are likened to divers who carefully have to surface when re-entering their everyday lives after the course. Using Dante’s words to describe my own experience at the High Ropes Track was not only done because it happened to be an accurate description of my situation at the time, or because borrowing the words of a poet going down to hell also seemed a suitably ironic way of depicting an experience that was so full of anxiety that it defied other forms of labelling, but mainly because the coach himself stated that the track was merely a metaphor, a way of doing ‘edge work’. At courses such as those described above, then, events are presented to the participants as unusual, as something that differs from their everyday life, yet has connections to it and which will have repercussions on it; they leave their everyday lives behind and venture into the unknown, but only in order to make this unknown, or at least the knowledge gained and skills tried out there, a part of their everyday lives.77 A course of this kind, then, has an experimental character. It is, to borrow the phrase from the UGL course papers, a ‘laboratory’ setting.

In other words, at these courses, the everyday lives of the participants are destabilized (cf. Benson 2008: 276, Callon et al. 2002: 206). The participants are brought out of their everyday life, here meaning their work life, and either put into a new environment (such as with the teambuilding at Alfa) or into a new group (such as at UGL) where their work life is recreated (in the form of the group). Through this move, the coaches suddenly have, in a

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77 At the course given by Alfa, the coach introduced the High Ropes Track with a story of how he had lost his way in a fog when going in a small boat to the island where the course is held. Suddenly he was crippled by fear. In the end though, the situation turned out well. And now he knows how he feels when he is about to panic, and can therefore stay calm and not let the fear cripple him.
sense, control over the participants’ everyday work life – and thereby to a certain extent also the way the participants perceive themselves. Following Latour (1983), this is the full meaning of a ‘laboratory’ setting. At UGL the common social processes of everyday work life are then reenacted in such a way that in each exercise focus is placed on certain specific issues deemed relevant to a person who wants to become a skilled leader and group member. At Alfa these everyday work processes are reenacted through playful exercises in a imaginative world of floating stones and giant spider webs and nameless fears (such as the High Ropes Track which is said to be a ‘metaphor’ for each person’s limits) in order to put focus on the process and not on the content of the work.

Interpreting
When destabilization has been accomplished, the process of interpretation starts. At UGL, the exercises and the issues they raise are discussed up until a point where the coaches, by delivering a theory, try to make themselves spokespersons for the participants. They try to get the participants to accept the theory as a valid description of what they have just been through during the preceeding exercise, which then also means what they generally go through in their everyday work lives. The coaches thus attempt to conclude the process of translation. Then a method is delivered which will solve the issue that the exercise has raised. These methods are always verbal. In UGL all problems are resolved verbally. The techniques are designed to make it possible to phrase the problems in certain words that are then used in certain ways. To give feedback by ‘I-messages’ is one example. A feeling of uneasiness, for example, is first correlated by the speaker with a specific emotion, and then expressed verbally in a prescribed manner. As mentioned, this technique of verbalizing feelings is used after every exercise at the team-building course at Alfa. The exercises are often of a physical nature, that is, they may involve rather difficult and uncommon bodily alterations (postures and movements), but these ways of using the body are not ends in themselves but only a means to an enhanced understanding, an understanding that is always reflected upon verbally. The High Ropes Track has a similar construction. The participants do it with a coach that forces them to reflect on their feelings and to verbalize them in a certain manner, that is, to determine and express their inner emotions at each instance. By making use of these methods, the participants confirm that the process of translation has been successful – at least temporarily. In such a case the participants are now requalified, that is, they return to their work with a new view of themselves and their work (cf. Benson 2008: 276, Callon et al. 2002: 206).

78 According to Latour (1983), ‘laboratories are built to destabilize or undo’ the ‘difference between the “inside” and the “outside”’. By translating the items of the ‘field’ into laboratory terms, those working in the laboratory gain control over the field.
From this perspective there is, to borrow the oft quoted words of Kurt Lewin, ‘nothing so practical as a good theory’ (1951: 169). Courses such as UGL and teambuilding at Alfa seek to ‘translate’ the experiences of the participants into phrases such as ‘edge work’, ‘synergy’, ‘openness’, ‘group development’, and others. Yet these theories appear as good theories, and therefore practical, to the receiving parties only if delivered at the right moment. Timing, in other words, is crucial for translations to work.

Timing

It was only some time after the High Ropes Track exercise itself, that the opening lines of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy* struck me as an almost literal description of what I had been through. During the exercise itself, the kind of labelling I was fully preoccupied with was that of trying to put my emotions into words, which towards the end of the track even that seemed too difficult. Comparing these two different types of descriptive exercises – the labelling of emotions during the track and the borrowing of a poet’s words to describe the same event some years later – makes evident the crucial role of timing when putting an experience into words. The comparison highlights the different facets of anthropological fieldwork – ‘being there’ as opposed to the laid back reflection on the experience afterwards – yet thereby also suggests the need for thinking in terms of temporal aspects when trying to understand any type of exercise where the labelling of experiences is important.

During my own participation in the UGL course I could not but help noticing the dexterity of the coaches leading it. They obviously were experienced professionals. The way they could just pinpoint when the group had entered the Control phase, although none of the participants seemed to understand it, was quite impressive. Personally, I really felt that they at times could see right through me. When working inside a concept, with a well-defined structure, with certain specific theories and methods that are to be delivered, the consultant will to a certain degree know what is coming. When my group at UGL stepped into the Control phase, the nice and intimate atmosphere suddenly changed into a harsh and annoying dispute that seemed to feed itself. The coaches, at the time sitting by and watching, were of course only waiting for this to happen. In a similar manner, the coach at Alfa was probably not surprised when one of the participants at the course voiced a refusal to do the High Ropes Track. The way the coach responded, not by arguing but by delivering a short speech on the importance of being open to new experiences and then just leaving the issue aside for the time being, both surprised and impressed me at the time. But he had of course
been through such objections many times before. Dealing with people’s fears and anxieties was a part of his job.\textsuperscript{79}

A management concept or course is nothing like ‘art for art’s sake’. The theories and concepts and other models are not there just as descriptions, but to be implemented, to be used by – and thereby change the world of – the participants in a certain way. For this to happen, the dexterity of a skilled coach is probably a necessity. The participants must be prepared to accept the interpretation that the coach presents, or such an interpretation is useless, or even counterproductive. The coach must have a ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu 1990: 66) to see when a model is, so to speak, deliverable; there must be, to borrow a phrase from psychoanalysis, a situation of ‘positive transference’, or as is the common psychotherapeutic vocabulary today, a well-established ‘working alliance’ (Horvath and Greenberg 1994).\textsuperscript{80} Only then can an attempt at interpreting become successful. This view is, in a specific way, actually explicitly stated in both Alfa and UGL in the concept of Experiential Learning.

A personal toolbox

Generally speaking the two concepts of ‘translation’ and Experiential Learning actually describe the same processes, but from different perspectives. Translation is a model of what Experiential Learning is a model for (cf. Geertz 1993: 93).\textsuperscript{81} Concepts such as ‘translation’ or ‘interpretation’ are therefore useful to understand the crucial element of a course where a new perspective is – ideally – opened up to the participants. Yet they only take the analyses so far, since a course like UGL does not involve a translation or interpretation, but rather a cluster of theories, models, methods and techniques of which some are a bit accepted by some of the participants, others more accepted by most participants, some not accepted by some but by others, etc. The concepts of translation or interpretation are useful to understand how a course functions in its details, but less so as a whole.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79}He later told me about the huge number of people confessing that they were terribly afraid of heights when about to do the High Ropes Track. This was just ‘too many’, suggesting that this fear of heights perhaps was about something else.
\item \textsuperscript{80}To deliver interpretations at the right moment was stressed as an important part of psychological interventions already by Freud who pointed out that timing in this case is crucial for the efficacy of the treatment. Freud discussed this in his book The Question of Lay Analysis, and in his essays ‘On Beginning the Treatment’ and ‘“Wild” Psycho-Analysis’. See Hoffman de Maré (2002) for a brief discussion of the subject.
\item \textsuperscript{81}What the concept of translation adds is an analysis of power. It points to how the whole process is set up so as to make the participants accept the coaches’ translations, the latter ultimately grounded in the research of behavioural expertise. The concept of translation thus highlights how the power over the translation process is in the hands of those that are knowledgeable in the matters at hand, that is, the expertise. Yet as Callon (1986) describes, those who are on the receiving end of a translation can always refuse to accept it.
\end{itemize}
One of the participants at a UGL course described the course as a set of tools. The use of terms like ‘tool’, ‘instrument’, etc., is a common way for practitioners to talk about practical psychological knowledge. From such a perspective the course as a whole can be understood as a compilation of useful psychological tools of different kinds, or in other words a ‘psychological toolbox’.

By giving the participants a personal experience of different tools, enhanced functionality becomes possible for both the individual and the group; although groups are seen as dynamical units, they are not believed to develop by necessity, but only through the active participation of the members. It is therefore only through increased self-awareness among the participants that the group can develop at all – other than by chance. The basic assumption here is that cooperation is a skill that you can learn. You can improve your ability to cooperate, to work together with others. During the 1980s this kind of training was often, in Sweden, called ‘cooperation training’ (samarbetssträning). During the 1990s this kind of training generally took on the English term and was renamed ‘teambuilding’ or ‘team training’.

From such a perspective, theoretical ‘purity’ is neither the aim of UGL, nor of teambuilding at Alfa. Such courses are on the contrary rather eclectic in character. When I first tried to make sense of UGL, the concept that in my view best captured the content of the course was ‘heteroglossia’ (Bachtin 1981). The lack of an explicit and consistent theoretical framework was, to me at the time, the most striking feature of the course. Coming from an environment (that is, an academic department) where theoretical rigour is highly valued, the course seemed a hotchpotch of theories, methods and techniques dealing in learning styles, leadership styles, conflict handling, group development, teaching practices, communication techniques, and methods for personal and group reflection. Yet, I gradually realized that I had simply tried to make sense of the course by the use of the wrong rationale. The course was consistent enough from a managerial perspective, which becomes obvious when thinking about it in terms of a ‘toolbox’. What is ‘heterogeneous’ or ‘homogeneous’ is not a question of inherent characteristics, but rather of perspective. For a toolbox, the diversity of tools is what makes it a whole. In other words, the characteristic style of psychological expertise is simply ‘that of bricolage: it amalgamates knowledges and techniques from different sources into a complex “know-how”’ (Rose 1998: 86). What the participants learn to practice is then, as Grabher (2004: 1492) calls it,

\[\ldots\] situative pragmatism: knowledge is valued according to its usefulness to solve the specific project task rather than to the authority of its disciplinary, institutional or departmental origin and status.

To summarize this type of interpretation in action (to paraphrase Latour 1987), courses such as those described here have a few specific characteristics. First, verbalization makes theorization possible. Second, this explicit-
ness about psychological functioning enables the build-up of a ‘toolbox’, by delivering adherent (verbal) methods and techniques for more efficient interaction. These methods and techniques are then, third, at best tried out in practical exercises, simulating real-life situations in a controlled laboratory environment.

This rather complex way of enabling more efficient interaction and thereby work – based on an aggregation of diverse psychological theories, methods and techniques – has not always been a way of improving the efficiency of organizations, but has largely come about since the 1980s. In the following section I will briefly outline the social processes coming together in this development, thereby also locating the above-described courses in the genealogy of rationalization efforts in Sweden.

**Versions of feedback**

To gather together in groups and ‘open up’ in line with certain specific procedures has not always been a way of improving the efficiency of organizations. Both regarding form and content, contemporary group dynamic courses are the outcome of a long tradition of experimentation concerning how to enhance group functioning. When UGL started in the late 1970s, similar courses had already been given for more than a decade in Sweden. These courses tried to make use of the positive experiences that had grown out of educational forms in the USA that were not just about how to ‘master the given content’. Such courses also tried to involve the participants and make them see their responsibility for the direction of the course by making them more aware of the impact of their own behaviour on the social relations created in the group (Karlsson, Hane & Sörbom 2000: 190). The most well-known type of course with such ambitions up until the late 1970s was sensitivity training.

**Sensitivity training**

In the USA, group dynamic courses had been developed since the late 1940s, when the idea of feedback as an interactive technique was worked out by Lewin and associates. ‘Sensitivity training’ became a common designation for these courses. Sensitivity training was during the post-war years used by many different types of groups, and for many different reasons. At first developed in the training of community leaders, it soon became a popular form of executive training. Such groups were at this time known as T-groups, short for training groups (Back 1972, Marrow 1969).

The possibility held out by sensitivity training of creating self-governing individuals and groups made it attractive to management theorists who envisioned another type of work organization besides that of scientific management with its strict hierarchical division of work. Douglas McGregor, for
instance, saw sensitivity training as a necessary component in the work organization of the future. In an almost prophetic manner he stated that:

The modern industrial organization is a vast complex of interdependent relationships … In fact, the interdependence is so great that only collaborative team efforts can make the system work effectively. It is probable that one day we shall begin to draw organizational charts as a series of linked groups rather than as a hierarchical structure … (1960: 175).

In addition to management theorists, sensitivity training also caught the eye of some psychotherapists, gradually increasing the popularity of group psychotherapy. Some groups offered a therapeutic experience, though not being therapy groups in the strict sense of the term. One such type was the so-called open encounter group, as developed by Will Schutz during his work at the Esalen Institute in the 1960s (Rowan 1988: 60, Kripal 2007: 166). Sensitivity training, then, was a movement with many different branches. A common purpose towards the end of the 1960s was the idea of using openness and unstructured form to break through the stiffness and inhibitions imagined to be common in people living in a hierarchical and repressive society, and especially in those used to working in bureaucratic organizations. It was imagined that by acquiring a more authentically human way of being through the release of a free flow of emotions people would become more honest and alive. This flow of emotions could find many expressions, but the perhaps most significant was the flow of tears. Tears became a measurement for the success of the specific course; no tears, not enough emotion, that is, too much inhibition (Back 1972, see also Smith 1992).

In Sweden these courses were – in work life – a privilege for the few (Derefeldt 1975: 53). Sensitivity training was mostly given to high-level managers as part of a more wide ranging executive training, thus becoming a part of the Swedish management landscape in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Sensitivity training was here seen as ‘training in becoming ob-

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82 Rowan (1988: 63) describes Schutz’s work as a way to aid people in finding a more authentic way of living, to get beyond defensiveness and neurotic control and learn what ‘good social relationships feel like’. There were, however, those who believed that Schutz’s way of ‘opening up’ was too harsh. One of his colleagues at Esalen described the practices of the open encounter group as ‘beat ’em up, fuck ’em at the first opportunity’ (Kripal 2007: 168). During this period Schutz visited Sweden several times and demonstrated his method to ‘enthusiastic followers’ (Egidius 2001b: 110).

83 Back (1972) uses the term ‘sensitivity training’ for a number of group approaches, whereas Derefeldt (1975: 8), writing about the training for employees in Sweden, makes a distinction between sensitivity training and other approaches, both those less structured (such as encounter groups) and those more structured (such as ‘instrumental team training’).

84 There were attempts to introduce group dynamics in Sweden in the 1950s – without any particular success (Back 1972). Spontaneity and openness were seen as essential to the group encounter, as a way of creating a dynamic in the group. The participants were supposed to address each other with first names. It was also standard procedure to interrupt others when speaking. This kind of interaction was obviously too much for the Swedes who, at the time,
servant of your own and others’ emotions’ (1975: 9). It was a course where you had ‘intense experiences’ (1975: 21). In giving an account of a ‘typical course’, Derefeldt describes how one of the participants starts crying when he talks about his problems with trusting other people and how the others empathize and try to comfort him, one of them hugging him, another writing in his journal that this guy was ‘strong’ when daring to be open and display his emotions (1975: 15). In sensitivity training, as described by Derefeldt, being human was being emotional. And being emotional included the display of emotions.\footnote{An interesting example of a more wide-ranging sensitivity training program is described by Berg (1979). At Emmaboda Glasverk – a factory producing glass – the chief executive attended a sensitivity training lab in the US in 1969 and came back to Sweden convinced that ‘everyone in the company should attend sensitivity training’ (1979: 91). To this end a consultancy firm that had experimented with such training already in 1955, and which was already heavily involved in human relations work in the company, started organizing sensitivity labs for the employees. At first, when it involved the top management, the training seems to have worked out pretty well. Later on, at the beginning of the 1970s as the foremen were drawn in, and as the political climate in society at large, including the public debate about industrial democracy, became radicalized, which also was at a time when the economic results dipped, these kinds of exercises just broke down at Emmaboda. Sensitivity training was a type of activity that – at least if judged by the example of Emmaboda – seemed to have been frowned upon by the workers on the shop floor. Activities that started out as a privilege for the management could have been desired by the workers as well if such activities had been considered as benefits of some kind. This seems not to have been the case, though. Therapeutic activities are sometimes seen as an outgrowth, and integral part, of bourgeois culture (Pfister 1997). Given that the managers at Emmaboda had another class background than the workers, they may have found it easier, or more interesting, to participate in these labs. Another possible explanation is simply that the workers and managers had different types of jobs. The managers had to be able to relate to other people in efficient ways as a part of their job. The workers mainly had to deal with different machines and raw materials.}

During the post-war years, the Swedish economy was dominated by a few large companies, mostly from the engineering and heavy industries. Though, as seen above, activities inspired by the psychology of group dynamics made a certain impact on Swedish work life during the post-war years, the overall picture is still one where Taylorist and Fordist inspired management methods dominated. Organizations had a well-developed division of work both vertically and horizontally, that is, both made a distinction between the constructors and executors of the work process, and divided the execution into a number of minute tasks (Sund 2002: 20, Magnusson 2000a: 31, Lundh 2010: Chapter 4).\footnote{Since Taylorism was based on piece work, the typical signifier for a Taylorist type of management was the so-called time study man (always a man, it seems, and often an engineer). In the mid-1960s 80 percent of the work in the Swedish engineering industry was piece work. When Fordist technologies were gradually introduced in Sweden during the post-war years, the vertical and horizontal division of work increased even more (Lundh 2010: 159, 165).}

At the end of the 1970s the interest in sensitivity training seems to have declined fast (see e.g. Danielsen 1988). At the same time however, courses

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such as UGL, that used the methods of group dynamics in a new way, were introduced in Sweden.

Teams

In 1978 Anders Risling, a psychologist and officer in the Swedish Army, went to the USA in order to attain new ideas for the development of the organization and leadership of the Swedish military. He participated in a course at the Organizational Effectiveness Training Centre in Monterey, spanning 16 weeks. After his return to Sweden, Risling developed a course, which we now know as UGL, especially designed for Swedish conditions (Andersson 2001: 30-31). The course was created to be a component in the training of officers in the Swedish military, of which it has been a compulsory part since 1983. UGL soon became appreciated by those young officers who went through it as a part of their training. It was, however, considered by most as being out of context since it did not fit in with the traditional and very strict control and command system that was the organizing principle of the military (Karlsson, Hane and Sörbom 2000).

Yet, if UGL did not really fit into the military system at the time, it soon turned out that it was well in line with the most recent contemporary developments in managerial thought and practice. In Sweden, high profile executives like Jan Carlzon at SAS and Percy Barnevik at ABB started reorganizing their companies from large bureaucracies to networks of smaller units, at the same time stressing the responsibility of all employees for the success of the company. The international management guru of the times, Tom Peters, partially based two books, *Thriving on Chaos* (1987) and *Liberation Management* (1992), on the work of Carlzon and Barnevik respectively in his attempt to predict what the future looked like. Yet, the most revolutionary company restructuring in Sweden at the time was probably when Volvo abandoned the conveyor belt technology, the very symbol for the modern factory and not least the automobile industry, in favour of a model where teams built whole cars from start to finish, thus (re)turning to a model of organizing work that resembled the late nineteenth century craft industry preceding the Ford factories (see e.g. Womack et al. 1990: 101, Berggren 1990: 11).

In this movement of organizational restructuring, from the dominance of bureaucracies towards networks of smaller units many companies sought out

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87 The attempts at reorganizing large companies found support both in the changing political climate of the time and in technological advancements. One of the main ingredients in early neoliberal discourse was the critique of bureaucracy as an inefficient way of organizing (Peck and Tickell 2002: 388). Computerization simultaneously counteracted advantages of scale. Whereas mechanization and process oriented manufacturing used to demand large-scale production, the use of information and communication technology made such ways of production an option for middle-sized and small companies as well. The latter even had an advantage, since their size made them more flexible (see Chapter Four).
the aid of consultancy firms. During the 1990s, the military capitalized on the new interest for group functioning and personal development and sold the right to give UGL courses to anyone who could pass the tests administered by the Swedish Defence College. A number of consultancy firms then started giving the course. UGL thereby expanded outside of its original context and became popular among other organizations, public and private. In a similar manner, Alfa too grew out of the new possibilities for managing organizations. The company was started in the mid-1990s by two people who had worked in companies which they had found to be functioning poorly. They were frustrated with their respective work situations and both wanted to somehow contribute to improved social interaction in work life. The result was Alfa. Alfa grew rapidly. Obviously there was a demand for these kinds of services.

From emotion promotion to psychoeducation

As seen above, the theoretical-methodological foundation of group dynamic courses has remained the same since the late 1940s when it was first formed. As the label reflects, groups are here seen as dynamic units. These are imagined to change in line with the interaction in the group, meaning that the participants can, through the use of feedback communication, affect the direction and transformation of the group. Throughout the years this foundation has been constantly worked upon, moulded, and recast in new formations – and ultimately used for different purposes. With the change in management ideology from the 1980s and onwards, group dynamic exercises have found a new rationale.

The change in underlying principle becomes evident when comparing, for example, the view of emotions between group practices created in earlier periods – summarized under the label of sensitivity training – and UGL and the sort of teambuilding that have been discussed in this chapter. In sensitivity training groups emotional outbursts were seen as valuable. Tears were good. At the course I participated in, however, the flow of tears at one occasion only led to the coaches having to cancel one of the scheduled exercises, which the group then never got the occasion to practice. Perhaps the participants learned something from this incident, although the major conclusion appears to be that the course is demanding and that not everyone is fit for participation; the particular course may actually be seriously disturbed by a

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88 At the same time the consultancy business itself was restructured, both in the sense the appearance of an increasing number of consultancies and a redefinition of the very basis for being a consultant. Whereas management consultants in the early 1970s still grounded their expertise in scientific research – and for this particular reason were used as consultants – from the 1980s and onwards it became increasingly uncertain what kind of knowledge and performance ideally constituted a consultancy service. Anyone could use the label ‘consultant’ as long as there was a demand for the service (Furusten 1996).
flow of tears. In this case, then, the outburst of tears had mostly negative consequences for all involved.

Whereas the idea of sensitivity training was to ‘soften up’ the stiffness of managers working in bureaucracies, making them conscious of alternative ways of being and interacting by making apparent a more ‘whole’ or full human existence, thus being able to better handle issues of cooperation (cf. Derefeldt 1975), the new courses try to forge autonomous individuals that together can create autonomous teams. During the last decades, the content and direction of group dynamic courses have thus changed, from what could perhaps be called emotion promotion to a sort of psychoeducation. Whereas earlier practices aimed at emotional awakening, the practices investigated here aim at the distribution of useful psychological knowledge and skills; the latter practices are not only more explicit about the models used, but this explicitness is also an essential part of the courses, ideally remaking the participants into a sort of amateur psychologists.89 This change towards psychoeducation is well in line with wider societal developments.

The mediation of managerial know-how

The popularity of teambuilding and leadership courses in the 1990s did not come about in a void. As seen above, many companies were at this time restructured towards networks of self-governing units. This movement towards a new type of organization also had a corollary in the rise of the ‘management theory industry’ (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997), mainly consisting of a number of ‘management gurus’ delivering advice on how to accomplish such restructurings. In the 2000s ‘guru speech’ – that is, advice on how to manage – became a common type of discourse, not only in courses, but also in different media, delivered by a number of consultants, managers, psychologists, psychotherapists, etc. A part of this discourse was made up of self-help psychology. In this section I will continue to stake out the field of work-enabling self-help psychology – which I felt virtually ‘assembled’ (cf. Ong and Collier 2005) itself in front of my eyes during this time – by briefly depicting this landscape of mass-mediated managerial know-how, including how it has evolved over the last decades. I will here argue that these mediations disclose the character of work-enabling self-help psychology in that they are not only mediations in the sense of transmissions of know-how, but also in the sense being of a reconciliatory character. These interventions all

89 This contrast indicates a difference in thought patterns. Today management is believed to be a way of interacting, an activity that involves more or less everyone in the organization. Managers in mid-century bureaucratic organizations, however, were believed to become more efficient as managers if they became more ‘sensitive’, thus being able to better handle issues of cooperation (cf. Derefeldt 1975). That the rest of the staff did not have to become more ‘whole’ or ‘human’, at least not when wage labouring, indicates that they were seen as something like ‘cogs in the machinery’.

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stress the importance of openness – between individuals, within a group, and towards any kind of useful psychological know-how.

The unacknowledged legislators

The age of ‘management gurus’ (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997) began with the publication of *In Search of Excellence* (1982) by Peters and Waterman, two American management consultants. In the years to come, anyone from managers to politicians to royalties to people who needed help in ‘reorganizing their desk’ (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997: 3) all sought out advice from management thinkers, such as prominent consultants and business leaders. These gurus had suddenly become ‘the unacknowledged legislators of mankind’ (Shelley quoted in Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997: 3).

In Sweden Jan Carlzon’s *Riv Pyramiderna* (1985) became a national best-seller (later published in a revised English edition as *Moments of Truth*, of which the second edition had an introduction by Tom Peters). In the book Carlzon not only describes how he believes a business should be organized, sharing lots of examples from his work at SAS, but also testifies to the sudden interest in business leaders like him, describing how his lectures at universities drew large crowds, whereas a decade earlier, as a professor told him, ‘there would only have been five spectators – and they would have been leftists there to hack you to pieces’ (1985: 131).

A part of the management theory industry was made up of self-help psychology (see e.g. Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997), for example, produced by some of those whose work was also used in UGL. Gordon (who created the method of ‘I-messages’) had already published *Leader Effectiveness Training* in 1977, Blanchard (who worked out a ‘situational leadership’ model) co-authored *The One Minute Manager*, and Will Schutz reworked the FIRO-theory (used in both UGL and by Alfa) into a concept called *The Human Element* and presented it in a book with the same name. Since the concept has become popular in Sweden and since it is, I argue, representative for psychological ‘guru speech’ in general, I will here briefly summarize this latter work.

In *The Human Element: Productivity, Self-Esteem, and the Bottom Line* (1994), Schutz reconstructs the idea of group development. In FIRO the stages a group go through are Inclusion, Control, and Affection. In *The Human Element* the stages are Inclusion, Control, and Openness – and development is not to be understood as a one-way journey into the last stage. As time goes by, and tasks and participants change, the group moves

90 The Human Element has become a popular management concept in Sweden. THE is also used in more than twenty countries on five continents. Before Schutz died in 2002, he sold the concept to a Japanese firm, with which he had cooperated for some time, and that he believed would be able to make the most of it (Cervin et al. 2005).
back and forth between the different stages. Even if ‘no one type of atmosphere is necessarily good or bad’ (Schutz 1994: 123), to reach the stage of openness is the aim, since ‘teamwork results from using openness as a method for solving any problem’ (1994: 122). Yet, getting to the last stage of openness is always a struggle. The group will not create an open atmosphere until it is ready for it. ‘Openness in an atmosphere has to do with preferences about expression of feelings’ (1994: 125).

Schutz launches a method for decision making that he calls ‘concordance’ (and which the coach referred to at the teambuilding course; see above). This method is based on the idea that ‘the more participatory and influential employees are, the more likely they are to be highly motivated’ (1994: 211). Therefore everyone that is affected by a decision must have the opportunity to participate in the decision making. Everybody must agree on the decision, and everyone has a veto. If vetoed, the discussion then continues about how to alter the decision so that everyone will stand behind it. ‘Concordance fosters a structure in which each person’s full creativity and skill can best be used. Concordance allows an organization to capitalize on an atmosphere in which we employees are inspired and encouraged to express our own ideas’ (1994: 211).

Schutz somewhat indirectly underlines the similarity between decision making and conflict resolution since the same principles may be used in both processes. ‘Conflict resolution becomes effective when it uses the principles of concordance; in particular, honesty and self-awareness’, meaning that team members must ‘share their thoughts and personal feelings’ to have ‘all the relevant factors that must be integrated to reach an optimal resolution’ (1994: 232). Conflicts cannot therefore be settled simply by attempts at logical reasoning, since this kind of reasoning can be blocked by feelings of different kinds. ‘Logical statements are often not completely logical at all but actually have a feeling component’ (1994: 189). Since feelings, and not least fears, are a part of the problem, they must also be a part of the resolution. ‘Accounting for our feelings and fears requires us to identify them and their sources, be self-aware, and be willing to communicate about them’ (1994: 147).

In the early 2000s, there were not many Swedish management consultants working with groups and teams who had wider aspirations, in the sense of writing their own how-to books and creating their own concepts. One who had done just that, however, was Kerstin Myrgård. By the mid-2000s she had written a handful of books on how to manage groups and teams, based on her thirty years of consultancy work. These books constitute an important part of the programs she developed on teambuilding and personal development. In Nya Effektiva Arbetsteam (New Efficient Work Teams), a practical guide on how to create efficient work places, Myrgård describes what she

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91 Where not otherwise stated, this description of Myrgårds work is based on an interview with her in late 2005. Since then she has retired and sold the company.
calls *den synliggörande pedagogiken* (the visualizing pedagogy, in the sense of an educative form which ‘makes visible’). This pedagogy is summarized in what she calls *Fyra ess* (Four Esses, in Swedish also meaning Four Aces), standing for See yourself, See others, See the task, See the possibilities. The first part stresses the importance of self-awareness, the second stresses honesty and communication (in practice feedback), the third stresses concrete objectives, and the last one stresses ‘positive thinking’, a belief that problems are possible to solve.\(^2\) Myrgård views this concept as the most basic and important part of her programs, something she has come to realize gradually (personal communication). The book is largely about how to apply the visualizing pedagogy at work and thus achieve efficient teamwork and worker participation on all levels resulting in learning teams. In the harsh world of business today – with cut downs and reorganizations, insecurity, and guilt towards colleagues who have been laid off – it is more important than ever, according to Myrgård, to construct organizations where people actually can feel well at work. By increasing job satisfaction\(^3\) efficiency is, Myrgård states (2005: 119), promoted as well.

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### The normalization of guru speech

The way management issues became a part of the collective consciousness in the 1990s was testified to by the writings in the mass media, which both reflected and promoted developments. In the 1990s some union journals (the publications sent for free to members of different unions) not only started writing about management gurus, but even more important, also started writing in the same manner as the management gurus – that is, they started giving advice on how to manage social interaction in organizations. In the 2000s this development continued when newspapers began publishing similar advice in the economy pages. By the late 2000s, guru speech had become normalized, an established part of the standard mass media repertoire. The publication of managerial know-how in the form of *manuals and counselling columns* was recurrent in the morning papers, the free daily papers, a diversity of union journals, and occasionally appeared elsewhere as well. I will here present a few illustrations of these writings. In order to give a more coherent picture of the mass media flow, I will focus on what was published in some union journals and the dailies in Stockholm in September 2007.

A publication where most texts, it seems, can be turned into manuals is *Chef*, journal for a union of managers called Ledarna. In September 2007

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\(^2\) Compare these ‘Four Esses/Aces’ with the four words that the group at the teambuilding course held by Alfa used to summarize their course. These words were ‘happiness,’ ‘openness,’ ‘objectives,’ and ‘planning.’

\(^3\) The Swedish term used is *arbetsglädje*, which literally means ‘work enjoyment’, thus suggesting that happiness in this case comes to you through work.
it contained no less than six psychological manuals. For example, the recurrent feature ‘Street Smart. Shrewd advice from chief to chief’ (in the original ‘Gatsmart. Sluga knep från chef till chef’), this time had the subtitle ‘We give straight feedback at all our meetings’. In the article a manager describes how the managerial team at his company does an exercise called ‘Time out’ at every meeting, which is a form of collective reflection on how they manage to uphold the company values in practice. Attached to the article is a ‘tool-box’ – a highlighted square or ‘box’ – where this feedback technique is summarized. According to the article, this is not a time-consuming exercise, since training makes you skilled in giving feedback, and if used frequently it becomes a way of keeping the company together, thus increasing efficiency.

The journal Naturvetaren (distributed for free to the members of a union called Naturvetarförbundet, which organizes people with an education in the natural sciences), even had a standardized feature in every issue in 2007, called simply ‘The Manual’ – which seems an accurate label for these kinds of writings. In September 2007 (#6: 26-27), you could learn how to ‘Mingle into happiness and success’, as the title put it. The article is an interview with an instructor at a company giving courses on how to mingle, and contains not only a few facts about these courses and a few practical pieces of advice, but also a separate ‘tool-box’ stating that you should, in brief, ‘stop degrading yourself or what you do’, ‘be open to the unknown’, and ‘follow up’ on your new business associates.

Similar manuals could at this time be found not only in journals for ‘white collar’ unions, but also in some journals directed to ‘blue collar’ workers, such as Dagens arbete, a journal for IF Metall (a union of industrial workers and at the time one of the largest unions in Sweden). The September 2007 issue of Dagens arbete contained a manual published under the recurrent feature ‘The Job Emergency Ward’, this time with the subtitle ‘Anxiety after the vacation? How to charge the batteries’. The article features an interview with a social psychologist who shares his knowledge about the relationship between work and spare time. Attached to the article is a ‘tool-box’ where a few pieces of advice are delivered, such as that the ‘time after the vacation is the best for changing old patterns that you are dissatisfied with’, that remembering previous accomplishments ‘will give you a more positive attitude’, that you should ignore ‘the inner voices that are negative’ and ‘listen to your constructive voices instead’, that you should ‘talk to your co-workers’ so as to understand ‘that you are not alone’ in having ‘feelings of anxiety when going back to work’, and that you should ‘set up reasonable objectives’ since ‘after the vacation you cannot work at a high pace’.

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94 Other manuals in this issue were about how to measure achievements, how to relax, how to sleep well, how to work with mental attitudes. In the section containing book reviews a review of a book about communication is turned into a manual. These diverse manuals are of different complexity, and occupy anything from a few pages to a few paragraphs.
As seen here, manuals are often constructed through an interview with an expert – a psychotherapist or psychologist or some other kind of psy-expert – who delivers some advice for how to handle a problem. This is also common in the daily press, for example in the free daily newspapers. A typical example is a manual in *Metro* (2007-09-18: 27), in a regular feature called ‘New Job’, about how to strengthen your self-esteem by writing love letters to yourself. The article is an interview with a ‘career coach’ who has written a book called *Kärleksbomba dig själv!* (‘Love bomb yourself!’). The technique with love letters is one of several described in the book. In the morning papers most manuals are found in the economy pages. For example, *Dagens Nyheter* in September 2007 published manuals in a part called ‘Job’, put together in cooperation with the magazine *Chef* (see above), that dealt with work life issues such as how to handle critique, how to reach decisions in groups, how to achieve the appropriate mind set to overcome severe difficulties, or how socialize in conference settings. The main competitor, *Svenska Dagbladet*, during this time also published manuals in the economy pages, under the heading ‘Balance in life’, which found themselves somewhere in the borderland between the ‘therapeutic’ and the ‘managerial’.95

Less common than manuals are work-related counselling columns. Yet, in 2007 every issue of *Chef* contained such columns. In September 2007 (nr.8) a regular feature called ‘Our Expert Team Intervenes!’ is about Morgan who had been laid off from an airline company and saw it as a chance to try something new, yet did not really know what he wanted to do. A psychologist gives him the rather Freudian advice to try to make the unconscious conscious: by reflecting upon his history Morgan can see the choices he has made and through this become more aware of his own motivations. He thereby gets a tool which helps him make more conscious choices in the future. Similar, though less ambitious, counselling columns were also occasionally published in the evening papers in September 2007. Advice on how to improve organizational functioning may actually appear in the least expected places. *ICA-kuriren* is a publication that for many decades was, and still to some degree is, a reading for housekeepers, publishing recipes and advice on how to run a household. In 2006 a psychologist and psychotherapist started answering the readers’ questions in a counselling column. Through the latter the ‘care’ element was partially redirected from the home towards the self – and through this to a certain extent towards work. In *ICA-

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96 In the original: *Vårt expertteam rycker ut!* Some twenty pages later in this issue of *Chef*, there is another (also regular) feature called ‘The Manager Emergency Ward’ (*Chefakuten*), here with the subtitle ‘Our meetings are so quiet’. In ‘The Manager Emergency Ward’ the readers provide the answers, and in this case a manager has a problem with the personnel who do not respond to what she says at the meetings about policies, cooperation and so on, yet seem to talk a lot about these issues otherwise. She is, by two other readers who have answered the query, given the advice to talk to each one in the staff individually so as to break up the negative atmosphere of the group.


kuriren in September 2007 (39/07:70) the column treats a question from a woman who has started to feel excluded at work. She is given the advice: ‘Become aware of your negative thoughts and ponder other possible ways of interpreting your situation. Step forward instead of backing out.’

As seen here, knowledge about how to manage oneself and others at work appear in the mass media in how to-books as well as in a diversity of journals and papers and is directed towards not only persons holding a managerial position, but wider audiences. To take part in, or make use of, these advisory procedures you do not have to pledge allegiance to anything but the idea of the usefulness of psychological tools in social interaction. Anyone with some kind of claim to psychological expertise can offer advice on how to improve functionality in interaction. And anyone, more or less, can allegedly benefit from at least some such advice. As Rose (1998: 86-87) puts it,

the social consequences of psychology are not the same as the social consequences of psychologists. Psychology is a ‘generous’ discipline: the key to the social penetration of psychology lies in its capacity to lend itself ‘freely’ to others who will ‘borrow’ it because of what it offers to them in the way of justification and guide to action.

Mediations: representation and reconciliation

Both the courses and mass media representations described in this chapter can be seen as ways of mediating useful knowledge. Yet, these are mediations also in the sense that they are of a reconciliatory rather than polemical character. The latter is the case since the objective of interventions is to try to settle problematic life situations (for example between different adversaries) and redirect energy in a productive direction, but also since these mediations do not describe or state a conflict between different psychological perspectives, but are bent on problem solving rather than debate, making use of and acknowledging whatever is functional for the managerial issues treated. From where does this ‘positive’ and reconciliatory spirit that stresses usefulness and integration stem? I suggest from mainly two directions: humanistic psychology and contemporary psychotherapy.

Myrgård states that humanistic psychology has been an important inspiration for her, just like, as she puts it, ‘for most others in our business’ (2005: 128). Indeed, a lot of humanistic ideas come up in Myrgård’s books, as in the theories and methods delivered in UGL and at Alfa and even in the words of the ‘gurus’ – not only Schutz and Gordon, but also, for example, Peters and Carlzon (cf. Kleiner 1996: 330, Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997: 95-96). Humanistic psychology is generally seen as less interested in

97 In Search of Excellence (1982) by Peters and Waterman is largely an attempt to show how successful American companies have applied the humanistic principles to their businesses. The typical employee is thus ‘man waiting for motivation’, and a company is an organization ideally driven by ‘autonomy and entrepreneurship’ with ‘a bias for action’, and where you
deviance and illness and more in normality and fulfilment (Moss 2001: 5). It seems reasonable that managers and consultants should appreciate a psychological ‘school’ that tries to understand how to reach fulfilment, and which also supplies the methods to get there. However, if scrutinizing Myrgård’s work, for example, it goes beyond merely humanistic theories and methods by having a rather inclusive perspective, making use of a diversity of psychological theories and methods. What is common to the mediations described in this chapter is not that they stick to only the theories and methods of humanistic psychology (although those are obviously seen as useful), but rather the general orientation of the humanistic perspective – that is, the focus on, and belief in, people’s capabilities.  

The latter also gives a specific role to the expert: not to transform the clients, but to aid them in their self-transformation and self-realization. This is also largely the approach of psychotherapy, not least humanistic variants, but also later approaches such as cognitive behaviour therapy where psychoeducation constitutes an integral part of the treatment (Smith 1997: 845-847, Hawton et al. 1989).

As seen in this chapter, management today is not only about organizing the actual labour process, but also about getting both teams and individuals ‘fit’ for work through different educational courses (which are also useful for the unemployed to take part in).  

This ‘fitness’ is not a question of learning the actual tasks at work, but rather to enhance interactional skills, to become more functional as a human being. Which is also, more or less, what psychotherapy is about (Fabrikant 1994). This common denominator has made psychotherapeutic knowledge, or at least a therapeutic orientation, useful in the management of work organizations, where courses and mass media representations mediate between the ‘therapeutic’ and the ‘managerial’ by integrating a therapeutic approach into the business of managing. Tucker (1999) even suggests that the role of the manager today has changed from

98 Which is also largely the approach of the so called positive psychology (see Chapter Four).

99 Consultancy implies that knowledge is distributed according to the principles of a market system. Anyone (?) interested in buying the services of a consultant may do so. In the case of Myrgård, organizations handling the unemployed have been among those who have purchased her services. Ironically, in Myrgård’s experience, these government-financed organizations handling the unemployed often have more money to spend on such courses than business organizations usually have: the unemployed taking part in her programs get four weeks training, which, as Myrgård puts it, ‘no company could afford’.
commanding to supportive to such an extent that the business organization in general should be thought of as a ‘therapeutic corporation’.

The psychotherapeutic leanings of present-day management, and more specifically the influx of psychotherapeutic know-how into the field, have pushed the issue of efficiency towards the question of well-being. Myrgård, for example, states that job satisfaction (*arbetsglädje*) is the foundation of efficient work. Schutz suggests that ‘we all work best when we feel good about ourselves’ (1994: 237). The latter is also, almost literally, what Blanchard and Johnson write in *The One minute Manager*: ‘People who feel good about themselves produce good results’ (1985: 19). The force which may be channelled into productive work is in work-enabling self-help psychology imagined to come from a commitment to the group’s objectives, from a willingness to participate – in short from *well-being in the group at work*. Gordon thus stresses that leaders must ‘develop mutually satisfying relationships with the people they lead’ (2001 [1977]: 285). Yet, as seen in the manuals and counselling columns reiterated here, the responsibility for developing such satisfying relationships, and thus worker well-being more generally, do not fall only upon those in managerial positions. Employees are in these articles described as both in need of and in search of enhanced self-awareness, not least when it comes to understanding their own motivations, giving them the opportunity to abandon ‘negative thoughts’ and instead listen to their inner ‘constructive voices’ and thus develop a ‘positive attitude’, and so on.

Gurus such as Gordon and Schutz actually personify this development towards a more therapeutic-like management, as does Myrgård. She first worked as a nurse in psychiatric care, then started teaching, and later took a B.A. in Psychology and Teaching, as well as an education in Psychodrama, before being employed by a management consultancy, which she later acquired and developed further (personal communication). Gordon started out as an associate of Carl Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, involved in psychotherapy research and development. In the 1970s Gordon won international recognition for his work with parental groups (see Gordon 1970), simultaneously with his work on the concept of *Leader Effectiveness Training* (2001 [1977]). As mentioned above, Schutz achieved renown as an encounter group guru in the 1970s – a type of group work also called ‘therapy for normals’ (see e.g. Keltner 1989: 19). In *The Human Element* he describes how he gradually realized that in his work as organizational consultant he had to include the ‘emotional, personal-change component’ that he had experienced as crucial in his previous therapy work to take the employees past their ‘personal fears, rigidities, defences’ (1994:

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100 A therapeutic treatment created by Moreno, based on the idea that the individual personality is made up of different roles. By enacting and switching different roles in a collectively created group play, the breaking of old patterns of behaviour and the trying out of new ones becomes possible (Egidius 2005: 450, 594).
10), thus creating workplaces where employees will ‘support each other, help each other realize their potential’ and thus ‘identify with the organization out of desire rather than coercion’ (1994: 11).

The mediations described in this chapter really only have a polemical edge in one sense: through their view of the workplace as a psycho-social system, where efficiency can be promoted by the distribution of know-how about human interaction, they implicitly argue against the old mechanical Taylorist model of work where rationalization consisted in calculation and bureaucratization (in the sense a strict division of work). These mediations are simply based on a different idea about how to steer organizations into synchronized collective action.

Synchronizing the individual and the collective

Organizational management can be seen as the synchronizing of the activities of a number of individuals into collective action (Alvesson 2003). As opposed to the model of ‘scientific management’ where synchronization is obtained through a hierarchical control and command system, organizational reality in the humanistic perspective consists of a ‘postbureaucratic’ (Grey and Garsten 2001, Garsten and Grey 1997) landscape of largely autonomous units, where a specific type of communication is what makes control possible. The idea and practice of feedback as a form of group interaction has here been extended in both directions, so to speak, into a both individual and social reflexivity, making ‘openness’ the essential technique for synchronizing individual aspirations into collective action. From this perspective, everyone takes part in the business of managing, more or less.

The importance of verbal feedback

Foundational in the mediations of managerial knowledge depicted in this chapter is a kind of toolbox psychology. The specifics of this kind of psychology as a way of managing can be understood in relation to two other ways of reconstructing, or intervening in, organizations – those of scientific management and sensitivity training. Given the circumstances of its inception, sensitivity training may appear as directed against scientific management. Yet as it appeared in organizational development in Sweden in the 1960s and 70s, sensitivity training was more of a complement than a competitor to scientific management. The differences between sensitivity-infused scientific management and managing through toolbox psychology can be understood through the crucial issues of autonomy, communication and control. Instead of being based on a hierarchical control and command system, where those in charge become more understanding towards the personnel through sensitivity training, management in the humanistic perspective con-
sists in the creation and integration of self-regulating units. A specific type of communication is what makes control possible here.

Looking at the emotional turmoil and its aftermath during one of the exercises in the UGL course I participated in – most evidently manifested in the flow of tears from one of the participants – makes it possible to understand the perspective on communication and control in this type of group dynamical courses. This turmoil meant that the coaches had to cancel one of the exercises, which our group then never got the chance to do. Somewhat ironically, the exercise we missed was one that, I believe, is in a way defining for UGL as a course. The exercise in question has certain similarities with one that school children do when undergoing training in Emotional Intelligence, and which is there called ‘Chain of gossip’ (see Chapter One). In UGL the exercise takes place as follows (according to the course file and what participants in other courses have told me). The participants sit in three rows with one person in the first row (the executive), one person in the second (the middle manager) and three persons in the back row (the rest of the staff). Together they are to solve an issue, which is only given to the executive. They are to communicate only through written notes, and they can only send notes to the next level. What emerges is an image of the hierarchical organization, lacking openness and thereby possibilities for efficient feedback, since messages only travel up and down in the organization and one level at the time, where the middle level therefore is all jammed up, and where those at the ‘bottom’ often do not understand the organizational objectives and even less what their colleagues are up to. This exercise is defining for UGL since it is about communication, which is a crucial element in the course, yet is entirely negative, that is, shows what communication should not, indeed cannot, be like to be efficient.

In the perspective of contemporary group dynamics, the ideal type of communication, which makes the forming of a team possible, is verbal feedback. In the group dynamic courses investigated here, this type of communication is defined in relation to two other types of communication which forms its opposites by either not involving feedback or not being verbal. In UGL feedback is explicitly defined as the opposite of a hierarchically structured sender-receiver model, as seen above. It is suggested that such a model is inefficient, since messages are always disturbed by ‘noise’, that is, different types of misunderstandings. The many levels in a hierarchical organization with the lack of horizontal communication counteract openness and thereby possibilities of efficient feedback which could reduce ‘noise’. Any attempts at control from the executive will therefore be illusory; without efficient communication there are simply no possibilities for efficient control.

The other type of communication that verbal feedback is defined against is what perhaps could be called emotional excess, in the sense of a free display of emotions in any form. This is not explicitly stated in any course, but can be seen when comparing the different facets that group dynamic courses in Sweden have gone through since the 1960s. In sensitivity training, the
display of emotions (that is, even in non-verbal ways) was seen as something good. The experimental nature of courses such as UGL, the non-verbal display of emotions is not encouraged, nor is it seen as beneficial to the course. Communication, including that of emotions, is rather to occur through the verbal techniques of feedback distributed at the course.

In the verbal feedback model, communication is thus also a form of control. ‘I-messages’, for example, are not seen as merely a way of sharing one’s emotions about the present interaction, but also as a way of delivering information that cannot be ignored, and that must be related to in one way or another. The basic technique of ‘openness’ here means to create a large common ‘arena’, where everyone knows as much about everyone else, and themselves, as possible. Since openness here is based on mutual trust, this also means that, as the coach in Alfa put it, ‘trust is also a form of control’ (cf. Grey and Garsten 2001). It is through this constant process of feedback, constructing a network of control, that the group is made into a team. At the same time, this network of control is based on the autonomy of the individuals, in the sense that without autonomy the process of feedback would not become possible, since feedback requires different parties communicating. The cohesiveness of a team is not the outcome of the individuals submitting to the group, and even less of some persons submitting to others, but of their cooperative solving of any conflicts as they arise.

The crystal palace of managing

From the perspective of contemporary group dynamics, the necessary sharing of personal thoughts and emotions by using specific techniques for communication and interpretation is supposed to be of a verbal nature, yet is often phrased in terms of visibility.\(^{101}\) Myrgård worked out a specific type of education which was to make important issues ‘visible’. In UGL relevant knowledge should ideally appear in an ‘arena’, there for everyone to perceive. At Alfa and in The Human Element, and occasionally in manuals and counselling columns, the necessity of sharing thoughts and emotions, which is the crucial technique for accomplishing efficiency at work, is phrased in the perhaps most common spatial metaphor of humanistic management – that is, ‘openness’. Though the ideal of almost total visibility may make the practice of openness appear as something resembling a ‘panopticon’ (Benthem 1995 [1791], Foucault 1979), the non-hierarchical ideal of mutual communication and control makes such a metaphor less suitable. Rather the whole construction comes to resemble the narrator’s vision in Dostoyevsky’s Notes from the Underground of modern society as a Crystal Palace, that is, a glass house where everything is visible to everyone else (and which made

\(^{101}\) That is, in line with contemporary trends in organizational management, as well as society more generally, towards ‘transparency’ (Garsten and Lindh de Montoya 2008).
the narrator in that novella want to crawl down into a cellar). In some instances today this metaphor has even taken concrete form, such as in the headquarters of Bang & Olufsen, where the building is actually made out of glass and where employees and managers observe each other to the same extent (Krause-Jensen 2010). This has given rise to a management method that the employees call ‘management by walking around’ (2010: 17), meaning a management by simply being there and embodying the values of the organization – that is, by simply being visible as a committed and competent co-worker. A form of synopticism, simply meaning that many view something together, or at the same time (cf. Mathiesen 1997: 219) is here seen as a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for a successful managing.

With the publication of psychological managerial know-how in the mass media, the arena where everything is ideally visible to everyone else – the synopticon – is occasionally widened from the group or the organization to the public sphere. Manuals and counselling columns depict a world where individuals scrutinize their personal selves and try to form efficient teams, as well as are given advice on how to do just that. Being of a self-help character, these articles offer you advice for how to acquire power over your life. Since self-awareness and the ability to handle yourself are in group dynamic courses regarded an important building block in the construction of autonomous organizational units such as teams, mass media representations such as manuals and counselling columns are not essentially opposed to more complex social forms of organizational functioning such as teambuilding but rather a preparation for such practices. Taken together, the diverse mediations of managerial knowledge convey an ideal way of being in which you are supposed to establish an interactive and reflexive relationship not only with theories, techniques, and team members, but even with your self, as if conducting participant observation in your own life – which is also basically what you are supposed to do in UGL, explicitly stated in the exercise called the Rear-view Mirror. Thus, inter-individual reflexivity is, in the humanistic perspective on management, an extension of intra-individual reflexivity.

We are all managers now

Whereas the Taylorist/Fordist ideal of mass production was based on a far reaching division of work, ultimately seeking out the ‘one best way’ (Kanigel 1997), the humanistic perspective envisions no ultimate and preconceived way of structuring work, only a diversity of methods which may be combined in different ways by autonomous groups and individuals, and where individual skills are therefore never out of place. Anders Risling, who

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102 According to Peters and Waterman (1984: 287-289) ‘management by wandering around’ was already the official management method practiced by Hewlett Packard in the 1970s. This method consisted in managers attending workplaces throughout the company, talking to the employees and engaging with their work.
constructed the original version of UGL, states that managing is ‘a craft’ (*Chef* 2007, nr 6-7: 12). And indeed, the view of managing supplied by the courses given by consultancies – by their very existence and by the way they function – is that of an activity with more of a craft work, or artisanal, character. Because learning to use psychological tools is a matter of practical experience, an experience ultimately reflected in the dexterity of the coaches leading such courses. Whatever productivity that emanates out of a work organization is here seen as an individual and/or a team achievement, testifying to the way the people involved have managed to enhance their individual and, through this, their collective capacity.103

Management is from the humanistic perspective not something that some people do to others, but something that more or less everyone is engaged in; a way of interacting with others as well as with oneself.104 The concept of sympathy is used to describe how choosing to act in accordance with the accurate models for social interaction may turn into a productive force in its own right. Sympathy is that phase of effortless cooperation where all members have found their roles, where intra-group struggle has virtually ceased, and where all force is therefore put into the task, meaning that the group is really transformed into a ‘team’ – also defined as when the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

The widespread dissemination of know-how concerning how to manage selves and groups makes more or less anyone in contemporary ‘viewer society’ (Mathiesen 1997) a manager of sorts – yet where actual practical experience may be lacking. Since the 1980s the idea that ‘we are all managers now’ has been purported by a growing number of parties interested in managerial issues – managers, consultants, organizational theorists (Grey 1999). The type of management consultancies described in this chapter have benefited from this idea of management as a collective undertaking, since it provides them with a market. These consultancies are dependent for their very existence on a view of management as something that, more or less, everyone takes part in and – since being an undertaking carried on by the individuals’ comprehension and use of psychological tools – something for which not only theoretical but also practical training is required.

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103 Along with the use of terms such as ‘coach’ and ‘teams’ in contemporary management prose, the stress on individual skills and a striving for achievement, as well as the view of this type of activity as its own motivation, makes work here resemble some kind of sport.

104 As the Swedish Defence College presents UGL: ‘Do you want to influence others? Then you want to exercise leadership’ (http://www.fhs.se/sv/utbildning/uppdagsutbildningar/ledarskap/ugl/ugl/#content, 2012-06-29). UGL is thus not a leadership course directed merely to those who have a management position, but to anyone who wants to understand how they affect others and are affected in social interaction.
Management by integration and self-control

In the 1960s, Douglas McGregor suggested that the increasing complexity of companies meant that the companies would have to abandon the hierarchical and disciplinary scientific management approach to the organization of work, where the only motivation for work lay outside of the actual work situation (that is, in the form of the payment). Instead, he suggested, they should apply ‘management by integration and self-control’ (McGregor 1960), where individual and organizational objectives were synchronized and where the self-governance of individuals and groups would lead to the accomplishment of company objectives. In the latter case employees, as Schutz (1994: 11) later put it, ‘identify with the organization out of desire rather than coercion’. This ideal of management by integration and self-control is largely what is mediated in the group dynamic courses and how to-books, as well as to a certain extent in the journals and newspapers, described here.

In the humanistic perspective, synergy does not just happen, but comes out of the participating individual’s capacity for interaction. Organizations thus benefit from having employees who try to achieve greater self-awareness, self-esteem, etc., and not least since these to a large degree can be accomplished by learning effective methods for social interaction, such as how to become more empathic and communicative. Since it is the individual skills that make the force of the collective possible, to be more than the sum of its parts the team must, so to speak, consist of considerable parts. Therefore, the ‘how’ of work to a certain degree coincides with the ‘how’ of human functionality in general.

As opposed to the Taylorist division of the work force into managers and labourers, the ‘managerial’ in the humanistic view of work is not only a position in an organization but more of a way of being. In other words, the ‘how’ of work is also a ‘what’. Yet this ‘what’ is not that of a particular work organization, but an expression of a wider societal ethos. It is precisely by making use of such commonly embraced values as self-awareness, self-esteem, feedback, personal development, etc., that the humanistic version of work gains its force as a ‘how’. In other words, it is by getting the opportunity to function better not only as employees but also as human beings, that these employees can embrace the basic suppositions of this ‘how’ of work, even if only for their own benefit – and thus come together in a striving for synergy.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how contemporary capitalism privileges ‘the mass production of knowledgeable and enterprising subjects … who can simultaneously optimize their relationship to themselves and to work’ (Olds
and Thrift 2005: 286). In the Swedish case described here, toolbox psychology becomes a psychologically infused version of this type of ‘production of knowledgeable and enterprising subjects’, and as such a means of rationalizing interaction and thereby work efforts. More specifically, this means that, first, psychological knowledge is today disseminated into work organizations through employees taking part in management courses, often led or administrated by management consultants. Such courses aim not only at bookish learning, but at giving individuals a practical knowledge of how to implement techniques and theories in real life situations. The benefits of such knowledge and skills are also conveyed to the general public through how-to books, and in manuals and counselling columns in the daily papers and union journals. This popular psychological knowledge concerns itself with the question of how to manage human interaction (including the one you have with yourself) through the use of psychological tools.

Second, group dynamic courses, such as those described in this chapter, are attempts at rationalizing work organizations by giving employees the means for a more efficient interaction. By acquiring a psychological toolbox employees can supposedly enhance their capacity for work. Ideally, they understand themselves and know how to stay ‘fit’ for work. They also have tools for communication and can reach out and interact with others in efficient ways, meaning that they have an ability to form teams, which ideally reach a state of synergy. Work and productivity thus becomes a question of achievement and is in line with such a view thought about in terms of activities such as sport from where contemporary management prose also borrows some of its foundational expressions.

Third, humanistic psychology and management have been developed since at least the 1940s. Yet, such ideas and practices hardly made any impact on Swedish organizational life until the late 1960s, and then only in a limited way in the form of sensitivity training, which largely was a privilege for the few. A humanistic type of management did not involve a wider Swedish audience until the 1980s and 1990s, that is, at the same time as political and technological changes in the form of neoliberal ideology and the revolution in information and communication technologies also made an impact. Today, managing is not only the privilege of a few persons holding a specific positions in an organization, but professed to be a way of interacting, an activity that involves more or less everyone in the organization. Psychological know-how is now a possibility, perhaps even a duty, for an increasing number of employees.

This also means that, fourth, in Sweden today work and productivity are, at least partially, given new meanings. Management is now not only about organizing the actual labour process, but also about getting both teams and individuals ‘fit’ for work, the latter through educational offerings making use of what is today a global pool of psychological ideas and practices, yet where a major input comes from humanistic psychology. Group dynamic courses on how to manage groups and teams share the general orientation of
humanistic psychology towards the fulfilment of human possibilities. In the case of teambuilding this objective is explicitly stated in the concept of synergy. This striving towards fulfilment of human possibilities not only makes use of sports terms – where managers are supposed to ‘coach’ ‘teams’ towards the successful achievement of different objectives – but also share some traits with a therapeutic approach which in a similar manner aims at enhanced human functionality. By capitalizing on the ‘psychotherapeutic’ then – both by using specific techniques and following its general orientation towards personal and interpersonal functionality – organizational management in Sweden took a step in a therapeutic direction from the 1980s and onwards. This was also a time when an increasing number of Swedes sought out professional psychotherapeutic help – which is the subject of the next chapter.
In the late 1990s the number of Swedes suffering from mental and behavioural problems increased rapidly. One such alarming development was the of so-called burnout epidemic. This development had as its prelude an economic recession unheard of since the 1930s, with high unemployment rates, severe organizational cut-downs, and increased work-loads for employees. This ‘epidemic’ became a major public concern, not only because of the suffering of the many afflicted, or the obscurity regarding the actual causes, but also since the tax funded health care system spent large sums on health care benefits for those afflicted. At the beginning of the new millennium new therapies were worked out to deal with this problem.

This chapter, then, deals with psychotherapeutic efforts at reinstating workers into the production apparatus. More specifically, it looks at the rehabilitation of people suffering from stress-related illnesses in Sweden in the mid-2000s. A few different examples of such treatments are here described and briefly analysed. In these treatments, the patients are given responsibility for their own well-being and health. By educating them in different psychological theories and techniques the patients are given tools to understand and cope with their own stress reactions, all in order to not only rehabilitate them back to work but also to give them the means to stay healthy once cured.

I will here argue that the common features of the described treatments are also shared by much of contemporary psychotherapy in Sweden in general, including the psychotherapeutic know-how represented in the mass media. In an attempt to trace out some causes for the contemporary developments of psychotherapeutic thought and practice as outlined in the chapter, the present situation is also set in relation to the transformation of mental health care in Sweden during the twentieth century. The chapter ends with some conclusions about the intertwinement of therapeutics and work as it appears in Swedish welfare society today, suggesting that contemporary Swedish psychotherapy has made use of the possibilities worked out within the field during the twentieth century to adapt itself to the ‘enterprising’ ethos (Rose 1998) of contemporary liberal democratic states such as Sweden. This also means that psychotherapy today upholds the same values as contemporary management discourse – such as autonomy, responsibility, authenticity, and efficiency (Boltanski and Chipello 2005, Fleming 2009, Rose 1998).
A rehabilitation project

In the beginning of 2007 I participated in a meeting for relatives of people suffering from stress-related illness. The afflicted were all taking part in a rehabilitation project. To be admitted to this program the patients had to be diagnosed as suffering from stress and ‘exhaustion syndrome’ (utmattningssyndrom) – the latter at the time being a newly constructed diagnosis intended as an alternative to that of burnout (Socialstyrelsen 2003, cf. Friberg 2006: 145). Present at the meeting were, apart from about ten relatives, four people working with the patients in the project. These care workers had different occupations and roles in the project. One of them was a psychologist and psychotherapist who led the primary rehabilitation program, another taught Basic Body Awareness, one was an occupational therapist, and one was medical social worker (kurator). The meeting went on for about an hour and had a rather informal atmosphere. The staff shared information about the project with the relatives, and the relatives had the opportunity to comment on this information. They were invited to present themselves and, so to speak, ‘personalize’ the information given by commenting on their own situation with the afflicted (who were not present at the meeting).

This particular rehabilitation project was started at a major hospital in Stockholm at the beginning of the 2000s. The aim of the project was to work out methods for the healing of patients suffering from stress-related illnesses, a condition popularly known as ‘burnout’. The basic rehabilitation program took the form of a ‘cognitive discussion group’. This group was led by a psychotherapist and met once a week for 14 weeks. During this time the patients also received training in Basic Body Awareness and met with an

105 I will here follow Sandström (2010) and translate utmattningssyndrom as ‘exhaustion syndrome’. This diagnosis was created in 2003 after a report from the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen). The term ‘burnout’ translated into Swedish is utbrändhet, a term suggesting an irreversible state and therefore, by the authors of the report, not considered an appropriate description of this condition. In the ICD-10-SE – that is, the Swedish version of ICD-10, the WHO’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems – utmattningssyndrom is diagnosis F48.3A, whereas burnout is Z73.0. ‘Exhaustion syndrome’ is not included as a diagnosis in ICD-10. Interesting to notice is also that the different position in the classificatory system makes utmattningssyndrom a stress-related illness, whereas burnout is seen as a problem related to life management. When put inside quotation marks the English term ‘burnout’ is here used in the wide sense, roughly meaning a person suffering from severe exhaustion. I will here only use the term ‘exhaustion syndrome’ when necessary so as to specify those with this particular diagnosis.
107 The occupational therapist here tries to arrange a smooth return to the work place, whereas the kurator, here a medical social worker, assists in arranging less stressful private living conditions.
108 The description of this project is based on interviews with one of the therapists leading the groups and with one of the participants, on the written material handed out to the participants, and my participation at the meeting presenting the project to relatives of the participants.
109 In Swedish Kognitiv samtalsgrupp.
occupational therapist and a medical social worker. Since these patients often have a relapse, the methods used in the project were geared to aiding the patients in staying healthy once the treatment has ended.

Each session with the cognitive group had a specific theme. These were, in order, the care for oneself; information about ‘exhaustion syndrome’; biological, physiological, psychological and spiritual needs; the grief process; cognitive theory (two sessions); self-esteem; a good relation to oneself; to handle and prioritize relations; how we are affected by our thoughts; and, lastly, anger in a social context. The first meeting was an introductory meeting. The last two meetings consisted of summary and evaluation and a discussion about how to go on when the series of meetings had ended. The main aim of the cognitive group was to help the participants create ‘coping strategies’. These are functional ways of handling oneself, for example when stressed, that help to prevent people from getting ill (again).

The psychological theory that the participants were supposed to learn was (mainly) basic cognitive psychology, that is, that ‘thoughts are thoughts, not facts’, as one of the therapists put it. This simple idea seemed to open up for many discussions about possible ways of changing your way of living. For example, the participants were told about so-called cognitive distortions (in Swedish often called tankefällor), and given a paper with a list of ten such distortions.\textsuperscript{110} These were:

All-or-nothing thinking - Thinking of things in absolute terms, like ‘always’, ‘every’ or ‘never’. Few aspects of human behavior are so absolute.

Overgeneralization - Taking isolated cases and using them to make wide generalizations.

Mental filter - Focusing exclusively on certain, usually negative or upsetting, aspects of something while ignoring the rest, like a tiny imperfection in a piece of clothing.

Disqualifying the positive - Continually ‘shooting down’ positive experiences for arbitrary, ad hoc reasons.

Jumping to conclusions - Assuming something negative where there is no evidence to support it. Two specific subtypes are also identified: Mind reading - Assuming the intentions of others. Fortune telling - Predicting how things will turn before they happen.

Magnification and Minimization - Inappropriately understating or exaggerating the way people or situations truly are. Often the positive characteristics of other people are exaggerated and negative characteristics are understated. There is one subtype of magnification: Catastrophizing - Focusing on the worst possible outcome, however unlikely, or thinking that a situation is unbearable or impossible when it is really just uncomfortable.

Emotional reasoning - Making decisions and arguments based on how you feel rather than objective reality.

\textsuperscript{110} The English version of this list (of which the participants received a Swedish translation) is quoted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_distortions, 2007-06-25. A version of this list (originally?) appeared in Burns (1999 [1980]).
Making **should statements** - Concentrating on what you think ‘should’ or ought to be rather than the actual situation you are faced with, or having **rigid rules** which you think should always apply no matter what the circumstances are.

**Labeling** - Related to overgeneralization, explaining by naming. Rather than describing the specific behavior, you assign a label to someone or yourself that puts them in absolute and unalterable terms.

**Personalization** - Assuming you or others directly caused things when that may not have been the case. When applied to others this is an example of blame.

At the session the participants discuss their own experiences of these distortions, what distortions they may themselves suffer from and how they, in such a case, may be able to adjust them.

Affect theory was also part of the education. It was here stated that affects are innate biological reaction systems and that there are eight affects, of which two are positive (interest and joy), one is neutral (surprise), and five are negative (fear, sadness, anger, shame, disgust). The positive affects make us sense a ‘positive energy’ and feel productive. Negative affects makes us ready for fight or flight, or to avoid something and seek help. The participants learnt that emotions (känslor)\(^{111}\) are the conscious experiences of affect reactions, and that when growing up we get a personal repertoire of emotions, which is heavily guided by cultural and social values.

A few other issues were also of concern. The participants got to discuss anger – what it is and ways to handle it. They learnt ways to improve their self-esteem, and ways to become active instead of passive parts in problematic situations. The aim of doing therapy in a group was to make use of the ‘inside’ knowledge of the participants (that is, their experiences as sufferers of the illness), thus accomplishing a dynamic in discussions beyond that in individual therapy.

According to Erica, one of the therapists who had lead half of the cognitive groups,\(^{112}\) some of the participants found the session series a bit overloaded, with too many themes. Erica herself stated that four themes would suffice. These would be care, cognitive theory, self-esteem, and anger. Everything else could be subthemes to these four. Erica also emphasized that the participants did not tend to view the papers that were handed out – such as that presenting cognitive distortions – as the most important part of the group. The participants usually stated that these papers just started up different lines of thinking that were then aired in the group.

From an analytical point of view, a few features of the meeting seemed particularly significant. First, just as the patients going through the treatment, their relatives got to meet persons who administered psychological treatments, who talked explicitly about their work, even the theories and methods.

\(^{111}\) The Swedish term *känslor* may be translated as both ‘feelings’ and ‘emotions’ depending on the context. In colloquial language it is the common term used to discuss emotional life.

\(^{112}\) In May 2007.
used. Both patients and relatives thus got the opportunity to learn more about stress-related illnesses and their treatment, making it possible for them to understand and take a more active part in the healing. Second, by trying to involve the relatives in the treatment – that is, getting them to understand the situation and the processes their kin (that is, the patients), and therefore also they themselves, were involved in at the moment – the project as a whole took the view of mental disorders as produced, reproduced and cured in a social context. The involvement of the medical social worker and the occupational therapist also pointed in this direction. The latter also meant that, third, the treatment was closely related to work life. Fourth, affect or emotion theory played an important part. Yet the main theoretical and methodological framework was cognitive psychology. Another influence was group dynamics. This means that, fifth, the treatment had an integrative or eclectic touch to it.

If Freudian psychoanalysis largely defined psychotherapy a century ago, then something has obviously happened since. Regarding all its specific features the above-described therapy is the radical opposite of classical psychoanalysis. We do not find a dyadic and hierarchically organized therapy, based on a theoretically refined drive theory, where a physician administers a time-consuming cure to a wealthy neurotic housewife (to be). Instead we here find a time-limited treatment – based on a mixture of theoretical models all worked out during the post-war years, such as cognitive psychology, affect theory and group dynamics – where a host of persons are involved in the rehabilitation of a group of employees back to work, mainly by aiding these employees in working out their own conscious strategies for how to manage their lives. In brief, psychotherapy has here become a work-enabling self-help psychology, shaped by the values of autonomy and authenticity, as well as responsibility and efficiency, framing contemporary management discourse (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005, Fleming 2009).

Both the diagnosis ‘exhaustion syndrome’ and this specific program were created in the mid-2000s. The program has, I suggest, certain similarities with other programs in Sweden aimed at healing stress-related illnesses and constructed around the same time, in the sense that all these programs share the above-mentioned five significant features. These features are however, I will here argue, also shared by much of psychotherapy in general in Sweden today, making them appear as a sort of contemporary therapeutic common sense. In the following sections I will continue to stake out the field by describing how present-day Swedish psychotherapy appears as drawn towards the slot of work-enabling self-help psychology.

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113 After WW I, psychoanalysis widened its clientele (see e.g. Schröter 2004: 166, Danto 1998).
The healing of stress-related illnesses

In 2004 and 2006, and to a lesser extent also in 2008, I visited a gathering called the Psychotherapy Fair which has been held every second year since 2000. From 2004 to 2008 it was held at Stockholmsmässan, a large exhibition complex, in a suburb of Stockholm called Älvsjö. According to the program of the third fair in 2004,

this fair is unique in Sweden, as well as in the rest of the world. Exhibitors are licensed psychotherapists, their organizations, workplaces, and institutions. Specially invited participants are patient organizations, affected unions, publishing companies, politicians, researchers, and others that work to promote psychic health, psychotherapy, and psychological counselling. … In about 100 show-cases and at about 270 seminars/lectures, mini-lectures at a speaker’s corner, and panel discussions the visitors are given rich possibilities to take part of, and discuss, the wide field of licensed psychotherapists, such as work with patients/clients in medical treatment, health care, and rehabilitation and pre-emptive work, and work in corporate health care, schools, and education, research and development.\footnote{All translations from Swedish – that is, from programs, reports, journals, newspapers, etc. – are my own, unless otherwise stated.}

In 2006 the program stated that the Fair had ‘become a forum for information, knowledge dissemination, developing discussions and informal gatherings for everyone who is active within and interested in the diversified field of psychotherapy and psychology’.

From an analytical point of view, the Fair resembles a sort of ‘public square’, both in the sense that you may encounter other people and ideas, and in the sense of being a marketplace. The Fair, moreover, has a similarity to a scientific conference which people attend to keep up with what is happening in their particular field of knowledge (yet which is also open to the general public), but it is also like an industrial fair in that it exhibits newly developed ‘technologies’, as well as other items, that are for sale. This mixture of knowledge production and trade makes the Fair a hub in the present so-called knowledge-based economy. The very idea of creating a psychotherapy fair thus speaks to the ways in which therapy and economy have become tightly linked.

The Fair basically has two parts: seminars and exhibitions. The first are held in everything from small rooms to lecture halls depending on the number of participants registered. In most cases a solemn atmosphere reigns: a lecturer delivers a speech to a thoughtful audience in a cool air-conditioned room with softened lights. In the exhibition hall there is a livelier atmosphere. People wander around and look at the show-cases – usually about one hundred of them – occasionally stopping and chatting with an exhibitor or other visitors. There are also a few, more or less crowded, cafés where you
can sit down for a break and a chance to contemplate the seminars, or perhaps chat about them with colleagues or other visitors.

A variety of projects are presented both at the seminars and in the exhibition hall. Research groups at scientific institutions, or at different psychiatric or psychotherapeutic clinics, present their results. There are presentations of newly published books. Different psychotherapeutic associations present their ideas and work. Public and private health care organizations employing psychotherapists inform about their psychotherapeutic activities. Counsellors and psychologists working at schools or companies or other kinds of organizations present their work. Altogether you find a host of different psychodynamic, humanistic, cognitive, behavioural, cognitive behavioural, etc., approaches represented – in short a wide variety of projects and approaches put to work at every facet of human life from birth to death.

I was first made aware of the Fair through an invitation from a person involved in the National Association for EQ (see Chapter One). When first visiting the Fair I soon realized that it not only was a place where psychotherapeutic activities in Sweden became visible to a wider audience, but also a place which made visible the ways this ‘psychotherapeutic’ stretched out into other spheres of society. One example of such a link made visible was that between the ‘psychotherapeutic’ and the ‘managerial’ in treatments of ‘burnout’, since such treatments ideally not only cure the participants but also make them better equipped for work life interaction in general. At the Psychotherapy Fairs in 2004 and 2006 I took part in four seminars describing different research projects that had been developed in order to come to terms with this problem.

Psychoeducation as treatment
At the Fair in 2004 I participated in two seminars that dealt with stress-related problems. They both presented projects with a theoretical base in cognitive psychology, which aimed at constructing methods to lessen stress

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115 Who visits the Fair? Drawing on a few informal conversations at one of the cafés, and a few conversations I could not help but overhear at another (very crowded) café, as well as the report about the conversations an acquaintance (who visited one of the fairs) had with a number of different persons, and from the personal presentations by the participants at a few less crowded seminars, my impression is that visitors are mainly what perhaps can be summed up as psy-professionals interested in what is going on in their business. At the Fair you not only find well-known approaches such as cognitive therapy, behaviour therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, psychoanalysis, and different psychodynamic approaches, but also (publicly) less well-known therapies such as hypnosis therapy, art therapy, dance therapy, music therapy, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), Imago, and a therapy for the treatment of affect phobia, just to mention a few. A specific kind of showcases consists of those set up by publishing houses. Some are small, specialized, sometimes even just marketing a single work, whereas the larger publishers are selling a wide variety of books spanning from theoretical and methodological works to self-help manuals, and from neuroscience to social psychology. There are also a variety of mini-seminars taking place in this hall that altogether treat a similar width of subjects as the showcases.
and enhance well-being and health, and thus the ability to work. To reach this goal both these projects used so-called psychoeducation which, as the term suggests, simply means an education in relevant psychological knowledge.

The first of these seminars presented a research project called ‘The Affect School’, carried out at a Swedish university. The seminar was a straightforward PowerPoint presentation held in a middle-size lecture hall – dark blue tapestries, softened lights, a cool breeze from the air-conditioning, around 40 visitors – by the leader of the research project who seemed eager to present his work (at least he was the only lecturer I listened to who started before schedule). His words may be summarized as follows.\textsuperscript{116}

The Affect School is a form of psychoeducation – it is a school. The education takes place in groups which include six to eight participants. The basic idea taught is that human behaviour follows certain affective patterns. A factor that has been shown to make people vulnerable to stress, according to the presentation, is the inability to identify affects. Severe inability of this kind is called ‘alexithymia’, which can be measured in different ways. Some participants had their brains scanned before and after their treatment. These images were at the seminar used to illustrate that the brain starts functioning in a slightly different way when we increase our knowledge of affects, in that the control of the cortical processes over the amygdala will increase.\textsuperscript{117} Just understanding how we as humans function will thus enhance our well-being.

The ‘school’ consists, we were further told, of eight meetings and deals with facts about affects and their relation to stress based on Silvan Tomkins ideas about eight basic affects.\textsuperscript{118} The project made use of the Swedish terms \textit{känslor} and \textit{emotioner} in a way which makes it hard to translate these terms into English.\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Känslor} were in this project defined as affects one is aware of, while \textit{emotioner} were seen as personally coloured \textit{känslor}. The otherwise colloquial Swedish word \textit{känslor} thus got a scientific definition here. Each meeting of the Affect School deals with one specific affect. The participants are encouraged to think about a situation when they experienced this \textit{känsla}, what is was like, what they did, for how long it lasted, what others did, etc. The participants also have to reflect on and discuss where in the body they experience a \textit{känsla}, how to talk about \textit{känslor}, how you know that someone else is experiencing this \textit{känsla}, how you can understand another person’s \textit{känsla}. Each meeting also includes a discussion about a more general prob-

\textsuperscript{116} For a more detailed description of this project see \textit{Scandinavian Journal of Psychology}, 2005, 46, 395–402.
\textsuperscript{117} In other words, cognitive processes will increase their control over emotional processes in the brain.
\textsuperscript{118} Tomkins initially stated that there are eight basic affects. In later works he added a ninth affect, ‘dismell’ (Tomkins 1991: 5).
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Känsla} is the singular form, \textit{känslor} the plural.
lem such as primary affects, känslor and the brain, Tomkins’ theories, empathy and emotional intelligence, and affects and stress.

The seminar ended with a brief presentation of how the Affect School has also, in a similar way as with patients, been used to enhance the performance of (healthy) professionals whose work may be negatively affected by stress, such as police officers and professional athletes (in this case golfers) – and with positive results.¹²⁰

The other seminar about stress-related illness that I visited at the Psychotherapy Fair in 2004 was the one described briefly in the opening vignette in the Introduction of this book. To repeat, the project was carried out by two psychotherapy students and dealt with a school in southern Sweden that, like many other schools, had a problem with stress-related illness among the teachers. The aim of the project was to give the personnel tools to cope with their own stress reactions. This was done mainly by educating them in the cognitive psychology of stress, where an emotion is seen as an interpretation.

More specifically, a summary of the seminar may look as follows. Different people react differently to the same phenomena. In cognitive theory these reactions are called automatic thoughts. These, we were told, can be altered. The seminar then continued with the proposition that the role of the teachers has changed rather dramatically in Sweden in later years. The teachers’ work has come to be less and less about teaching and more and more about dealing with the psycho-social environment. The teachers have not had time to understand what these changes mean. And when we feel threatened we get primitive. Parts of the brain that are very old – that is, anatomical structures which are old from an evolutionary perspective – take over and, so to speak, think for us. There is a stress reaction. Just to understand this is very liberating, according to the presentation. If we accept that this is the way the brain functions we become relieved of shame and guilt, because we understand that this is the way we function as human beings; mere knowledge about how the human mind and brain functions will make us feel better. At the school where the project was tried out, the sick leave diminished with 30 per

¹²⁰ A whole chapter is devoted to The Affect School in Läkarroll i förändring (The Changing Role of the Physician), a book written for physicians interested in ‘health promoting methods’, including ‘to promote people’s own responsibility for their health’, which is seen as important when ‘life style related unhealth seem to increase ever more’ (Bengtsson and Hybbinette 2004: 17). Given this, ill-health today is more complex, and health care therefore (according to the book) requires teamwork, where different professions work together. The book also contains an appendix with references to useful litterature for the person ‘who wants to read more about emotions and the relationship between body and mind, such as the new research about stress, pain, and neuroscience’ (2004: 289). The works mentioned are, for example, Daniel Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence, the popular works by Antonio Damasio, Hans Selye’s The Stress of Life, and Peter Währborg’s Stress och den nya ohälsan (Stress and the New Ill-health). Two other chapters are devoted to the importance of emotions (känslor) for health, and Johannes Siegrist’s model of ill-health in work life. The latter states that work-related ill-health today is a combination of context and personality. The context is the new type of boundless work life in a globalized economy, and the personality which has a hard time handling this new work life is those driven by ‘overcomittment’ (2004: 66).
cent in a year. The whole project was thus an economic success, since the
cost was soon earned. The two students working on this project summarized
that health, well-being, personal development and efficient work can be
linked.\textsuperscript{121}

Exhaustion syndrome
At the Fair in 2006 I visited two seminars that dealt with the rehabilitation of
patients diagnosed as suffering from ‘exhaustion syndrome’, popularly
known as ‘burnout’. These two programs were parallel research projects at a
major university, located in the Stockholm area. The aim of these projects
was to produce marketable programs for the rehabilitation of patients suffer-
ing from this illness.

The first of these two projects shared certain features with the one de-
dscribed at some length initially in this chapter. To a certain degree these pro-
jects even shared the same educational material. This project, however, was
worked out for primary care, not specialist care, in contrast to the project
described earlier. Another difference was that the project which I am about
to describe here was not really about psychotherapy, in the strict sense of the
term, but about therapy given by ‘experienced caretakers’, such as nurses,
counsellors, or social workers. These ‘experienced caretakers’ are given a
brief psychotherapeutic education, so that they, in turn, may assist the pa-
tients in acquiring their ‘tools’.\textsuperscript{122}

Otherwise the way this project was described made it appear as similar to
the one described earlier, with a ‘cognitive discussion group’ consisting of
eight participants, a series of sessions where each session has a specified
content, and the attempts at creating a dynamic in the group that will give
extra value, so to speak, beyond what a dyadic patient-therapist relationship
could give. Through the therapeutic process the participants are supposed to
go from a fight-or-flight response to a deeper understanding of themselves,
and on to exploring new perspectives and working out coping strategies. At
the meetings the participants sit at a table with a stack of handkerchiefs in
the middle (in case someone starts crying).

The program consists of fourteen sessions. The themes of these sessions
include affect theory, cognitive theory, methods for strengthening one’s self-

\textsuperscript{121} When afterwards pondering these four therapeutic objectives, they struck me as a rather
accurate summary of the values of the Swedish welfare society – or at least its latest version
(see below and Conclusion) – which, on a small scale, the project in a sense had been set up to
uphold.

\textsuperscript{122} In an early presentation of the program it is stated that: the patients should be supplied
with a ‘simple set of tools’ and receive training in using these ‘tools’. It is further stated that
the project decided to use ‘experienced caretakers’ since there is a lack of psychotherapists
outside of the large cities, and since it is a well-established fact that the so-called unspecific
(or common) factors, such as a well-established working alliance (see below) are effective
in psychotherapy (Herlofson 2003).
esteem, coping, and other topics. The first session is an introduction, the last one is a summary. Sessions two to thirteen all follow the same pattern, beginning with a breathing exercise, which is followed by a recapitulation of the last meeting. Then the participants discuss their homework and other issues they feel are important. The group leader then lectures on the theme of the session, which is reflected on, whereafter the participants construct their own home work, and then the session ends, just as it started, with a breathing exercise.

Common for all these patients – according to the presentation of the program – is a state similar to affect dysregulation (a term used in dialectical behaviour therapy), that is, they are not capable of regulating their emotional life in a functional way. In practice this means that they lack the ability to say no, to actually draw the line somewhere. They often have a long history in health care before they receive therapy, through which they have learnt to be victims. What they need, we were told, is more self-esteem, in order to get away from the role of victim and instead become actors.

The second 2006 seminar dealing with therapy for ‘exhaustion syndrome’ that I visited described a method called ‘focused group therapy’. Just as the project described above, the aim of this project was to aid the patients in working out their own coping skills. A difference though is that the groups are led by psychodynamically oriented group therapists. In brief, the project was described as follows.

The patients are mainly women (70 per cent) and most often in their early forties. The therapy goes on for 18 weeks. The group meets twice a week the first nine sessions, in order to get the process started, and then once a week. An important goal of the project is to assist the patients in building up, or restoring, their self-esteem. The patients are often competent professionals, but typically have had a problem with the delimitation of their tasks. Put plainly, they lack the ability to say no. They have let others evaluate how much work they could do. When they have not been able to perform in line with expectations, they have experienced a lack of competence, which in the long run lead to decreased self-esteem, and the cardinal symptoms of ‘exhaustion syndrome’ – fatigue and an inability to perform even the simplest tasks. According to the presentation, these patients need to understand their own interactional patterns. They further need to develop new behaviours, for example to dare to feel and express negative emotions. This is what they are supposed to learn in the group.

In one of the articles presenting this project (Lindgren and Sandahl 2004), the feeling of competence which is an important part of the patients’ self-esteem is referred to as ‘self-efficacy’. This term is borrowed from Bandura

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123 As a layperson, this was the seminar that was most difficult for me to comprehend. Whether this was due to the fact that there were four speakers who all had a lot to say, or because these individuals had a psychodynamic background and therefore used a vocabulary of that kind, I do not know – perhaps a little bit of both.
(1997), a psychologist who uses it to describe processes of control. High self-efficacy, according to Bandura, makes the individual proactive, self-reflective and self-organizing, thereby comprising an ability to function in diverse situations. Self-efficacy thus, arguably, appears as something of an inner motor, thereby also giving the person a certain amount of autonomy.

Regaining health by achieving control

The four different projects described above, aimed at the psychological treatment of stress-related illnesses, have been developed in different contexts by different persons from different medical and psychological departments, ranging from psychotherapy students to senior academic researchers, and make use of different theories and methods. Still they have a few things in common, that they also share with the first project described in this chapter. First, they all try to give the patients the knowledge and skills to cope with their respective situations, which is to some extent accomplished through so-called psychoeducation. Second, the psychoeducation involves some kind of affect or emotion theory. Third, though the theoretical perspective in these projects varied, they all had an integrative touch to them. Fourth, they all share a view of psychic illness as produced, reproduced and cured in a social context. And, fifth, they include economic considerations: most obviously in that they are all closely related to work life by being rehabilitation projects, but also in that they are thoroughly organized and with a limited number of sessions, which makes the cost of the therapy possible to calculate. In all the different cases these therapeutic components – which thus include theoretical perspectives, therapeutic techniques, psychoeducation, specific types of group leaders, a specific way of organizing the treatment, and so on – have been assembled into the compound of a therapy.

At one of the seminars presenting a treatment for stress-related illnesses, the lecturer stated that because of the wide variety of useful theories and methods, the most difficult issue in constructing a new treatment was the need for delimitation. Or as he put it, ‘we know so much!’, thus purporting a view of psychotherapeutic knowledge as a sort of rich and varied smorgasbord that the constructor of a treatment can choose from when composing his or her own plate. Yet, if there is nothing naturally given about the means by which treatments are constructed, since there are so many options, then why are some means chosen instead of others and by different researchers in different projects?

To understand these different treatments one must first acknowledge that they are both rehabilitations and psychotherapies. The question is thus not simply what makes the patients well or what makes it possible to reinstate them in the production apparatus, but how both of these objectives are accomplished at the same time. From this point of view the different treatments can be described as ways of helping the patients to regain health by achieving control. A relapse is common among patients suffering from stress-
related illnesses, but by giving the patients enough control over their own situation, this can be avoided. It is by once again achieving the necessary self-control that the patients can both be cured and stay healthy and productive. The treatments for stress-related illnesses thus follow an inclination to, at least indirectly, uphold autonomy, personal responsibility and efficiency as essential values. This inclination – apparently fit for rehabilitation – is however, I argue, not unique to these rehabilitation projects, but shared by much of psychotherapy in general in Sweden today. In order to examine this, I will undertake a brief overview of contemporary Swedish psychotherapy in the following section.

Psychotherapy and the ethos of enterprise

During the Psychotherapy Fairs in 2004, 2006 and 2008 I took part in almost 30 seminars. Following my methodological strategy to seek out phenomena explicitly dealing with emotions – or affects, passions, etc. – I ended up in the most different contexts. I took part in seminars dealing with grief and depression from a psychoanalytical point of view; seminars on theories and practices related to the idea of emotional intelligence (see Chapter One); and seminars on cognitive behaviour therapy, cognitive psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, dance therapy, or art therapy. I visited seminars dealing with the role of psychotherapists and psychologists working as organizational consultants, and a seminar on the newly published Swedish edition of a book by neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. I listened in on a few panel discussions about psychotherapy integration, the similarities between different approaches, and similar topics. I also collected a wide variety of material in the exhibition hall, by gathering written hand-outs, and by listening in on the mini-seminars there, as well as by chatting with other visitors. Needless to say, the material altogether presents a diversity of perspectives on the theorization and application of psychotherapy, yet there are also some recurring themes. Focusing on the latter, I will not indulge in a detailed description of all the seminars I attended and the other material I gathered. My aim in this section, rather, is to describe the ways in which the specific features of the treatment of stress-related illnesses occurred in many other treatments presented at the Fair, as well as at the Fair as a whole. This will also be a way to understand how an ethos of ‘enterprise’ (Rose 1998), upholding values such as autonomy, responsibility and efficiency, is maintained by psychotherapy in general in Sweden today.

124 Of the 220 seminars taking place during the three days in May 2004, where each seminar went on for 75 minutes, I visited eleven. In 2006 I visited twelve seminars. In 2008 I did not have the opportunity to participate in any systematic way, but merely dropped in at some seminars during the last day (that is, on the weekend).
Psychoeducation and affect theory

The redistribution of psychological knowledge and skills was a prominent feature of many of the projects described at the Fair (just as it was in the treatments for stress-related illnesses described above). Though psychotherapy has always been about increased self-understanding on the part of the patient/client, there is a difference between the self-understanding coming out of the patient–therapist interaction and the theoretical learning of explicit psychoeducation. In the latter case, a part of the expertise of the therapist is, so to speak, given away to the patient (Bäuml, et al. 2006, Authier 1977). This is the situation, for instance, in cognitive therapies and cognitive-inspired approaches where homework and explicit therapeutic focus is an important part of the treatment, and where the therapist and the client together decide on the tasks.\textsuperscript{125} Such an involvement of the patient in the therapeutic work necessitates an increased psychological self-understanding on the part of latter.

An important part of giving the patients back their self-control in the treatments for stress-related illnesses is to give them an understanding of affect and/or emotion theory. The role of affects and emotions in human behaviour is widely discussed among psychotherapists, yet a matter which has achieved no common solution. The most populated seminar I visited during the fairs was that about the newly published Swedish version of the book \textit{Looking for Spinoza} by emotion theorist Antonio Damasio. Damasio’s name was otherwise just mentioned in two of the other seminars I took part in. Exactly how affect and emotion theory stick together as a whole was, however, not discussed at any seminar. The two concepts of affects and emotions have been worked out at different times in different types of research. No general terminology for describing the emotional world emerged at the Fair. ‘Affects’ have been the conventional term used in psychotherapy to describe the emotional world since the time of Freud, so the term fits standard psychotherapeutic vocabulary.\textsuperscript{126} Moreover, Tomkins (1962, 1991:

\textsuperscript{125} CBT has a few specific features that define it as a practice. Here is how they are described in a guide for practitioners: ‘Much of the treatment is based on the here-and-now, and there is an assumption that the main goal of therapy is to help the patients bring about desired changes in their lives. Thus treatment focuses on the opportunity for new adaptive learning, and on producing changes outside the clinical setting. Problem solving is an important integral part of treatment. All aspects of therapy are made explicit to the patient, and the therapist and patient endeavour to work in a collaborative relationship in which they plan together strategies to deal with clearly identified problems. Therapy is time-limited, and has explicitly agreed goals’ (Hawton, et.al. 1989).

\textsuperscript{126} According to Egidius (2005: 23), the term ‘affect’ is more common in psychiatry, whereas the term ‘emotion’ is more common in psychological texts. It is interesting to notice that Freud in one of the very few texts where he tried to accomplish a systematic discussion of the term ‘affect’ (Fhanér 1989: 12), a short article called \textit{Das Unbewusste}, slides between different emotion terms, but uses the term ‘affect’ most often and also in different compounds such as \textit{Affektbetrag} – a term that goes back to his work with Breuer – thereby institutionalizing ‘affect’ as a psychoanalytic term (Freud 2003: 162-164, 476, n.8). In Freud’s view neurosis is
5) saw affects as the basic motivational system in humans, which has made it possible to replace Freudian drive theory with affect theory. In more recent years, however, ‘emotions’ have become a term used in some neuroscientific research which psychotherapists seem to deem important, to judge, for example, by the large presence at the seminar about Damasio’s work. The situation was even more confusing since not only ‘affects’ and ‘emotions’ but also the popular Swedish term känslor was frequently used at the Fair, though in different ways by different speakers. Sometimes it was used as a synonym for emotions, sometimes as a synonym for feelings, sometimes it was given a more elaborate meaning such as ‘personally coloured affects’, yet most often defined by the context, that is, not really defined at all. The different and multifaceted meanings that the popular term känslor has in everyday speech were therefore reflected at the Fair. \footnote{There is thus no common perspective concerning emotions/affects in psychotherapy today. The perspectives used rather appear to be imported from basic psychological research because of their usefulness. And in the projects with explicit psychoeducation, it was basically the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins – stating that there are a few basic affects which are ‘hard-wired’ – that was used. Though based on decades of basic research and complex enough in its details, Tomkins’ theory is still possible to summarize in a way simple enough for almost anyone to understand.}

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127 The concept of empathy was also discussed in some seminars. It was mentioned as an important quality in the patients/clients, which could be enhanced through psychoeducation. Otherwise the concept of empathy was made use of in a rather ‘everyday’ manner, as if its meaning was almost self-evident, most often when the importance of establishing an empathic relationship with the client/patient was discussed. In a few seminars references were made to research that shows that it is not so much the specific method used as the skills of the therapist that decides the outcome of the therapy. As mentioned in a seminar, one important part of this therapeutic skill lies in the ability to create an empathic relationship with the patient/client, an insight established with the research by Carl Rogers and associates. In a somewhat roundabout way, empathy therefore becomes, as characterized in another seminar, a fundamental psychotherapeutic method. An empathic relationship is therefore one of the so-called common factors of psychotherapy – that is, effective factors regardless of type of treatment (Weinberger 1994). Since the importance of an empathic relationship was first discussed in a systematic way by Rogers, who stressed its vital importance for a successful outcome, yet confirmed through later research and now acknowledged as important in psychotherapy in general, the Rogerian type of therapy has largely been absorbed by other strands of treatment – a fact not always acknowledged (Bloch and Harari 2001).
Integration and social context

Just like the seminars focusing on treatments for ‘burnout’, many others also presented work which had an integrative approach. Although specific associations representing specific approaches often hosted the seminars, I could not detect much interest in upholding intra-disciplinary boundaries between different therapeutic approaches. The Fair was rather characterized by a sort of reconciliatory spirit; psychotherapy integration was a matter discussed at several seminars. I even ended up in a few seminars that dealt exclusively with this phenomenon. On the whole, the impression I got was that although there are some instances where differentiation between psychotherapeutic approaches is seen as desirable or useful – such as in the education of psychotherapists – in real life practice integration is more and more of a fact, and a fact that many psychologists and psychotherapists welcome.

The notion of integration appears to give the therapeutic imagination and practice new possibilities. New therapies are constantly invented. The clinics presenting their work in the exhibition hall often use several different types of therapies, thus having a rather pragmatic view. Since the common denominator for the treatments presented at the Fair is that they are all psychological treatments, it was another kind of therapy that appeared as the common adversary. As a participant at a seminar half-jokingly remarked, ‘our common enemy are the medics (medcinarna)’. At one of the seminars the chairperson concluded that he believed that ‘in the future we will not talk about psychotherapies [that is, in the plural], but psychological treatment’, thus suggesting that if theoretical-methodological ‘purity’ once was an issue of importance in psychotherapy, it is so no longer. Some ‘schools’ – such as cognitive behaviour therapy, assembling components from cognitive therapy and behaviour therapy – are already working in that direction, since they are integrative in themselves.

The view that mental disorders and their treatments are produced in a social environment was evident in the way many presentations put the afflictions into a social context when explaining both how and why the illness in question had occurred as well as the reasons for how the cure had been constructed. It was also evident in the many group treatments presented at the Fair. Just as homework takes the therapeutic work outside of the clinic, thereby widening the context in which the sought after normality and functionality is defined, so group treatments broaden the therapeutic context from

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128 According to Holmqvist and Lilliengren (2008) integrative psychotherapies can be of four different types, based on, respectively, theoretical integration, assimilative integration, technical eclecticism or common factors. The first is based on the integration of theoretical models from different therapeutic approaches. The second follows one therapeutic approach into which elements of other therapies are assimilated and integrated. The third pays less attention to theoretical issues and instead integrates techniques which have been shown useful for specific problems. The fourth case makes use of the idea that there are certain common factors that are curative in all therapies, where the aim (not yet realized) is to create therapies that integrate these factors.
Both psychotherapy integration and the emphasis on the social context in understanding illnesses and constructing treatments extend the possibilities of psychotherapy. In the first case the ‘smorgasbord’ of theoretical and methodological possibilities when assembling a therapy is widened, in the second case the opportunities for the patients to assemble and try out interactional skills are widened. Altogether this means that the ‘psychological toolbox’, or coping strategies, that patients accumulate may be better adapted to the problems encountered in the respective real-life situations – thus enhancing the possibilities of self-governance.

These widened possibilities for the construction and application of psychotherapeutic know-how has also created new market opportunities for entrepreneurial therapists – and especially so given the new economistic framework under which psychotherapy in Sweden today exists.

An economistic framework

Both explicitly and implicitly, economic considerations have today become an integrated part of psychotherapy in Sweden. Only a few of the seminars I visited made an explicit connection to work life, for example two seminars where psychotherapists described their work as management consultants in work organizations, there enhancing the well-being of the employees and thus their abilities for increased work efforts. Yet, through public management reform over the last decades (Pollit and Bouckaert 2011), therapeutic efficacy (also implying cost-effectiveness) has become a subject of growing importance for psychotherapy (Pusch and Dobson 1994: 675, Olsson 1999). This has meant that to delimit, compare and evaluate, where the first is a precondition for the other two, appear as important ingredients in the development of new therapies – making it possible to measure therapeutic efficacy and (partly through this) also keeping the costs of therapy low.

Many therapies presented at the Fair were so-called short-term or time-limited therapies. Instead of a treatment which can go on for years and with consultations perhaps several times a week, such as in Freudian psychoanalysis, short-term therapies have a limited number of sessions, often decided

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129 One of the firms sold telephone counselling to other organizations. The employees of these organizations could call any time to speak to a psychologist or psychotherapist if they felt the need. The other firm employed psychotherapists who worked as management consultants, either helping employees in organizations with acute problems or working with organizational development. One of the therapists involved in the latter was also involved in one of the ‘burnout’ projects described above. Although she later stated, when I interviewed her, that there are differences between working with patients and other clients – that is, between rehabilitation and organizational development – her skills obviously allowed her to do both.
on before the therapy begins.\footnote{This development has already reached its most extreme consequences in the Single Session Therapy which, as the label suggests, is a specific treatment only lasting one session, and presented at the Fair by Falu Psykiatriska Sektor. For an early popular account of Single Session Therapy, see ‘Therapists Say a Single Session May Be Enough’, an article in the New York Times (1991-05-02) written by Daniel Goleman (who later published Emotional Intelligence).} Time limits make it possible to compare and evaluate therapeutic efficiency according to standardized methods, so-called randomized controlled trials. Many of the seminars at the Fair, and especially those dealing with new therapies, included this type of evaluation of the treatment in their presentations. The latter followed a pattern where the therapy in question had its outcome measured and compared with other therapies and with TAU (treatment as usual) by the use of statistical methods.\footnote{‘Treatment as usual’ means that the patients remain in line, waiting for a place at the common type of treatment for the illness in question. In other words, ‘studies that include TAU indicate what would have been the common outcome for a clinical group had the evaluated intervention not been implemented’ (Andée Löfholm et al. 2013: 25).} An important authority pushing therapy in this direction is the Swedish Council on Health Technology Assessment (SBU) which undertakes systematic assessments of therapies for different problems, thus giving health care authorities instruments which enable a more efficient management of health care services. At the same time a framework is set for the standards that therapies must be able to answer to – if they are to receive public funding.\footnote{See e.g. http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/riktlinjer/nationellartiklinjer/omnationellartiklinjer/satarviframriktlinjerna, 2013-05-21.}

However, the system of randomized controlled trials is, as seen at the Fair, not unproblematic. Statistical measures used in psychotherapy can be rather basic, yet there is also an on-going debate, which surfaced at some seminars at the Fair, among psychotherapy researchers about what different statistical methods actually measure, what ought to be measured, and what is gained and lost by the use of such methods. Not least the ‘person factors’ – the patient and the therapist – are variables that are hard to control, meaning that the outcome may vary considerably between different patients given the supposedly same treatment by different therapists (see for example Sandell 2008, Holmqvist and Philips 2008).

An increasingly common way of diminishing the variability of the factors of patient and therapist is manualization. Therapies are today often thoroughly organized in a radically different way than when psychotherapy emerged as treatment in the early twentieth century, in the sense that not only the time limits but also the content may be set before the treatment starts. From an analytical point of view, therapeutic manuals ideally resemble algorithms. That is, you start with one value (in this case some kind of ill-health) and by executing the algorithm (that is, the manual) you get to another value (some state of well-being). Manualization and statistical evaluation constitute parts of the movement striving to remake psychotherapy into an evidence-based
medicine (EBM), through which patients are given, allegedly, more efficient treatments – the latter also meaning that therapeutic processes are organized in a more cost-effective way.

An emerging psychotherapeutic common sense

To sum up this brief overview of the characteristic traits in the treatments for stress-related illnesses and other psychotherapies, the distinguishing features of therapies for ‘burnout’ are present in psychotherapy at large in Sweden today. Although not many psychological treatments are directly work-related rehabilitation, many therapies nevertheless follow the same logic as such, in the sense of including the components characteristic for the treatments of stress-related illnesses. However, these traits are not common to all psychotherapeutic approaches. Nor do these traits belong to a certain ‘school’ within psychotherapy, but are found in a diversity of approaches – and to my knowledge especially in newer ones, developed under the sway of EBM. Although in no absolute way defining for psychotherapy in Sweden today, these traits nevertheless appear as a sort of emerging psychotherapeutic common sense. This therapeutic common sense shares some fundamental assumptions with the wider societal ethos of ‘enterprise’ (Rose 1998) permeating contemporary liberal democratic states such as Sweden. In other words, aimed at giving the patients tools for psychological self-regulation – inside and outside of work life – therapies including the above described components not only uphold the values of health and well-being, but also indirectly those of autonomy, responsibility, efficiency, in a way even fulfillment (1998: 154-155).

Another thing that the treatments for ‘burnout’ have in common, besides the five traits, is that they were all constructed at the same time, in the early 2000s. This was a time when Sweden emerged out of a decade of severe economic recession and organizational cut-downs on all fronts, not least in public organizations such as those of health care. Self-help-oriented psychological approaches became very popular at this time, and not only in closed psychotherapy sessions. Diverse forms of such approaches also reached a mass audience through different media – together constituting a sort of public therapy – through which a mass of individuals were given the opportunity to achieve a similar kind of self-control as that offered through the treatments for ‘burnout’. At the time, then, the emerging psychotherapeutic common sense not only appeared in the rather limited public space of the Fair, but also in the wider arena of the mediated public sphere – which will be briefly described in the next section.
Public therapy

In the mid-2000s, psychoeducation was not something that occurred only in closed psychotherapy sessions in Sweden. At this time the mass media provided numerous articles, but also television shows and radio coverage, dealing with therapeutic issues. These consisted not just of classical journalistic accounts reporting on what happened in society regarding psychotherapy. A number of articles and shows also took a therapeutic perspective, publishing psychological advice on how to come to terms with different interactional or mental problems, sometimes even showing therapy live in front of an audience. An assortment of therapeutic self-help books were also published at this time. The mass media thereby contributed in the dissemination of practical therapeutic knowledge.

I will in this section argue that toolbox psychology and mass medialization are involved in a dynamic relationship mutually reinforcing each other: it is the tendency in recent psychotherapy towards guided self-help based on a toolbox psychology which has opened up the possibility for psychotherapy to go public, so to speak, and this tendency (towards guided self-help) is given public recognition in the mass medialization of therapy.

Manualization

At the 2008 Psychotherapy Fair one of the seminars presented a newly published book called *Ut ur depression och nedstämdhet med kognitiv beteendeterapi: Ett effektivt självhjälpsprogram* (Out of Depression and Unhappiness with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: An Efficient Self-help Program) (Andersson et al. 2007). This book is a manualized treatment for depression based on a research project in cognitive behaviour therapy. It was presented as the first book in Swedish containing a verified self-help program for depression. It was, however, not the first self-help book based on cognitive behaviour therapy.

At the turn of the century cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) grew increasingly popular as a therapeutic practice, probably due to its proven efficacy as a treatment for affective conditions, such as anxiety syndromes (SBU 2005). CBT is also comparatively easy to manualize, and is often conducted following a manual. For example, all research on CBT has involved manualized therapy (Andersson and Mörtberg 2008: 88). This tendency towards manualization has also led to the rise of a CBT self-help industry in the last years. A number of self-help books are now available in Swedish that deal with emotional problems such as anxieties and depression. This small industry assembles a range of authors, from former patients to psychotherapists to academic researchers. Due to the latter category of authors

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133 Other examples of such books are *Hantera din ångest och oro: Kognitiva metoder för självhjälp* by Helen Kennerley, *Fri från oro, ångest och fobier: Råd och tekniker från kognitiv*
some self-help books – such as the one by Andersson et al. mentioned above – are direct outcomes of scientific research. The popularity of CBT is perhaps not only due to its proven efficacy, but also to this small but flourishing self-help industry that presents CBT in an understandable and favourable way to presumptive recipients.

Another self-help book in the CBT self-help industry presented at the 2008 Psychotherapy Fair, was a book about panic disorder called Ingen panik (meaning both ‘no panic’ and ‘don’t panic’). This book was at the time of its publication also described in an article in the newspaper Expressen (in a supplement called Hallå!, 2007-09-16-17: 32-35). The article contains a few facts about the subject (such as its distribution and how it feels or what happens during an attack), explanations of what panic syndrome and cognitive behaviour therapy are, and a test for determining if an experience is a panic attack. Three manuals accompany the article: a brief one about how to set up partial objectives as a way to overcome panic attacks, another one about how to handle actual attacks, and a third and rather lengthy manual outlining ten steps to come to terms with panic attacks. These steps include rather typical CBT advice such as that you should remember that ‘thoughts are not facts’ since ‘thought and fear can influence and amplify each other’ and that you should try to ‘identify your thoughts and cognitive distortions’ as well as ‘expose yourself to the symptoms that give you anxiety’ and ‘often practice the things you find uncomfortable’. Towards the end of the treatment you should start to ‘imagine yourself in a future where you no longer have any phobia’ and eventually ‘accept your emotions and stand up for yourself’ because ‘many people with panic syndrome find it hard to say no’ meaning that the syndrome may be ‘a signal that something is wrong in your lifestyle’. This article is in itself a rather lengthy example of the kind of therapeutic manual which could be found in the evening papers in Stockholm several times a week in the mid and late 2000s.134

In a review of this book in Psykologtidningen (2008/2), a journal for the union of psychologists, it is stated that certain self-help programs for panic disorders are proven to be almost as effective as therapist led treatments. And proven efficacy is also the case with Ingen panik, which is based on such a study. The reviewer predicts a huge interest for this kind of book from politicians and health care administrators in ‘a health care sector with shrink-

beteendeterapi by Maria Farm Larsson and Håkan Wisung, Vad är panikängest? Hur du påverkas av dina tankar by Stefan L Lindmark, Social fobi – effektiv hjälp med kognitiv beteendeterapi by Tomas Furmark et al., Vinn över din depression – en självhjälpsbok by Rolf Aaröe, and Ingen panik: Fri från panik- och ångestattacker i 10 steg med kognitiv beteendeterapi by Per Carlbring and Åsa Hanell (for the latter, see below).

134 These manuals were not always about how to heal actual mental illness, but more often delivered psychological advice for how get past personal and interactional problems. See e.g. Aftonbladet (2007-09: 02, 06, 09, 16, 19, 23, 26, 27, 30), Expressen (2007-09: 01, 02, 11, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23).
ing resources’ and where medication is the norm for treating panic disorder yet which often results in a relapse.

The general trend in psychotherapy today towards manualization – which is, as seen above, a part of the movement towards an evidence-based medicine – has found a favourable environment in the mass media. Since self-help manuals must be so simple that lay persons can understand them, newspapers and other publications can represent therapeutic manuals for anyone interested. Not only professional psychologists and psychotherapists, but anyone who can make a claim to possess some kind of therapeutic know-how, can also take part in this production of mass-mediated therapy.

Doing it in public

By the mid-2000s, psychotherapy and counselling had, in Sweden, lost its exclusive character. A wide range of self-help books, but even more so counselling columns in the press and TV therapy, had made psychological interventions a rather mundane activity. Not only a therapeutic language, but even representations of actual treatments, had in this way become a part of people’s everyday lives. In TV therapy people were treated live in front of an audience. In counselling columns psy-professionals answered questions from the readers.\(^{135}\)

Since the late 1980s, counselling columns had become common in the evening papers in Stockholm, and later in the free dailies and the morning papers as well. The most conspicuous counselling column in the daily press in the mid-2000s was called ‘Ask Eva’ (Fråga Eva) and spread out over half a page in Aftonbladet on Sundays and featured Eva Rusz (presented as a psychologist, cognitive therapist and mental coach). The same day as Expressen published the article about Ingen panik!, the column gives space to a man who describes how he is attracted to a woman at his workplace, yet is married and wants to remain so (though the intense passion is gone) and does not know how to act upon his emotions. Rhetorically he states that ‘emotions are powerful and you cannot just shut them off’ (Aftonbladet 2007-09-16: 24). He is given the advice that you can actually contain your emotions momentarily (which is a common method in some occupations) and that you can enjoy an infatuation without further acting upon it. The other ‘Ask Eva’ columns in September 2007 had a similar thematic, treating problematic emotional relationships. During this particular month Aftonbladet contained no less than 24 psychological counselling columns (the supplements included), whereas Expressen only contained four. The free daily newspapers, Metro and Stockholm City, each delivered roughly one

\(^{135}\) As Nordin (2007: 155) noticed in her study of middle-aged single men in northern Sweden, most people today seem well versed in a popular psychological language due to its circulation in the mass media.

Already in the 1990s, the move towards a collective therapeutic consciousness in Sweden had achieved an input from television through programs such as \textit{Maj Fant}, named after its host, who performed live counselling in front of an audience (Furhammar 2006: 104-105). In January 2003, the normalization of therapeutic discourse and practice continued when the television show \textit{Dr. Phil}, featuring the American psychologist Phillip McGraw, began appearing on Swedish national television. The show soon drew about half a million viewers (\textit{Expressen} 2003-01-22, 2003-02-24), a rather extraordinary figure considering that it was aired in the afternoon when many people were still at work, and also in a country with no more than nine million inhabitants.

Each program of the \textit{Dr. Phil} show has its own theme, if not always a psychological issue, then at least a social issue of a problematic character which is dealt with, in some way or another, from a psychological point of view.\footnote{The analysis of the \textit{Dr. Phil} show is here mainly based on a number of shows aired in Sweden in early 2004.} The theme is usually introduced and maintained, thus in a way created, by a couple of ‘witnesses’ who share their real-life stories with the rest of the audience. McGraw uses his whole expressional repertoire to reflect the mood of the ‘witnesses’ – thus acknowledging their grief, worries, happiness, anxieties, indecisiveness, etc. – and then, by being very straightforward in his analysis and advice, giving the impression that this is a crucial moment when a person’s life is about to turn.\footnote{In the introduction to the show the latter is explicitly stated. The intro is the same in every show, with cuts from different shows and Dr. Phil’s voice-over stating that ‘this is going to be a changing day in your life’.} One or several of the ‘witnesses’ are then given a sort of quick-fix therapy.

For example, in a show about being overweight McGraw states, with the help of the witnesses’ confessions about the difficulties that made them start overeating, that the eating is not the real problem, but only a medication for other problems, a ‘coping tool’. He then states that ‘things often start for one reason and then continues for another’ and that ‘you have to reprogram your life’. McGraw asks an overweight businesswoman to describe her way of becoming successful at work. He then summarizes her words: ‘What you said was: goal setting, planning and prioritize. Why would you approach any management situation differently? Why not approach your weight in the same way?’ The show ends with McGraw’s summary: ‘Figure out the why, and then put together a plan to replace the how, to replace the coping mechanism [that is, the overeating].’ In a show about obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), the two main witnesses are both obsessed with cleaning. By
cleaning we can, according to McGraw, take control of a tiny spot of our life, when the rest is chaos. So the cleaning, too, is a coping mechanism. And then again he states: ‘Behaviours often start for one reason but then continue just out of habit.’ However, you cannot ‘just break habits, you replace them’. In a show about dangers at school, where parents and children give witness about abuse and even deaths, the second-to-last witness describes how her dance teacher’s degrading words are still in her head years later. McGraw gives her advice about how to achieve an ‘emotional closure’ by writing a letter to her former teacher, or maybe even confronting her. All in order to, as McGraw puts it, ‘quit whining about it and take your power back’.139

Mental problems, as they emerge in the Dr. Phil show, are often about lack of control. People suffering from obesity or OCD are not free. They are not in charge of their lives. They try to take control, but are instead imprisoned by the problem. The treatment is about finding a way of taking the power back. In the Dr. Phil show, psychotherapy has something managerial-like to it: coming to terms with mental problems is about organizing your everyday life and activities in the appropriate way, of becoming more functional as a human being by finding a pattern of behaviour which is more satisfying and fulfilling. Ultimately this consists in, in Dr Phil’s words, “finding your authentic self” (McGraw 2001).

In the shadow of Dr. Phil, a television show called Nyberg & Törnblom was launched on TV3, one of the Swedish commercial cable channels, in September 2007. This show was hosted by Rene Nyberg, with Mia Törnblom as a sort of expert on personal development. The first program featured four people – as in the Dr. Phil show, ‘witnesses’ carrying the theme of the particular show – who wanted to change their lives, but could not. Törnblom ‘diagnosed’ them as suffering from low self-esteem, and taught them a few techniques for improving it. The show ended with Nyberg asking Törnblom what we should think about until the next show. Törnblom replied: ‘That we are good enough just as we are.’

In the sixth show, dealing with performance anxiety, the first guest is Helena who is a high achiever with three jobs who cannot relax. It turns out that her mother was never satisfied with her as a child. Törnblom gives her the advice to quit trying to please her mother since she has never been pleased so far. As Törnblom puts it, ‘your inner voice must be reprogrammed and it is your responsibility to start doing that’. Susanne, the second guest, has a related but opposite problem. She is afraid of not being successful, of being exposed as a fake, although she knows she is a capable person. Nyberg then asks if these problems are not all about low self-esteem. Törnblom replies that they are, and describes the signs of low self-esteem as that feeling of being a fake, and of doing things because others want us to,

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139 When the show is about a societal problem of less significant psychological character, the treatment is often given towards the end of the show, and the problem that society seemingly has such troubles in handling, is in this way given a symbolic treatment by Dr. Phil.
instead of focusing on what we want to do ourselves. Two other guests with similar problems are then given advice. Nyberg concludes, half-jokingly, that achievement can obviously be a problem, but is there then nothing positive about being an achiever? Törnblom responds that many of us work a lot, but it is not work that makes us feel bad. What eats us is the anxiety and the feeling of not being enough. ‘We are what we are, and sometimes we do the wrong thing, but we are never wrong’, she concludes the show.\footnote{140}

As seen here, mass-mediated psychotherapeutic treatments have two directions: towards the person suffering from a mental or behavioural problem and towards the audience in general. In line with this dual direction, counseling columns and live therapy generally address general problems, the treatment of which many people can learn something from. Mass mediations of therapy and therapeutic know-how are thus not merely entertainment but also offer consumers the possibility of taking control of their own lives. At the same time, public therapeutic representations soften the edges of therapy. The treatments applied, and the theoretical-methodological basis presented, are simple enough for most people to understand and also general enough to be able to apply to an assortment of situations occurring in the different shows. By going public, and thus widening its clientele by incorporating an audience, psychotherapy has emerged in the mass media as a sort of life management, making use of simple and general models of treatment that anyone can understand.

Psychological entrepreneurs in and of the mass media
The publication of psychological self-help techniques in the mass media has opened up a space for entrepreneurs to carve out their own personal niche. A number of psychologists and therapists have made use of the possibilities of cross references between different media – a sort of intertextuality – and have thus managed to turn themselves into popular psychological celebrities. McGraw, for instance, has also published a number of self-help books, many of which have been translated into Swedish. Several Swedish psychologists and therapists have embarked on that route as well. Eva Rusz, for example, who had a counselling column in \textit{Aftonbladet}, also published a number of self-help books subsequently reviewed in the papers, and was further consulted as a psy-expert in a number of articles not only in \textit{Aftonbladet}, but also in \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, \textit{Svenska Dagbladet}, \textit{Expressen}, and \textit{Metro}.\footnote{141} In the

\footnote{140} The other five shows in the series were about jealousy, fear, disliking one’s looks, and about partner or family relations. In all these shows Törnblom stressed the importance of self-esteem and that it is possible to break destructive patterns of thought and behaviour. Throughout the series both Nyberg and Törnblom, as well as the clients, occasionally referred to the techniques delivered as ‘tools’.

late 2000s, the morning papers in Stockholm started with counselling columns. These columns were even lengthier than those in the evening papers, spreading out over a whole page. The therapists from *Dagens Nyheter*, Liria Ortiz and Martin Forster, also published popular psychological books at the time, which they both presented at the Psychotherapy Fair in 2012, in seminars directed at the general public.

However, the probably most successful popular psychological entrepreneur in Sweden in the late 2000s was Mia Törnblom, who published self-help books and gave a series of popular lectures at the same time as she appeared both in the press and in her own television show. In 2005 she published a book called *Självkänsla nu!* (Self-esteem now!) where she describes all the benefits of having good self-esteem, including a few manuals for how to achieve it. In 2006 the sequel *Mera självkänsla* (More self-esteem) followed. The same year she appeared in a reality TV show about dating, employed as a coach to strengthen the self-esteem of the participants. In September 2007 *Nyberg & Törnblom* premiered. Both evening papers in Stockholm, *Aftonbladet* (2007-09-16) and *Expressen* (2007-09-02, in a supplement called *Hallå!*), then published interviews with Törnblom, as well as a few of her manuals. Törnblom is what perhaps could be called a ‘lay therapist’ (Hornborg 2012). She has no formal license as a psychologist or psychotherapist (who are licensed by the state). She does not treat people who are ill, but ‘works with’ (as she occasionally puts it) people who have personal and interactional problems. In Törnblom’s world – as it appears in the papers, in her books, on television and in her lectures – there is no absolute difference between work and the rest of life. Most personal and interactional problems come out of having low self-esteem and the concomitant inability to organize life in a functional way.

Concerning the psychologization of the United States, Ward (2002) suggests that people take an interest in psychology because they find this kind of know-how useful. And judging by the success of Törnblom, Rusz, McGraw and others, there was obviously an unexploited demand for this kind of information in Sweden in the 2000s. These psychological entrepreneurs make a living out of creating new opportunities for the deployment of psychological knowledge. Through their work, therapy becomes something for everyone to engage in. It provides a flexible and useful self-help kit.

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142 I visited one of her lectures in September 2007.

143 A noticeable feature of *Nyberg & Törnblom* was that the kind of expertise that the expert in this show had was rather obscure. Mia Törnblom was presented as vägledare – probably meant to be a sort of vernacular term for ‘coach’ – in personal development. Exactly was this meant though was unclear. It was not stated if she had some kind of psychological or psychotherapeutic certification or academic schooling. The conclusion one could draw was that she probably had not, or else that would have been stated. What she had, though, was a rather direct way of communicating that functioned well on TV (being rather similar to that of Dr. Phil), and in addition of course also a psychological toolbox with a limited, but seemingly rather accurate, set of techniques and models that were easy for the clients as well as the audience to comprehend.
Psychotherapy as life management

By taking part of mass-mediated popular therapeutic representations, such as therapeutic manuals, counselling columns, and TV therapy, the general public, directly or indirectly, may also become the recipients of psychological interventions. The five features of ‘burnout’ therapies described previously are also found in the mass media. The mass mediated infotainment consisting of popular therapeutic representations is a form of rudimentary psychoeducation. This infotainment to a large degree circulates around emotions and how to come to terms with emotional problems. The knowledge applied comes from different psychological ‘schools’ or perspectives. Therapeutic efforts are indeed time-limited and often deal with work-related problems and in a managerial-like way. And though therapeutic representations generally address the individual consumer, the mass mediation creates a mass of individual recipients – thus extending the ‘psychoeducation’ to a vast number of people far beyond what any therapist-led group treatment could, even if including information to relatives and co-workers.

Today, public health is partially upheld through health promoting campaigns in the mass media, directed by governmental authorities, which provide advice for how to live a healthy life. To the extent that such campaigns portray individuals as free to choose what advice to make use of in their own lives, yet as also having a responsibility to actually choose a healthy life, these campaigns apply contemporary management principles – and thereby extend the scope of neo-liberal managerialism beyond mere work organizations and into people’s everyday lives (Thanem 2009). In a similar manner, the mass media today function as a channel for psychotherapeutic knowledge and practice, though this dissemination is hardly part of any campaign launched by governmental authorities. Some mass-mediated therapeutic efforts constitute psychotherapy in the strict sense of the term, that is, based on research and scientifically verified, while others are more popular, in both senses of the term. These mediations give a mass of individuals the opportunity to obtain a psychologically regulated self-control, related to that administered through the ‘burnout’-therapies. The dissemination of psychotherapeutic know-how through mass media in the 2000s thus constituted a sort of rudimentary public therapy – in the sense that it was directed to the general public and occasionally even occurred in public.

Altogether this medialized public therapy strengthens the tendency in psychotherapy more generally towards manualization. The widening of the clientele also opens up for psychological entrepreneurs who have a flair for generally applicable and easily comprehensible models. Medialization thus pushes psychotherapy towards a sort of life management based on a toolbox psychology.

Noticeable is that this mass mediation of psychotherapeutic theory and practice constituted a novel situation. Still in the mid-1980s, there was an almost complete lack of therapeutic representations in both television and
the daily press. Swedish television at the time consisted of two channels guided by a public service ideology – stressing the values of objectivity, impartiality and good taste (Furhammar 2006: 20) – that aired from five in the afternoon until eleven in the evening. The daily newspapers were really ‘news’-papers publishing ‘hard’ news. For a long time psychotherapy – in the strict sense of the term – had also been hard to get, since it was only administered by physicians to patients with a psychiatric diagnosis or to state employees with a remittance from a psychiatrist – unless one wanted to pay for the whole treatment oneself (Reeder 2006: 191-195). As seen above, all this was to change in the decades to come. But how and why? In order to better understand how the practice of psychotherapy in Sweden left its seclusion and went public – and thus to better understand the emergence of a work-enabling self-help psychology – I will in the following section situate these transformations of mental health care within the wider developments of Swedish welfare society during the twentieth century.

From the age of nerves to psychoculture

Until the 1970s, psychotherapy was not highly regarded within the medical establishment in Sweden, but largely labelled as unscientific (Olsson 1999: 149). During much of the twentieth century Swedes had, however, occasional opportunities to learn about the language of psychodynamics and psychic conflict through the mass media (Pietikainen 2007: 224-227, 292-293). In the 2000s this development had taken a new turn with a number of mass media representations that not only reported on scientific findings and potential cures for mental ill-being, but also in a popular way actually administered therapeutic know-how through psychoeducation, or even cures through manualized treatment. This was well in line with a general turning in health care where psychotherapeutic ways of healing won more general recognition. I will in this section describe this turnaround, pointing to some significant events. This will also be a way of tracing the emergence of the different traits in the treatments of stress-related illnesses, thus opening up for an understanding of how they became legitimate alternatives in psychotherapy in Sweden today.

The general statements about the mass media is here based on my reading of all daily newspapers in Stockholm (as well as a few union journals) in September 1987, 1997 and 2007, as well as a reading of the newspapers in the first half of September in 1977 and 1982. For a review of television see Furhammar (2006). The first regular feature that had a psychological perspective – and not just reported on psychological matters – in the daily press was *Idag* in *Svenska Dagbladet*, which was started in 1974 (for a history of this feature see Olsson 2004). Yet until the late 2000s, *Idag* mostly published lengthy articles pointing towards current problems and trends, and only rarely published anything like manuals or counselling columns. Following the example of *Idag*, the main competitor *Dagens Nyheter* started a similar feature called *Insidan*. Notable is that *Insidan* published a counselling column on a weekly basis for a while in the early 1980s (see e.g. 1982-09-06).
The age of ‘nerves’

From the late nineteenth century and onwards, ‘nervousness’, or simply ‘nerves’, was seen as a growing societal problem in industrialized countries. This overstimulation of the nerves was believed to be caused by modern types of work (Rabinbach 1992), but also by other aspects of industrialization, such as the new means of communication, and the electrified cities with their lights, sounds, and hectic pace of life (Ekström 1994). The general diagnosis for nerve problems was ‘neurosis’. Among the various more specific diagnoses given to these nerve conditions, the most prominent was neurasthenia, the ‘queen diagnosis’ (Johannisson 2005: 152) among the nerve illnesses, defined as loss of nervous energy (Johannisson 2009: 225), with symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, vague pains, palpitations, insomnia, and inability to concentrate (Johannisson 2005: 148). Nervousness had for a long time been ‘reserved for the privileged classes’ (Killen 2006: 1), as well as a sign of refined femininity (Johannisson 2005: 154). With the growth of modern industrial society nervousness became an affliction for everyone, associated more with the times, that is, with the modern condition, than with a specific class or sex (Killen 2006). During this ‘age of nervousness’ (Pietikainen 2007), fatigue thus became a public issue since it was imagined to be caused by life in industrial society itself.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Swedish State became actively involved in attempts to ‘turn neurotic patients into productive citizens’ (Pietikainen 2007: 309). Yet, unlike some other European countries and the United States – where psychoanalysis and psychodynamic approaches had made an impact – psychotherapy was not in common use as a treatment for ‘nerve illnesses’ in Sweden.145 Instead, ‘neurologists and neurologically trained nerve doctors remained the foremost neurosis experts until the 1940s’ (2007: 101), and ‘cost-effective work therapy rather than time-consuming psychotherapy was all the rage in mental medicine in the 1920s and 1930s’ (2007: 319). With the creation of psychopharmaceuticals in the 1950s, the use of drugs became the major way of treating mental disorders in Sweden (Ottosson 2003). At the Nerve Polyclinic at the Serafimer Hospital in Stockholm, ‘the opportunity to discuss their problems at length was probably what many patients wanted. In reality, about ninety per cent of patients at the polyclinic were prescribed drugs’ (Pietikainen 2007: 294). Still in 1950, the Swedish Psychoanalytical Society was the only association for professional psychotherapists in Sweden and had merely six active members (Johansson 1999: 459, cf. Ginger 2003).

After WW II, the health care system in Sweden expands as the economy expands. Both work and health were now thought about in terms of rights

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145 In Europe, psychoanalysis was until the end of WW II developed mainly in Austria, Germany and Great Britain (Ginger 2003). At that time ‘psychoanalysis completely dominated American psychiatry’ (Luhrmann 2001: 212).
These rights were upheld by a simple but elegant move: care was partially transformed into wage labour. The overall result was a huge expansion of the labour market. Tax-funded public institutions were given the responsibility for health care, child care, and elderly care. The new jobs at these institutions were mainly occupied by women who, as a group, entered the labour market in unprecedented numbers. This huge expansion of a tax-funded labour market also led to increases in overall taxation. The ‘male breadwinner’ family model gradually disappeared, at least as an ideal. It became increasingly common for both partners in a household to be salaried employees, and more of a financial necessity (see e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990, Gustafsson 1994, Hirdman 1994). The ever-increasing standards of living, the peaceful labour relations and a commonly accepted ‘work-for-all strategy’ defined a new harmonious modernity, where the benefits of industrial rationalization were there for both the few and the many (Harrysson and Pettersson 2004, Junestav 2004, Björck 2008). Tensions such as nerve strains or class struggle seemed to have no public place. The nerve problems, and specifically their general symptoms as fatigue, ceased to exist as public issues and were ‘relegated into the shadow of the 20th century huge modernity and welfare projects’, thus becoming ‘antiquated reactions outside of the expected normality’ (Johannisson 2006: 12).

Alternative versions of expertise

Meanwhile, alternative versions of expertise in psychiatric matters – which would later on affect psychotherapy in Sweden – were constructed in continental Europe and America. In the USA, the so-called humanistic movement in psychology and psychotherapy, stressing the sanity and possibilities of personal growth within every individual, grew strong from the 1940s and onwards. Abraham Maslow took little interest in deviance, but stressed the need for self-actualization (Leahey 2004: 493-494). Carl Rogers developed a psychotherapy where the role of the therapist was mainly to aid the clients (as he called them) to cure themselves, emphasizing the importance of an empathic relationship between the therapist and the client for a productive psychotherapeutic treatment to be at all possible. This client-centred therapy was the outcome of a pioneering research program where Rogers and associates measured therapeutic efficacy by taping vast numbers of therapist-client interaction and comparing them to see what type of interventions that had an effect (Ward 2002: 200; Thorne 1992: 38-39, 47; Philips and Holmqvist 2008: 21). This also opened up for a new form of psychotherapy research that went beyond the case study used by Freud. Despite the influence of cli-

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146 In the Swedish constitution, the right to health and work is seen as a fundamental part of individual well-being, and as an obligation on behalf of the public. ‘Den enskildes personliga, ekonomiska och kulturella välfärd skall vara grundläggande mål för den offentliga verksamheten. Det skall särskilt åligga det allmänna att trygga rätten till hälsa, arbete, bostad och utbildning samt att verka för social omsorg och trygghet’ (SFS 1974: 152).
ent-centred therapy, Rogers himself later gave up the dyadic form of therapy for group therapy, inspired by sensitivity training (see Chapter Two) which he saw as ‘perhaps the most significant social invention of this century’ (Rogers 1968, quoted in Marrow 1969: 213-214).

Another development that spurred the imagination of psychologists from mid-century and onwards was the gradual computerization of society and its theorization in cybernetics and systems theory. Cybernetics offered a possibility of looking at organisms, including humans, as information handling systems, thus challenging the common view in psychoanalysis and behaviourism of humans as barely cultured animals. Psychology was thereby given a new ideal type (in the Weberian sense), unfettered by a nineteenth century evolutionary framework. In this ‘cybernetic psychology’ (Edwards 1996: 179), the computer became a model for thinking about human behaviour. Human psychology was seen as analogous to a computer program and behaviour as structurally equivalent to the execution of such a program. This was the beginning of the so-called cognitive revolution in psychology (Holmqvist 2004: 109-112, Teigen 2006). Like humanistic psychology, cognitive psychology was ‘positive’ rather than ‘negative’ (cf. Miller and Rose 1988), that is, looking at possibilities rather than restraints, and oriented towards the future rather than the past.

For Silvan Tomkins, the ideas from cybernetics about systems of communication and control led to a new way of looking at human emotions (Tomkins 1992: xiii, Sedgwick and Frank 1995). The idea of multiple interdependent systems led him to think of emotions as expressions of an innate but, in relation to drives, partly independent system. For Tomkins this affect system was the primary motivational system in humans, since drives, put simply, lack immediate direction and can easily be disrupted and must therefore be amplified by affects to reach potency (Tomkins 1962: 6, 22; 1991: 5-6). Hunger, for example, can stir up both positive and negative associations – it can make you sad, angry, perhaps even happy – and it is these emotions that direct your further actions (Tomkins 1962: 49). In a similar manner the concept of stress was also elaborated in relation to the cybernetic point of view. With the increasing importance of systemic approaches within biology in the 1960s and 1970s the concept of stress gradually became mainstream science (Viner 1999).

During the 1960s, the so-called anti-psychiatry movement also gained momentum, a momentum that lasted into the 1970s. In countries such as Italy, France, the UK, and the USA psychiatric institutions and methods were criticized as being everything from authoritarian to unscientific. New types of therapeutic milieux were created in, more or less, outright opposition to the traditional medical model in which physicians labelled patients with diagnoses. In these therapeutic communities, the patients were involved in the therapeutic work, based on the assumption that a democratic environment would constitute a more efficient context since all possible forces – including that of the patient – would be made use of in the treatment
The most outspoken criticism of high-profile characters such as Ronald Laing was later on left behind. Yet, the general idea emerging out of the movement of looking at mental disorders as created, and therefore also preferably cured, in a social context – a trait it thus shared with the sensitivity training movement and the movement towards group psychotherapy – gave rise to new types of therapies such as systemic and family therapy (Leff 2001).

Generally speaking, the post-war decades were a time of eclecticism, integration and invention. The times saw

a long growth-cycle of such forms of counterneurotic technology as joy therapy, reality therapy, primal scream therapy, transcendental meditation, Gestalt therapy, marathon encounter groups, Reichian massage, co-counselling, psychodrama, Lacan’s ‘ten-minute psychoanalytic session’, rebirthing, ‘transaccio- nal analysis’, bio-energetics, existential therapy, postural integration (or ‘rolfing’) and psychosynthesis (Sedgwick 1982: 189).

Many of these therapies soon lost their ‘followers’, and more or less disappeared from the public arena. The development of new therapies continued, however, and the momentum pushed psychotherapy into new territories where the life of therapies gradually came to resemble other forms of mass culture (ibid.). Under the influence of the humanistic idea of actualization (Ward 2002: 200-201), psychotherapy went from a type of psychiatric treatment to comprising a host of different but related methods possible to use in a lot of different circumstances to adjust a lot of different problems. As Richards (1996: 83) puts it:

> The sane/insane boundary had been permanently breached, *there was now a market for psychotherapy for normal people* – surely a development of huge, if as yet unappreciated, cultural significance.

Not only was the sane/insane boundary breached, but also that between psychoanalysis and behaviourism. The diminishing interest in theoretical-methodological purification in these early dominants opened up for a development where psychotherapy since the 1960s has been characterised less by interschool struggle and more by integration of perspectives (Saugstad 1998: 477).

Sweden was not untouched by the ongoing changes in the outside world. The dominance of somatic medicine in the treatment of mental disorders in Sweden during the better part of the century meant that only a few publicly owned psychotherapeutic establishments had been founded, for example Mentalvårdsbyrån (The Mental Care Bureau) in the 1950s (later renamed Psykoterapiinstitutet (The Psychotherapy Institute)) where a few psychotherapists worked (Reeder 2006: 22, 58). However, a few institutions outside of the medical establishment, such as the Erica and Saint Luke Foundations, became centres for psychotherapeutic thought and practice during the post-
war years. The former specialized in the treatment of children, making use of the experiences of teachers, social workers and physicians, while the latter was originally a meeting place for Christian care workers such as physicians, social workers, and Protestant pastors. Both soon started their own formal psychotherapeutic training programs (Pietikainen 2007: 164, 213). In 1963 psychotherapy was acknowledged as a legitimate medical treatment, and was from then on funded by the public health insurance system – but only if the treatment was administered by a physician (Reeder 2006: 191). In the late 1960s, a growing number of psychiatrists started opposing the dominance of somatic medicine in Swedish psychiatry. As one of them later on put it, ‘you did not have to work long as a psychiatrist to see that talk could have a curative effect’ (Ottosson 2003: 84). Although there was hardly an anti-psychiatry movement in Sweden (Ohlsson 2008: 86), the sometimes heated debates over the direction of psychiatry at the time opened up a space for change. On a minor scale psychotherapeutic thinking and practice found new ways into the regular health care apparatus, for example in the form of the so-called Nacka model, where two municipalities outside of Stockholm in 1974 started experimenting with more open forms of psychiatric care on a psychotherapeutic foundation (Reeder 2006: 24-26).

The development of alternative versions of expertise, then, had some impact on the Swedish health care system, though hardly causing any foundational changes. Yet, these alternative versions came in handy when other forces later on pushed for change. The former alternatives thereby became the foundation of an emerging psychotherapeutic common sense in Sweden.

Health as public and individual concern

The economic recession at the beginning of the 1970s made new solutions necessary in the Swedish social security system. The steady increase in health care spending suddenly became problematic. At the same time the public sector – of which health care was an important part – was of vital importance in the economy at large. The answer to this seemingly unsolvable problem was a compromise stressing both the responsibility of society and the responsibility of the individual. According to Olsson, Swedish public health discourse is at the end of the 1970s reoriented in an ‘individualizing and totalizing’ (1999: 144) direction. Health is to permeate all facets of life, and the individual is to take responsibility for his or her own health – public health is seen as both a public and an individual concern.

During the decades to come public health care – just as in the case with the Swedish school system (see Chapter One) – came under the sway of the international ‘public management reform’ trend (Pollit and Bouckaert 2011) towards the New Public Management. A market orientation was initiated and was directed, first, towards a clear separation between the functions of demand and supply of health care services; second, towards a decentralized budget responsibility and achievement based remuneration; third, towards
competition between public and private suppliers; and forth, towards increased freedom of choice for the patient (Blomqvist and Rothstein 2000: 194). In conjunction with this shift there was also a shift towards more openness for alternative therapeutic solutions, including non-somatic. A state license for psychologists was created in 1978 (and recreated with a new integrated education in 1982) and for psychotherapists in 1985 (Reeder 2006: 31, 34). In 1986 psychotherapy became a compulsory part of the education of psychiatrists in Sweden (Rigné 2002). In the 1980s the large mental hospitals, usually located in less populated areas, were gradually closed down and replaced by more open forms of care, which also meant that psychiatric care ceased to be something radically separated from the rest of society (Reeder 2006: 20-26, 217-219). During this time, the concept of ‘psychoeducation’ started gaining general use. In an environment characterized by public management reform, where mental institutions were closed down and cost-effective treatments were much wanted, psychoeducation attracted much interest (Bäuml, et al. 2006).

Public management reform spurred an increasing interest in psychotherapeutic efficiency. It became increasingly important to be able to measure which treatments worked, and how well, and on whom, and through which factors. In the 1990s, the so-called evidence movement in psychotherapy gained force, originating in initiatives in the American Psychological Association, and stressing the need for empirical evidence in psychotherapy. The latter meant statistical evidence, that is, from a randomized controlled treatment trial (Philips and Holmqvist 2008). The Swedish Council for Health Technology Assessment (SBU) had been founded already in 1987 as a national organization for the evaluation of health care methods. At the turn of the century SBU started assessing psychiatric treatments. These reports from SBU are based on systematic literature reviews. Treatments which are hard to assess with the method of randomized and controlled treatment trial – for example by not being so-called short-term or time-limited therapies – here tend to end up in the slot ‘lacking scientific support’. In 2008 SBU ‘received additional funds to perform more assessments in the field of mental health’ (Jonsson 2009: 48).

When Sweden in the late 1990s tumbled into the so-called burnout epidemic, the illness at first struck care workers and was believed to be caused by a too great commitment resulting in an emotional exhaustion and loss of empathy. However, with symptoms such as fatigue, weakness, inability to concentrate, and insomnia the illness resembled the old condition of neurasthenia (Socialstyrelsen 2003: 7, 20, 27). Yet this time, the ‘modern fatigue’ (Johannisson 2006) was not thought about in terms of ‘nerves’. Through the diagnosis of burnout, which was gradually established in Swedish society, these workers were seen as having a problem with their ‘life management’. Those who were ill had to learn how to direct more of their care towards themselves (Friberg 2006). During the 2000s the condition was gradually rethought and under the diagnosis of ‘exhaustion syndrome’, created in the
mid-2000s, those afflicted were labelled as suffering from ‘stress’ and dysfunctional affect regulation. The aim of the treatment remained the reestablishment of self-control, that is, the reflexive care for oneself. At the same time the numbers of people suffering from depression and anxiety disorders rose rapidly, together with ‘burnout’ creating a wave of mental ill-health. The number of people on long-term sick leave from work doubled in a few years (Theorell 2006: 18, 20, 28; SBU 2004: 75; see also Huzell and Larsson 2011: 109).

This wave also generated a response in the mass media, making mental problems a public issue (see e.g. Theorell 2006: 66, Friberg 2006: Chapter 7). The mass media coverage, however, not only provided reporting on mental ill-health, but also the publication of advice on how to come to terms with it. Whereas therapeutic manuals and counselling columns had been rare in the Swedish mass media up until the late 1980s, the numbers rose rapidly during the 1990s and even more so during the 2000s. This apparently increasing demand for psychological self-help occurred at the same time as employees faced new external demands to stay fit and healthy. Due to the high rates of sick leave absenteeism, as well as the reformation towards employer co-financing in the sickness insurance, employee well-being and health became an increasingly important issue for employers in Sweden. Yet at least some of the responsibility for this health and fitness (through the concept of ‘employability’) fell on the employees themselves (Huzell and Larsson 2011).

The modern welfare state can be seen as characterized by a ‘pastoral power’ (Foucault 2003, see also Rose 2007: 73-74) where the ‘flock’ is attended to through individualizing technologies which make everyone a subject of government. In contemporary Sweden, these individualizing technologies are increasingly of a psychotherapeutic kind. It seems that present-day psychotherapeutic ways of healing – and not least cognitive approaches – rather easily can involve the patients/clients in the actual therapy, whereas somatic (or at least ‘school medicine’) ways of healing with its strict hierarchical orders of expertise cannot, more than in a very limited way. The five features, significant for the treatment of stress-related illnesses, and worked out during the post-war years, are arguably important parts in the reshaping of psychotherapy in this direction. Today, then, psychotherapy seems to have found a very successful form that makes it, in line with Swedish public

147 In the early 1990s the Swedish economy crashed. Unemployment rates rose to numbers not seen since the great depression in the 1930s. During the 1990s many organizations saw severe cut-downs and increasing work-loads for the employees. For example, the number of employees in public health care was during this time cut by 50 per cent. The number of persons suffering from long-term ill-health increased rapidly, largely due to stress-related illnesses (Währborg 2009: 31-32). One quarter of the population is now estimated to suffer from anxiety syndromes at least once in their lifetime (SBU 2005: 19). And the cost for the social security system is huge, not least because so many of the afflicted are disqualified from work (2005: 23).
health discourse (Olsson 1999), both a public and an individual concern. In the mid-2000s there were almost 4000 licensed psychotherapists in Sweden, at least ten different professional associations, a host of diverse therapeutic approaches put to use for a growing number of mental problems (Johansson 1999: 459, Reeder 2006: 254, Psykoterapi 2006) – and a public sphere where popular psychoeducation had become a part of the regular mass media flow.

Self-help as a collective enterprise

Generally speaking, an increasing mental ill-health in Sweden during the 1990s (Socialstyrelsen 2003) – the so-called burnout epidemic of, but also increasing rates of depression (SBU 2004: 74-75) and a range of newly defined anxiety syndromes (SBU 2005) – caused severe problems for a host of interests in society, and not least for work organizations. This wave of mental ill-health occurred at the same time as the economic situation created a public demand for short-term cost-effective therapeutic services (Pusch and Dobson 1994: 675). Looking at the therapies for stress-related illnesses from a wider socio-historical perspective, an extra-therapeutic phenomenon is thus constantly in the background. These therapies were developed not only to heal the persons suffering from these illnesses, but also to ‘heal’ the problem of the high rate of work absenteeism. The directions that psychotherapy and psychology had taken since mid-century meant that there was a variety of psychotherapeutic approaches and methods which could be appropriated and put to use in the rehabilitation of workers who had fallen into unproductive states. The specific features of the treatments for stress-related illness described in this chapter are simply the psychotherapeutic remedy for the societal predicament that these therapies have been worked out to solve; they are psychotherapeutic ways of responding to the demands of the welfare apparatus, which by and large is the financer of these treatments.

A widening of the psychotherapeutic field and a diversification of expertise

The treatments for stress-related illnesses described in this chapter are parts of a larger movement within the psychotherapeutic field over recent decades where self-help has become something of a collective enterprise. This movement has become possible by, and to a large degree consists in, a widening of the field and an adherent diversification of expertise. Recent decades have seen a growth of the psychotherapeutic field in both complexity and extension. Not only is there an increasing diversity of psychotherapeutic treatments (for an increasing number of psychiatric diagnoses, SBU 2005: 48), psychotherapists now work in a number of non-clinical contexts as well,
at the same time as a number of other types of subject positions than that of the psychotherapist are now acknowledged in therapeutic efforts. The growth in the number of therapies have benefitted from the fact that various therapeutic approaches have been mixed in different ways, giving rise to integrative treatments. The complexity of the psychotherapeutic field is further increased by the array of different therapeutic approaches that have been developed since the 1960s that not always, or in some cases not even primarily, are meant to heal medical conditions, but rather intended for the adjustment of problematic life situations. This breaching of the ‘sane/insane boundary’ (Richards 1996: 83) has also meant that, as described in this chapter, psychotherapists now work in many different areas outside of strictly clinical contexts, for example with organizational development. Some therapists, along with other psy-professionals, have found a market in the assortment of newspapers and journals that today publish counselling columns of a psychological character, while others perform treatment live on television or radio shows. With the dissemination of psychotherapeutic thought and practice in and through the mass media, a therapeutic way of thinking and being enters people’s everyday lives. Mass media consumers are not only given the opportunity to become a sort of amateur therapists, but they also (at least indirectly) become recipients of psychotherapy.

The multi-dimensional extension of the field of psychotherapy in recent decades has meant that it is less certain what constitutes psychotherapeutic expertise nowadays, as are its limits. The very idea of self-help approaches involving psychoeducation is to give away some of this expertise to the patients so that they will be able to manage themselves. In other words, the widening of the psychotherapeutic field is paralleled by a process of diversification of expertise. The growing number of certifications within the psychotherapeutic field, along with the distribution of knowledge to patients and other lay persons, constitutes a complex process where the expertise of the psychotherapist and psychologist is both acknowledged and destabilized, and in the end reconstructed.

The profession of psychotherapist is in Sweden licensed by the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*). To be a holder of such a license in itself signifies an expert status in matters of psychological treatment. The same goes for the profession of psychologist. In addition, the widening of the psychotherapeutic field – both the construction of new treatments (sometimes for new diagnoses) and the application of psychotherapeutic knowledge in non-clinical contexts – has given rise to the creation of a sort of partial or narrow expertise, that may fill the position of expertise within a narrow slice of this field. Examples of such positions are ‘leaders of cognitive counselling groups’, coaches of different kinds, and ‘therapists’ who are not psychotherapists, that is, lacking state license yet have passed

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some sort of exam. In the case that such persons have a certification, for example to follow a specific program, they fill the role of expertise in relation to the application of these particular programs.

Moreover, patients are sometimes acknowledged as experts on themselves and on their own situation. To a certain extent they will have to become such experts if they are to manage themselves when the treatment has ended. In group approaches, patients are also seen somewhat as experts on the condition of their fellow patients; since the other patients have similar experiences they will bring another kind of empathic understanding to the group interaction than what the therapist might possess. The expertise of the therapist is, in these cases, supplemented with expertise of the patients, acquired through their specific type of being, that is, their lived experience as patients.

Notable here is that the ultimate therapeutic expertise does not consist in simply understanding how to use the different techniques. The example from the Psychotherapy Fair with the lecturer who stated that ‘we know so much!’ reflects the tendency towards integration, or even eclecticism, in present-day psychotherapy; this is the view of psychotherapeutic knowledge as a sort of rich and varied smorgasbord from which you can compose your own plate. Yet, it also seems to reflect the discomfort of psychotherapists who will have to put up with a rather small plate when serving themselves and others from this smorgasbord, that is, therapists who know so much but will have to cater (also) to persons who know far less and who can digest but a part of that rich variety of dishes. In the last instance, then, the need for delimitation comes from the necessity of accomplishing a short-term cost-effective therapeutic service, for example a treatment that would not only rehabilitate people suffering from ‘burnout’ back to work but also help them take care of themselves thereafter to avoid a relapse. At least some of these techniques should be so simple that even the patients can understand them and use them on their own. The most significant expertise then consists in having a deep and wide knowledge of the rich assortment of therapeutic techniques, including how to choose and combine the right variety so as to accomplish a time-limited cost-effective treatment.

A welfare technology
What all those engaged in therapeutic work involving psychoeducation have in common in the last instance is that they are all under the sway of the overarching framework for public management. From the patients or clients who gain some knowledge about how to handle themselves, to the technicians who are certified in certain treatments, to the psychotherapists who can adjust treatments for specific purposes and/or lead therapy groups, to the constructors of new therapies (often being researchers holding an academic position at a university) – that is, from the lowest to the highest steps on this
ladder of expertise – everyone is, directly or indirectly, involved in upholding cost-effective therapeutic services.

In a welfare society of the Swedish type, with (to a large degree) tax-funded social benefits, including the pay for sick leave, diminishing the number of people absent from work is of interest to a number of different actors and institutions. These include the individuals afflicted, their families (and perhaps friends and relatives), as well as work organizations suffering from high absentee rates. Others interested parties are the state, municipalities, and counties carrying the costs of health care and receiving diminishing employment tax incomes, but also indirectly the large numbers of taxpayers who in the end will pay for all these days of sick leave. In Sweden, diminishing the number of people absent from work is, more or less, a question for society as a whole. This wide and general interest in upholding a healthy and productive work force is reflected in the mass mediation of psychotherapeutic thought and practice, pushing the field towards a sort of life management. A host of individual actors involved presumably have their own agendas, but the totality of mass media representations of psychotherapeutic know-how make up society’s reflection on, and is thereby also a part of, the general turning towards guided self-help in the managing of mental health – and thereby productivity.

In a way then, the larger organization that is made more efficient by diminishing the sick leave among the staff of any particular work organization – be it private or public – is the welfare society itself. Since the work of all citizens becomes linked to that of all others through the welfare apparatus, *health cannot be a private issue in a welfare society of the Swedish type* (cf. Åmark 2005, Junestav 2004, Olsson 1999, Berggren and Trägårdh 2006). This has had a crucial impact on the development of psychotherapy in Sweden in recent decades.

In an article in the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* in 1987 (1987-09-03: 43), a psychotherapist warns that the newly instituted state licensing of psychotherapists is not necessarily for the good. When therapists, educational programs, even the literature used in courses, are to be approved by the state, psychotherapy risks becoming less of a possibility at profound self-understanding and more of a quick fix for the reinstatement of the patients into the production apparatus. This apprehension has now largely materialized.

The shadow of the state falls heavily upon Swedish psychotherapy today. Put simply, psychotherapy in Sweden has today become less of *Lebensphilosophie*, or outlook on life, and more of welfare technology (cf. Reeder 2006: 219-224). What for many decades was the dominant form, that is psychoanalysis, today finds itself in an ever more hostile environment, even at the brink of being marginalized.\(^{149}\) When the state started taking control of

\(^{149}\) The continuous work of the Swedish Council for Health Technology Assessment (SBU) in finding specific treatments for the ever growing number of specific mental disorders speaks in
psychotherapy, the interest of the state came to dominate. That is, therapeutic efforts were now viewed from the perspective of the state (cf. Scott 1998), meaning that the public health aspects start to define what is legitimate therapy. This influence of the state has (at least) two significant implications for psychotherapy in Sweden:

First, governmental institutions increasingly decide on appropriate treatments. SBU assesses possible treatments, The National Board of Health and Welfare publishes guidelines for the producers of health care services based on these assessments, the counties buy services from health care producers informed by these guidelines, and the Swedish Social Insurance Agency administers the health care insurance money. Over recent decades, the impact of the welfare state has become a force for standardization: health care services that do not apply to the standards delivered by The National Board of Health and Welfare are gradually sorted out.\(^{150}\) This development means that expertise is now increasingly encoded in classifications and manuals (‘pure expertises’ in the words of Castel 1991: 291) and through this disseminated into the health care system, at the expense of the autonomy of physicians and other therapists, a process known as deprofessionalization (see e.g. Reeder 2006, cf. Deleuze 1992).

Second, in line with prevalent public health ideology, the responsibility of the care seeking individual is now foundational. Therapies are constructed as guided self-help, where the patient is seen as a more or less knowledgeable and competent co-worker. Such attempts have today become a necessity when meeting the demands of the welfare apparatus for short-term cost-effective therapeutic services that, as in the case of the treatments for stress-related illnesses investigated in this chapter, not only seek to restore the health of employees, but also aim at supporting them in staying healthy once cured – all which is explicitly stated in the objective of working out personal coping strategies.

### Conclusion

An investigation of the contemporary treatments for stress-related illnesses needs to be understood in relation to broader societal developments. These

treatments, as well as contemporary Swedish psychotherapy in general, share some fundamental assumptions with the wider societal ethos of ‘enterprise’ (Rose 1998) that has come to permeate liberal democratic states such as Sweden over the last decades. Values such as health and well-being are here joined with autonomy, responsibility, efficiency, in a way even fulfilment. I will here highlight four crucial aspects of this development.

First, the treatments for stress-related illnesses include a redistribution of psychological knowledge and skills. In the healing of ‘burnout’, the patients acquire a psychological toolbox through psychoeducation and are expected to work out personal coping strategies together with a therapist. They are actively involved in the actual treatment, and are not only given tools to cope with their situation, but are encouraged to adapt these tools to their own personal situation, thereby being expected to take responsibility for it. This move towards psychoeducation is a general trend in present-day psychotherapy. In clinical and non-clinical contexts alike the very idea of the ‘treatment’ is that the participants should become knowledgeable enough to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. This development is also both reflected and promoted in the Swedish mass media where today a diversity of psychoeducative efforts can be found, some of which are treatments in themselves.

Second, that patients are to become responsible actors also means that, through the redistribution of therapeutic knowledge and techniques, work and health are intertwined. The treatment is not something that the therapists do to the patients, but a work process that the patients are heavily involved in, a sort of guided self-help. The patients/clients are supposed to go ‘from victims to actors’. When returning to their job, they should ideally have learnt how to work in a way that precludes the probability of having a relapse. In some cases (such as the Affect School) such skills are seen as useful not just for staying healthy, but also for becoming more productive at work. That psychotherapeutic techniques may enhance the functionality of individuals at work has led to psychotherapists sometimes being employed by work organizations as management consultants working with organizational development, and in this work basing their authority on the same knowledge and skills that has allowed them to treat patients. The ‘psychotherapeutic’ is here given multidimensional meanings, becoming a question of both curing patients and making them, or aiding them in, upholding a productive existence.

Third, it is through the latest developments of the Swedish welfare society that this new space for psychotherapeutics has opened up. The reorganization of the public health care system from the 1980s and onwards placed a greater responsibility for health concerns onto the individual. In this vision, individuals were no longer supposed to merely demand health care when ill. They now had to continually work on their own health as well. This opened up a space that psychotherapies could easily fill, since techniques for involving the patients/clients in the actual therapy had been a psychotherapeutic
theme for decades. As a response to the so-called burnout epidemic in the late 1990s, new therapies were therefore developed that tried to make the patients co-workers in the therapeutic process.

Fourth, the treatments discussed in this chapter are all attempts, on the micro level, at creating efficient welfare services and thus a well-functioning welfare society, yet both the welfare apparatus and the wider society are transformed by the forces that these therapies are a part of. The redistribution of therapeutic techniques ideally integrates each individual’s life into a more healthy and productive overall existence, thus also creating a more healthy and productive society. The ‘private’ thus becomes a public concern, and self-help becomes a collective enterprise – and even more so with the mass mediation of psychoeducation. Psychotherapeutic developments now harmonize with the workings of other work-related spheres in Swedish welfare society: since they all make use of psychological tools, an assortment of which are represented in the mass media, developments within the school system, management theory and practice, and in psychotherapy have become entwined – which is the focus of the next chapter.
4. The Anatomy of Work-Enabling Self-Help Psychology

The previous chapters have shown how the distribution of psychological tools in different types of work-related activities – such as schooling, management educations, the rehabilitation of people suffering from stress-related illnesses – has become a method for enhancing personal and organizational functioning. In other words, a self-help-oriented psychoeducation has become something of a rationalization method in Sweden in recent decades. It has also been shown how this development of a work-enabling self-help psychology is reflected and promoted in the mass media, thereby making up a part of the everyday life of the ordinary citizen. However, since the focus of each of the former chapters has been on the particular way of institutionalizing a psychological toolbox-thinking in a specific sphere of society, any type of commonality between the psychological discourses in these different spheres has so far only been indirectly shown. It is therefore now time to turn to the more direct connections between the different institutionalized psychological discourses discussed in the previous chapters.

I will here look at the commonalities in the psychological tools discussed in earlier chapters. What follows is therefore, to a certain extent, a reiteration of what has been said so far. I will, however, not just recapitulate what has already been said, but highlight the fundamental concepts and practices so as to explicate both the content of, and connections between, the different tools. In other words, I will try to ‘dissect’ the assemblage (cf. Ong and Collier 2005) of work-enabling self-help psychology in order to lay bare its ‘anatomy’ (cf. Foucault 1979). In accordance with Foucault (1979), this ‘anatomy’ will not be seen as the construction of some kind of ‘will’ or higher Reason. The different parts of this assemblage will here rather be seen as knowledge and practices created for different specific purposes, yet which have proved useful, and thereby been applied, in a diversity of contexts. Only gradually, when it has been practical for someone in a specific context, have these different parts been connected bit by bit, eventually into a more consistent structure.

I will here argue that the set of theories, methods and techniques making up work-enabling self-help psychology have partially been worked out in opposition to prevalent management ideology. Having for a long time existed as a sort of managerial undergrowth (Kleiner 1996), these ideas and practices have now gained a more dominant position within management theory.
and practice. Work-enabling self-help psychology can thus be understood as a way of enacting a ‘new spirit of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). However, the ‘human technologies’ (Rose 1998: 121) of work-enabling self-help psychology can arguably be understood not only as an expression of the new, third, spirit of capitalism, but also as a part of the communication and control technologies of the third industrial revolution. I will therefore conclude the chapter with a brief description of how work-enabling self-help psychology has been assembled over the last decades – under the influence of both critique of the capitalist system and technological developments. All in order to rigorously explicate the ‘anatomy’ of the assemblage of work-enabling self-help psychology.

In the toolbox psychology described in this thesis verbalization is essential. All techniques and methods are based on the idea/technique of verbalization. It is through putting any kind of life experience into words that the management (in the wide sense of the term) of selves, teams, and organizations becomes possible. When, for example, the overstressed personnel at some schools are invited to learn the fundamentals of the psychology of stress, they (allegedly) become less stressed (see Introduction and Chapter Three). A team is, supposedly, most efficiently created when the participants come to realize that groups develop through stages, a development which takes place if the members learn effective verbal techniques for feedback (Chapter Two). And it is through naming emotions that it becomes possible to control them (Chapters One to Three). The important concepts used in the type of guided self-help described in this thesis tend to assemble people’s life worlds under the umbrella of the ‘psychological’ by naming everyday experiences in a psychological prose. A range of activities and entities are, by being labelled with these terms, ‘translated’ (Callon 1986, Rose 1998: 55-56) into the vocabulary of work-enabling self-help psychology.

Yet, verbalization is here not only a road to reflection, but also to intervention. Work-enabling self-help psychology is a matter of ‘how to do things with words’ (Austin 1962). It is by actually uttering certain words that you deliver feedback, for example an ‘I-message’. It is by opening up and talking about your thoughts and feelings that you widen the ‘arena’. And by naming emotions you start controlling them, and thereby yourself as well as your co-workers. And so on. Work-related popular psychological activities are discursive actions, structured through the use of certain concepts and their adherent practices.

To lay bare the ‘anatomy’ of work-enabling self-help psychology I will here start by examining the five conceptual formations (cf. Foucault 2002) constructed around the notions of the ‘self’, ‘emotions’, ‘communication’, ‘choice’, and ‘groups’ which are foundational in all the different contexts.

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151 This phrase is borrowed from Austin (1962), a work in the so-called ordinary language philosophy of mid-century British philosophy. Austin here suggested that language was not only representational, but also a way of acting.
described in the earlier chapters.\footnote{These concepts have largely the same meaning in all the empirical examples discussed in this chapter, as well as the rest of the thesis, although the elaborations of the concepts differ somewhat between scientific and popular usage. The list of concepts could of course have been longer, including for example, cognition, thought, actor, and others. Yet, such concepts will not be passed by in this discussion, but rather included in the wider themes emanating out of the five concepts; these concepts often come, so to speak, in clusters.} In this way a couple of themes will be depicted which also encompass other related concepts as well as adherent practices. I will then end the chapter with a brief description of how these concepts and practices have been assembled in recent decades into a work-enabling self-help psychology.

The self

The ‘self’ became a central concept in psychology with the humanistic movement. As a general way of characterizing the individual in psychological research and practice, its popularity increased in the 1960s and has since then been on the rise, gradually replacing the concept of personality, which in turn had replaced the older concept of character (Teigen 2006: 360). Much of what is spelled ‘self-…’ thus owes its present popularity to the force of humanistic psychology.

Self-awareness

In the teachings of emotional intelligence in schools self-awareness is the first step on the EQ staircase. In UGL self-awareness is explicitly stated as one of the objectives with the course. In The Human Element, psychologist Will Schutz writes that ‘best solutions to organizational and leadership issues require self-awareness as an essential step’ (1994: xv). In the team-building courses given by ALFA the value of self-awareness is pointed out (more or less implicitly) all the time – the question after each exercise about how it felt has as its purpose to make the participants aware of their emotions. Self-awareness is also important in the management courses worked out by Kerstin Myrgård. Self-awareness is one of the foundations of the ‘visualizing pedagogy’ (Myrgård 2005),\footnote{In Swedish den synliggörande pedagogiken.} which she sees as the most basic and important part of her programs. Although the treatments of ‘burnout’ do not explicitly discuss self-awareness, they are all based on some kind of ‘psychoeducation’, the aim of which is to give the participants a psychological understanding of themselves and the way they function both as human beings and as individuals.

Mass media representations taking a psychological perspective – such as manuals, counselling columns, TV therapy, and how to-books – generally focus on techniques and methods dealing with how to replace the ‘negative’
ways of acting in which people tend to degrade, disrupt or even destroy themselves, with ‘positive’ methods that will help them manage their life in a more functional way. Self-awareness – to understand how you function and why you function as you do – is here seen as essential for this kind of approach to work. Counselling columns often urge the readers to, in different ways, penetrate their own psyche for a better understanding of who they are. Even manuals often implicitly assert the value of self-awareness by including a bit of psychoeducation. TV therapy generally contains both psychoeducation and self-examination. In how to-books, there is space for more explicitness than in the press and the value of self-awareness is often stressed. Management consultant and ‘lay therapist’ (Hornborg 2012) Mia Törnblom, for example, states that self-awareness is a necessity for all personal development (2005: 111). The how to-books dealing with emotional intelligence – how to increase it and use it for different purposes – also tend to stress the value of self-awareness.

All in all, self-awareness is often seen as the unavoidable core of psychological interventions directed at the individual. The idea of self-awareness is explicit in the writings of, and courses given by, humanistically inspired management consultants, but less outspoken elsewhere. Yet the idea appears as a foundation – a taken for granted – in any kind of psychological self-help thinking. If following psychologist and historian Danziger (1990, 1997), looking upon modern psychology as a hybrid of physiology and philosophy, it is evident that the value of self-awareness traces its roots to philosophy. The idea of self-awareness is as old as Western philosophy itself. ‘Know thyself’ was written over the temple in Delphi where Apollo’s oracle resided. This ancient adage has stayed a, more or less, outspoken foundation of Western philosophy throughout the centuries ever since. Yet its meaning has changed with the times (see e.g. Foucault 1988). In work-enabling self-help psychology, self-awareness is psychologically structured; it is based on psychological ideas and spelt out in psychological concepts. The ancient adage and its possible answers have here been ‘translated’ (Callon 1986) into a psychological prose.

Self-esteem
When you have started gaining self-awareness, you can also gradually gain self-esteem. This rather simple and straightforward equation is set forth in the different fields of practice investigated in this thesis. Yet the complexity of this equation may differ.

In the rehabilitation from ‘burnout’ the participants learn ways to improve their self-esteem, and ways to become an active – instead of passive – part in problematic situations. In one of the programs, self-esteem is described as intimately related to self-efficacy – that is, the individuals’ faith in their own ability to cope with everyday life – and where loss of self-efficacy is seen as leading to loss of self-esteem. In the treatment, these patients are
aided in working out more functional ways of interacting and reflecting, that is, better coping strategies. This, allegedly, leads to better self-esteem, which gives the patients more faith in their own ability to handle any situation whatsoever. That is also largely how best-selling psychologist Goleman portrays the situation in Working with Emotional Intelligence (1998). The term ‘self-efficacy’ is here borrowed from psychologist Bandura (1986, 1988, 1997), who uses it to try to describe processes of self-control in humans, thus making use of the idea of circular causality, foundational in cybernetics and its attempts to understand self-regulating systems from a general point of view.

When Will Schutz reworked the FIRO-theory in The Human Element (1994), self-esteem was to play an important part. The subtitle of the book actually reads: Productivity, Self-esteem, and the Bottom Line. According to Schutz, self-esteem is ‘crucial to personal and professional effectiveness’ (1994: 71). ‘I demonstrate high self-esteem … by being flexible, being able to express myself fully, and being in charge of myself. My perceptions are accurate, and I have learned to make all my reactions conscious.’ (1994: 100)

In the work with emotional intelligence in schools, the concept of self-esteem amounts to a meta-discussion; increasing the pupils’ self-esteem is seen by some of the proponents as the main rationality for the very work itself. Wennberg also describes the knowledge about our own self-esteem as an important part of our self-awareness (2003: 36).

Törnblom has made self-esteem the central concept of her discourse. In books like Självkänsla nu! (Self-esteem Now!) and Mera självkänsla (More Self-esteem) she also makes a difference between self-esteem (our appreciation of ourselves) and self-confidence (our appreciation of what we do or accomplish). In her appearances on television she stresses the importance of self-esteem for the ability to function well as a human being, and the fact that self-esteem is ‘perishable’; it has to be continually rebuilt. She usually delivers a few rather basic techniques to gain an increased self-esteem. Phillip McGraw, in the Dr. Phil show, also talks a lot about ‘how you feel about yourself’, though he does not often use the word self-esteem, and it is not always exactly clear what he means by that expression.

In work-enabling self-help psychology, self-esteem is often described as that which gives your life a balance. If you have high self-esteem you can handle failure. You respect yourself, and can continue to function in your everyday life in both ups and downs. In relation to work life, that is, when looking at humans as a part of an industrialized world, what the concept of self-esteem does is to assert that you are not a machine. The concept of self-esteem contains an implicit value statement, saying that ultimately you should not value yourself by what you produce or do. You have a value as a human being, that is, as an individual. Although you are always part of a larger totality, you are also a totality in yourself. Such an understanding though – somewhat ironically – actually seems to make you a more efficient

Self-actualization

In the vocabulary of Maslow, attaining self-esteem opens up the possibility of self-actualization. In an article called ‘A theory of human motivation’ (1943), Maslow recognized a hierarchy of five basic human needs. These were physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization. In Maslow’s view, needs only serve as motivators as long as they are unfulfilled. When their lower and middle level needs have been fulfilled, the possibility of self-actualization is what will motivate people. This latter need Maslow defined as ‘to become everything that one is capable of becoming’ (1943: 382). In a similar manner Carl Rogers, Maslow’s associate in the humanistic movement, saw psychotherapy as a way for people to actualize themselves, to realize their potentialities (Thorne 1992).

The idea of ‘actualization’ was borrowed from neurologist Kurt Goldstein, who used it as a way to describe the brain as a holistic structure, realizing its possibilities even if partly damaged (Harrington 1996). Through Maslow’s reinterpretation the concept of actualization suggested that people may ‘develop’, in the sense of becoming more fully human, when they climb the ladder of needs. This idea was well in line with the way psychoanalysis had been developed by Adler and Rank, who refuted Freud’s pessimistic outlook on life and health, and believed in the possibility of a more ‘positive’ psychology that could help people realize themselves (Ansbacher 1990, Kramer 1995). This was also the direction of psychoanalysis at the Tavistock clinic, which cooperated with Lewin’s Research Center for Group Dynamics (Miller and Rose 1988, Marrow 1969: 222). Today this heritage is carried on by a branch which is known as, simply, positive psychology, a label suggested by Martin Seligman, and by the APA Section on Positive Psychology defined as ‘the study of human strengths and well-being’.154

In management today, the term self-actualization is not often used, but has been exchanged for the less technical and more general term ‘personal development’, used for example in UGL and by Törnblom. Work life is now, as Rose has it, ‘a realm in which productivity is to be enhanced, quality assured, and innovation fostered through the active engagement of the self-fulfilling impulses of the employee’ (1998: 160). This harnessing of the self (cf. Foucault 1979) has, allegedly, made it possible for employers of ‘tapping more of the potential within their employees’ (Schutz 1994: 7).

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Self-help

The first elaboration of a modern self-help philosophy is generally attributed to Samuel Smiles (2002 [1866]), who preached that common people could raise themselves above the level of poverty and ignorance, and also that members of higher classes stood out only because of their own self-help. For Smiles, just as in work-enabling self-help psychology, self-help was a collective enterprise (Garsten and Grey 1997: 216).

With the psychological concept of the self, as elaborated during the nineteenth century, the old idea of self-help was ‘translated’ (Callon 1986) into a psychological prose and practice. Self-help has today largely become help directed towards the self, that is, a practice aimed at gaining self-awareness, improving self-esteem, and ultimately reaching the state of self-actualization – or at least accomplishing some kind of self-realization or personal development. Beginning with the ‘self-esteem literature’ – which asserts that ‘if an individual is to overcome adversity in life, he or she must first come to appreciate and respect his or her self’ (Ward 2002: 102) – the psychological version of self-help has even given rise to its own self-help industry, with a diversity of therapeutic and managerial how-to books. The individual potential for self-healing and on to enterprise is here both stressed and explicated within a psychological framework. This is also the case with psychological manuals and counselling columns in the press, with their tendency to address the consumer, displaying methods and techniques for how you may work on your self. Just like some later psychotherapeutic developments which make use of the patient’s or client’s engagements through homework, mass-mediated psychological self-help has capitalized on the humanistic heritage. This is evident through, for example, the importance of the concept of self-esteem in these types of ‘interventions’, but also in the belief in the patients’/clients’ capacity to work on their selves.

It may seem ironic that the concept of the self gives rise to a whole industry at the same time as the very idea of a consistent subject is virtually taken apart by post-modern philosophy (Rose 1998: 169). Yet the self-help industry may also appear as an enactment of this crisis of subjection (McGee 2005: 177). The different conceptualizations based on the ‘self’ has linked psychological discourse to one of the legitimate ways of exercising authority in a democratic society – that is, through autonomization (Rose 1998: 99). Self psychology becomes an authoritative voice since it, allegedly, helps individuals become autonomous beings: it helps them in realizing themselves as self-governing entities.

The authentic is today sought after in a number of different contexts, and by the use of different means, some of which may appear as less expected – such as in and through popular mass consumption culture. Nevertheless, popular psychological self-help books (as well as manuals and counselling columns in the press, and TV therapy) offer people a set of tools for how to understand themselves and live a life imagined to be more authentic. The

In management today, the concept of the self has become so important that it is possible to build a whole educational enterprise around it. These are the ‘fundamental principles’ with which Schutz summarizes The Human Element (1994: xv):

- At the heart of all human functioning is the self.
- Best solutions to organizational and leadership issues require self-awareness as an essential step.
- Deeper self-awareness leads to self-acceptance and then self-esteem.
- As individuals gain self-awareness and self-esteem, they become more open and honest with their co-workers. They redirect the energy they now use for defensiveness, withholding, and other interpersonal struggles into productive work.

These principles are also an excellent illustration of what I mean by the ‘therapeutization of work’: the mere working out of accurate selves means that dysfunctional behaviour such as defensiveness and withholding is exchanged for openness and thereby productive teamwork. Put briefly, work and well-being are seen as each other’s underpinnings.

**Emotions**

In psychological treatments and advice, self-awareness is to a large degree a question of gaining knowledge of emotional functioning – all in accordance with the logic that in order to master your emotions you must first understand them. This awareness tends to have two sides. It is usually about gaining awareness of your own emotions – that is, what you actually feel in certain situations – as well as the way emotions function in human beings in general. The matter is a bit complicated however, since there is no generally accepted definition of emotion. Rather there are a number of categories – such as emotions, affects, sentiments, moods, etc. – that try to capture the emotional world of human beings and its importance in human functioning. This matter is even further complicated by the fact that certain terms are specific to certain languages: it is for example very hard to avoid using the term känslor when reflecting on emotional matters in Swedish, at least if
you want to address a general audience. Nevertheless, in work-enabling self-help psychology there is a well-established view that the conceptual formation of emotion is central to self-awareness, both in the sense of recognizing personal feeling patterns and of understanding human emotional functioning in general.

Modern psychological emotion theory dates back no longer than to Darwin’s work, elaborated in The Emotions in Man and Animals and The Descent of Man. The last 150 years have seen waves of rather vivid debates about emotion theory involving biologists and theologians as well as psychologists – and more recently also sociologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists, linguists (Dixon 2003). The conceptual apparatus used in work directed psychological interventions today is, I suggest, a somewhat eclectic mixture where a more technical apparatus – based on affect theory (as elaborated by Silvan Tomkins and followers), cognitive psychology, and recent findings in the neuroscience of emotions – is implemented into a wider humanistic framework where the idea of empathic understanding is foundational, though not all approaches contain all these ingredients.

In the mass media, writings on emotional functioning have often reflected therapeutic and management fashions. During the 1990s and into the 2000s emotional intelligence was a subject occasionally treated in the press. A number of articles also described how cognitive behaviour therapy, or other types of cognitive approaches, can be used to adjust emotional problems, and often with a summary of the advice in a ‘tool-box’. More generally, in counselling columns, such as that in the weekly magazine ICA-kuriren or that of Eva Rusz in the daily newspaper Aftonbladet, the readers are often told to try to understand their own emotions – and are occasionally given advice for how to handle them – in order to be able to deal with their lives and the problems that they have encountered.

Therapeutic how-to-books often seem to be inspired by – or sometimes simply are a type of – cognitive behaviour therapy. This type of therapy is usually seen as well-suited for the adjustment of emotional problems, and always starts with a psychoeducative component which includes basic affect or emotion theory, and this is also the case with the how-to-books based on this approach. Since this type of therapy uses ‘homework’ as a crucial therapeutic activity it is well-suited for self-help. In the how-to-books dealing

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155 The Swedish noun känsla and the corresponding verb känna have a history that differs a lot from its English correspondents, yet have some crucial similarities too. The noun känsla is derived from the old verb känna, nowadays most often meaning to feel, but also meaning to appreciate in the sense to have a sort of intuitive knowledge of something. The verb is much older than the noun. The noun känsla was not used in its present meaning until the end of the eighteenth century. It became common at the same time that the word passion lost its importance and gradually derived a new meaning. The verb känna at this time also developed a new meaning, since from then on used as a correspondent to the English verb ‘feel.’ Suddenly it was possible to känna känslor. The knowledge that you declare to possess when using the verb no longer only is about another person; it can just as well be about your own subjective state of being (SAOB, 1893–, Dixon 2003).
with emotional intelligence there are, needless to say, also always at least a couple of pages about emotion theory.

In *The Human Element* (1994) psychologist Schutz regards knowledge about personal feelings as an important type of knowledge, since feelings affect decision making. We may believe we communicate and reason in a strictly rational way, but our feelings are always there. ‘Logical statements are often not completely logical at all but actually have a feeling component’ (1994: 189). ‘Ignoring the personal feelings of the members means the team is dealing with only half a deck. This idea is brilliantly captured in the anonymous adage, “How do I know what I think until I say what I feel?”’ (1994: 232). We must therefore be open about our feelings, which, however, is easier said than done. ‘Accounting for our feelings and fears requires us to identify them and their sources, be self-aware, and be willing to communicate about them’ (1994: 147).

UGL includes a lot of discussions about emotions. For example, it is regarded as important to communicate what you feel to the members of the group, including yourself, as a way of enhancing the ‘arena’, that is, what everyone knows about everyone. This requires an ability to express emotions verbally. The course file therefore also includes a discussion about emotion words, because when delivering statements about one’s emotions it is easy to use non-emotion words describing how we feel, such as ‘misunderstood’ instead of, for example, ‘sad’. In using words such as ‘misunderstood’ we are, according to the course file, not talking about ourselves, that is, about our emotions, but merely trying to shift the responsibility for our state of being to others. The feedback technique of ‘I-messages’ makes use of this know-how of correct emotion verbalization, since it is about communicating your inner feelings regarding the actions of someone else. It is stated in the course file that this type of feedback is powerful since your emotions cannot be questioned; no one else can really know what you feel unless you tell them.

In ALFA’s teambuilding course, emotions hold center stage most of the time. After each exercise the coach asks the participants about how it felt so as to make the participants aware of their emotions. It is regarded as important that each exercise feels good, meaning that the participants are committed to the work of the group. And the purpose of the High Ropes Track is that you learn how to master yourself by learning how to manage your emotions, especially in situations of stress.

Fundamental in the teachings of Emotional Intelligence in schools is the value of a better understanding of emotions and emotional functioning. A basic skill here is the ability to recognize and label different emotions. For example, in order to control our anger, we must first be able to recognize it. The belief here is that such an understanding leads to more efficient schoolwork – in this case meaning both peaceful interaction and successful personal achievements.
In the therapy for ‘burnout’, affect theory – based on the work of Silvan Tomkins – is generally a part of the psychoeducation included in such rehabs.

Affect theory, as used in popular self-help psychology, teaches that there are a few basic affects which can be either amplified or reduced in the dynamics of the psyche, and which can also function as amplifiers. In the psychoeducation directed to laypersons, affect amplification or reduction is seen as taking place especially through the feedback mechanism which the affect system makes up together with the cognitive system. Put otherwise, our thoughts and actions can make us, for example, either more afraid or less afraid of something. On several occasions, lecturers at the Psychotherapy Fair stated that affect theory is today used to replace Freudian drive theory – in the actual treatment discussed and in psychotherapy more generally. Drive theory is, as a therapist at the Fair put it, ‘simply too mechanical’.

From an analytical point of view, the psyche is, in Freudian drive theory, viewed as an ‘energy converter’, transfiguring and channelling the psychic energy of drives in different directions. Freud here developed his ideas about a *psycho-*dynamics in an analogy with the theories of *thermo-*dynamics, elaborated during the nineteenth century and viewing work as a form of energy conversion, visible in the steel works and factory plants of the time (Sjögren 1997: 183, Rabinbach 1992). Tomkins, on the other hand, started working on his affect theory after reading Norbert Wiener’s writings on cybernetics (Tomkins 1992: xiii, Sedgwick and Frank 1995: 504). With affect theory replacing drive theory, psychotherapy in its ‘generative’ metaphors (Danziger 1992) thus takes a leap forward from the nineteenth century steel mill and factory plant into the age of feedback systems and computers.

This focus on emotions and emotional functioning has been given a new impetus, and a more secure scientific basis in ‘hard science’, with some of the latest research in neuropsychology – such as the work of Antonio Damasio – which tries to map emotional functioning in the brain, and its relation to the rest of the body. Damasio’s work, as presented in three volumes (see Chapter Three), occupies the borderlands between different fields, and has successfully penetrated many of them.156 As Damasio’s work is described in secondary sources (see e. g. Fineman 2003, Kolb and Whishaw 2003), his

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156 Damasio’s books are referred to in the press as well as in peer-reviewed journals in psychotherapy, in theoretical and more practice oriented works on emotional intelligence, as well as in management theory (see for example Fineman 2003), and in educational text books on neuropsychology (Kolb and Whishaw 2003). It should also be noted that the books are best-sellers.
main contribution is to have shown the necessity of a functional emotional system for rational decision making. As seen above, such a proposition is not far from what many management theorists and psychotherapists suggest, yet is in Damasio’s research grounded in ‘hard science’.

All in all, work-enabling self-help psychology points to the way that contemporary organizational management contributes to upholding an ‘emotional capitalism’ (Illouz 2007). The ‘private self’ is now to be ‘publicly performed’ and is thus ‘harnessed to the discourses and values of the economic and political spheres’ (2007: 5). That is, emotion management has become a vital component in organizational management. As seen in this thesis, an awareness of emotions and emotional functioning, as well as methods for adjustment and/or control, is of fundamental value in any kind of work-related psychological toolbox. Such methods span a range from very simple to highly complex. And professional advice spans a range from very general to highly specific. What these advices all have in common is the idea that a full understanding of what it means to be human includes an understanding of emotions and emotional functioning. To think of people as rational in a strictly logical or mechanical sense is to describe ‘only half a deck’ (Schutz 1994); it is to miss out on the perhaps most authentically human feature. Accurate emotional expression and, thereby, control is therefore of vital importance for a type of management that simply is about channeling the force coming from people being authentic. More or less explicit and reflexive, ideals from the 1960s counterculture are here recycled into management ideals (Fleming 2009: 19, McGee 2005, cf. Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

**Communication**

The gaining of self-awareness is, in work-enabling self-help psychology, seen as taking place in a social context. To exchange thoughts and feelings with co-workers, experts, friends, family, put simply, your fellow human beings – that is, to communicate – appears as essential in any kind of psychological self-improvement strategy. Yet communicating within a psychological perspective is often hard work, since you need to open up and talk about what you may have put a lot of energy into concealing – from yourself and/or others. For the communication to be efficient certain specific techniques may therefore be needed.

In job-related situations openness can become an important technique for increasing productivity. According to Will Schutz ‘teamwork results from using openness as a method for solving any problem’ (1994: 122). This openness means communicating your personal thoughts and feelings. This is especially so when conflict arises, because ‘conflict resolution becomes effective when it uses the principles of … honesty and self-awareness. When team members share their thoughts and personal feelings, they have all the
relevant factors that must be integrated to reach an optimal resolution’ (1994: 232). Schutz writes that ‘society reinforces lying and the idea that human beings are too weak to deal with the truth’ (1994: 57). However, Schutz maintains, ‘the truth does set me free – organizationally, interpersonally, personally, and bodily… The more open I am, the healthier I am’ (1994: 58).

The EQ program implemented in some schools in Sweden includes both more theoretical discussions about communication, and practical techniques for how make it more efficient. The exercise called ‘Chain of gossip’ is about how communication may fail, including a discussion about the possible reasons for this. Higher up on the EQ staircase we find a tool called ‘The stop light’, which is distributed in order to reduce violence and promote emotional control. This tool teaches the children to visualize a stop light whenever they get mad. They are supposed to ‘see red’ when angry, simply meaning ‘stop’, do not take action. When they cool down they are supposed to first see yellow and then green, meaning ‘act’, that is, communicate verbally.

In counselling columns and TV therapy, you get the impression that in order to straighten out their problems, people need to talk. That will not fix everything, but otherwise you cannot fix anything. One of Dr. Phil’s favourite expressions – ‘do you want me to be straight with you?!’ – often sounds more like a request than a question. Anyway, the participants never say no. Being straight – a direct communication about matters of fact – is an outspoken philosophy of McGraw, a way of making the therapeutic encounter more efficient. In counselling columns, such as that of Eva Rusz in Aftonbladet, or those in ICA-kuriren, it is often stated that it is important to communicate about the problems. Those seeking advice often seem to send their questions to the counsellor instead of simply discussing the issue with those involved. In such cases, the counsellor usually returns the question and states that it is important that those involved find a way to communicate about the issue.

As seen here, in work-enabling self-help psychology there are a few different techniques for achieving more efficient communication. Most of these are simply a form of feedback, or ways to accomplish such. In the most general sense, feedback equals the circulation of knowledge and information. It thus also reflects certain ideals. Whereas communication in hierarchical organizations is directed mainly ‘downwards’, and thus maintains an ideal of linear causation, feedback is based on the idea of circular causation. By sharing information, the quality of decision making in an organization is believed to be enhanced. In its most basic form feedback is simply someone
reflecting on what someone else has said. In more elaborated form it is a highly structured way of enhancing efficiency in teamwork. In the latter case the feedback may follow a manual. The following of a specific sequence in the application is then what defines the tool.

An example here is the method of ‘I-messages’ used to induce change in other people’s behaviour. The one delivering the message should first describe the situation bothering him or her, and then declare what he or she feels when the situation arises. According to the accompanying theory, people usually put up a lot of different defences in order to avoid changing their behaviour. The person delivering the message should then just repeat it, until the different defences have been exhausted and the other person realizes that he or she must alter the behaviour. The manual thus resembles a computer program made up of an algorithm with a loop, where the same sequence is initiated again and again until the expected outcome is achieved.

In teamwork feedback often amounts to ‘confessions’, since members must, as Schutz puts it, ‘share their thoughts and personal feelings’ to have ‘all the relevant factors that must be integrated to reach an optimal resolution’ (1994: 232) of a conflict or problem. In work-enabling self-help psychology the confession is thus about ventilating ‘personal’ emotions and thoughts. The intimate character of both form and content makes these two fit well together. The confession is not an exclusively psychological form, but the psychological one is merely a modern version of a long tradition. As Foucault acknowledges, the confession is a form of interaction that has been elaborated in Western thinking and practice since the middle ages and thus has become a typical Western form ‘for the production of truth’ (1990: 58).

In a management system where the enactment of authenticity is seen as a means for attaining organizational efficiency and therefore encouraged (Fleming 2009, Ilouz 2007, Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), the personal confession is a highly valued form of communicating – and thus also a way of managing. As opposed to confessions in religious and legal matters, the personal confession in psychological matters is not just an end in itself. It is either feedback, or a way of inviting feedback from others, thus keeping the communicative exchange going.

If Freud invented the ‘talking cure’,\(^{157}\) the idea of open group communication as the foundational tool in creating both personal and organizational functionality – here meaning well-being and efficiency – goes back to Lewin’s work in the 1930s and 1940s. This idea was later developed in different directions (Ward 2002: 202, Egidius 2001b: 45, Marrow 1969). In relation to organizational management, communication here becomes the essentially human way of being rational. Humans may act rationally even when their actions are not dependent on well-developed types of interactive communi-

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\(^{157}\) A term originally coined by ‘Anna O.’ (pseudonym for Bertha von Pappenheim), a patient of Freud’s colleague Josef Breuer, since then often used to describe psychoanalysis (Leahy 2004: 275-276, Sirois 2012).
cation, but only in a mechanical Taylorist fashion, that is, more or less as cogs in a machine. From the perspective of work-enabling self-help psychology, a fully human rationality, which makes use of all authentically human components, both thoughts and feelings, must be based on open communication.

To summarize this section, the ideal way of communicating in work-related popular psychological interventions consists of two forms: feedback and manuals. This view can perhaps best be understood by looking at the elaborate form it is given in UGL. An essential part of the course is the idea and practice of feedback. Since communication in these feedback processes means being open with your personal thoughts and feelings, there is thus no end to feedback. The importance of interactivity for efficient communication is thereby also stressed, that is, the involvement of all group members in these processes. Especially emotions are here seen as a kind of basic personal truth that cannot be questioned by anyone. This is the idea behind the technique of delivering feedback through ‘I-messages’, where you follow a manual to correctly state how you feel when someone does something, in order to change that person’s behaviour. The ‘arena’, what everyone knows about everyone, is in this way also widened (which from an analytical point of view means that the group is turned into a kind of ‘synopticon’ (Mathiesen 1997)). As one of the coaches at the course put it: ‘Feedback is always constructive!’

Choice

Since there are appropriate techniques available, increased self-esteem, just like raised self-awareness, is in work-enabling self-help psychology seen as simply a matter of choice. If self-awareness is a common way of beginning any type of self-improvement strategy – whether in the form of a self-help book or a teambuilding course or a therapeutic treatment – then the concept of choice is the logical conclusion, because change is a matter of choice. In self-help psychology the issue of choice thus also becomes a way of, implicitly or explicitly, asserting the importance of looking upon oneself as an ‘agentic’ individual (cf. Meyer and Jepperson 2000), capable of governing, and taking responsibility for, one’s own life. This setup is well in line with the general character of modern liberal democratic society where the individual is ‘obliged to be free’, that is, obliged ‘to construe all aspects of … life as the outcome of choices made among a number of oppositions’ (Rose 1998: 100). Yet, when this obligation to be free is enacted in relation to a toolbox psychology, the possible choices are all of a psychological character.

For example, in UGL you can read in the course file that no one can ‘produce emotions’ in another person. It is stated that ‘in our culture’ we often tend to see others as responsible for what happens to us. But that is just
a way of avoiding responsibility. It is we ourselves who choose what we feel. This somewhat obscure – though rather philosophical – reflection on our own personal responsibility for how we live, seems to imply that at least concerning our inner world of emotions we – even in ‘our culture’ – may have absolute power, if we just acknowledge it.

In Phillip McGraw’s approach, personal choices make all the difference. In one show he stresses the relationship between choice and responsibility when stating that ‘sometimes you make the right choices and sometimes you have to make the choices right’. In any case, it seems, you choose how you feel about your life.

Törnblom sometimes encourages her clients to stop playing the victim by stating, ‘ta av offerkoftan!’ (take off your victim cardigan). Törnblom then usually states that this ‘cardigan’ is so warm and cozy that we very much want to keep wearing it, but that we should not lose ourselves in self-pity. She puts a lot of effort into showing that we instead have a lot to gain from choosing self-esteem.

In therapy based on cognitive psychology, choice is often stressed. Emotional reactions are seen as interpretations which can be re-learned; we may not be able to choose all the circumstances of our lives but – in a roundabout way – we do choose how we feel about them. In one of the therapies for ‘exhaustion syndrome’, it is stated that the patients must start thinking about themselves as actors rather than victims. By being guided back to their positive experiences in life, the chances increase that they want, and thereby choose, to be healthy rather than ill.

Choice is fundamental in Schutz’s philosophy of life as expressed in The Human Element. ‘Once I accept that I determine my own life, everything is different … If I assume the concept of choice, I must alter my understanding’ and not ponder if something is being done to me, because ‘according to the choice principle, I am allowing something to be done to me’ (1994: 43). It is of course difficult to know what a human being can accomplish, ‘but a key factor in extending capacity is to assume that I determine my own life and am capable of making any changes I wish in myself, in my relationships, and my work situation’ (1994: 41).

The concept of choice is related to concepts such as self-actualization and personal development, since the latter are only possible through personal choice and thus are agency manifested. In psychological prose, the opposite of choice and agency is learned helplessness, a term coined by Martin Seligman (who later initiated the approach called ‘positive psychology’ which is about how to make life more fulfilling). When investigating the frequent connection between depression and sense of helplessness, Seligman (1975) opposed the common idea that depression results in helplessness by trying to show that the reverse causality is actually the case, also implying that helplessness can be learned if circumstances are experienced as out of

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158 In a show about couples getting married when they are (too) young.
control. This idea of learned helplessness was in the early 1980s appropriated as a characterization of what was wrong with Swedish society, which can be seen as the advent of neoliberalism in Sweden (Möller 2004: 236, 2007: 260-261).¹⁵⁹

Choice is of course a fundamental concept in a democratic society, yet what neoliberal discourse has accomplished in recent decades is to associate the concept of choice with other concepts that are also opposed to helplessness, such as agency (cf. Meyer and Jepperson 2000), enterprise (Rose 1998), and managing (Grey 1999). In line with these developments, the concept of choice, as used in work-related self-help psychology, asserts that you have the possibility to control and alter your life. In an industrialized society, where the idea of ‘the machine’ is sometimes used to describe even some kind of human organization, the concept of choice singles out humans as a specific type of entity. Being fully human, according to this logic, means choosing your own life. And to be truly self-aware means to acknowledge this freedom of choice and the responsibility that follows it. Not making use of this freedom is to let someone else do it; it is to lay down your humanity before some sort of dominating structure, it is to succumb to the sense of helplessness. Yet, when enacting ‘the choice principle’ (Schutz 1994: 43), another life starts to appear. ‘For in the choices one makes, and in the obligation to render one’s everyday existence meaningful as an outcome of choices made, one’s relation with oneself is tied ever more firmly to the ethics of individual autonomy and personal responsibility’ (Rose 1999a: 272). By adhering to the ‘choice principle’, individuals thus construct themselves in accordance with contemporary management philosophy which emphasizes the values of autonomy and responsibility – and in line with this, the ‘agentic’ individual (Meyer and Jepperson 2000, Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

¹⁵⁹ Gösta Bohman, the leader of Moderaterna, the liberal-conservative party in Sweden, used the term to describe how the extensive responsibility for the citizens’ well-being taken on by the welfare state fostered a mentality where people lacked initiative and entrepreneurialism, where they simply had become helpless. The party ideologue, Staffan Burenstam-Linder, continued on this path by proclaiming that the welfare state actually had become a threat to the welfare society (Möller 2004: 236, 2007: 260-261). It is interesting to notice that the development of the so-called strong society by the social democratic party from the 1950s and onwards was based on an idea of the ‘dissatisfaction of rising expectations’, meaning that the more needs that were satisfied the more people wanted, a concept thus well in line with Abraham Maslow’s theory of a hierarchy of needs (Samuelsson 1972: 204, see also above). The social democratic prime minister Erlander, later followed by Palme, from this idea drew the conclusion that the state was expected to build a large and inclusive social insurance apparatus. Bohman’s use of Seligman obviously made it possible for him draw the opposite conclusion to that of Erlander and Palme.
Groups

The term ‘group dynamics’, based on the view that groups are units comprising forces working both for and against change, was established by Lewin in the 1940s (Marrow 1969, Lewin 1945). During the decades to come, groups were used for a number of purposes, such as managerial training, psychotherapy, and different versions of sensitivity training (Marrow 1969, Back 1972, Egidius 2001b: 45). Building on this heritage groups are in contemporary work-enabling self-help psychology seen as an ideal form for work, and thereby also for practical education. In the latter case, the ways through which know-how is transmitted can involve both lectures and practical exercises. The group is thus both an arena for disseminating theoretical knowledge and a means for practicing interaction. This is the case regardless of whether the objectives for practicing interaction is forming a work group, including encountering the practical problems of such a forming, or going through psychotherapy.

The work and therapy group

The aim of the work group is efficient work. The work group is ideally characterized by rational discourse (cf. Bion 1961). In the extreme case, when the group is supposed to transform into a team, the goal is synergy, that effortless state of cooperation where virtually all effort is put into the task and none into intra-group conflicts. The work group is the form that work-enabling self-help psychology assumes in most cases described in this thesis, such as in the work with Emotional Intelligence in schools, most obviously in group dynamic management courses, but also in the rehabilitation from ‘burnout’ where the group discussions are believed to enhance the individuals’ understanding of the condition.

When the group assumes the form of a therapeutic arena, the aim is the enhanced well-being, or in some other sense healing, of the participants. The most obvious case, of those depicted in this book, is the group psychotherapy for patients suffering from stress-related illnesses. Another example is when the exercises in Emotional Intelligence are believed to enhance the self-esteem of the participants. In group dynamic management courses the well-being of the participants is seen as important, since synergy comes out of the participants’ motivation to contribute to the work.

As seen here, the work group and the group as a therapeutic arena sometimes blend together. The work group should ideally turn into a therapeutic, or at least therapeutic-like, arena in some instances, yet the care for each other’s well-being should never be the overarching aim of a work group.

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Bion (1961) believed that groups only occasionally found themselves in a state where they could be productive, often turning into unproductive states characterized by anxiety. The use of the term ‘work group’ here is merely a way of stating that groups, from the perspective of work-enabling self-help psychology, can have other goals besides efficient work.
because in such a case the question of efficiency risks disappearing from the group’s attention if it is seen as a threat to well-being. In a similar manner, though discussions in a therapy group may contribute to an intellectual understanding of the condition, this is merely a means for facilitating healing.

The research on group dynamics has co-existed in a symbiotic relationship with the research on the self since the 1930s. The action research on groups initiated by Lewin and the humanistic research on the self shared a normative approach, since both were largely directed towards the improvement of self and group functioning through guided self-help. Much of later psychotherapy developments also shared this orientation. As an ideal unit for learning and practicing functional interaction, the group also becomes an arena for personal development. By participating in the guided self-help of group exercises you may gain self-awareness, build self-esteem, learn how to communicate, learn how to manage emotions, and through this initiate a personal development and achieve more of self-control, yet also understand how people may react when groups develop, understand what motivates different people, what it feels like to reach the state of synergy – altogether become more of a responsible actor and group participant ready to influence and form your own life as well as that of the group. You may, in short, learn how to manage selves and groups.

Ritualization as change agent

The use of the group for purposes of education and work also eases the ‘enrolment’ (Callon 1986) of participants into the sphere of work-enabling self-help psychology by opening up for a ritualization of activities. The ritual traits in many popular psychological activities, as hinted at in earlier chapters, make the field appear as if it has adapted itself to Lewin’s old idea of group dynamics as an ‘experimental cultural anthropology’ (Lewin 1948: 35), aiming at the accomplishment of cultural change. In the ‘post-traditional order’ of modernity (Giddens 1991: 20) ritual theory has become a part of the general societal knowledge of ritual action (Bell 2009: xi, 263-264). People no longer merely participate in rites, they often also look upon them as rituals – sometimes even lamenting the lack of the more all-encompassing rites that are imagined to be found in more homogeneous societies (see e.g. Gerholm 1988). Group psychological activities occasionally seem to make use of this general knowledge of ritual theory in rather self-conscious ways.

One example is UGL, which reveals certain characteristics of a rite of passage: the course attempts to give the participants a new perspective of reality and thus initiate them into a new way of being; what takes place at the course is largely unknown to the participants beforehand; when participating in the course you go away to a specific location where you are secluded from the rest of the world and where you spend a limited time; as a confirmation of what you have passed through you get a diploma afterwards – and you are encouraged not to reveal the content of the course to others so as not to spoil
their experiences. In a way, any therapeutic-like experience has something of a rite of passage quality to it (and most participants will probably have at least an implicit knowledge of what that means). No matter whether it is the High Ropes Track or psychoanalyses, you are supposed to enter the unknown and come out as a new person – although the depth of the experience may certainly vary.

In a similar manner, almost any therapeutic activity can be seen as a ‘rite of affliction’, intended to ‘heal, exorcise, protect and purify’ (Bell 2009: 115). Significant here is manualized group therapy, where every session follows the same form. In psychotherapy research, following a specific form is sometimes called ‘rituals for alleviating the problem’ (Weinberger 1994). Such a ‘ritual’ is a so-called common factor. In psychotherapy, common factors are those effective aspects that are shared by a number of therapies, irrespective of what ‘school’ the treatment belongs to (widely used is an empathic listening by the therapist/counsellor/fellow group participant). It seems that if people identify an action as an attempt to heal their afflictions – which becomes possible through ritualization – that insight alone reduces symptoms.

The probably most self-conscious use of ritual traits is, however, found in TV therapy, and there probably most of all in the Dr. Phil show. Besides being a ritual of affliction, the show is also something of a rite of passage, and makes use of a number of ritual-like characteristics, most evidently performance.161 The main characters enter a stage, interventions are performed in front of an audience, and these actions are of a kind that ideally will change the lives of those treated. In the introduction to the show, a voice even states that ‘this is going to be a changing day in your life’ – and that often seems to be the case for many participants, at least as it is depicted on the show. The use of ritual-like characteristics in the show – obviously as a way to enhance the dramatic effects – may be intended as a variety of so-called rituals for alleviating the problem (see above), yet it also gives participants certain prescribed roles in the interaction.

As seen here then, as well as in this thesis more generally, the ‘enrolment’ (Callon 1986) of participants into the world of work-enabling self-help psychology is, arguably, eased by a ritualization of activities – often based on the use of interactional forms such as the group. That ritual- and scientific-based interaction contains similar elements – suggesting that science and ritual enact legitimacy in similar ways – has been noticed by several anthropologists (Gusterson 1998: 152). This isomorphism also means that ritualization can be employed to, so to speak, spice up ‘effects of truth’ (Foucault 1980: 118) in psychological interventions (which may not have been scientifically verified, and which if they were perhaps would be found

161 Bell (2009) distinguishes five characteristics which give activities a ritual-like appearance. These are formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance.
lacking). In other words, ritualization gives authority to the content, giving interventions a both elevated and established character making it easier for participants to, so to speak, swallow the prescribed medicine. In some cases this is obviously intentional, in some cases probably not, in many cases something in between. Yet no matter what, ritualization as it appears here supports the application of the different conceptual formations and adherent practices fundamental to work-enabling self-help psychology.

A motivation for communication

To sum up this chapter so far, the characteristics that this psychological discourse portrays as valuable are, put briefly, the achievement of self-awareness and of high self-esteem, the ability to understand and manage your emotions, the ability to communicate, and to look upon yourself as an actor rather than a victim. These qualities not only make you a more efficient group member and co-worker but also in a sense more human, since they form a way of actualizing your self and becoming more functional in any kind of human interaction. Generally speaking, these abilities and qualities are of two kinds. The ability to understand your emotions, self-awareness, and the ability to communicate are all about communication, about getting in touch with others as well as your self. The ensemble of tools designed to achieve this could therefore be described as communication technologies. The ability to manage your emotions, to acquire a high self-esteem, and to look upon yourself as an actor rather than a victim are all about acquiring some kind of inner ‘motor’ which keeps (you) running in both ups and downs. What work-enabling self-help psychology depicts as valuable, then, are basically communication technologies and the motivation to use them.

On a more general level then, what people ‘tell themselves about themselves’ (Geertz 1993: 448) when reproducing this psychological discourse is that to be human (that is, fully human) is to communicate, with yourself as well as others, but that to communicate is not easy, it is something you have to learn, often requiring the use of certain techniques, and therefore hard work requiring motivation. Such a motivation, however, is only the drive to exploit your own way of being. It is, to paraphrase Nietzsche (2007), only the will to become what you are – that is, human.

Here the affinity of work-enabling self-help psychology with, first, the so-called artistic critique of capitalism (which condemned the system as dehumanizing) and, second, with later technological developments, becomes evident. First, the focus on self-help, on individual agency, in relation to the possibilities of improvement by education and training, and where personal reflection plays an important part – in short, the skilled use of psychological tools – makes work the opposite of submitting oneself to a machinery. To have a toolbox, and the knowledge and skills to use the tools in the right way, is basically to be an artisan. In other words, to produce both well-being and efficiency, and the one does here not go without the other, work itself
must regain a craft character. I therefore suggest that the imagination that lies at the heart of this work-enabling self-help psychology is the idea of the supreme value of craft work. This direction of work-enabling self-help psychology is arguably well in line with the general transformation of organizational theory and practice in later decades, yet the enactment of this ideal through the application of a form of communication technology also points to the affinity of this kind of psychology with technological developments during the third industrial revolution – correspondences which are described and analysed in the last section of this chapter.

Communication and control in the third industrial revolution

To sum up the thesis so far, the psychological theories, methods and techniques of work-enabling self-help psychology make up a set of discursive practices based on a few conceptual formations. Altogether these discursive practices constitute a psychological work ethic, since they stress the value of work by psychological means. By depicting work as a way of realizing your self, a pathway to authenticity and autonomy, the discursive practices of work-enabling self-help psychology appear as a way of ‘justifying engagements in capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005: 8). They can thus – in line with the argument presented in the Introduction – be seen as a part of the new spirit of capitalism. In this final section of the chapter I will conclude the argument outlined in the Introduction by describing how these discursive practices – and thus the new, third, spirit of capitalism – make up a part of the third industrial revolution.

In the pages to follow I will describe how the different theories, methods and techniques mentioned in Chapters One to Three were created, as well as how these together came to constitute the conceptual formations and adherent practices outlined in this chapter. I here argue that regarding both form and content, the ‘human technologies’ of work-enabling self-help psychology has to a large extent grown out of the same soil as the other communication and control technologies of the third industrial revolution. Work-enabling self-help psychology can be seen as a hybrid where some of these communication and control technologies have merged with the theories, methods and techniques of humanistic psychology – thus appearing as a set of managerial possibilities.

The script in the second industrial revolution

In this chapter I have argued that the principal ways of communicating – that is, of handling information – in work-enabling self-help psychology are manuals and feedback. These ways of handling information are specific to,
and thus in a way defining for, the third industrial revolution. Yet whereas feedback is the exclusive addition of the third industrial revolution, manu-
larization, or the use of scripts, finds its origin further back in time, arguably already constitutive to the second industrial revolution.

In the late nineteenth century, the American engineer Frederick Taylor created a system, called ‘scientific management’, to increase efficiency in factory production. The general idea was to eliminate the traditional ways the workers had executed their tasks – the ‘rule-of-thumb’ as Taylor called it (2010 [1911]: 22) – by establishing a division between the workers of the mind and the workers of the hand, between those who designed the tasks and those who executed them. With the aim to seek out the ‘one best way’ (Kanigel 1997: 441), every task was then investigated and calculated by the management so as to be executed in an as efficient manner as possible.

The script was the essential method for achieving this managerial control over the labour process. By writing detailed instructions for how to go about every type of work effort and then overseeing that the workers followed these guidelines exactly the management approached absolute control over the work process. According to Taylor, this meant increased efficiency and thus increased profits, which everyone nevertheless benefitted from since the system only worked if the personnel got their fair share of that profit. In Taylorism the personnel was thus recruited with the allure of higher wages (Taylor 2010 [1911]: 11-12).

Organizations developed both vertical and horizontal divisions of work, that is, they not only made a distinction between the constructors and execu-
tors of the work process, but also divided the execution into a number of different tasks (Lundh 2010: 156-166). In its ideal form, the whole organiza-
tion in this way came to resemble a machine where workers simply consti-
tuted the cogs. With Fordist technologies such as the assembly line, which were gradually introduced in Sweden during the post-war years, the vertical and horizontal division of work increased even more (Lundh 2010: 159, 165).

A significant component in the second industrial revolution was the scien-
tization of production (Magnusson 2000a: 23). Taylor’s contribution was

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162 The Taylorist way of organizing work consisted in increasing efficiency by taking the power over the labour process out of the hands of the workers and instead putting it in the hands of the management. This is, of course, not identical with taking the power over produc-
tion out of the hands of the workers. Questions about, for example, objectives, financing, ownership, salaries, vacations, retirement, sick pay, etc., are issues outside of the actual labour process. In Sweden the ‘December compromise’ in 1906 stated that the employers had ‘the right to lead and distribute work’ (Lundh 2010: 119), but also that the workers had the right to organize. This compromise was the breakthrough for the system of collective bargaining in Sweden.

163 Since Taylorism was based on piece work, the typical signifier for a Taylorist type of management was the so-called time study man (always a man, it seems, and often an engi-
neer). In the 1940s, 80 per cent of the workers in the Swedish engineering industry had their work affected by time studies (Lund 2010: 159).
to show how output could be increased through an application of scientific measures not only to processes of invention and the construction of machinery and technology, but also to the construction of the actual work process. Taylor’s idea about the possibility of increasing efficiency through a ‘scientific management’ set the standard for how to go about the business of organizing for the rest of the century and into the next, yet his actual way of doing organizational science was challenged early on, and especially from mid-century and onwards when new types of machinery offered new ways of thinking about human functioning.

Out of the cybernetic fold

From the middle of the twentieth century the creation of cybernetics and the subsequent computerization of society offered a new way of thinking about control that would have a transformative impact on society and not least on the ways of managing groups and individuals described in this thesis, by bringing back to life the ideal of craft production (see e.g. Piore and Sabel 1984). This alternative vision about what life in an industrial society could or should be like gradually emerged when it became a practical possibility to build ‘thinking’ machines. Suddenly machines did not just represent a specific logic that was a possible threat to humanity (in the form of alienation), but humans themselves seemed to be machines of a specific kind – that is, systems of control and communication – which could be mimicked in inorganic beings. The possibility of a ‘cybernetic psychology’ (Edwards 1996) thereby appeared, and with it new ways of applying scripts or manuals.

A major event in setting off this development was a series of interdisciplinary conferences in New York in the late 1940s and early 1950s where a small group of scientists gathered together to discuss issues related to the control and stability of systems. Some of them were mathematicians and pioneers in computer construction, others were physiologists trying to understand brain functions, yet others were social scientists interested in small group functioning. The common denominator was an interest in the notion of circular causality, in engineering known as ‘feedback’, and how it could be applied to the social sciences. When one of the participants, Norbert Wiener, published a book on the subject called *Cybernetics* (1948), this became the name for this field of investigation (Heims 1991, Richardson 1991). The decades after the war have been called the ‘cybernetic fold’ (Sedgwick and Frank 1995). The possibilities offered by the cybernetic views on humans, technology and society were widely discussed in the USA, in Europe, as well as in the Soviet Union (Holmqvist 2004). Cybernetics offered both a new way of thinking about the society to come (as an information society based on all-purpose computers) and a new way of looking at humans (as information handling systems with an objective). However, stressing the circulation of information as a foundational part of technology and society also, from the cybernetic point of view, meant stressing new opportunities...
Many participants in the cybernetics conferences in New York – such as Norbert Wiener, Kurt Lewin, and Gregory Bateson – shared a critical stance towards the hierarchical organizations dominating society and therefore a desire to create a science that offered opportunities for social interaction of a more participatory kind. Such a participatory management would become possible if communication in organizations shifted from one way to circular, that is, from hierarchical to being of a feedback type (Holmqvist 2004: 74, Turner 2006: 24, Lewin 1948).

When Lewin became acquainted with the concept of feedback he quickly applied it to his own field of research, which he had termed ‘group dynamics’ as a way to describe groups as wholes with an internal life determining their character (Heims 1991: 216, Richardson 1991: 95-100). Lewin’s earlier research had shown that democratically led groups not only fostered democratically minded participants, but also lead to more efficient group work. In Lewin’s view, this meant that democratic groups, based on interactive communication, simply were more rational (Lewin 1948: 83). To accomplish such group work Lewin set out to construct what he termed an ‘experimental cultural anthropology’ (as opposed to cultural anthropology proper which he saw as ‘still in its “descriptive” stage’, Lewin 1948: 35). This opened up for the practice of sensitivity training (see Chapter Two), developed at the National Training laboratory (NTL) in Bethel, Maine, USA, from the late 1940s and onwards, as well as the different individual and group practices developed at the Esalen Institute and the Western Training Laboratories in California (Back 1972). Associated with the latter, Luft and Ingham worked out the Johari Window model – used in contemporary management courses – which stated the importance of, so to speak, getting everything personal out into the ‘arena’ (see Chapter Two). Later on Kolb, in an attempt to create an explicit model of Lewin’s work, outlined a prototype for group interaction which he called Experiential Learning (Kolb 1984, Kolb and Fry 1975), and in addition also created a learning profile as an aid to help people understand how they learn things most efficiently – both which are also used in management courses today (see Chapter Two).

In the cybernetic view of self-regulation, feedback was not the only vital component. Feedback gives a dynamic quality to the self-regulating unit since it makes it possible for this unit to interact with an environment – be that environment a group, a larger organization, or some other kind of entity. Yet since self-regulation equals goal-directed behavior, any self-regulating system must also be directed towards accomplishing some kind of objective. Wiener viewed this objective in terms of ‘purpose’, and thought about mental processes as black boxes, only taking an interest in input and output (Holmqvist 2004). Others, however, took a direct interest in the structure of these mental processes. With the continuous development of computers, these mental processes were thought of as analogous to computer programs. This implied that dysfunctional thought patterns, or ‘cognitive distortions’, could be replaced by more adequate ones, a procedure popularly phrased as
‘reprogramming’, and is today often undertaken by following a manual, which ideally resembles an algorithm (see Chapter Three). Even when delivering feedback, the following of a manual may be seen as the most efficient way, thus making the ‘intervention’ structurally equivalent to the execution of a computer program (see Chapter Two and above).

Though making use of the Taylorist practice of scripting work efforts, these cases involve personal reflection and thus involve the parameter of choice. They are not simply about unquestioningly following the ‘one best’ script; rather, it is in the end up to each and every individual to understand and choose when to follow or apply a specific manual. In work-enabling self-help psychology, both managerial and psychotherapeutic knowledge thus appears as subsumed under ‘a metaphysics of the playful and the adventurous’ (Dumit 2001: 63), since even the most rigorous scientific models are subjugated to individual preferences.

The cybernetic approach also influenced other views on human functionality. Inspired by the cybernetic ideas, Silvan Tomkins started thinking of emotions as expressions of a partly independent biological sub-system, a view which has offered new possibilities for achieving self-control through psychotherapy, for example in some therapies for stress-related illnesses (see Chapter Three). In a similar way Hans Selye, who worked out the concept of stress, was inspired by Walter Cannon, another participant in the Cybernetics conferences. Initially not well received within the scientific community, Selye’s systemic approach in the 1960s found an ally in the emerging sociobiology, which also tried to make sense of human interaction from an informational and cybernetics point of view (Viner 1999). Gradually the stress concept became mainstream science, and is today defining for a set of illnesses and cures (see Chapter Three).

Out of the cybernetic fold thus unfolded a future where stress and affects were new options for thinking about human functionality, yet where groups and individuals could achieve self-control by using the instruments of feedback and manuals. The cybernetic view thus made way for new types of managing work and therapy that – for example, by making use of psychoeducation in stress and/or affect theory – tended to involve the patients/workers in relevant decision making. Such a distribution of knowledge, skills and responsibility, and to a certain extent even of the position of expertise, was well in line with earlier therapeutic and managerial developments set in motion by humanistic psychology.

Humanistic networks

Already in the early twentieth century psychologists on both sides of the Atlantic criticized Taylorism for its lack of understanding of human functioning, replacing the Taylorist idea of the factory as a gigantic machine with
the idea of the factory as a social system. During the postwar years, some researchers at the Tavistock Institute in Great Britain found inspiration in Lewin’s work, and developed the idea of sociotechnical systems, that is, systems where the workforce was divided into teams which were given the responsibility for how to organize their own work. Within a sociotechnical system, workers not only worked hard but also, allegedly, became motivated to contribute to the constant improvement of the work process (Marrow 1969: 222, Kleiner 1996: 62-65, Rose 1998: 146).

In a similar vein, Douglas McGregor during the post-war years launched his ideas about the counterproductive ways in which managers usually envisioned their staff. McGregor (1960) suggested that the modern business enterprise was simply too complex to be depicted as a bureaucratic pyramid (see Chapter Two). Accordingly, the common managerial assumption that people were unambitious and avoided responsibility had become not only self-fulfilling but also destructive. In contrast to this common assumption about human nature, which he called Theory X, McGregor put forth Theory Y that assumed that people have their own ideas about what to achieve at work, that they will work hard to realize these goals, and that it therefore is the role of the management to understand these personal goals and to integrate them with those of the organization. Theory Y later became an important argument for the restructuring of both work organizations and schooling in Sweden (see Chapters One and Two). It was inspired by Maslow’s theory of human motivation (Gabor 2000).

Maslow was one of the founders of the so-called third force in psychology, also called humanistic psychology, that distanced itself from both psychoanalysis and behaviourism – in that it tried to do away with the ‘animalistic’ aspects of these theories that primarily saw humans as little more than cultured animals – yet also tried to synthesize the two in that it stressed both innate motivations and the influence of the environment (Gabor 2000: 154-155). In Maslow’s theory of human motivation (1943) he recognized the possibility of self-actualization as that which will motivate people when other more basic needs have been satisfied. Following Maslow and McGregor, Herzberg suggested that so-called hygiene factors (such as reasonable payment and working environment) must be satisfied for people to be content at work, yet that it is the possibility of experiencing psychological growth which will motivate people to give their best (Herzberg 1968, Gabor 2000: 176-178). In the 1970s both Herzberg’s and Maslow’s theories were

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164 British psychologist C S Myers suggested that psychology could aid in managing the problems caused by industrialization and founded the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. In the United States, Mary Parker Follet was one of the first influential management philosophers in the humanist vein, yet was later forgotten, and only rehabilitated at the end of the twentieth century. A decisive influence, however, was Elton Mayo who, along with Fritz Roethlisberger, formed what would be known as the Human Relations School. Mayo’s and Roethlisberger’s idea that human motivation was born out of feelings of importance contradicted the basic Taylorist practice of piece work (Rose 1998: 136-140, Gabor 2000).
used as arguments for a new way of organizing schooling in Sweden (see Chapter One).

When Maslow, during the 1960s, started thinking about organizational management and group dynamics, he used the concept of ‘synergy’ – outlined by Ruth Benedict in a series of unpublished lectures in 1941 – to describe a culture where the dichotomy between selfishness and unselfishness no longer exists (Gabor 2000: 182). This concept became important as a way to define efficient teamwork (see Chapter Two).

Maslow also worked out the concept of self-esteem. Although first used in psychology by William James in the late nineteenth century, it was with the emergence of humanistic psychology that self-esteem became a widely used concept in psychology (Ward 2000: 99-100). Carl Rogers applied both the concepts of self-actualization and self-esteem, as well as the concept of empathy, to psychotherapy. In Rogers’ Client-Centred Therapy the client – Rogers avoided the term ‘patient’ – is to come to terms with himself or herself through self-exploration. Put simply, the therapist is merely to support this exploration through an accepting empathic understanding, thus setting in motion the actualization tendency and with it the growth of a positive self-regard (Thorne 1992, Ward 2002:100). Today the concept of self-esteem is standard vocabulary in self-help psychology (see Chapter Three and above).

Rogers’ ideas about the egalitarian and straightforward therapeutic encounter facilitated the expansion of therapeutic thinking into other domains than psychiatry (Smith 1997: 847). Thomas Gordon, one of Rogers’ associates, worked out both the method of so-called I-messages and the method of active listening (Gordon 1970; Doherty and Ryder 1980: 410; Weger, Castle and Emmett 2010: 35), both used in contemporary management courses (see Chapter Two), based on Rogers’ concept of the ‘non-directive therapeutic encounter’. Elias Porter, another one of Rogers’ associates, constructed the Strength Deployment Inventory, an instrument for self-discovery used in management courses today (see Chapter Two), based on his own Relationship Awareness Theory about what motivates people under different circumstances. Hershey and Blanchard felt that Rogers’ model of the non-directive therapeutic encounter was appropriate but inadequate when it came to understanding efficient leadership. They worked out the model of Situation Based Leadership (1977) in order to show how different types of leadership would be most efficient under different circumstances (see Chapter Two).

As did other ‘humanists’, both Maslow and Rogers took up residence at the Esalen Institute in California for a while in the 1960s. Will Schutz also

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165 Benedict had developed this concept in a series of unpublished lectures in 1941 (Gabor 2000: 182).
166 During the postwar years the concept of self-esteem became central in both professional and popular versions of humanistic psychotherapy; both in Rogers’ version of therapy and in the different therapies within the human potential movement. At the same time, the concept also became well established in basic research (Ward 2002: 99-100).
worked there for a number of years, developing his version of sensitivity training in the form of open encounter groups (see Chapter Two). Another intern was psychiatrist Ronald Laing who saw society as inherently alienating. The Esalen was the centre of the so-called human potential movement, which was aligned with humanistic psychology, but also a hub in the 1960s counterculture movement (Krippal 2007).

Incorporating the artistic critique: managing as a craft

For decades, some of the theories and methods from the cybernetic and humanistic psychologies existed as a sort of undergrowth of managerial thought and practice (Kleiner 1996, see also Chapter Two). Based on the idea of the organization as a psycho-social system, they also constituted an opposition to the Taylorist system – with its view of the individual as a ‘human motor’ (Rabinbach 1992) – and as such formed a part of the broader ‘artistic critique’, which saw the capitalist system (and factory work in particular) as alienating and dehumanizing (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). During the 1960s and 1970s, this critique intensified in many industrialized countries, including Sweden, which opened up new possibilities for these psychologies.

As seen here and in the previous chapters, the ideas and practices described here may be traced back in time until the 1940s or even further, yet achieved their first societal significance in Sweden from the late 1960s and onwards. At this time, the Swedish model of peaceful labour relations started to disintegrate. On-going rationalizations increased efficiency: digitalization made possible further mechanization of the labour process, or even the out-and-out replacement of manual labour with robots, at the same time as harsher global competition made increased productivity a necessity. Yet, an increasing number of strikes followed as did increasing rates of employee turnover (Berggren 1990: 46–48). The strike in the Kiruna iron ore mine in 1969, which became intensely debated in Sweden, was not only over wages, but over the issues of dehumanization and alienation in work life as well – as was the wave of strikes that followed it (Berglund and Schedin 2009: 25).

To avoid further unrest the Swedish Employers Association (SAF), as well as many companies, started looking towards the sociotechnical systems approach where workers were organized in self-regulating groups (Berggren

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168 This kind of critique was given voice by unions, politicians, intellectuals, artists, etc. (see also Ward 2002, Kleiner 1996, Kanigel 1997). Since the late nineteenth century factories had in this type of critique been depicted as a threat to the humanness of humanity – perhaps most vividly in popular films like Chaplin’s *Modern Times* and Lang’s *Metropolis*. This was a critique of the view of the individual as a ‘human motor’ (Rabinbach 1992), a suitable cog in the huge machineries of factory plants, a de-personified and exchangeable worker fit for the technologies of piece work and/or conveyor belt.

169 At the strike in the mine in Kiruna, which set off a wave of strikes, a common proclamation was ‘We are humans, not machines’ (Berglund and Schedin 2009: 25).
At the same time the Swedish state started interfering with a number of laws strengthening the workers’ rights (which in the end led to a re-opening of the socialist agenda with legislation on the gradual transmittance of ownership to union-controlled funds that would guarantee worker influence in the companies, Lundh 2010: 266-267).

Already in 1966 an official governmental commission (SOU 1966: 40: 24) had suggested that the term ‘psychotechnics’ (psykoteknik) should be abandoned in favour of the term ‘work psychology’ (arbetspsykologi). The commission did not oppose psychological testing as such, but rather the mechanical view of psychology, and thereby human interaction, which was generally seen as furthering the alienation already prevalent in modern industrial society (Eriksson 1999: 80). The risks of alienation were also discussed in a more general manner by the anti-psychiatry movement (see Chapter Three), for example in the writings of Ronald Laing such as The Politics of Experience, which made an impact on the contemporary discourse about the role of psychiatry in society (Ohlsson 2008: 129). Marx’s earlier writings, where he put forth an integration and variation of work as an ideal since opposed to the alienating labour of the factory, were translated into Swedish in 1965 and became influential among intellectuals in the so-called New Swedish Left, and later in wider circles (Liedman 1995, Ljunggren 2009: 147, 152, 164-165). Drawing on Braverman (1974) – who saw the capitalist system as subordinating ‘the worker ever more decisively to the yoke of the machine’ (1974: 231), thus causing a ‘degradation of work’ – Swedish historians started describing how ‘mechanization, deskilling and the loss of autonomy contributed to the alienation of the worker’ (Hilson 2001: 111). In the same spirit, so called progressive Swedish musicians mocked the Fordist model. Peps Persson, for example, called the worker ‘machine number two’, chanting that ‘you are but one of all the cogs in the machine’.

It was in this societal climate that changes were initiated leading up to the fields of inquiry described in Chapters One to Three in this thesis and whose main characteristics have here been portrayed. That is, a societal climate where the threat of alienation in an industrial system based on a far-reaching division of work was put forth by leftist intellectuals, unions, artists, (anti) psychiatrists, even official governmental commissions, and where employers started experimenting with alternative ways of organizing work based on an integration of tasks and self-regulating groups to come to terms with worker unrest and employee turnover. The problem that the interested parties faced

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170 Israel (1982: 26) makes a division between two perspectives on alienation, one sociological and one psychological. The former is the Marxian version where the worker is alienated because of the relations of production. The latter he views as a bourgeoisie version, since it does not concern itself with the relations of production, but describes alienation as a personal experience, the outcome of the dominance of machinery over human labour. It appears that these two perspectives were often mixed – in the sense that no distinction was made between them – in popular perspectives at the time.

171 A song called ‘Maskin nr. 2’, on the album Spår.
employers, workers, unions, researchers, intellectuals, official governmental commissions – was thus how to accomplish an efficient production process that did not also further ill-being. Or in other words, how to accomplish *rationalization without alienation*. To overcome the critique of alienation and dehumanization in work life – a critique later labelled ‘artistic’ by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) – was thus a challenge that organizational management faced during this time.

An answer to this challenge was presented by the managerial undergrowth of the humanistic and cybernetic psychologies which, with the weakening of the system of scientific management, now gained strength and blossomed. Together these psychologies supplied a vision of what work could be like at best in industrial society that differed radically from the Taylorist ideas. According to Anders Risling, who once created the course UGL, leadership is a craft (*Chef* 2007/6-7: 12). By presenting this craft view as a practical alternative for organizational functioning and management, Risling suggests, UGL has since the late 1970s contributed to levelling out the strictly hierarchical organizations which were dominant at the time. And indeed, even a traditionally hierarchical organization like the Swedish military, for which UGL was once created, today seems to envision the relationship between humans and machines in a way that actually puts people first. In an article by Peter Bjurbo in the newspaper *Aftonbladet*, it is stated that today the military vision is to ‘equip the man, not man the equipment’ (2001-09-17: 29). The enigma of efficiency – that is, how to accomplish rationalization – is from this perspective thus about how to make the personnel give the most by supplying them with the right kind of tools.

From this point of view, efficient work is seen as coming out of a craft-like approach rather than a strictly hierarchical organization – that is, from an integration of tasks rather than a radical division of work (cf. Piore and Sabel 1984). It is this craft ideal, I argue, which is upheld by the toolbox psychology described in this thesis, where managerial skills are equivalent with the ability to use the right tools at the right time in the right way. As described in Chapter Two, the ability to collect and apply useful knowledge and techniques is the practice of the bricoleur (Rose 1998: 86) upholding a ‘situative pragmatism’ (Grabher 2004: 1492, cf. Viktorin 2008: 20), where knowledge is valued according to its usefulness in each specific situation. In contrast to the ‘human motor’ view, humans are, in work-enabling self-help psychology, more like artisans with a toolbox, following their own type of rationality, based on feedback communication and emotion management, where everyone is an actor and self-esteem is what keeps them on the track. This direction of work-enabling self-help psychology is well in line with the general transformation of organizational theory and practice during recent decades where ‘flexible specialization’ (Piore and Sabel 1984), based on an integration of tasks rather than the far reaching division of work of Taylorism/Fordism, has emerged as an ideal for work organizations (see also Castells 1997, Magnusson 2000a).
From bureaucracies to self-governing units

Parallel to the dominant Taylorist/Fordist paradigm of organizing, there was a more craft oriented ideal that persisted as an exception in some regions throughout the twentieth century. In certain industrial districts – such as Solingen in Germany, Bologna in Italy, and Gnosjö in Sweden – businesses with alternative types of industrial organization flourished. These alternative ways included firms organized in networks, with skilled workers and a labour process based on the integration of tasks. These firms thus upheld the ideal of craft work that Taylorism had been constructed to wipe out (Piore and Sabel 1984, Biernacki 2001, Sjöstrand 2008).

With the development of new information and communication technologies, the small-scale company and its more craft oriented work reappeared as ideals more generally. Microelectronics opened the possibility of making the manufacturing process itself more flexible with smaller series and thus more customer-oriented production (Castells 1997). Whereas mechanization and process-oriented manufacturing used to demand large scale production, the present use of information and communication technologies now makes such ways of production an option for middle-sized and small companies as well. The latter may even have an advantage because of computerization, since their smaller size makes them more flexible. The new information and communication technologies have therefore brought about incentives for the restructuring of work organizations (Magnusson 2000: 35).

When advantages of scale diminished or disappeared, formerly alternative organizational ideals became mainstream – yet with an assemblage of new input. For example, due to the success of Japanese companies during the 1970s, their management methods, such as the team-based approach, continuous improvement (kaizen), and quality circles, became popular (Elger and Smith 1994). Another important input came from the humanistic and cybernetic psychologies, advocated by many management gurus, which due to the way they had been developed during the post-war years, offered very hands-on ways for enacting the now-fashionable ideals of teamwork and autonomization and responsibilization of workers (see Chapter Two and above). In line with these ideas and practices, large companies were reorganized from bureaucracies towards networks of self-governing units, which also meant that the strict vertical and horizontal division of work was partially replaced by its opposite, that is, an integration of tasks. Swedish companies such as Volvo, ABB and SAS were pioneers in this type of reorganization during the 1980s.172

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172 Volvo became a pioneer on teamwork experiments, inspired by a socio-technical systems approach (Berggren 1990, Womack et al. 1990: 101, Gorz 1999, Arbetsledaren nr. 11, 1987). ABB was reorganized into a number of ‘small companies within the larger’, that is, a network of smaller units with their own financial responsibility. The CEO leading the restructurings, Percy Barnevik, is said to have found inspiration for the restructurings in his father’s small printing works where, because of the size, all employees made a difference. ‘People must feel
With the demise of the hierarchical organization as an ideal, the question of synchronization – that is, how to organize the different individual work efforts into a collective organizational action – once again became a critical issue. A common answer was that of corporate culture, stressing the importance of establishing common world views among the employees, thus giving them blueprints for how to perceive the world, their work, even themselves (Alvesson 2003). In line with developments within cybernetic psychology, such blueprints were sometimes referred to as ‘mental programs’ or ‘software of the mind’ (Hofstede 1980, 1991). The CEOs of Volvo, SAS, and ABB at the time – that is, Gyllenhammar, Carlzon, and Barnevik – all appeared to be very conscious of the growing importance of creating and upholding a corporate culture and the way the mass media functioned as a facilitator of such a culture. As such they were all examples of one of the apparent paradoxes of modern management: that the restructuring of a hierarchical organization into networks of self-governing units seemed to demand a strong leader (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997: 227).

For those who found it problematic to re-assemble the managerial apparatus, the representatives of the ‘management theory industry’ (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997), that is, consultants and management theorists, offered their help. This help not only consisted of lecturing on the importance of creating the right kind of organizational culture (see e.g. Peters and Waterman 1984, Carlzon 1985, Beckérus 1988, see also Alvesson 2003), or of actual interventions in companies, but also of the distribution of practical knowledge through management courses, self-help books, even articles in the mass media, all of which contributed to the dissemination of psychological know-how useful in the construction of self-governing individuals and groups – a range of which has been described in this thesis (see Chapter Two).

Already in the early 1970s, a reorganization of the public sector had been initiated – first in schooling and later on in health care. These early reforms were largely a question of inviting a more humanistic perspective into organizational management. Yet the pace was at first slow and hesitating. The pace accelerated during the 1980s, and even more so during the 1990s. Although launched for different purposes (see Chapter One and Three), these later reforms, just as in the private sector, all in all leaned more towards self-regulation – of organizations, of organizational units, and of individuals – that their work is important’, Barnevik stated (Haag and Pettersson 1998:101, Micklethwait and Wooldridge 1997: 125, 225).

173 Carlzon allegedly managed the turn-around of SAS by promoting the view that an airline was not a number of planes carrying a cargo of passengers, but a number of employees giving the best possible service to the customers (Carlzon 1985). Barnevik and Carlzon were even portrayed as something of managerial culture heroes by Tom Peters (1987, 1992), the leading management ‘guru’ of the times. Barnevik also figured extensively in everything from Swedish newspapers to Harvard Business Review (Haag and Pettersson 1998). In a similar manner, Volvo’s teamwork experiments were covered at length in the Swedish media, and not least in union journals such as Arbetsledaren and Metallarbetaren.
meaning that the cybernetic and humanistic psychologies could be (and often were) applied, as seen in the examples described in this thesis.

As seen here then, as well as in this thesis more generally, the theories, methods and techniques from the cybernetic and humanistic psychologies were, in the 2000s, assembled and put to use in teambuilding and leadership courses, in the psychotherapeutic rehabilitation of workers, and in the schooling of children – and much of this was both reflected and promoted in the mass media. Making use of this psychological know-how has thus been one way of enabling more self-regulation in organizations. In sum, the widely fathomed management ideals of the third industrial revolution – that is, a self-regulating ‘unit’ with well-developed tools for communicating and interacting and thus networking – are also those of work-enabling self-help psychology, the latter offering a way of enacting these ideals. From the autonomous individual, to teams, to the ‘learning organization’ (Senge 2006), the same ideal is continually repeated.

Manuals and feedback

Concepts such as manualization (that is, the use of scripts, protocols, algorithms) and feedback do not necessarily refer to humans communicating. Despite attempts to portray teamwork as efficient and despite the restructuring of many work organizations into networks of self-governing units, digitalization has also offered new possibilities for a more Taylorist-like organization of work. Microelectronics has in some instances actually increased the possibilities of a horizontal division of work, thus resulting in what has been called a ‘digital Taylorism’ (Brown et al. 2011). For example, some services that were previously carried out as an integrated job have the last decades been divided into several parts carried out by different persons. In Sweden this goes for butchers, home care personnel, mail carriers, some retail personnel, and others. The employees thus find their jobs less qualified and more repetitive and where the execution may be digitally monitored and managed (Gellerstedt 2011). Another example is call centers, where employees phoning prospective customers in many cases follow scripted dialogues displayed on a computer screen, thus making the job a form of Taylorism (Sprigg and Jackson 2006: 198, Mirchandani 2012: 86). Brown et al. (2011) even argue that digital Taylorism has in the last decade started conquering so-called knowledge work. Searching for ways to get the valuable commodity of knowledge cheaper, companies are now trying to standardize as much knowledge work as possible and buy it from the cheapest sellers – often located in Eastern Europe, India, and China.174

174 The flexibility needed in complex service work is here not achieved by equipping the personnel in general, but by the so-called exception principle, which is the ‘process of weeding out difficult cases and channeling them to experts for handling’ (Brown et al. 2011: 73). A British firm, for example, in the mid-2000s abandoned its earlier attempts ‘to encourage staff
The tendency towards controlling human interaction through electronic feedback has also stretched out into society in general. An ever-increasing number of authorities, institutions and organizations monitor a diversity of social interaction electronically. ‘Whether travelling, eating, shopping, working, walking in the streets or working out at the gym, some checks occur, some record is made or some image is captured’ (Lyon 2007: 25). The increasing use of microelectronics in production and consumption, as well as in social life in general, has eased this slip into the ‘surveillance society’ (2007: 7).

As seen here then, new forms for achieving control in no absolute way determine how this control is actually enacted. At work it can be achieved, for example, through digital Taylorism or through a more craft-like approach. The new communication and control technologies have, in other words, offered a set of managerial possibilities which can be assembled in different ways. Generally speaking, work-enabling self-help psychology can be seen as one such assemblage where some of these possibilities offered by the new communication and control technologies have been merged with certain techniques and ideas from humanistic psychology. The capitalist, or at least the managerial, system has here incorporated, and thus adapted itself to, the so-called artistic critique which depicted it as a system leading to alienation in work life since repressing authentic human qualities. By making use of theories, methods and techniques from the cybernetic and humanistic psychologies which stress autonomization and responsibilization, work-enabling self-help psychology is an expression of this new managerial system, this ‘new spirit of capitalism’.

Artisans of the soul?
The theme of alienation has a long tradition in Western thinking. Numerous philosophers and social scientists – from Adam Smith to Karl Marx, to Max Weber, Hannah Arendt, Harry Braverman, André Gorz, even Pope John Paul II, and others – have lamented the demeaning effects of modern-day work, all concluding that it leads to some kind of estrangement or alienation.\(^{175}\) The simplification of tasks inherent in the modern division of labour and the increased use of machines which have accompanied it is believed to change the very meanings of work. ‘There is a big difference between a tool, controlled by human hands, and a machine to which humans must adapt. Once the machine appears, humans cease to be the subject of their own work’, as Applebaum (1992: xi) puts it. It is this problem of the subjugation of humans to an alienating machine logic that the psychological toolbox addresses. As

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\(^{175}\) See Applebaum (1992) for a comprehensive overview of these thinkers and their ideas about work.
an expression of the ‘new spirit of capitalism’ (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), work-enabling self-help psychology has come together as a response to the critique of dehumanization and estrangement in work life. This toolbox psychology has been a part of the new wave of managerial technologies which has absorbed the critique and thus tried to accomplish a rationalization without alienation. The latter has been achieved by making use of the new forms of communication and control constitutional to the third industrial revolution – that is, manualization and feedback – and thus in a way that overcomes the problematic opposition between humans and machines.

As an enactment of the new technology through discursive actions, work-enabling self-help psychology offers a symbolic reflection of this third industrial revolution by supplying a vision of what it means to be human that fits the new techno-economic paradigm well: a vision of humans as a type of actors who have everything to gain from making full use of different communication technologies, who actually become human by communicating, but who cannot really communicate efficiently, that is, really become themselves, without the proper types of technologies. The psychological toolbox is thus not only a way of enhancing the functionality of humans at work – and in work-associated activities – it also metaphorically speaks of the relationship between humans and their technology. In contrast to the Taylorist system, where mechanization meant the subjugation of humans to the machinery (a fact acknowledged by both supporters and opponents) there is in work-enabling self-help psychology no principal view of accelerating technological developments as inherently dehumanizing. By thinking in terms of the cybernetic concept of feedback, both humans and machines are reconceptualized as systems of communication and control. ‘Modern equipment’ (Rabinow 2003) – at least in the sense of contemporary ‘human technologies’ (Rose 1998) – is, in work-enabling self-help psychology, seen as a possible, if not even necessary, means when reaching towards self-realization.

Levi-Strauss suggested that the function of myths is to ‘overcome a contradiction’ (1986: 229), to reconcile that which seems irreconcilable. As it happens, to reconcile that which seems (or at least has been seen as) irreconcilable is also an accurate description of what work-enabling self-help psychology accomplishes when it reproduces a dream of jobs and employment as craft work, of living your life as a sort of artisan of your own soul rather than as a cog in a machine at the same time as living a life of an utmost modernity, a life permeated by the latest techno-science of a new era. In work-enabling self-help psychology, the skilled use of communication technologies is a craft. Here humans once again become the subjects of their own labour, even in a work-life overshadowed by machines.
Conclusion: Exploitation as Liberation

A specific type of psychological know-how – a work-enabling self-help psychology – is today offered to Swedes in a variety of settings throughout life. For example, as a child in school in Sweden today you may take part in a subject where you are supposed to learn psychological techniques for how to manage yourself and interact with others – in order to make schooling more efficient. When you start working, or perhaps continue your education at a university, you may end up in a leadership or teambuilding course where you learn psychological techniques for how to manage yourself and interact with others – in order to make your work more efficient. If you nevertheless work too hard or in the wrong way or in some other way contract a stress-related illness you may end up in a form of therapy where you learn psychological techniques for how to manage yourself and interact with others – in order make you more fit for work. And all the time, when you are on your way to work or from work, or when you get home, or just need a rest, and indulge in the mass media, you may – by chance or choice – consume some products where you learn a few psychological techniques for how to manage yourself and interact with others.

The aim in this thesis has been to depict this work-enabling self-help psychology – to dissect it and describe its ‘anatomy’, to outline its reach, and to show how it has been assembled in contemporary Sweden. The latter process has here been called the therapeutization of work, since it constitutes an intertwinement of management ideology and practice with therapeutic theories and methods. I have tried to show how this entwinement has been made possible by, and to a large degree consists of, a dissemination of psychological tools in work life and psychotherapy, as well as in society more generally. Through different encounters with these psychoeducative efforts the average ‘worker-citizen’ gets the possibility to assemble his or her own set of psychological tools fit for the kind of problems that he or she may encounter. What is common to the different educative efforts described in this thesis is that they are, as the name suggests, work-enabling. All methods are aimed at facilitating work, from the rehabilitation of patients back to work in a therapy to the enabling of more efficient work in a leadership course – in the latter case where the participants learn to take responsibility not only for their own productivity but for that of their co-workers as well. Common is also the view that work and well-being are seen as each other’s underpinnings: well-being demands work and work is seen as truly efficient only if it facili-
tates well-being. The latter also means that work here becomes indispensible, in need of no further motivation. The therapeutization of work thus involves the rise of a psychological work ethic in present day Sweden. An efficient work organization is here seen as accomplished through the shaping of committed employees. Toolbox psychology thus represents a specific type of rationalization effort, constituted by therapeutic means.

Yet it is hardly self-evident that work promotes well-being, or for that matter other related values such as personal development and health. On the contrary, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries workers, unions, politicians, even managers and management consultants, often stressed the hardships of work (Kanigel 1997, Rabinbach 1992) – as did many social theorists, viewing work as an arena for exploitation and alienation (see e.g. Marx and Engels 2002 [1848], Braverman 1974, cf. Fleming 2009: 2). So, I asked in the Introduction to this book, what has happened? How did work become something with therapeutic connotations? In line with the argument made by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), it has here been shown how this work-enabling self-help psychology, or toolbox psychology, emerged out of the attempts to reconstruct the managerial system under influence of the critique of capitalism that gained force during the post-war years. It has also been shown how the humanistic and (what is here called) cybernetic psychologies contributed the essential content to what became this self-help psychology.

I will now, in this Conclusion, first summarize these findings and then try to outline what the distribution of a toolbox psychology means on a wider societal level. In other words, I will outline the possibilities and problems that are opened up by the dissemination of psychological tools in society. In so doing it will also, eventually, be possible to pin down the thought structure – the collective consciousness – at the heart of this intertwinement of the ‘therapeutic’ and ‘managerial’.

The psychological toolbox as rationalization device

In this thesis I have mapped an array of psychological theories, methods and techniques that are used to enable the construction of, and to enhance functionality in, autonomous individuals, groups and teams at work in Sweden. In order to do this I have undertaken the kind of intermittent (see e.g. Hannerz 2004, Wulff 2009, Garsten 2008, Ullberg 2013) and ‘polymorphous’ (Gusterson 1998, see also Hardtman 2003, Hannerz 2004) fieldwork which has become common today. Through this I have collected a variety of empirical material. The material has then been arranged in thematically ordered chapters, each giving account for attempts at disseminating psychological know-how in a specific societal institution.

In Chapter One I described the program in Emotional Intelligence, or EQ, made use of in a number of schools in Sweden. Emotional Intelligence is a
practical subject designed to make the pupils reflect – on their own emotions, thoughts, actions, ways of communicating and interacting, as well as on the ways other people may manage all this. Through the EQ-program – if efficiently implemented – the future workers and citizens of society should become ready and able to think and act in accordance with psychologically created realities. Emotional Intelligence is believed by its proponents to integrate the whole person into a more productive existence. Yet the subject of EQ is not only directed at individuals and individual productivity, but also at creating a more productive working and learning climate as a whole. It offers a common language and a set of shared values for all those who spend their work day at the school – and thereby a more productive school environment.

Chapter Two illustrated how psychological knowledge is today disseminated into work organizations through employees taking part in management courses, often led or administrated by management consultants. Such courses aim not only at bookish learning, but at giving individuals a practical knowledge of how to manage human interaction (including the one you have with your self) through the use of psychological tools. Participants may, for example, get the opportunity to acquire tools for communication through the use of which they can reach out and interact with others in efficient ways, meaning that they have an ability to form teams, which ideally reach a state of synergy. By acquiring a set of psychological tools employees can thus, supposedly, enhance their capacity for work. The benefits of such knowledge and skills are also conveyed to the general public through how to-books, and in manuals and counselling columns in the daily papers and union journals. The view of managing conveyed in courses, and related mass media representations, is that of a way of interacting, an activity that to different extents involves more or less everyone in the organization. Accordingly, psychological know-how is now a possibility, perhaps even a duty, for an increasing number of employees.

In Chapter Three I gave an account of how some psychotherapeutic treatments in Sweden are drawn towards the slot of work-enabling self-help psychology. In treatments for stress-related illnesses the patients acquire psychological knowledge and skills through psychoeducation and are expected to work out personal coping strategies together with a therapist. They are thus not only given tools to cope with their situation, but are encouraged to adapt these tools to their own personal situation, and are thereby also supposed to take responsibility for it. The treatment is not something that the therapists do to the patients, but a work process that the patients are heavily involved in, a sort of guided self-help. When returning to their job, patients should ideally have learnt how to work in a way that precludes the probability of having a relapse. This move towards psychoeducation as a fundamental part of the treatment appears to be common in psychotherapy more generally in Sweden today. The move is also both reflected and promoted in the Swedish mass media where today a diversity of psychoeducative efforts can
be found, some of which are treatments in themselves. That psychotherapeutic techniques may enhance the functionality of individuals at work has also led to psychotherapists sometimes being employed by work organizations as management consultants working with organizational development, and in this work basing their authority on the same knowledge and skills that has allowed them to treat patients.

In Chapter Four I changed perspective and pointed to the commonalities between the tools applied in the different subfields. These subfields, or arenas, all have their own specific institutional history, social dynamic, forms of authority, etc. Yet the psychological know-how deployed in these different contexts today share some fundamental similarities. In Chapter Four I showed how certain themes recurred – such as emotions, the self, choice, communication, groups – and how these themes encompassed a few foundational concepts and certain adherent practices through which the knowledge based on these concepts can be enacted. The attempts to form children into productive citizens in schools, the strivings for synergy in management educations, and the coping strategies worked out in psychotherapeutic rehabilitations all make use of similar psychological know-how. By offering this know-how to pupils, employees, patients and clients, these interventions enable more efficient interaction and thereby work. In a work life where the ability for efficient social interaction is of increasing importance, the distribution of (this ensemble of) psychological tools thus constitutes a rationalization device.

A part of the third industrial revolution in Sweden

In this thesis I have also described how the different psychological tools have been created and gradually assembled into a work-enabling self-help psychology. I have traced the origins of these tools, as well as how they have been put together into the different courses, educations and therapies described here. I have also shown how different self-help tools started appearing in a more structured way in the mass media, mainly from the late 1990s and onwards. To accomplish all this I have made rather extensive use of first- and secondhand historical material, which is here used to delimit the field. Just as the field has gradually been constructed out of the different connections mapped during fieldwork, so have its extensions in time been mapped by archive studies and the use of secondhand historical sources. By thus establishing how the different variables of the present stretch out in time, different societal processes are made to appear. Though diverse in character, what these different processes have in common is that they were all fuelled by ambitions to adjust some imagined drawbacks related to a bureaucratic and hierarchical way of organizing work and learning.

As described in Chapter Four, the bureaucratic organization increasingly appeared as problematic during the post-war decades for a number of rea-
sons. In business and industry, the growing complexity of organizations, not least due to technological developments, made the bureaucratic organization appear inefficient. Synchronizing work efforts through a hierarchical control and command system became increasingly difficult. Turnover was high in the industry, and it was hard to recruit personnel. There was a growing critique, not least among unions and workers, against the thoroughgoing division of work, the increasing automation and the hectic pace of work during the post-war years. As described mainly in Chapter Four, much of this critique was given voice in a rhetoric where it was stated that humans are not machines and therefore should not be treated as such. That is, the critique opposed the dehumanization and alienation seen as prevalent in work life. Increasingly, autonomization was seen as the legitimate way of exercising authority. Confronting these problems, employers started experimenting with new ways of organizing work based on autonomous individuals and work groups. Together with the new information and communication technologies, these new organizational ideals are sometimes seen as making up a third industrial revolution.

The kind of management courses described in Chapter Two are basically the outcome of this development. During the post-war years the humanistic and cybernetic psychologies had existed as sort of managerial undergrowth, yet which hardly made any impact on Swedish organizational life until the late 1960s, and then only in a limited way in the form of sensitivity training, which was largely a privilege for the few. When the demand for autonomizing tools increased from the 1980s and onwards in business and industry, these psychologies offered an assortment of such tools that could easily be assembled and applied. By making use of these tools employers and employees at the same time translated their aspirations into a humanistic language thus enabling a ‘management by integration and self-control’ (McGregor 1960, Chapter 5).

During the post-war years there was as increasing demand for autonomizing techniques and methods not only in private organizations, but in the administration of the public sector in Sweden as well. In schooling, problems with disciplinary and related organizational issues had already made authorities initiate changes in this direction as early as the 1960s. In Chapter One it was shown how the implementation of Emotional Intelligence in Swedish schools was intimately linked to the development of a new way of organizing schooling, in itself part of a wave of public management reform. Much of what Emotional Intelligence is about had been discussed and already suggested in four Swedish Governmental Official Reports published in the early 1970s. Yet it was not until the school system was reorganized in line with the principles of the New Public Management that the subject of EQ materialized. It was only then that the ideals of autonomy and self-governing that are fundamental in the EQ discourse also became more generally practiced ideals in the organization of schooling, which opened up for a few enthusiasts to start implementing the subject.
And as seen in Chapter Three, it was the reorganization of the public health care system in Sweden from the 1980s and onwards, through which a greater responsibility for health concerns was placed onto the individual, that opened up a space for self-help psychology in therapeutics. Techniques for involving the patients/clients in the actual therapy had been a psychotherapeutic theme for decades. With the demand for cost-effective therapeutic services due to public management reform these techniques were now appropriated and made use of in new therapies that tried to make patients co-workers in the therapeutic process – such as the treatments developed as a response to the so-called burnout epidemic.

With large chunks of the population involved in the activity of ‘working out personhood’ (Jiménez 2003), new possibilities opened up in the 1990s for the mass media. By ‘speaking truth to power’ (Larsen 2007: 19) – that is, through the straightforward reporting, as well as the more penetrating critical reflection – the mass media have been a part of the reflexivity of modernity (Larssen 2010: 24, Thompson 1999, Giddens 1991). With the publication of psychological tools in the mass media, this particular reflexivity has now changed from simply telling the truth to also enacting it, from producing ‘know-what’ to producing ‘know-how’. In manuals, counselling columns, how to-books, and TV therapy the emphasis is certainly on openness, but of a specific kind: not of revealing the hidden truth (as in investigative reporting, or for that matter Freudian psychoanalysis) but a late modern psychotherapeutic type of openness, as in group dynamic exercises, with more interactive communication and no barriers between the private and the public. This type of mass media representations therefore not only work in tandem with the humanistic perspective on work, but actually enact it. Through this redistribution of managerial ideas and techniques, even the mass media today take a more direct part in the organization of society.

All in all, the interventions and mediations described in this thesis are all attempts at creating efficient interaction and reflection, through which efficient work and welfare services are supposed to become possible. These interventions and mediations thus simply appear as attempts at, on the micro level, creating a more efficient welfare society. Yet with the increasing dissemination of psychological tools this society is itself transformed. As it appears in this thesis, the ‘pastoral power’ (Foucault 2003) of the welfare state – based on individualizing technologies – and contemporary managerial technologies of business and industry – also based on individualizing technologies – have in Sweden today found a common ground in the work-enabling self-help psychology. This common ground has also become a public issue though the different mass media that have participated in the distri-

176 In Sweden, the mass media is traditionally known as the ‘third governmental power’ (tre-
dje statsmakten). This is the name given to the mass media when seen as an authority representing the people and believed to uphold the task of critically scrutinizing the other two of government and parliament (Larsson 1993: 351-353).
bution of this psychological know-how. In contemporary Sweden, the ‘private’ psyche has become a public concern and psychological self-help a collective enterprise. Psychoeducation here takes on some characteristics of *folkbildning*, the kind of public education that the working class indulged in during the twentieth century to become, or at least depict itself as, competent and responsible in order to take part in the governing of public affairs (Ambjörnsson 1988). To be able to act in accordance with psychological know-how today becomes, at least in some instances, a symbolic power display, a late modern equivalent of ‘refined manners’ (cf. Elias 1978) – and no less so given the price of management courses. If the citizens of liberal democratic states are ‘obliged to be free’ (Rose 1998: 100), a part of this obliged freedom today consists in the freedom of ‘working out personhood’ (Jiménez 2003). Individuals can thus ‘achieve fulfilment by means of work rather than in spite of it’ (Bell and Taylor 2003: 332). As described in Chapter Four, the psychological tools applied for this purpose can arguably be seen as a part of the third industrial revolution since making use of manualization and feedback and thus are not only compatible with, but actually make up a set of, the new types of communication and control technologies.

**From construction to commitment**

The empirical material presented in this thesis largely consists of different forms of self-help psychology, manifested in social practice and media discourse. The material springs out of a multifaceted, or ‘polymorphous’ (Gusterson 1997), fieldwork venture into a number of psychoeducative efforts. As described in Chapters One, Two and Four (and below), the ideals promoted in these efforts resonate well with some social scientific investigations into everyday organizational life, but less well with others. Yet it has not been my intention to investigate to what extent these ideals actually materialize in everyday work life; that is, whether employees actually are autonomous, or employers flexible, or work life fulfilling. This would appear to occasionally be the case and occasionally not. The educative efforts investigated here are to be seen as normative and ideological. As such they have, however, a lot to say about contemporary changes in organizational life in Sweden. Altogether, the material points towards the establishment of a set of ideas about how to manage persons and organizations which is intimately intertwined with the assembling of a work-enabling self-help psychology. The dissemination of psychological tools partially constitutes, and thereby also signifies, some contemporary changes in Swedish welfare society. I maintain that much of Swedish society is now permeated by a sort of humanistic welfare management. Since it is ideological, this way of managing is also demanding, and not everyone is fit (it appears) to follow and uphold its values. Crucial in this humanistic management is the altered role of the expertise, based on a shifting view of what constitutes legitimate authority.
Rationality, privacy, autonomy

Rose suggests that the role of psychology in ‘the liberal, democratic, and capitalist societies of what we used to call the West’ (1998: 81) is perhaps best understood ‘when we approach it not as a matter of appliance of science, not as a matter of the evolution of ideas, not even as a matter of the rise of a profession, but in terms of expertise’ (1998: 86). From such a perspective, ‘one might see the spread of psy as answering to something of a ‘crisis’ – not a crisis of identity or subjectivity brought about by the stage of the process of modernity, but a crisis of authority’ (1998: 92). Psychology presents a solution to this crisis since it offers a way of justifying the exercise of authority in a democratic society, which is essential for ‘those who claim authority over conduct – social workers, teachers, managers, prison officers and so forth’ (ibid.).

With the infusion of psy into the training and credentializing of professionals of conduct, the possibility emerges that the decisions that are made by such authorities can be conducted in a way that appears to be in the best interests of those whose lives they will affect … This ethical-therapeutic transformation … explains the seductive promise held out by psychology to those who will exercise authority. … It gives a new kind of human and moral worth and legitimacy not merely to the gross and evident wielding of power over others, but also to the mundane activities of daily decision making in the factory or in the family. … For the allure of psychology is that the ethical pathway for authority is also an ethical pathway for the self (Rose 1998: 93).

Rose further suggests that this ethical-therapeutic transformation has come about in and through ‘three principal forms of connection between psychological expertise and liberal democratic forms of government: rationality, privacy and autonomy’ (1998: 99). In the first case authority becomes legitimate by laying claims to a rational basis. This has often implied a depersonalization of decision making, where the construction of formal regulations and the use of different types of calculations are the means whereby authority is exercised. The notion of privacy points to that not only public spaces and institutions are seen as the cornerstones of liberal democratic societies, but so are the private ones, ‘notably the market, the organization, and the family’ (1998: 99-100). The expertise of psychology opens up such private spaces to governmental authorities, as well as offers possibilities to those in charge of these spaces. The connection through the ideal of autonomy between psychological expertise and liberal democratic forms of government rests on the assumption that the ‘modern liberal self is “obliged to be free”, to construe all aspects of life as the outcome of choices made among a number of oppositions’ (1998: 100). To the extent that psychological techniques enact this vision of autonomous selfhood, and that psychological expertise thus enable their clients by setting up a number of possible choices, they walk in tandem with liberal democratic forms of government.
Yet, although Rose does not touch upon the subject, it is fairly obvious that these different ‘forms of connection between psychological expertise and liberal democratic forms of government’ (1998: 99, see above) are not homogeneous in character, but fall into two different types. ‘Privacy’ describes a field where psychological expertise may justify the exercise of authority. ‘Rationality’ and ‘autonomy’, on the other hand, describes different ways of justifying such authority. The connection through ‘privacy’ between the liberal democratic way of governing and psychological expertise arguably has been, as well as remains, an important part of Swedish welfare society. From the first psychological institutes, such as *Psykotekniska institutet* and the Saint Luke and Erika Foundations, and up to this very day with management courses such as UGL, school subjects such as EQ, and present day therapeutic programs – these are all examples of how psychological expertise has opened up the ‘personal’ and ‘private’ to different authorities. And this is also arguably the case with psychological representations in the mass media which not only have the private domain as their primary target but also penetrate it effectively through their colloquial character.

As opposed to the continuing importance of ‘privacy’, the connections through ‘rationality’ and ‘autonomy’ generally speaking make up the end points of a clearly discernible development during the century. The type of work-enabling self-help psychology described in this book has emerged through a gradual change in the deployment of psychological expertise in Sweden, from efforts where authority is legitimized by ‘rationality’ towards efforts legitimized by the achievement of ‘autonomy’. Whereas psychological expertise in Sweden during the middle of the twentieth century was mainly employed to construct methods and techniques that could facilitate the adjustment of workers into the system of ‘scientific management’, such expertise was towards the end of the century employed to assist workers, patients, school children, and through the mass media even the general public, in realizing themselves as, or as parts of, autonomous entities driven by their own commitment. This movement from ‘rationality’ to ‘autonomy’ has turned psychology into a popular science, in all senses of the term, and has played a key role in the development of a work-enabling self-help psychology in Sweden.

**Welfare management**

The shift from rationality to autonomy as a legitimate way of exercising authority has, as I showed in Chapters Two and Four, a corollary in a shift from construction to commitment as ideal way of coordinating work organizations. That is, instead of applying a minute vertical and horizontal division of work, coordination of productive activities are now ideally accomplished through the integration of employees’ aspirations with organizational objectives. Or in McGregor’s words, the ideal of a ‘management by direction and control’ has been replaced by the ideal of a ‘management by integration and
self-control’ (see for example McGregor 1960, Chapter 5). However, as seen in Chapter Four, the spirit of ‘scientific management’ is not quite dead, but has merely found new forms, for instance in the so-called digital Taylorism applied in many service occupations where employees are digitally monitored and guided (Brown et al 2011). The concept of ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer 1998), suggesting that rational calculations are the foundation for ever more activities in society, points in a similar direction. What to make of this apparent confusion of discipline and commitment in contemporary management practice?

As described in Chapters Two and Four, ideas and techniques from the cybernetic and humanistic psychologies existed as a sort of managerial undergrowth in Sweden during the post-war years. These ideas and techniques were, in Sweden and elsewhere, often seen as a complement that made up for the disadvantages of Taylorism/Fordism, in much the same way as psychotechnics and ergonomics did (Braverman 1974, McGregor 1960: 42-46, Rabinbach 1992, De Geer 1978). Humanistic management at the time thus operated on a tactical level. However, already in 1960 McGregor suggested that the humanistic ideals could be uplifted to the level of strategy – thus simply becoming ‘a way of managing people’ (1960: 75). The latter is largely what has happened today with the creation of a new spirit of capitalism. Managerial efforts thus appear to have changed focus on a strategic level from construction to commitment as ideal way of coordinating work organizations. So whereas humanistic techniques and ideas were seen as a complementary part of the framework of ‘scientific management’ during much of the twentieth century, the situation is now rather the reverse. Taylorist techniques and ideas are present, but not as overarching ideals. Selves, groups, work organizations are now (ideally) managed in much the same way – by channelling commitment in a productive direction.\(^{177}\)

As seen in this thesis, these managerial ideals have not only made an imprint on business and industry, but on the public sector as well. In other words, if the governmental body in Sweden during the post-war years could be described as a ‘corporative state’ (Rothstein 1992) it is today rather pursuing a ‘policy of activation’ (Dahlstedt 2009). The practical enactment of ‘welfare’ has thus been pushed from the state towards society. As seen in

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\(^{177}\) It is interesting to notice that, for example, the McDonald’s corporation does not describe itself in Taylorist terms, nor does it recruit personnel with the allure of high wages in the way both Taylor and Ford suggested, but rather puts forth a humanistic perspective in its self-presentation, using terms such as the possibilities of ‘personal development’ and ‘teamwork’, as well as the possibilities and necessity of ‘coaching’, at the company. If Taylorist techniques are part of the functioning of McDonald’s, they are not part of the company’s self-image. The way the company presents itself on its Swedish homepage is on the contrary rather similar to how the Swedish companies that spearheaded (and still uphold) the turn towards commitment and motivation in management – such as SAS and Volvo – present themselves (see e.g. http://www.volvogroup.com/group/global/en-gb/career/life%20at%20volvo%20group/ourculture/pages/ourculture.aspx, http://www.sasgroup.net/SASGroup/default.asp.
Chapter One, there have been, at least since the 1970s, outspoken attempts in 
education toward so-called organizational development, to take schools 
away from any resemblance to a total institution towards a humanistic model 
of management based on the idea of self-regulation. The subject of EQ is a 
part of that movement, as are the circumstances which made the subject pos-
sible. As seen in Chapter Three, this change becomes evident in psychother-
apy in the mantra to ‘go from victim to actor’ which expresses the general 
ethos in the recently created therapies for stress-related illnesses. And by 
being schooled and rehabilitated in these ways, those who are not already fit 
to become a part of work organizations – public and private – functioning in 
line with just these principles, will ideally be so thereafter.

In other words, as an official governmental commission stated already in 
1990, ‘the present historical movement of the societal organization can be 
described as a change from the hierarchy of bureaucracy to a decentralized, 
self-governing, and open organizational type’ (SOU 1990: 44: 229). In Swe-
den, the emphasis on ‘rationality’ as a justification of authority during the 
better part of the twentieth century – with an adherent emphasis on calcul-
a- 

tion and construction – made the term ‘social engineering’ common as a 
description for the advancement of this type of welfare state. Beyond the 
plans and methods for efficient production and public administration, the 
social engineers tried out ways to rationally manage different facets of peo-
ple’s private lives (Hirdman 1993, Björck 2008). Yet, with the now preva-

cent view that the institutions rather than the citizens are problematic (SOU 
1990: 44: 235), this means that the ‘period in Swedish history characterized 
by … social engineering and standard solutions based on centralized plan-
ing is over’ (SOU 1990: 44: 407).

Placing the empirical material collected through fieldwork into a wider 
societal context, it appears that toolbox psychology is merely a part of, a way 
of upholding and enacting, certain general contemporary management ideals 
such as autonomy, responsibility, efficiency, and fulfilment. That these 
common ideals are promoted in the management of a diversity of affairs 
means that much of contemporary Swedish society is permeated by a type of 

welfare management ideology, where more or less everyone is seen as taking 
part in that management, based on an idea to make use of peoples commit-
tment to do good and live well. Altogether then, the change in management

178 For example, after WW II the ‘Home Research Institute’ (Hemmets forskningsinstitut, 
HFI) was set up, where research was conducted on how many utensils there were and ought to 
be in a normal kitchen, how much time housewives should spend on cleaning every week, 
rational ways of furnishing, etc. This research had few practical consequences (Hirdman 
1993: 206). Instead, society was constructed through housing. New functional apartments, day 
care centres, leisure-time centres, hospitals and elderly care centres, together gradually put a 
new society into being, not least by opening up a possibility for many women to alter 
their work status from housewives to wage labourers (Hirdman 1993, Gustafsson 1994, 
Sörensdotter 2008: 69-73) – the latter thereby also being a way of institutionalizing the Swe-
dish work-for-all strategy known as Arbetslinjen (see below).
179 All translations from Swedish to English are my own, unless otherwise stated.
paradigm – in the sense of a move from rationality towards autonomy as the way of justifying authority – appears as a general movement that integrates much of the production apparatus, including its ‘broader systems of social and political organisation’ (Tonkiss 2006: 95), such as health care and schooling, into its framework. Generally speaking then, in Swedish welfare society the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Rose 1998: 12) has since the 1980s moved away from the ‘rational’ ideals of scientific management and social engineering towards that of an autonomizing humanistic welfare management.

The possibilities and problems of freedom
Partly as a response to the critique given voice from the 1960s and onwards of the bureaucratic work organization as alienating and dehumanizing, management systems have shifted shape. Today, managerial technologies are generally constructed so as to govern through, and not against, the ‘powers of freedom’ (Rose 1999b). ‘The new spirit of capitalism’ upholds ‘human’ values such as autonomy, responsibility and fulfilment. Through this change in organizational perspective, employees are now, allegedly, liberated from the dehumanizing constraints of the bureaucratic machinery. The threat of alienation has been replaced by the allures of health, well-being and personal development. Yet ‘human’ values such as autonomy are not unproblematic. It takes a certain type of mindset to be able to exist in accordance with these values – and not least when applied in relation to work.

A management system favours a certain type of person. If you are not that type of person you simple have to re-learn – if you are to fit in. The lack of boundaries, both traditional and bureaucratic, in a management system based on commitment means that the delimitations at work are not only, or even mainly, to be set by ‘the system’, but by those working (Börnfelt 2009: 132, cf. Wahlström 2009: 194-195). At the same time, with a view of work as achievement, work itself is largely about overcoming limitations, of pushing the boundaries further ahead. Individuals need to create a mindset that is free from any limitations that can obstruct or reduce the work effort. Workers therefore need to extend their ‘safety zone’ (see Chapter Two); they must, in short, be able to challenge their own fears. As it happens, in recent years many people actually seem to have both discovered their own fears and received aid to overcome them. In the early 2000s, the Swedish population had learnt, some persons in the flesh, about a new condition characterized by spiritual and bodily exhaustion. Though less of a public issue, an increasing amount of people suffering from anxiety syndromes appeared at the same time as this fatigue (SBU 2005). If this development is a consequence of the liberation from alienation towards a more human way of being, then Kierkegaard seems to have been right when stating that ‘anxiety is the vertigo of freedom’ (1997: 365) and Nietzsche no less, when asserting that it takes
something like an Übermensch to be free, most people choose to run with the herd, and for good reasons.\textsuperscript{180}

Humanistic management and existential philosophy share a common ground in their problematization of freedom. Yet they follow diverging paths in doing so. In existential philosophy the \textit{problems} of freedom have always been at the core – from Kierkegaard’s attempts to come to terms with the Christian problem of the free will to Nietzsche’s meditations over the ‘last man’ and the Übermensch to Heidegger’s thoughts about how to resist the temptation to fall into the everydayness of \textit{das Man}.\textsuperscript{181} Humanistic management, on the other hand, has concerned itself more with the unrealized \textit{possibilities} of freedom.

From Lewin’s attempts to construct democratic work groups to Maslow’s ideas about self-actualization and synergy to McGregor’s attempts to integrate these, humanistic management has exploited the possibilities of freedom, but through the focus on the positive aspects this type of managing left behind the downside of freedom. Today the dominance of the humanistic paradigm is articulated through a management discourse where ideals such as autonomy, authenticity and responsibility are stressed. But these variables of freedom also have their problematic twins – at least if judging by the number of people suffering from various forms of ‘burnout’ and anxiety today. As Friberg (2006) argues, in Sweden the diagnosis of burnout emerged simultaneously with the construction of contemporary ‘flexible capitalism’. It is telling that in the late twentieth century the condition of ‘burnout’ was first detected in care workers who supposedly had gone too far in their engagements, who simply \textit{cared too much} (see e.g. Maslach 1982). It was as if those afflicted had simply lost themselves in their own commitment. They represented the type of persons that the management system was not designed to handle, people who were \textit{too} committed to their task. This condition was then gradually seen as something that anyone could fall into – as if commitment was once something that was significant only for care-workers, but which then became significant for, ideally, any kind of work (cf. Socialstyrelsen 2003). In a management system which simply channelled this commitment these persons would in the end, it seems, simply burn out.

As seen in this thesis, management educations today may be about both understanding yourself and daring to speak out. There are even therapeutic-

\textsuperscript{180} According to Kierkegaard this vertigo arises when ‘freedom looks down into its own possibilities and grapples for something limited to hold on to’ (1997: 365). The concept of Übermensch grew out of Nietzsche’s attempts to come to terms with the apparent opposition between freedom and conformity (see for example Simon 1995).

\textsuperscript{181} In English \textit{das Man} is usually translated as the ‘they’ (Réé 1998) or the ‘Anyone’ (Zimmerman 1990: 22). ‘Inauthenticity arises … when we understand ourselves as Cartesian selves … constantly looking over our shoulders and comparing our “selves” with those of others. … In our anxiety to differentiate ourselves from others, however, we become dependent on them – not on anyone in particular, but on the other in general, or what Heidegger called \textit{das Man}, or the “they”’ (Réé 1998: 22).
like attempts integrated in certain management education courses (such as the opportunity to confront your fears at the High Ropes Track). Yet these attempts are ‘therapeutic’ rather than therapy; they may redirect thinking and action, and thus indirectly offer a way of thinking about ill-being, but do not try to accomplish some kind of fundamental healing. Psychotherapy (or at least certain strands of it) has now become a way of making up for the drawbacks of contemporary managerial ideals. Today, the different diagnoses and treatments for the conditions of ‘burnout’ and anxiety appear as manifest parts of the economic system at large.

As described here, work-related ill-being refers indirectly to management ideals by being a sort of negative reflection of it. Management ideals and the treatment of work related conditions have also advanced hand in hand during the twentieth century. In the late nineteenth century both labour and fatigue were thought about in terms of an economy of energy. For those who suffered from nerve illnesses, neurologists and psychiatrists tried to appreciate the proper levels of nerve stimuli and activity that would be synonymous with, and thereby the best way of regaining, a state of health. Rest *per se* was not always the right solution. Regaining health was rather ‘a matter of increasing effectiveness by identifying the optimal equilibrium between inflow and outflow of energy’ (Johannisson 2006: 11).

When the old problem of fatigue popped up again at the end of the twentieth century the mental health business had left the nervous age behind and had been transformed into a ‘psychoculture’ (Pietikainen 2007: 218). The work-related fatigue that plagued late nineteenth century Europe and the one that plagued countries like Sweden a century later may appear to resemble each other, since they are made up of elements out of the same ‘symptom pool’ (Pietikainen 2007: 358). Indeed, the symptoms shown made these new types of ill-being resemble neurasthenia, the ‘queen diagnosis’ (Johannisson 1994: 152) among the nerve illnesses a hundred years earlier. Yet there is a crucial difference, which is best understood when looking at how these two types of fatigue are, or were, supposed to be overcome. If the fatigue during

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182 European scientists of work criticizing Taylor’s system of scientific management did not object to the machine-like view of humans, but rather that the system was not scientific enough. In Europe, physiologists measured the energy intake and output of the body – the ‘human motor’ as it was thought of during the time (Rabinbach 1992) – and from this calculated the labour that could be undertaken by, and thereby also the rest necessary for, the individual labourer to function at a maximum. The argument for the eight-hour work day was simply that it was the most efficient, it allowed the workers to both labour and recuperate, and thus to always labour at the maximum (Rabinbach 1992). As Friberg (2006) notices, thinking in terms of an economy of energy is still a viable way of reasoning when it comes to work related fatigue, for example in the way people are advised to avoid ‘energy thieves’. Yet today the responsibility for upholding the energy equilibrium rests on the individual, not on any external expert.

183 Although neurasthenia was envisioned somewhat differently in different countries even by physicians (Pietikainen 2007: 47), it was generally speaking ‘the functional nervous disorder from the 1880s to World War I and beyond’ (2007: 48).
the late nineteenth century was problematized and answered within the domain of the physiological, it was later understood as caused by a dysfunctional psycho-dynamics. The fatigue of the late twentieth century was therefore to be overcome by a psychological treatment that readjusted the malfunctioning system of psychological self-regulation in the individual. Such a readjustment could only ever be accomplished by engaging the patients in the treatment, by making them understand that they had to, so to speak, redirect a larger part of their care towards themselves. Such a healing could never be accomplished by setting limits and standards independent of those involved, but only through their active participation. The patients should learn about their own internal system, so that they could themselves manage it.

What becomes apparent here is that well-being and ill-being forms a continuum that in welfare society can be addressed – and at least in the case of Sweden, I argue, has been addressed – by the same regulatory mechanisms. From this perspective, the ‘management system’ can also be understood in a broad sense, thus not being merely the attempts to synchronize productive activities in organizations, but a more or less integrated therapeutic-managerial apparatus directed towards the ‘steering’ of a host of productive and reproductive activities throughout society. From this perspective, a welfare society constructs not only channels for the distribution of money to those unable to support themselves but also a more or less integrated therapeutic-managerial apparatus. This apparatus has as its foundation a philosophical anthropology, in the sense of an idea of what it means to be human that defines possible interventions. Work-related ill-being is thus largely addressed by the same regulatory mechanisms as the organization of work.

The intertwinement of the ‘managerial’ and the ‘psychotherapeutic’

The legacy of the attempts to uplift the ‘human side of enterprise’ (McGregor 1960) has perhaps in some sense been the advancement a more ‘human’ society, but also one with new types of ill-being. Needless to say, this is not to state a simple cause and effect relationship, where the implementation of certain management practices were later followed by certain types of ill-being, but merely that management ideals and the corresponding types of ill-being are manifestations of the same regulatory rationality. Put otherwise, management ideals carry with them a certain view of productivity. They therefore also, at least implicitly, carry with them a certain view of its opposite. Any management system finds its mirror-image in the work-related ways of being ill. In a similar way any idea of illness also carries with it a vision of health; the treatment of work-related illnesses thereby also suggest healthier and more efficient ways of organizing work. Approaches to the organization of work and the ways of being ill and healed therefore also
change, more or less, simultaneously. At a given point in time, work and health on the one hand, and ill-being and therapeutic attempts on the other, are all expressions of the same philosophical anthropology, in the sense of being a vision of what it means to be human. I will now pin down this thought structure – the collective consciousness – at the heart of the intertwinement of the ‘therapeutic’ and ‘managerial’ in contemporary Sweden.

Science as worlding
The intellectual attempts to tamper with the fast and thoroughgoing industrialization in Germany in the early twentieth century not only meant that a few German psychologists, such as Kurt Lewin, questioned the techno-scientific world view of the day and tried to work out a new type of science that had a place for humans (Harrington 1996), but also that a few German philosophers, such as Heidegger and Jaspers, worked out the so-called Existenzphilosophie that addressed the same issues from a philosophical point of view. Of most relevance here is the interest of this philosophy in types of knowledge and their differences and articulations. In order to understand the know-how of toolbox psychology and the way it expresses a specific philosophical anthropology I will here make use of – or perhaps one should say try to think along with – Heidegger’s ideas about science and the way they have been elaborated by Foucault and Ricoeur.

Heidegger (1962) used the concept of thematization to understand science. According to Heidegger, a new science opens up a new perspective on the world, thereby creating, in the sense of imagining, new objects to be investigated: ‘Thematizing Objectifies’ (1962: 414). Yet, the perspective of a new science does not just consist in new objects to be investigated, and even less in new answers to old questions, but in a total package – also including modes of expression, a conceptual apparatus, and a field of investigation – that are constituted all together. Heidegger’s later turning away (see e.g. Birnbaum and Wallenstein 1999: 21) from some of the questions raised in his earlier work, did not alter, but rather strengthened, his interest in the constitutional character of science and technology.

In his work ‘The Question Concerning Technology’ (Heidegger 1977), modern technology is depicted as exploitative by nature. Technology demands something of both humans and their natural environments, though in different ways. Modern technology is not just a means, but also a way of becoming aware. The world is through technology given to humans as stock, or more precisely as ‘standing-reserve’ (1977: 17). Even that which is manufactured thus appears as a sort of raw material (Heidegger 1977, Zimmerman

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184 The reference is to § 69.
185 The term Heidegger uses for this type of demand, or challenging, or calling forth, is Herausfordern (1977: 14).
This way of ‘worlding’ also subsumes science into its demanding (despite the fact that modern science preceded modern technology).\(^\text{186}\)

To understand the intertwining of the managerial and the psychotherapeutic, a perspective that incorporates Heidegger’s basic orientation is useful. Yet, Heidegger’s views of science and technology are either too specific (as in the concept of thematization which deals with specific sciences in the strict sense of the term), or too unspecific (when discussing modern technology as the total situation of modernity) to neatly fit the specific case dealt with here.

Foucault followed in Heidegger’s footsteps when trying to understand how scientific languages create certain perspectives of the world and how different sciences are articulated (Schwartz 2003). Foucault used the concept of *episteme* for the structure that gives certain sciences foundational similarities though being superficially dissimilar (Foucault 2000, 2002). The problem with the concept of *episteme* from the point of view of the present thesis is not only that an episteme is hard to explicate, but also that it was worked out to fit sciences in the strict sense of the term in line with the concept of thematization, and not popular conceptions.

Yet, a type of framework which is both explicable, generally applicable and at the appropriate level of specificity is the concept of metaphor as developed by Ricoeur in *The Rule of Metaphor* (1978). Here Ricoeur attempts to arrive at a theory of ‘living metaphor’ (1978: 285), where it becomes possible to see the similarities between metaphor and scientific models, an attempt largely inspired by Black (1962). Viewing Heidegger as both ‘attempt and temptation’ (1978: 309), that is, roughly speaking, as posing the right questions but providing the wrong answers, Ricoeur draws on Gadamer in suggesting that there is a “metaphoric” at work at the origin of logical thought, at the root of all classification (Ricoeur 1978: 22). Metaphor is not to be seen as merely rhetorical, as merely a trope, but as constitutional to any discursive practice and thereby having the character of an underlying model. This also means that the ‘referential function of metaphor’ is not carried by single images but by a ‘metaphoric network’ (1978: 244) organized by what Black calls an ‘archetype’ and Pepper a ‘root metaphor’.

Two anthropologists that have discussed metaphor in ways close to the ‘living metaphor’ of Ricoeur are Sherry Ortner and Victor Turner. In an essay called ‘On Key Symbols’ (1973), Ortner suggests that many anthropologists have come to the conclusion that some kind of basic thought structure guides the thinking of the people they have studied. This basic thought structure can in some cases be captured, she suggests with a reference to

\(^\text{186}\) The name Heidegger gave to this formation is *Ge-stell*. In German the prefix ‘Ge-’ is used to assemble similar phenomena under one heading. For example, a mountain (*Berg*), next to other mountains together becomes *Gebirge*. Playing with words that describe the ‘demanding’ character of present-day technology such as ‘to put’ (*stellen*) and ‘to order’ (*bestellen*), Heidegger altogether summarizes this framework as *Ge-stell* (Heidegger 1977, see also Zimmermann 1990: 216).
Pepper, by the concept of root metaphor. Root metaphors ‘help us think about how it all hangs together’, meaning that ‘one can conceptualize the interrelationships among phenomena by analogy to the interrelation among the parts of the root metaphor’ (Ortner 1973: 1341). Ortner suggests that in ‘mechanized society … one root metaphor for the social processes is the machine, and in recent times the computer represents a crucial modification upon this root metaphor’ (1973: 1341) – which arguably also implies that in ‘mechanized society’ root metaphors have a clearly discernible history.

Turner (1974) draws attention to what Ricoeur later would describe as metaphoric networks by a discussion of Black’s term ‘conceptual archetype’ which is, by Turner, used as synonymous with ‘root metaphor’. The term ‘archetype’, borrowed from Jungian psychology, underlines the unconscious, or at least less outspoken, characteristics of ‘foundation metaphors’ (Turner 1974: 28). Turner takes the example of Kurt Lewin, whose language was full of terms borrowed from physics. Though Lewin disclaimed any intentions of here developing elaborate models, Turner quotes Black who asserted that the metaphoric language showed ‘visible symptoms of a massive archetype awaiting to be reconstructed by a sufficiently patient critic’ (Black 1962: 241, quoted in Turner 1974: 27). Though it is important to acknowledge, as Turner here does, that a root metaphor is not always explicit in actual language but rather has something of an unconscious character, and thus may have be to more or less reconstructed by the analyst, I agree with Ricoeur (1978: 244) that it is less wise to simply import a term from Jungian psychology (that is, ‘archetype’) with all the associations it carries. The term ‘root metaphor’ is therefore preferable.

Altogether, then, the concept of root metaphor captures some dimensions of the constitutional character of the concept of thematization and makes it possible to see links between knowledge domains in the spirit of the concept of episteme. Yet, as opposed to the latter two concepts, the concept of root metaphor does not delimit itself to sciences in the strict sense of the term, and is well established within anthropology for conceptualizing basic thought structures. It thus seems well designed to use in the analysis of work-enabling self-help psychology.

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187 Ortner suggests that key symbols can be either summarizing or elaborating. The latter type can be further broken down into root metaphors and key scenarios. Ricoeur saw his two works The Rule of Metaphor and Time and Narrative as ‘a pair’ (Ricoeur 1990a:ix). In a way, Ortner actually precedes this project with her distinction of elaborating symbols into root metaphors and key scenarios.

188 Ortner’s main example is Godfrey Lienhardt’s depiction of the Dinka, where cattle emerges as a root metaphor. The Dinka use the shades of colour that their cattle is perceived in when talking about the light, shade, and colours in the world around them. They also conceptualize the structure of society in analogy with the physical structure of a bull. Ortner does not address the issue of how and why certain imaginations become root metaphors, but her choice of examples suggest that such metaphors almost force themselves into the minds of people; what is all around you becomes the way you think about the world and thereby, in a sense, what is all around you.
The self-governing system as root metaphor

I suggest that the self-governing system functions as root metaphor in work-enabling self-help psychology. In the subject of EQ (see Chapter One) the knowledge and practices taught have as their common foundation a vision of pupils as potentially self-governing entities. The identification of personal emotions and values, the attempts at strengthening the pupil’s self-esteem, the technique called ‘The stop-light’, etc., all have the aim of transforming children into autonomous subjects capable in interaction. By making the subject of EQ a constitutional part of its organization, a school also – intentionally or unintentionally – complies with the guidelines drawn up already by the SIA and Child Care Commissions (see Chapter One) in going through so-called organizational development, thus moving away from the techniques of discipline and surveillance, with their associations of mass production and total institutions, and towards a regulation of both work and breaks based more on individual and collective self-control.

In management courses (see Chapter Two) self-regulation of both individuals and groups are seen as the necessary foundation for the achievement of efficiency at work. The very meaning of the term ‘team’ is a self-governing group. Theories about group development, synergy and situational leadership are all about how such groups come into being. Psychological profiles, models for learning and efficient communication, etc., distributed at such courses – as well as the diversity of psychological know-how disseminated through various mass media – all prepare individuals for the work of creating such groups by giving them, on the one hand, techniques for efficient interaction, and on the other, an understanding of themselves and others as individuals with personal motivations, and thus also with the autonomy seen as necessary for such work.

In therapies for stress-related illnesses (see Chapter Three) participants are aided in regaining the self-control they have lost. A general psychoeducation is here the foundation of the working out of personal coping strategies which will re-install this self-regulation and make the participants once again ready for work. Different forms of psychoeducation, more or less complex and explicit, are also found in the mass media representations which disseminate therapeutic know-how to various audiences. TV therapy both enacts the possibilities of psychological self-regulation and aid consumers in gaining such. Manuals and counselling columns deliver straightforward know-how and advice so that consumers can take charge of their own lives – as do therapeutic how-to-books, though in a more elaborated way.

Drawing on Nisbet (1969), Turner suggests that revolutions in thought are changes in root metaphor. In more than one way then, this means that metaphor is ‘metamorphic, transformative’ (Turner 1974: 25). Revolutionary or not, the root metaphor of the self-governing system bridges the opposition between humans and non-humans, and between organic and inorganic beings, in another way than that of the old image of the ‘human motor’. The
The root metaphor of the self-governing system re-directs the thinking about communication and control (and in a sense thereby also causality) from something that emanates from above in a hierarchical system to something that is circular. The root metaphor of the self-governing system thus gets its meaning in opposition to an earlier management metaphor – that of the mechanical machinery (cf. Morgan 1997). It thereby enables a vision of the relationship between humans and machines that bypasses the issue of authenticity which appeared as so problematic in the second industrial revolution. In a perspective guided by the root metaphor of the self-governing system, processes do not primarily emerge as organic or inorganic, or human or non-human (although that can certainly be of interest), but as more or less of a feedback character. In such a way, work-enabling self-help psychology enacts a change of root metaphor in the thinking about the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Rose 1998: 12) from the mechanical machinery – and its adherent visions about the engineering of the ‘social’ and the degradation of humans to cogs – to the self-regulating system.

Yet, the self-governing system is, I suggest, a ‘root’ metaphor also in the sense that it is at the root of organizational changes in welfare societies such as Sweden, thus having (had) a transformative character. The move towards autonomizing techniques as legitimate ways of exercising authority in the Swedish welfare society of the third industrial revolution implies that the root metaphor of the self-governing system guides the patterns of thought and action not only in the ethnographic material depicted in this thesis, but also in much of the wider systems of social and political organization that of which this material is a part.

Reconceptualizing the idea of industrial revolutions

Even the very idea of industrial revolutions, so foundational in this thesis, becomes possible, if not even necessary, to reconceptualize when the self-governing system is viewed as a root metaphor. The concept of industrial revolutions, as elaborated by, for example, Magnusson (2000a), suggests a close relationship between the development of new technologies and the development of new ways of organizing work. These two together constitute an industrial revolution. However, from the perspective of this thesis, industrial revolutions appear as simply new ways of understanding industrialization itself. At the heart of such a new understanding is a reinterpretation of the relationship between humans and machines based on a new ontology (describing what exists) and a new philosophical anthropology (describing what it means to be human in such a world). Through this reinterpretation, humans have to become something they have not been before – in the case of the third industrial revolution this is articulated as a move from ‘human motors’ towards self-governing entities. This new way of being not only means new ways of being a healthy productive citizen – including new more
efficient ways of organizing work, related to the new technical possibilities—but also new ways of being ill, as well as cured.

In other words, an industrial revolution does not just involve new technological and economic opportunities, but also a new cultural framework. All in all, management courses, psychotherapy, and other types of psychoeducation may be very hands-on, in the sense of giving participants tools for social interaction, but at the same time they also provide a specific metaphorical understanding, that is, a certain less explicated but nevertheless consistent perspective on what it means to be human.

**Exploitation as an existential condition**

If the third industrial revolution envisages a new type of society with new visions of humans and machines and their interaction, that new society is, in certain fundamental respects, yet another version of one long gone. Proponents of the humanistic management wanted to humanize work, make work less mechanical and richer with possibilities for the realization of the full human potential. At the same time, this human potential became something that could only be realized through work – such a realization became a question of how to replace the wrong kind of work with the right kind of work. The integration of therapy and economy as described in this thesis has therefore mainly contributed to upholding an already existing work ethic. This is in line with long-term societal developments in Europe. Humanistic management is thus but a part of what Braudel (1980) termed a longue durée.

**Work as categorical imperative**

The industrial revolution was preceded by an ‘industrious revolution’ (Ehmer 2001). In the Early Modern period, European men and women increased their work-loads to a significant degree. This development was most likely as many-faceted as European culture and society, but major causes were probably the growing importance of the monetary economy and a new influential work ethic, the latter described by Weber as ‘worldly asceticism’. This industrious revolution did not cause industrialization, but without it the whole industrialization process is hard to imagine (Weber 1978, Ehmer 2001, Rabinbach 1992: 7-9).

In Sweden the work ethic has found an expression in the broad consensus in the labour market policy Arbetslinjen,189 the Work Strategy, basically equating work with employment and stating that as many as possible should work. The Work Strategy emerged as a framework for labour market policy during the early decades of the twentieth century (Junestav 2004, Socialförsäkringsutredningen 2005). In Swedish politics, supporting the Work

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189 Sometimes also translated as the ‘work-for-all strategy’ (Harrysson and Pettersson 2004).
Strategy ‘is as controversial as being pro-peace’; there is wide support for the idea that ‘a well-functioning and widely embraced work strategy is the indispensable fundament of welfare society’ (Socialförsäkringsutredningen 2005: 9, 66). Yet, in the Work Strategy work is seen as in many ways valuable beyond the mere pecuniary satisfaction, for example by giving life a necessary structure, offering the workers a social context, a feeling of self-worth, etc. (Socialförsäkringsutredningen 2005, Junestav 2004). In stressing the need for a view of work as directed towards both oneself and others, possible to apply in both work organizations and rehabilitation, work-enabling self-help psychology is thus well in line with the Work Strategy. Indeed, by constituting a psychological work ethic (cf. van Drunen et al. 2004: 158), work-enabling self-help psychology both partially reconstructs and strengthens it.

From this perspective, the practical opposite of industriousness – that is, fatigue – can be seen as the specific industrious way of expressing a non-specific problematic. Though it is hard to argue verbally against the Work Strategy, other ways of opposing it are still feasible. Put otherwise, what is not possible to state in words, can be expressed with your body (cf. Scheper-Hughes 1992). Whilst any verbal argument against the Work Strategy may turn into a curiosity, the working body has nevertheless to be taken seriously. And since industriousness is the general societal morality, fatigue is a generally understood expression that not only those employed can use (cf. Johannisson 2006: 17-18). Yet, given a successful institutionalization of different types of psychotherapies for stress-related illnesses, as well as the establishment of more popular therapeutic-like efforts to come to terms with similar or adjacent conditions (such as low self-esteem), fatigue will be less of a public issue, and thereby also less of an individual possibility – just as it once was ‘relegated into the shadow of the 20th century huge modernity and welfare projects’ (Johannisson 2006: 12) of the second industrial revolution.

The contemporary problem of fatigue, including possible ways of overcoming it, is not about to alter the ideal of industriousness, but rather takes it to a new level. Because in a country dominated by Arbetslinjen, even fatigue should be overcome by work. Work has indeed become an economic equivalent of Kant’s ‘categorical imperative’, an irrefutable line of action since true in itself.\(^{190}\) If Western industrial society is a continuation of the industrious society which emerged in the Early Modern period, what answers to the problems of work can such a society then reasonably come up with other than – work!

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190 On Kant, see e.g. Höffe (2004).
(Schutz 1994: 7) by allowing the employees to, so to speak, find themselves as healthy productive beings. Such techniques thereby make visible the contradictory character of the network of psychology – in a way its very essence – as being both instrumental and ethical, as a means for both exploitation and self-realization, both technology and healing, both Psychotechnik and psychotherapy. During different periods one or the other may have dominated the societal view of this ‘-ology’, not least among psychologists themselves (see for example Rigné 2002), but they have remained two sides of the same coin. In the autonomizing techniques of work-enabling self-help psychology, this dual character is made explicit; an essential part of any intervention or treatment is to explicate that work demands self-realization and that self-realization demands work – one or the other or both.

When work more and more becomes a question of social interaction, and when the personnel is seen as the most important asset, and when productivity is believed to emanate (partly) out of the ability to interact and out of the motivation to work, it also becomes harder to measure individual contributions and individual skills. How do you measure motivation, flexibility and ‘social competence’? Even though there are measurements of, for example, EQ, it is in many cases hard (to say the least) to see exactly how these EQ-skills contribute to the production of goods and services, and thus what they are worth. In other words, the relationship between work and pay becomes opaque (cf. Magnusson 2000a: 30).

What is at stake here then, by this process of therapeutization of work in all its meanings, is the capitalist metaphor par excellence as put forth by Weber (1978) – that time is money. Work becomes a rather indistinct activity that is hard to measure since it becomes less obvious what is actually sold as work. It is no longer only a specific activity during a specified time. What the employees sell are their ‘persons’ (cf. Fleming 2009, McGee 2005). Work may thus get some pre-capitalistic connotations, in some ways looking more like serfdom than employment. Though it may of course also look a lot like liberation, since the employees are actually paid to go through personal development; they are paid just ‘to become themselves’, as it were.

In a ‘psychological society’ (Smith 1997) based on far-reaching psychoeducation the most penetrating form of exploitation may thus also appear as the most liberating form of being. With the view of work as ideally a full realization of the inherent human possibilities – an achievement demanding the whole knowledgeable person – exploitation and liberation no longer automatically emerge as opposites, but rather as inextricably linked.

This interlinking of exploitation and liberation is also evident in spheres outside of work, in the strict sense of the term. With the proliferation of mass media representations that distribute psychological know-how, media consumers are given the opportunity to free themselves from psychic constraints by exercising in the use of psychological tools. Even what might be perceived as diversions – that is, mass media representations intended for mere leisure and entertainment – has here taken on the literal meaning of the term
‘recreation’ since converted into a way of ‘working out personhood’ (Jiménez 2003) – and thus also emerging as an arena for exploitation. This is not to state that media consumers cannot learn something useful from taking part of psychological infotainment, but rather that they will have to in order to fully consume it. In a sense then, by consuming mass-mediated psychological know-how, they are themselves consumed by this know-how.

Indeed, the use of psychological tools has opened up for a new type of profound exploitation of the labour force – actual and potential. Not (mainly) in the sense that some exploit others. But as an existential condition: an (obliged) freedom to choose self-exploitation. Heidegger’s view here comes to mind, that modern technology reveals things as available, as stock or raw material; the ‘natural’ way of being is exploitation. With the well-elaborated version of ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1988) that work-enabling self-help psychology constitutes, the ‘natural’ relationship to yourself (indeed, your self) is as stock or raw material – that is, something to be worked upon, refined and put to use.
Sammanfattning på svenska

**Arbetets terapeutisering**

Den psykologiska verktygslådan som rationaliseringsredskap under den tredje industriella revolutionen i Sverige


I kapitel ett till tre beskrivs distributionen av psykologiska verktyg i några av samhällets sfärer. Kapitel ett handlar om skolämnet EQ. Materialet som
används i undervisningen beskrivs, liksom de olika positiva aspekterna som denna undervisning, enligt ämnets förspråkare, för med sig. Vidare beskrivs hur ämnets förspråkare strävar efter att engagera olika kategorier av människor i ämnet, vilket kan ses som nödvändigt då ämnet ligger utanför den ordinarie läroplanen och för sin fortsatta existens därför kräver en kritisk massa av anhängare. I kapitlet beskrivs också hur mer av praktisk psykologisk kunskap efterlystes inom skolans värld redan i början av 1970-talet, för att skapa bättre ordning i skolan, men också för att kunna ge eleverna en mer meningsfylld och utvecklande tillvaro. Genom de skolreformer som genomfördes framför allt från och med 1990-talet blev det möjligt att i ämnen som EQ förorska svara på denna efterfrågan.


Kapitel tre behandlar psykoterapins utveckling de senaste årtiondena, med fokus på terapier för patienter med utmattningssyndrom och liknande former av stressrelaterad ohälsa. Under 2000-talet har psykoterapier som präglas av hjälp till självhjälp blivit vanliga. Den allmänna tenden mot effektivisering av offentliga organisationer har gjort det intressant att i möjligaste mån lägga över det terapeutiska arbetet på patienterna. Detta sker genom rudimentär utbildning i psykologiska teorier och färdigheter där patienterna får verktyg för att nå bättre självkontroll, vilket antas öka chanserna att de förblir friska och fungerar bättre i arbetet när de väl kurerats. Kapitlet beskriver även hur terapi-TV och psykologiska frågespålet och manualer under denna tid blivit vanliga i massmedia, samtidigt som en flora av terapeutiska självhjälsböck-
er – somliga vetenskapligt verifierade, somliga mer populärt hållna – har brett ut sig.

Sammantaget blir spridningen av denna psykologiska ”know-how” genom managementkurser, terapier, skolan och massmedia – där vi erbjuds metoder att bearbeta oss själva för att bli effektivare i vårt arbete, eller bara för att bli friskare och mer välmående och därmed i praktiken mer arbetsdugliga – till en oförmögen underbyggnad av den allmänt omfattade politiska inriktning som kallas ”arbetslinjen”.


Sammantaget har denna utveckling lett till att ”arbetet med sig själv” blivit något av en universalmedicin: inom den psykologiska självhjälp industri finns idag knappast något problem som inte antas kunna angripas genom ett effektivt arbete med sig själv och sina relationer.

Men psykologiska verktyg är inte bara instrument utan innefattar – mer än andra verktyg – även en existentiell dimension där värden som självkänsla, personlig utveckling, känslomantering och ansvar blir viktiga sätt att förstå sig själv och sina möjligheter i livet. Till och med det individuella psyket, ens ”själv”, blir här till något av en råvara som främst finns där för att bearbeta och utvecklas. Genom att göra bruk av dessa verktyg förändras inte bara organisationer, utan också individernas liv och tänkande och därigenom, gradvis, även samhället i stort.


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