

Bruised by the Invisible Hand

A critical examination of journalistic representations and the naturalization of neoliberal ideology in times of industrial crisis

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Doctoral Dissertation
Department of Journalism, Media and Communication
University of Gothenburg

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ISBN 978-91-88212-59-7

ISSN 1101-4652

Tryck: Ineko, Göteborg

www.jmg.se

Internetlänk*

For Sonja

Acknowledgments

It is common to talk about the time when you are writing your dissertation as a time of chaos. If we stay with the concept of chaos my mind goes to the theory about the butterfly; how the flap of the wings of one butterfly can cause a hurricane hundreds of miles away. It is a beautiful thought. Many people have affected the final version of this book. Both obvious and less obvious ones. The more concrete work done by supervisors, opponents, colleagues and reviewers, the support from family and friends, the conscious and less conscious doing and being of others both close and far away. Taken together it has all pushed me to the point where I am now. For this I thank you all. Finally I rest in the eye of the hurricane and smile as I recall the sound of your wings.

Diana

June 2016

Scholarship has a civic and public function, and it is precisely the connection between knowledge and the larger society that makes visible its ethical and political function. Knowledge can and should be used for amplifying human freedom and promoting social justice, and not simply for creating profits and future careers. Intellectuals need to take a position, and, as Said argues, they have an obligation to remind audiences of the moral questions that may be hidden in the clamor of public debates and deflate the claims of (neoliberal) triumphalism.

(Giroux, 2015, p.146)

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(Luke 23:34)

1. Prologue

When the Swedish car company Saab Automobile went out of business and closed its factory in December 2011 it was the peak of an ongoing crisis in the car industry which meant the loss of one of Sweden's biggest employers and an important national industry, and for thousands of workers it meant the loss of their jobs. The news media coverage of the crisis was quite extensive in the months around the event. On the day of the closure the conservative Prime Minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt, commented on the situation in his yearly Christmas speech: *It must be terrible to be employed in a company where you have experienced this long and hard trial* (Dagens Nyheter, 2011-12-20). Half a year earlier, when the company had canceled the payment of salaries for the first time during this turbulent period, the Prime Minister was also quoted expressing his sympathy for the workers: *It must be really hard. I really feel for them today.* (Dagens Nyheter, 2011-06-23). Compassion for those affected—we recognize it from speeches by heads of state and government in times of tragedy and crisis. The particular situation commented on here is, however, not a natural disaster that no one could have foreseen but the outcome of an ongoing crisis in the industry during which the Swedish government had quite openly and explicitly turned down the possibility of state intervention. In the light of this, how can we understand the expressions of compassion from the Prime Minister?

The technocratic “there is nothing we can do” approach of politicians has been linked to neoliberalism, which is identified as the defining ideology of our current historical moment. Significant for this political ideology is a policy of depoliticization that aims at liberating the economic sphere from government control while renegotiating the contract between politics, labor and capital (Bourdieu, 2002; Harvey, 2005, 2010; Hay, 2007; Amable, 2010; Phelan, 2014; Giroux, 2015). Recalling the Prime Minister's Christmas speech it can be suggested that a head of government offering compassion instead of action indicates a *fait accompli*, a perception of the crisis as being beyond political intervention. If it were otherwise, then a speech about

measures and political decisions to take action would accompany or even replace the Prime Minister's words of compassion. The question then arises: If mass unemployment and the loss of an important national industry isn't a political question, then to what, where and whom do the (soon to be) unemployed workers turn for a solution? When the economic actors—the owners and investors—come to replace politicians in the neoliberal renegotiated responsibility for the labor market this may reasonably change the monitoring of working-class interests, and also the way in which journalism maneuvers when recontextualizing the crisis, its main events and actors, in this context.

2. Introducing the problem

The introductory passage above serves as an empirical illustration and entrance point to the core problem that will be examined in this dissertation. In this chapter I will further introduce the critical discourse analysis of how the two largest newspapers in Sweden covered the car industry crisis in conjunction with the closure of the Saab Automobiles factory in 2011. Below I first draw attention to what previous studies have identified in crisis discourses in other contexts. After presenting the focus of this examination I highlight what makes the Swedish context particularly interesting to investigate and present how crisis news discourses from a similar crisis situated in the 1970s will be used as a point of reference. In what way the assignment and position of news journalism within the democratic society makes crisis news coverage relevant to study will be discussed, as well as how I view the journalistic output as a negotiation between journalistic agency and the surrounding structure. This section broadens the discussion to involve different aspects of journalism on a general level and not only in a Swedish context. After the section about the role of journalism I move on to present the focus of the substudies. The theoretical approach of the dissertation will then be clarified and end the introductory chapter.

Previous studies have identified how different episodes of the ongoing global financial crisis have been framed in technocratic terms of systemic unavoidability rather than addressing structural, political and ideological aspects (Harman, 2010; Mylonas, 2012, 2015; Murray-Leach et al., 2014; Bickes, Otten and Weymann, 2014; Kelsey, 2014; Triandafyllidou et al., 2013; Mercille, 2013; Marron, 2010; Miller, 2009). The question is in what way this may be valid in a Swedish context, how neoliberal discourse operates in news media reporting of industrial crisis today. This examination focuses on the journalistic understanding and representation of the relationship between state, labor and capital in the way that questions of rights and responsibilities are shaped and ascribed to the working class, politics and economic elite in a situation where mass unemployment is the expected outcome. News coverage in Sweden's largest morning and evening

newspapers during three months of the crisis in the car industry will be examined to answer that question. To highlight the characteristics of today's discourses further I will compare them with the journalistic construction of a similar industry crisis from the late 1970s.

Sweden is an interesting case to investigate due to the combination of its historically strong labor movement and the previous political consensus about state intervention to save ailing industries in order to safeguard employment, together with the long legacy of press freedom and the previous outspoken affiliation between newspapers and political parties which made sure that working-class interests (also) were made visible. Taken together this history has contributed to the Swedish self-perception of Sweden as a country where citizens in their role as wage earners have a solid representation in the press as well as via unions and in an explicit political course towards increased class equality. In conclusion the comparison with the 1970s serves as an important point of reference when analyzing how neoliberal discourse operates in the reporting today and it is also helpful if we aim to understand why journalism represents rights and responsibilities regarding the relationship between state, labor and capital in a certain way at the present time.

In order to make the position and assignment of journalism visible I would like to start with a question: What do we expect from news media in general as well as (or perhaps even more) in times of crisis? An independent journalism orientated to a wider public interest, giving voice to a broad range of actors and interests providing divergent perspectives on what is going on? An investigative journalism working to keep us informed and up to date, providing means to debate issues of public importance? An interpretational journalism which explains, defines and puts the reported events into context? The suggested answer seems to cover commonly raised expectations on journalism in fulfilling its institutional role (see Anderson et al., 2013; Zelizer, 2004; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001). The function of the media and news journalism as watchdogs and critical reviewers is viewed as essential in a democracy, and the ideal of holding those in power

accountable is strong not only in the public's expectation but also among journalists¹ (e.g. Schultz, 1998). According to McChesney (2011), journalism's primary purpose is to create an inclusive and diverse space for deliberative conversations between citizens where public affairs can be brought to light and debated and where the activities of government and business are monitored. These conversations should encourage the mobilization of citizens in exercising their democratic rights and in their sense of belonging and empowerment.

The follow-up question – and the question that will be examined and discussed in the current dissertation – is: How are the stories actually told? I have chosen herein to analyze journalistic discourses to show how an event like a major crisis in the car industry is represented in the news. What is the reason and relevance of this choice? I can just state that it is not an interest in the car industry that has led me to select this particular topic. The case of industrial crisis is chosen as it offers an opportunity to study questions that I am truly interested in and find important from a democratic perspective: questions regarding class, power and ideology, and the role journalism plays in this.

The question *how* often leads to the question *why* and this case is no exception. If we find out how the crisis is discursively shaped by journalism then the next step is to ask why the story is told in a certain way. As the ideal of journalism to fulfill its democratic assignment seems to be quite vivid among Swedish journalists themselves (see Wiik, 2010) the journalistic discourses about industrial crisis and the understanding of the role of the actors involved need to be put in context. In other words, it is important to discuss within what frames and under what conditions the journalistic output is produced and how this might influence the journalistic practice.

¹The mentioned journalistic ideals and the expectations on journalism in the democratic society are valid also in a Swedish context; see for example Wiik, 2010, Strömbäck, 2003, and SOU, 1995:37

I think it can be stated, without running the risk of any major objections, that journalism has great power to influence society. Research on the relational dynamics between media and those it is set to scrutinize often derives from the mediatization theory and is centered on the notion of journalism's power to interpret and influence, stressing its permeating power to set the public agenda, while other actors must, or strive to, adapt to the journalistic logic (e.g. Asp, 1990; Strömbäck, 2008). In the Swedish context this research has often focused on the situation during elections or political scandals (e.g. Strömbäck and Nord, 2013; Asp and Bjerling, 2014; Ekström and Johansson, 2008). In my opinion, theories on mediatization and research highlighting journalists' (self-estimated sense of) autonomy sometimes tend to overemphasize the agency and let it be the taken-for-granted point of departure rather than the object of inquiry. This is the same critique that has been raised with reference to critical studies assuming the role of media and journalism as carrier of ideology (see Barnett, 2010; Collier, 2012). Dominance within the relationship between journalism and other power elites should perhaps be a matter of empirical investigation and not considered as static. According to Louw (2010), circumstances give one of the actors dominance in a particular context. In order to understand the status and position of journalism and its democratic assignment, it is important to examine the dynamics of this relationship in other contexts than merely during elections. The current dissertation is an attempt to do this.

Three empirical analyses will be presented in this study. The first study examines the representation of the working class, the second focuses on the relational dynamics between politics and journalism in the question of political responsibility, and the third highlights the main theme of the crisis discourses; the representation of the economic elite and of those given epistemic status to give expert interpretations of the crisis. The three studies herein give attention to how neoliberal tendencies and discourses of individualization, depoliticization and financialization operate in the interaction with the logic and routines of the everyday practice of mainstream journalism and in the journalistic understanding of crisis in the

industry. Here it should be pointed out that “mainstream journalism” in this study refers to the two largest newspapers in Sweden and that the analysis hence provide us with answers about how the crisis is covered by these two papers during the selected three-month time period.

Common to the studies is that they revolve around the central question of how neoliberal discourse operates in the journalistic reporting; what role ideology plays in the recontextualization of an event in terms of reproducing, negotiating and contesting discourses. This opens for a discussion about journalistic autonomy and journalism’s relationship to the political and economic elite, how responsible actors are held accountable in times of crisis and whose perspective is (re)presented as common sense. There is also an important question of class embedded here, as the main part of those affected by the industry crisis is not a cross-section of the population but is made up of a certain group of society: the working class. The argument for the relevance of conducting this study, why journalistic crisis news reports need to be put under scrutiny, relies on previous research emphasizing how news media and journalism undisputedly have a fundamental role in how societal issues are shaped discursively and how they can be understood by the public (e.g. Allan 2005; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; van Dijk 1991). Analysis of these discourses can enhance our understanding of how policy steps and measurements taken (or not taken) during crisis can become accepted, supported or even perceived as unavoidable (Kelsey et al., 2015; Whittle and Mueller, 2012). To study this topic is then inevitably also a question about democracy, considering journalism’s role as one of the key institutions in the democratic society.

The analysis springs from critical theory developed first by the Frankfurt school (see Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002; Althusser, 1971) that paved the way for Marxist inspired scholars stressing the importance of society’s power structures and concepts like ideology and hegemony in media and journalism studies. I am attempting to link up perspectives springing from political economy about the structural conditions and material constraints governing journalism with perspectives emphasizing the potential that lies

within the journalistic agency (as has been done by others before, see Berglez, 2006; Fenton, 2006; Hearn, 2008; Miller, 2010; Phelan, 2014). When it comes to the symbolic power of news journalism, critical discourse analysis offers a path where the journalistic discourses are seen as both constitutive of and shaped by ideology and the social power structure (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). I view journalistic discourses as situated within a neoliberal paradigm where journalism and journalistic output as well as the common sense of ordinary people is filtered through the ideology of late capitalism. Due to this, journalistic practice is at risk of operating in a direction where the angle of the news articles and the approached actors, the questions asked as well as the answers given, all fits within the construction of neoliberal consensus (Harvey, 2005, p.40ff). At the same time the dialectical relationships between discourse and other elements of social practices should be recognized, how the impact works both ways. This line of reasoning allows an oscillation between the perspective of social structure and the perspective of social action and agency (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2000). Put differently, this points to an understanding of neoliberal ideology as something that *might* operate via the journalistic logic while the journalistic logic can support, negotiate or oppose ideology. I will discuss this further in the chapter (6.1) that contextualizes journalistic agency.

The current chapter introduces the critical discourse analysis of how the two largest newspapers in Sweden covered the car industry crisis over the closure of Saab Automobiles factory and the focus of this examination is highlighted. I have also pointed out what makes the Swedish context particularly interesting to investigate and clarified how crisis news discourses from a similar crisis situated in the 1970s will be used as a point of reference in this study. The way in which the assignment and position of news journalism within the democratic society makes crisis news coverage relevant to study, as well as how I view the journalistic output as a negotiation between journalistic agency and the surrounding structure, has been introduced. I have also presented the focus of the substudies and the theoretical approach of this dissertation.

2.1 Main purpose and specific research questions

The main purpose of this dissertation and its specific research questions will be presented here. The study touches upon journalism's ability to fulfill its democratic assignment with emphasis on class in a context increasingly influenced by neoliberal ideas and policies—and what the implications might be if journalism fails to do so. The purpose of the study is to examine how neoliberal discourse operates in media reporting of industrial crisis today. To fulfill this the study has two aims. The first is to establish what discourses are constructed in the mainstream news articles, how the relation between state, labor and capital is understood in the way rights and responsibilities are ascribed to the working class, politics and the economic elite. The second aim is to discuss why the journalistic discourses are constructed in this way. Critical discourse analysis and critical social theories are deployed to achieve this, making it possible to analyze the crisis news discourses in an initiated and systematic way as well as to understand how they are part of a wider context. The construct of my study allows an examination of questions that are central to the field of media and journalism research; questions about journalistic agency and autonomy; the room for maneuver and the vulnerability of journalism, the way journalism relates to power elites, the overall social power structure and how neoliberal ideology is negotiated. The main purpose of the study is examined in three different studies all aimed at answering the overarching question:

How does neoliberal discourse operate in media reporting of industrial crisis today?

Common to the following subquestions examined in three different studies is a focus on how the crisis is understood by journalism in the way the rights and responsibilities of the working class, politicians and the business elite are constructed and discussed in the journalistic representation:

1: How are workers and other ordinary citizens represented?

I examine this by focusing on how workers are portrayed in terms of active and passive and in the roles allocated to them as well as in the settings in which their performances take place. The analysis involves crisis news

discourses in two different political contexts: the car industry crisis in the 2010s and the textile industry crisis in the 1970s.

2: How is political responsibility and public accountability negotiated?

I examine this by focusing on two things: first, how the crisis is handled and discursively shaped by politics and, second, how it is recontextualized and framed by news journalism in the way journalism relates to, reproduces, negotiates or opposes the dominant discourses of neoliberal politics. The analysis involves two different time periods: the time of the first signs of crisis in 2008 and the last stage of the crisis ending with the closure of the factory in 2011.

3: How does journalism construct the main theme of the crisis?

I examine this by focusing on the major statement and/or the general message in the crisis news discourses; what is (re)presented as causes, problems and solutions and what the journalistic approach to the economic power elite is. I also emphasize who is given epistemic status as an expert interpreting the events during crisis and how these interpretations correspond with the journalistic main theme. News discourses in conjunction with the textile industry crisis in the 1970s are analyzed and used as a point of reference to highlight further the main features of the news coverage today.

2.2 Disposition of the study

The dissertation consists of two parts. In the following chapters of the first part my study will be further contextualized and put within a theoretical frame. After the above presentation of the research problem, the purpose of the study and the specific research questions, chapter 3 presents social theories about neoliberalism and discusses how we can understand and identify the core characteristics of this ideology as well as in what way it is relevant in my research. In chapter 4 important concepts and relations will be clarified. This chapter also highlights the two different perspectives of this study: how political economy and cultural studies view the relationship

between neoliberalism and the media and what it means to take them both into account. This clarification is followed by a research overview in chapter 5, where research that is relevant for my study is presented. This means an introduction of previous research examining different aspects of media and neoliberalism; representations of class, politics and economy, what this research has concluded and how findings have been interpreted.

Chapter 6 puts both journalism and crisis within context. Two levels of context will be put forward in this chapter: first the Swedish context, looking at the specific situation for Sweden, and, second, a more wide-ranging level dealing with changes during the last decades in terms of different general aspects of both journalism and the labor market. The first level of contextualization of journalism hence highlights the uniqueness of Swedish journalism in the 1970s. The second level concerns the general conditions governing journalism in Western democracies today, how journalism is situated within a structure of ideological and organizational constraints and in what way this may influence the journalistic output or open up for journalistic agency. The focus on journalism is followed by the other part of the contextualizing chapter, a discussion about the political, economic and ideological settings surrounding the crises in the car industry and in the textile industry. The first level of contextualization focuses on the textile crisis and what characterized the Swedish labor market in the 1970s while the other takes into account how the labor market in Sweden today to an increasing extent is influenced and affected by more global terms and conditions. This is why it discusses changes on a more general level in terms of individualization, depoliticization and financialization that are noticeable also in other countries.

Chapter 7 is a methodology chapter introducing the tradition of critical discourse analysis (CDA), and how it is applicable in my study. Alongside the method of the study, this chapter also discusses the cases and the material that have been analyzed. In chapter 8 the three different substudies of this dissertation are further introduced and the way they contribute to the aim of the study will be clarified. The first part of the dissertation ends with

my main conclusions and a discussion about how the conclusions can be understood and put into context. The contribution of the dissertation, what an examination of crisis news discourses from the chosen perspective can offer to the field, is highlighted. The limitations of the study are also discussed in this last chapter of the first part of the study, as well as suggestions for future studies. The second part of my dissertation consists of the three empirical analyses about representation of the working class, political responsibility and the journalistic main theme of crisis. The dissertation ends with a summary of the study in Swedish, where the main features of the study are highlighted.

3. Neoliberalism as myth or reality

This chapter presents social theories about neoliberalism and discusses how we can understand and identify the core characteristics of this ideology as well as in what way it is relevant to my research. To state an interest in examining the neoliberalization of society and how this becomes visible in various ways is to choose a route that can be considered controversial, a theoretical standpoint criticized for being built on a preconstructed normative framing. This normative framing is said to be based on simplified moral binaries where neoliberalism basically works as a catch-all term for all that is bad in society (Barnett, 2010; Stedman-Jones, 2012), often ill-defined and misunderstood (Pickard, 2007) and where analysis only seems to aim at establishing that we live in a neoliberal context, period (Ferguson, 2010). Regardless of how neoliberalism has been applied in social science studies the fact remains; as a political project neoliberalism is not a modern myth but is based on clearly stated beliefs which have been transformed into political policies on a global scale and implemented in a range of different areas of our lives. To avoid the catch-all approach I will make an attempt to clarify what I am referring to herein as the neoliberalization of society.

I find it especially important to highlight Harvey's (2005) claim that it is fundamental to understand neoliberalism as something more than (just) a free market regime eager to cut loose from the state. Harvey points to a neoliberal paradox to explain his view of this: opposite to the rhetoric of a strong state as a hindrance to individual freedom, the state is needed by the free market regime to implement the neoliberal political goal of sustaining the independence of the financial system and protect and support it. Massive state support for banks in times of crisis is, according to Harvey, a clear sign of this inconsistent relationship with the state. This is in line with what has been argued about neoliberalism as a political philosophy that seeks to liberate only the processes of capital accumulation through policies designed to ensure market expansion while expanding social inequalities (Braedley and Luxton, 2010). The harshness of this political ideology is often underlined; Jessop (2010) highlights how it has brought a more brutal

form of finance-driven capitalism while McChesney (2011) simply labels it “capitalism with the gloves off”. Wacquant (2009) stresses the lenience with which the capitalist elite is treated in the neoliberal society at the same time as privatization of public functions and the diminishing of collective protections for the working class is an apparent development. In other words, Wacquant argues, the neoliberal order is not aimed at a dismantling of state and government but instead at setting up a state with little governmental oversight for people at the top and strict control of people at the bottom.

Neoliberalism should be understood foremost as a deliberate project for the restoration of class, Harvey (2005, 2010) argues. The central conclusion of a Marxist analysis is that the structure of class is defined by conflicts of interest as the capitalists’ profit is dependent on the surplus value that can be produced. This makes exploitation the core of the social relation between capital and labor (Marx, 1996; Wright, 2005, p.25). In a neoliberal context this relationship is, however, increasingly blurred as discourses promoting individual freedom and flexibility are on the rise. It has been argued that, while disguised as neutral common sense, the ideals of late capitalism colonize our minds and bring discourses that overemphasize emancipation and neglect differences in terms of opportunities and barriers in people’s lives (Nafstad et al., 2007; Lazzarato, 2009). This neoliberal way of viewing the relationship between structure and agency (re)produces ideologies that exaggerate freedom of choice and autonomy and shape perspectives promoting the idea that every individual makes their own success (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005).

That freedom and flexibility mostly concern some groups in society while not encompassing others is successfully hidden in the neoliberal rhetoric to secure the public’s consent (Phelan, 2014). The neoliberal emphasis on freedom of choice appears simultaneously with an increase of insecure employment conditions and a decline in worker and union power. This alters the conditions for labor and further amplifies the imbalance between capital and labor (Lindberg and Neergard, 2013). It has been pointed out

that this development (in Sweden as in other countries), where the workers' power to influence and be part of decisions determining their own future is fading (Allvin and Sverke, 2000; Furåker, 2005, Kjellberg, 2011), is going on without a thorough debate about the class aspect of this matter (Grönlund, 2004; Bengtsson, 2008).

Individualization, financialization/economization and depoliticization have been identified as interrelated core characteristics and the outcome of neoliberal politics (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001; Harvey, 2005, 2010; Hay, 2007; Lazzarato, 2009; Amable, 2010; Giroux, 2015). Amable (2010) explains the relation between these concepts by pointing to the most typical feature of neoliberalism: the emphasis on the individual and economic dimension of what could be seen as social and political questions, and claims this diminishes possibilities for collective action among those losing the economic competition and contributes to keeping them in their position.

According to the above argumentation, the other side of the coin of increased individual freedom and flexibility is that collective conditions of experience transform into personal problems and responsibilities. Political responsibility, on the other hand, is reconceptualized in relation to cost and efficiency rather than to social rights and values (Wacquant, 2009). Foucault (2008) talks about neoliberalism as a system providing the possibility of giving a strictly economic interpretation of whole domains previously thought to be non-economic. In other words this means an economization of the social coupled together with a depoliticization of the political.

Put like that, a society governed by neoliberalism does not come across as a very desirable place to live, which makes it hard to understand why anyone would tolerate it. Two important things can be said about this. To start with, neoliberalism should be viewed as an apparatus consisting of material conditions, policies, discourses, practices, relationships, organizational forms, ethics and so forth, permeated by a set of values (Phelan, 2014). Evil knights of neoliberalism did not come riding into town one day declaring

the launching of a suppressing system. In line with the thinking of Althusser (1971), the concept of hegemony and how it works has to be considered. Political ideas pass through a process of selection and modification, and ideas that at first seemed drastic or impossible are slowly molded and naturalized into common sense about (how) the order of things (should be). For hegemony to be possible, ideas and logics need to be molded and embraced by the public also. Put bluntly, there needs to be a selling point. Amable (2010) identifies competitiveness as a prominent feature at the heart of neoliberal ideology. The naturalization of the economic system, portrayed as an impartial mechanism allocating limited resources, encourages an individualized understanding where fighting for one's own best interest in fierce competition is turned into common sense. The concept of competition implies there has to be a winner and to be a "winner" in the context of imagined/claimed scarcity encourages a sense of entitlement; that you fought to make your own luck and that others could/should make a (better) attempt to do the same.

When it comes to the construction of hegemony, media and journalism have an important role in the negotiation and molding of neoliberal logics. Phelan (2014) suggests we should view the journalistic action as unconscious and unintentional to a large extent, stating that journalists reproduce neoliberal logics not because they are neoliberals, but by being journalists. Implicitly this argument revolves around the notion of the vulnerability of journalism and seems to contradict the notion of an independent, autonomous and powerful journalistic agency. I take the above theories into account in my examination of how news media, represented herein by the two largest national newspapers in Sweden, reproduce, negotiate or counteract neoliberal logics when constructing industry crisis news discourses.

This chapter has presented theories concerning neoliberalism and emphasized the class aspect of this economic and political practice; how this ideology exaggerates freedom of choice in the relation between structure and agency and how this changes (the view of) the relationship between state, labor and capital as the imbalance between capital and labor is

increasingly blurred. The concept of hegemony has also been highlighted, how neoliberal ideas and logics can become common sense and the important role that media and journalism play in naturalizing neoliberal ideology.

4. Clarification of concepts, relations and perspectives

There are some central concepts in this study: crisis, neoliberalism, class and power. What I am referring to when using these concepts will be clarified here as well as how I view the relationship between them and also how I view the journalistic room to maneuver in terms of structure and agency.

The use of the concept of crisis herein matches the common sense definition of crisis as an unstable and critical moment signaling a change is coming and also that an undesirable outcome is likely. In the case of industrial crisis, specifically, I refer to it as a situation where the survival of an industry is under threat and where the closure of a factory and mass unemployment is an (expected) outcome. At the same time, crisis can be defined as a situation where the outcome is uncertain in the sense that the actors involved in it cannot fully predict the consequences of different decisions and chains of events (Beckert, 1996). The uncertainty of crisis increases the importance of the politics of ideas and how they are communicated (Blyth, 2001).

In this study neoliberal politics and ideology plays a central role; how its logic is promoted by leading politicians and how it operates in media reporting via the journalistic recontextualization of the crisis. The concept of neoliberalism in this study refers to political economic practices emphasizing free market and free trade springing from an ideology promoting that the frames of the state (should) aim at encouraging individual freedom and entrepreneurial skills rather than to even out inequalities and give priority to questions concerning social responsibility (cf. Harvey, 2005; Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010). Individualization, depoliticization and marketization/financialization are often mentioned as characteristics of neoliberalism referring to the “disappearance” of political visibility and responsibility, the emphasis on market solutions and the focus on individuals instead of systems and structures, which is said to rearrange the relationship between state, labor and capital (Harvey, 2005; Phelan, 2014).

The recurrent labeling herein of the factory workers affected by the crisis as working class also needs to be clarified. The use of the concept of working class in this study aims at underlining that the factory workers in the neoliberal capitalist society today still *are* a class in themselves (in the Marxist sense of being exploited, having a shared position and a common relation to the modes of production), however, they are more rarely a class for themselves (in terms of class consciousness and/or collective organization to change their conditions) as class is not acknowledged in the neoliberal neglect of structural inequalities (see Lawler, 2005; Savage et al., 2001). In contrast the employing capitalist class is both a class in itself and for itself because its members belong to the capitalist class and they are aware of their own position and interests and how to preserve and fulfill them (Marx, 1955; Wright, 2000; Harvey, 2005). This Marxist emphasis on class is in opposition to the idea of “multitudes”, the importance of cultural identities today in what has been defined as a post-capitalist society where the working class-capitalist dichotomy has been claimed to be outdated or less relevant in the ongoing debate about power structures and inequality (see, for example, Hardt and Negri, 2004). My belief is that a restoration of an explicit class concept is increasingly important when examining the neoliberal context that promotes individuality and freedom of choice.

When it comes to the concept of power, it is the cornerstone of Marxism to focus on its relation to class domination in capitalist societies, how power is linked to class relations in economics, politics and ideology. This means power relations are not understood foremost as an interpersonal phenomenon but instead as rooted in the social structure (Wright, 2000). In this study two power relations are present. The first is the power balance between labor and capital in the labor market in terms of rights and responsibilities, or rather how this power relation is understood by journalism. The second is the relation between journalism and the political, economic and ideological conditions that surround it. To examine these power relations then inevitably involves the question of structure and agency.

The relationship between structure and agency is rather essential in this study. How structure to varying degrees molds the individuals and their social activity and agency—the ability of individuals to interact with the course of events and have the possibility to affect their direction—is a central concern of research examining different dimensions of social life (e.g. Giddens, 2008). Different ways of viewing this relationship can be exemplified by the work of Althusser (1971) and Giddens (1982). In the work of Althusser (1971) structure is both an agent of repression and something unavoidable. Ideology plays a key part in maintaining structure and, according to Althusser, it is impossible to escape ideology and inevitable to be subjected to it. This way of seeing the relationship diminishes possibilities of agency and is contradicted by Giddens (1982) who instead views structure as internal to agency. This places agency at the center, emphasizing how actors produce structure instead of the other way around.

journalism and ideology. By this I mean we How structure and agency is approached in my study becomes visible in the following. At the center of attention is the relation between the neoliberal logic and the journalistic logic, how neoliberal discourse operates via journalistic practice in times of industrial crisis. Put differently, the study examines how the journalistic logic, which is driven by factors more or less autonomous from the neoliberal logic, consciously or unconsciously co-constitute neoliberal discourse as an outcome of basic criteria of news value or particular routines embedded in the journalistic practice. By this I mean that, hypothetically speaking, news journalism is “free” to construct and interpret an event in any thinkable order as journalists can stay within the media logic, step outside it, or even go beyond it (Berglez, 2011). Journalists can be said to be more or less inclined to reproduce dominant discourses in different contexts. Speaking in terms of power, the power of journalism ideologically to affect people’s perceptions is the taken-for-granted assumption which justifies this scientific study (and others) of journalistic output, while the power over the discursive shaping is seen as a more or less conscious negotiation between should not only settle for journalists’ self-estimated

sense of autonomy but also pay attention to the actual journalistic output and the way neoliberal discourse operates in it. To use news discourses from the late 1970s as a point of reference to news discourses from the 2010s illuminates that the relationship between structure and agency can vary in different times and contexts, in terms of both journalistic agency and in journalists' room to maneuver, the same as for the actors in the labor market during an industrial crisis.

4.1 Two perspectives on neoliberalism and the media

The attempt to link political economy and cultural studies perspectives in this study makes it necessary here to clarify briefly how these two perspectives view the relationship between neoliberalism and the media. Within political economy the Marxist tradition of focusing on social relations of power is central, which in media and communication studies means the study of the power relations constituting the production, distribution and consumption of communication resources (Mosco, 2009). The capitalist system itself is the object of study for media research within this tradition and the relation between media and capitalism, for example, how neoliberalism affects the media content, is the focus of attention. Three themes are recognized as recurring in political economy research on media: ownership and regulation, media production and media representation (Phelan, 2014). In a simplified manner we can conclude that political economy studies focus on structure, the capitalist system, while cultural studies focus on agency: as the language of the system. In the traditional Marxist way of seeing the relationship between the material base and the social superstructure the former determines the latter. This view is challenged by the cultural studies perspective, for example, in the groundbreaking work of Hall (1988) and his analysis of Thatcherism where the relation was reversed (see Phelan, 2014, for an extended discussion on this). Hall identified the ideology and discourse of Thatcherism as a force reshaping the class configuration in the UK society and showed the importance of the ideology, politics and culture underpinning the capitalist system. Hall also analyzed the language of the neoliberalism of the Tory government (2011) and identified a firm political and ideological project

with the capacity to secure political consent. In both studies Hall points to the media as playing a crucial part in transforming political ideas into common sense.

The choice to link up the political economy perspective with a more cultural studies one in this study leads me to take into consideration the mechanics and the materiality of the economic base and the way this creates certain conditions, opportunities and limits for journalism (as well as for the actors in the labor market crisis it reports on), while also taking into account the possibility of journalistic negotiations and contestations of the neoliberal logic.

In this chapter the central concepts occurring in this study: crisis, neoliberalism, class and power, have been further introduced, as well as how I view the relationship between them and the journalistic room to maneuver in terms of structure and agency. The differences between the political economy and the cultural studies perspectives have also been introduced and my decision to link them together has been explained.

5. Research overview

In this chapter I will present and discuss previous research on media and neoliberalism. The chapter is divided in three sections. This division of focus is connected to the relationship between state, labor and capital, where the representation of the working class, politics and the market can illuminate how the relationship is understood by media and journalism. In other words the chapter presents research I find important and relevant to discuss in relation to my study. It is a selection and not an attempt at a full coverage of the fields of research related to my study. The research overview discusses how scholars have approached both the how and the why when it comes to media representations. This means that the presentation of how previous studies suggest that the working class, politics and the market is represented in the media is followed by interpretations from both scholars and journalists that can help us to understand the media representations and why it matters to study them. I will discuss in this chapter previous research springing from both the political economy and cultural studies research traditions examining neoliberalism and the media. The studies highlight in different ways media representations of the working class, the relation between journalism and politics in the negotiation about political responsibility, as well as the question of market interpretations and economic discourses in journalism and media.

5.1 Media, journalism and the stratification of class

In this section the stratification of class is in focus and previous studies giving attention to how the working class is represented by media will be discussed. As neoliberalism is identified as foremost a project for the restoration of class (see Harvey, 2005), examinations of how the working class is represented and how its position is understood in relation to state and capital is therefore crucial to show how neoliberal discourse operates in the media reporting of an industrial crisis today.

Lawler (2005) has examined how the working class is represented within the British media. Her study argues that there are strong common

understandings about what is sayable and what is not when it comes to class or, more specifically, when it comes to what working-class people are like. Lawler suggests that contempt for the working class is present and visible in the media representation to such an extent that we can speak about a set of doxic constitutions of the working class shared by the public bourgeoisie (including journalists). Skeggs (2004) in her study of representation of the working class in the media also points to how a normative middle-class gaze represents working-class people as “devoid of all worth and value”. The middle-class gaze through which the (behavior of) working-class people is being measured and judged is also identified as the dominant feature in other studies (e.g. Lyle, 2008; Bennett, 2013). It is argued in this research on British and American media representations of the working class that when working-class people are recognized in difficult situations today structural explanations have become subordinated those of individual blame. In the research project, “Making class through mediated ethical scenarios”, Skeggs and Woods (2011) concluded that representations of the working class in different media outlets seem to highlight individualization in action; how the neoliberal emphasis on self-improvement, choice of lifestyle and individual responsibility to avoid the wrong choice operates via seemingly harmless television reality shows. Skeggs and Woods point to the deceitful way strong moral judgment is presented as different kinds of make-over to strengthen and “help” those in a weaker position (2011).

Eriksson’s study (2015) shows similar findings on reality television in a Swedish context. The study shows discourses of ridicule where working-class people become signifiers of a morally unsound lifestyle. The study examines how compulsive shopping, which is highly promoted in the capitalist society, is transformed into a ridiculous behavior of working-class people who lack self-control and sufficient intellectual capacity.

Research about the representation of working-class people in news journalism points to other strategies than ridicule in the sense that the more blunt and obvious concept of reality television and popular culture is not applied within the journalistic practice. A more subtle form of ideology is

identified. The Glasgow Media Group (1976, 1980) examines ideology in news reports in a study of the coverage of a miners' strike in the British television news. The study shows that the ideological parameters of news reports are weakening the power of the working class. Their findings put focus on the difficulties of journalism to maintain an objective stance and points to how the news instead promotes the dominant ideology in society where the voices of the workers are suppressed and deemed to be less important than the voices of management. More recent studies highlight how journalism marginalizes the working class and makes their interests invisible by avoiding content relevant to other than middle- and upper-class citizens. A study of discursive transformations in labor news specifically (Martin, 2003, 2007) shows how the Canadian and US press target their audiences in terms of class and how this affects the language of reporting. Martin (2007) identifies a journalistic shift when covering transportation strikes, from a perspective of worker struggle before the 1970s towards a perspective of inconvenience suffered by consumers after the 1970s. Martin claims this consumer-oriented approach is harmful in the way it contributes to class inequality when excluding working-class interests. In line with Martin's analysis is Nerone's argument that the news media and the whole news industry during the last few decades have been transformed in a way that has "orphaned the working-class market" (Nerone 2009, p.354, see also Bagdikian, 2004; Chakravarty and Schiller, 2010; Machin and Niblock, 2010).

With reference to the above and to the idea of journalism as an institution with a key role in democracy it becomes clear that it is important to examine how news journalism constructs citizenship and provides a venue for citizens' voices; put simply, how journalism encourages or suppresses a sense of belonging and entitlement. In an extensive examination of the representation of ordinary citizens and public opinion in television news and the press in Britain and the USA, Lewis et al. (2005) show that citizens tend to be represented as observers of reported events, entitled to have a voice foremost when expressing their individual interests and emotions. It is concluded in that study that the way ordinary people are represented in the

news media does very little to encourage an active form of citizenship. In terms of democracy and the idea of a politically engaged citizen, Lewis et al. conclude that the news “in its current form is part of the problem rather than part of the solution” (2005, p.141). This research helps us to understand the importance of not only being concerned about *if*, and counting the number of times, the so-called ordinary citizen is represented in the news, but to also examine *in what way* ordinary citizens and working-class people are portrayed; in what contexts and roles they participate. The unequal capacity between different social groups and the task that lies before journalism to strive for a more equal and democratic distribution of attention has been the focus of attention in a number of previous studies (e.g. Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011; Lewis et al. 2005; Gimmler, 2001; McNair, 2000; Mansbridge, 1999; van Dijk, 1991), pointing to the fact that ordinary citizens are often left out of political activities.

In a Swedish context a study by Levin (2003) illuminates news discourses in conjunction with a big reorganization of a workplace. Levin emphasizes recurrent themes in the news coverage of the event and compares them with the discourses among the workers themselves in her focus groups. Levin argues that the versions of the event formulated in the media coverage construct the workers as victims in a discourse about winners and losers. Her study identifies news discourses as one-dimensional in comparison with the topics and discussions among those directly involved in the event. One of her conclusions is that agency and responsibility are unevenly distributed in the media discourse. The discrepancy between media discourses and the topics of the focus groups is emphasized in terms of dilemmas for journalists/journalism, the media and democracy.

According to the above, the way the working class is graded through a middle-class norm, ridiculed and portrayed as examples of a flawed lifestyle in reality television shows, as well as being neglected or represented as victims in news journalism, seems to go beyond nation-specific context. Previous studies indicate that this is valid in different Western societies.

Why is it so hard for the media to understand and respect the working class? This question was raised by the former editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Brent Cunningham, who suggested that “many reporters have blind spots when it comes to seeing through the myths of neoliberal economics and individual responsibility”. Cunningham’s explanation for these blind spots is that “today, reporters are more likely to come from middle-class backgrounds, have professional training, and spend most of their time with other educated, professional people. They misrepresent the working class because they don’t know them, spend time with them, or build relationships with them.” (workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/2016/04/18/from-paula-jones-to-trailer-parks-journalists-class-blind-spots). This argument identifies journalists themselves as part of the problem, implying that a different coverage of working-class people is within the reach of journalism if journalists broaden their horizons. The segregation between the middle-class journalists and the working class they represent is highlighted also in a Swedish context in a study mapping where journalists live and why it matters (Wiik, 2015.) The study suggests that the concentration of journalists living and socializing in areas characterized as the domains of a creative middle class detaches journalists from the reality and conditions governing the lives of working-class people.

A somewhat different answer to the question why the working class and labor stories are neglected by journalism is expressed in a discussion among journalists addressing this issue. In 2011, former industrial and political news correspondents in the UK invited union representatives and press officers to a seminar examining the demise of labor-related news, highlighting the fact that the focus of news stories nowadays is less on job losses than on market failure and the consequences for business. The seminar discussion about the diminishing news coverage on questions concerning the working class and trade unions locates the development both within material conditions in the labor market—the disappearance of the “real power” previously connected to the unions—and in the ownership structure of newspapers today where owners are increasingly involved in the economic system and the aim to make profits. Former industrial

correspondent Nicholas Jones bluntly concluded that journalists still *could* cover the labor market from a labor perspective, but “who is going to publish it?”(Media & Society, seminar 2011-03-16). The final rhetorical question implies that these former correspondents view journalistic agency as subordinated to the structure within which journalists work. In scholarly terms it positions journalism within the political economy perspective and downplays journalistic agency.

I have chosen to include the above discussions as they illuminate different ways of viewing structure and agency within the journalistic profession. Both Lawler (2005) and Skeggs (2004) make an attempt to interpret their research and explain why media represents the working class the way it does. Lawler suggests that the normative representation of the working class and the disgust shown for what are represented as the characteristics of this class is a manifestation of the middle class needing to distinguish itself from its others, where the working class representation then works as a means of self-constitution. According to Skeggs, the way the working class is represented has very little to do with individual journalists or agents within the media sector trying to distance themselves from the lower classes, but it is instead our entire social and cultural system that works to continue this class contempt where the working class is bound to lose. Richardson (2010) argues that what research about how news journalism neglects the working class and “talks to” middle- and upper-class readers shows is how the striving for profit serves as a driving force for newspapers to change their discourses to attract the desired readers. The question why is, according to Richardson, answered by looking at how class remains to be the most important mode of social stratification in the market segmentation of readers—opposite to “the increasing use of psychographic characteristics” (p.4). Martin (2007) interprets the journalistic orientation towards consumers (in Martin’s study this refers to the inconvenience of passengers unable to travel on buses, trains and airplanes during a strike) instead of a focus on the collective fight for social and economic justice as a clear expression of fragmenting individualism and a different understanding of labor rights than a few decades ago.

Harvey's (2005) explanation for why the media either neglects or diminishes the working class is that neoliberalism is foremost a political project whose aim is to restore capitalist class power and that the neoliberal ideology, characterized by individualization, depoliticization and marketization, is reproduced more or less consciously in media content. Following Harvey, other characteristics of the neoliberal ideology are the "disappearance" of political responsibility and the naturalization of market perspectives. Research that takes an interest in these questions when examining different aspects of neoliberalism and media will be introduced next.

In the section above, previous research about the media and the working class has been presented and discussed as well as different explanations of why media and journalism represent the working class and their interests in a certain way. Studies point to the working class being ridiculed and put forward as bad examples, for instance, in reality television shows, while news journalism tends either to neglect working-class people and interests or represent them as victims reacting to a given circumstance. The structure-agency relationship becomes clear in the different ways the question why the working class is represented like this is answered. Some answers underline journalistic agency and claim the neglect and ridicule found in media representations is the outcome of journalistic choices springing from a socio-economic gap between middle-class journalists and the working class. Others point to journalists being locked into a structure that prevents them from covering working-class and labor stories.

5.2 Media, journalism and political responsibility

Below, research dealing with media representations of politics and especially the question of political responsibility will be presented. This is followed by a discussion on why politics is represented this way and especially how a neoliberal tendency of depoliticization might influence the journalistic understanding of the role of politics.

Previous research has looked at how journalism manages to hold politicians responsible when it is covering issues and events that are understood as

“political”, in other words, situated within the realm where politics has/is perceived to have the ability to influence the order of things. The mention of “understood as” is significant and plays an important part in the question regarding journalism and political accountability. Numerous studies have pointed to difficulties arising within the neoliberal context in terms of recognizing a question as a political issue (Harman, 2011; Mylonas, 2012, 2015; Murray-Leach et al., 2014; Bickes, Otten and Weymann, 2014; Kelsey, 2014; Triandafyllidou et al., 2013; Mercille, 2013; Marron, 2010; Miller, 2009; Kotz, 2009). One example from this cluster of critical research focusing on the crisis of capitalism that started to become apparent in 2007/2008 is Mylonas’ (2012) study of mainstream media in different Western countries. The study identifies the core of neoliberal depoliticization in an act of blame-shifting where journalism constructs crisis discourses “by objectifying the crisis as something caused by the supposed reckless, exploitative and sly behavior of specific people” rather than addressing it from a structural perspective.

In a Swedish study, Ekström et al. (2015) examine the question of depoliticization from a historical perspective focusing on journalists’ interviews with politicians in times of crisis. The analysis of prime-time national and regional public service television news identifies a shift in the way journalism approaches politicians in different historical and political contexts. The study concludes that the questioning is oriented to different expectations of government interventions and responsibilities in different political regimes. Another Swedish study (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2014) on political responsibility and journalism focuses on changes in the concrete practices of news reporting and in the relations between media and politics. Swedish local, regional and national press is analyzed to investigate how journalism manages to hold politicians accountable in different contexts. The study shows similar results as the previously mentioned study; that journalism, when situated in a more complex and blurred sociopolitical context, is less inclined to hold politicians accountable. Yet another study in a Swedish context (Olson and Nord, 2015) that examines journalism and the question of political responsibility claims that the Swedish press is not only

less inclined to hold politicians accountable but also plays a legitimizing role in terms of the government's treatment of and response to what was labeled "the financial crisis" in 2008. The study identifies journalistic representations portraying leading politicians as credible crisis managers, which according to the study contributes greatly to an image of these politicians as trustworthy and competent.

As the second substudy of this dissertation examines the relational dynamics between journalism and politics and focuses on political discourses and arguments during the crisis in the car industry I wish to mention briefly some of the research that has taken an interest in the constitutive elements of political discourse. Studies analyzing political rhetoric with the aim of unmasking the ideology behind it often spring from the critical discourse tradition, focusing on the methods by which the political arguments are put forward and how its content can give us clues about the reason why something is being said in a certain way (see for example Wodak, 2011; Chilton, 2004; Chilton and Schäffner, 2002; van Dijk, 2002; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). Hall's study (1988) about the language and ideology of Thatcherism mentioned above could perhaps be seen as breaking the ground for the point of departure within CDA where the importance of language is given more attention than within previous critical research.

Following this research tradition, Fairclough (2016) in her study of British newspaper coverage of the austerity policy in 2010 aims at further developing an analytical framework for evaluating political discourse and how this is defended, questioned or criticized in the journalistic choice of arguments put forward. Her empirical analysis shows the British government's successful framing of austerity measures as a logical answer to ongoing overspending on the poor and how this framing made austerity measures directed at this group to appear not only as inevitable but even morally right. The question of morality and what role this plays in crisis news discourses concerning economy and the market, how market interpretations of events have become more dominant and how the voices and opinions of market actors are represented as undisputable, will be

discussed in the following section which concludes this chapter on previous research. First, however, I discuss why the question of political responsibility seems so hard to capture within today's media reporting.

Common to much of the previous research is that, in attempting to explain why the question of political responsibility seems to disappear from the news media, the focus is on depoliticization. Neoliberal logics appear to influence the way societal issues and crises are to an increasing extent seen as unavoidable, as an outcome of built-in mechanisms in an inevitable chain of events governed by an impartial "market" instead of political decisions. Harvey (2005) argues that neoliberalism has been and is successful in the act of becoming invisible as a political strategy. Instead this highly political idea has been naturalized into common sense, often perceived to be a natural condition without alternatives, which can then serve as an answer to why journalism fails to raise the question of political responsibility. This is in line with how Ekström et al. (2015) interpret the results of their study; pointing to a more depoliticized journalistic understanding today where journalism does not seem to expect politicians to take responsibility in matters that were considered highly political a few decades ago. Djerf-Pierre et al. (2014) also follow the same reasoning when concluding that the blurriness which makes political responsibility hard to distinguish for journalism is the outcome of a process of depoliticization that signifies the neoliberal and globalized society. A neoliberal blurriness wherein political choices, decisions and actions are difficult to distinguish and the question of political accountability is less clear-cut is also recognized in other studies (e.g. Behn, 2001; Lord, 2004; Papadopoulos, 2007).

Another explanation that emphasizes the lack of journalistic power or abilities to hold politicians responsible finds the answer within the "nature" of journalistic practice, as identified by, for example, Tuchman (1978). The journalistic practice is claimed to encourage a kind of manipulation where journalism is identified as the party being manipulated. To scrutinize the elite sources on which it is dependent is deemed to establish a situation

where journalism is never in full control of the story-telling process (see also Entman, 1989; Franklin, 1994; Negrine 1994).

Previous research on the question of media representations of politics and political responsibility has been discussed above. Different studies identify a decline in discourses focusing on political responsibility when the media covers complex societal issues like different kinds of crises. The studies relate this to neoliberalism and the way this logic make societal issues seem unavoidable. The perception of unavoidability makes journalists less inclined to hold politicians responsible. Other explanations locate the answer within the journalistic practice pointing to how journalists depend on politicians as elite sources and therefore are less willing to scrutinize them.

5.3 Media, journalism and the market

This last section highlights research about how media and journalism represent economic elites and how the representation of different crises has shifted from a broader societal perspective to a focus on market interpretations and market actors highlighting moral and individual aspects rather than discussing the problem from a systemic perspective.

One dominant feature has been identified by previous studies in the way different crises emerging from the ongoing crisis of capitalism have been perceived, discussed and discursively constructed by media and news journalism. Common to the different crises is that they are addressed and portrayed as financial and economic crises rather than as (political) systemic ones (e.g. Kelsey, 2014; Murray-Leach et al., 2014; Mylonas, 2015). In a special issue of *Critical Discourse Studies*, Kelsey et al. (2016) identify “the failure of journalism” in providing alternative interpretations and a critical assessment of what has been going on since 2007/2008 in the biggest recession since the 1930s. Kelsey et al. identify news stories focusing on morality, individual blame and the unavoidability of market mechanisms rather than discourses about structural issues and contextualizing discussions concerning the causes of the crisis. In a study of three major UK broadcast television channels Thomas (2016) examines the relationship

between media and economy (both in the sense of structural issues governing the news production and in the news coverage of questions concerning economy) in a case study about a banking crisis. Thomas concludes that while economic, business and financial journalism has the capacity to hold the corporate world accountable it fails to do so.

In a large-scale study of the media coverage of the Euro crisis in four leading newspapers in ten countries initiated by the Reuters Institute, Picard et al. (2014) found individualized discourses about the crisis focusing on suffering and blame. They argue that the emphasis on the individual and economic dimension of what could also be seen as social and political questions diminishes possibilities for collective action. Chakravartty and Schiller (2010) follow the same line of reasoning in their study of journalism in the US, China and India, where they identify a shift in the perspectives of news media. This shift refers to how coverage concerning the economy and society broadly has moved towards increased coverage concerning business and finance. A distinct market-oriented point of view is, according to Chakravartty and Schiller, expressed through a journalistic focus on various representatives of financial capital at the expense of a labor perspective. One of the central observations from numerous research studies on media and the economy is that statements from business and other elite sources promoting an economist market view are reported as facts by news journalism in a way that points to a lack of critical engagement and to a journalistic stance far away from the claimed objectivity (e.g. Duval, 2005; Martin, 2007; Nerone, 2009; Rafter, 2014; Silke, 2015).

A Swedish study of the increasing amount and influence of economics in the national public service television news (Viscovi, 2006) also identifies how opinions about the importance of “efficiency” and “flexibility” from economists or other actors within the so-called market sector are represented in an uncritical way in the news reports, rendering the market logic and its actors an aura of undeniable authority.

Besides showing how an economy/market perspective is dominant in media representations of different crises emerging from the ongoing crisis of capitalism, scholars also try to provide answers and explanations for why journalism neglects to question or provide alternatives to the discourses of business elites. For example, Thomas (2016) argues that the dominance of stories from a market perspective and the lenient posture towards the business elite springs from two mechanisms built in to the journalistic practice: oversimplifications and a reluctance to show an overly critical attitude towards bank(er)s. Chakravartty and Schiller (2010), on the other hand, claim that the explanation for the dominance of market interpretations and the increased focus on the economy and economic growth in the media is found outside of journalistic practice. They argue that the explanation for the shift in the journalistic perspective lies within the expansion of market capitalism since the 1980s. The two different explanations illuminate the divide between arguments leaning towards structural issues and arguments focusing on journalistic agency. The structure-agency divide becomes clear when summarizing all the above scholarly interpretations of the mentioned research focusing on questions of class, politics and economics within the media and journalism. I will discuss different ways to view and understand the journalistic practice and output further in the chapter (6.1)“contextualizing journalism”.

In addition to the how and why of media representations during different crises previous studies have also considered why it all matters, what the possible consequences might be. Cawley (2012) argues that non-systemic perspectives of journalism and the focus on business elite actors are working in two ways: they reduce the depth of explanations of complex processes while leaning towards conflict and easy accessible drama, at the same time as they strengthen the marketization of news discourse and the positioning of crisis within an economic frame. Croteau and Hoynes (2003) point to how a unilateral journalistic focus on the interests of society’s power elite strengthens the social order rather than opening up possibilities for ordinary citizens to challenge it, leading to a situation where no one is responsible and no one is to blame. Lehdorff (2012) argues that there is a shared

foundation of the different outbursts of crisis, that they all, however they are labeled and represented, are systemic crises illuminating the absence of sustainable economic and social development models, to which the media could/should call attention. Leschke et al. (2012) claim that an acknowledgement of the ongoing crisis as a systemic one could offer the opportunity to expose rising inequality as the most prominent characteristic in the present growth model and for a battery of corrections to be introduced. Foster and Magdoff (2009) argue that this is far from the case in a time dominated by an omnipresent financialization of everything, promoting exploitative and corrupt practices in order to protect corporate capital surplus at the same time as the needs of citizens and the increasing insecurity of the working class are unaddressed.

Above I have discussed how previous studies identify a dominant economy/market perspective in media representations of different contemporary crises. The reasons why discourses are constructed in this way are explained by pointing to mechanisms in the journalistic practice or the expansion of market capitalism. This way of locating the answer either within journalism or in the structure surrounding it is a division common to all three sections in this chapter. This highlights the different perspectives within the political economy and the cultural studies traditions. As my study departs from both perspectives it suggests the possibility that the answer is found somewhere in between, in the negotiation between the journalistic practice and the outside structure and that the relationship can alter depending on a number of factors. I will discuss this further in chapter 6.1.

5.4 A call for this study

Research dealing with questions regarding power and news journalism, whether it focuses on the power *of* journalism or the power that has impact *on* journalism, seldom has an explicit class perspective and in my perception this is an under-researched area. The societal developments during the last decades both outside and within the media system as well as in the way the media and news journalism interact with changing social factors presumably generates conditions that alter the way different class interests are

represented. At the very least it can be argued that the way neoliberal discourse operates in news reports, the way the relation between state, labor and capital is understood and expressed in mainstream news journalism, needs to be empirically investigated. We know from previous studies mentioned above that ordinary citizens today in general tend to be represented by news journalism as reactive rather than active and that other media representations, like reality television shows grade and judge the working class through a middle-class gaze, obscuring structural explanations and conditions. Other studies have drawn attention to the ideological loading of political rhetoric and suggested that the neoliberal blurriness of responsibility complicates the ability of journalism to do accountability work. We also know from previous work that outbursts of the ongoing crisis of capitalism tend to be put within an economic frame and that coverage of the broader economy and society has shifted towards a journalistic focus on business and finance.

Studies have identified the difficulties for journalistic practice, some suggesting the explanation can be found within the journalistic logic; how different norms, ideals and routines guide the journalistic practice and how ideology is negotiated. Other studies suggest the explanation is reached by looking at how journalism is situated in a neoliberal context. A large part of this research is conducted in contexts other than the Swedish. I interpret this as a call for a study that puts the pieces together and attempts a more overall approach. This study examines how neoliberal discourses operate in news media reports, how the relationship between state, labor and capital is understood and negotiated by journalism in the way the working class, responsible politicians and the economic elite are approached and represented today in a crisis situation where the question of class is omnipresent.

6. Contextualization of journalism and crisis in the 1970s and the 2010s

In this chapter both journalism and the two crises studied herein will be put in context. In the first part of the chapter two different levels of contextualization of journalism are in focus, one dealing with the unique Swedish case while the other focuses on aspects that characterize contemporary journalism more in general. The second section first highlights the context within which the textile industry crisis was situated and then moves on to a broader discussion concerning general trends in the labor market today in terms of a shift towards a more neoliberal regime that is also noticeable in other countries. This contextualizing chapter is a central part of a CDA where the history and societal context of the ideas being articulated are believed to be of great importance. The reason for this way of viewing context is quite simple; since texts are not produced or consumed in a vacuum neither should the analysis be (see Reisigl and Wodak, 2009).

6.1 Contextualizing journalism

In a democracy public discourse can and should empower citizens, give them voice and agency, build community and help citizens to act on behalf of their interests and values (Gamson, 2001, p.56).

Journalism has undisputed symbolic power and an assignment to work as a key institution in the democratic society, but journalism itself is also influenced and governed by a number of contextual constraints—the ideological, political and economic circumstances with which it is surrounded (e.g. Kellner, 2004; McChesney, 2008). The society within which the journalistic practice (and the crisis) is situated today as well as at the time of the Swedish textile industry crisis will be discussed in chapter 6.2. This chapter aims at contextualizing journalism by taking different organizational conditions into account. I will first describe journalism in Sweden in the 1970s to give an idea about the ideals and norms of the journalistic practice within which discourses about the textile industry crisis was constructed. The reason for choosing this time as a point of reference will also be

clarified. After this I move on to discuss general organizational constraints for journalism today, how changes within the media might put more pressure on the journalistic practice and affect the room for maneuver of journalism. This is followed by a discussion about journalism and ideology and the role the ideal of objectivity can play in this. The section below ends with an emphasis on the possibilities that still lie within the journalistic practice by looking at theories about agency and creativity.

6.1.1 Swedish journalism in the 1970s

In everyday practice journalism is guided by organizational conditions and journalistic routines, norms and ideals. Studies in a Swedish context show that the frames within which journalists operate are guided by a complex set of conditions, rules, routines and ideals that are interwoven in, shaped by and shaping everyday journalistic practice (Ekström and Nohrstedt, 1996; Wiik, 2010). The set of conditions that were valid in conjunction with the news coverage of the textile crisis will be presented in this section.

The period between 1966 and 1985 has been identified as a special era in Swedish journalism when journalistic practice was centered on an ideal that promoted taking a stance against power elites and where the norm was to be on the side of the people. In the 1970s journalism gave priority to so-called “hard news” focusing on the labor market, politics and the economy where the news value criterion “interesting” was insufficient for an event to be reported; events also had to be considered “important” to become news (Djerf-Pierre, 2000). The major assignment for journalism at this time was considered not only to be a watchdog covering questions already deemed important but also to set the agenda for what questions should be deemed important. This implies a new approach towards the audience where journalists saw it as their mission to influence rather than merely to inform the public. The strong critical scrutiny ideal led journalists to cover societal issues that were considered to be relevant for citizens from a democratic perspective. The posture towards the actors of business life especially was explicitly critical and this group was under heavy scrutiny. It was characteristic of the professional journalist to be an active agent and to

establish a dialog where journalism became the link between the ordinary citizen and society's power elite (Hadenius and Weibull, 2003). In many aspects it could be argued that the 1970s represents an extraordinary time and situation for Swedish journalism and therefore is a peculiar point of reference for this study. The idea, however, is to use it just because of its extraordinariness. As the first substudy poses the question if and what journalism could do differently in the construction of crisis today, the news reports from the 1970s provide a very different alternative for the overall choices of approach, angle, questions and so forth.

6.1.2 Organizational constraints for today's journalism

I will discuss here the organizational context within which journalistic practice is situated today and in what way it can affect the journalistic output. This section highlights journalism in a wider context than the Swedish, arguing that the previous journalistic model in Sweden, rooted in a democratic corporatist structure characterized by a historically strong party press, is being replaced increasingly by a liberal model like the North American one. This development makes theories originally tied to an American context valid also when discussing the context of Swedish journalism.

A range of organizational factors caused by rapid developments within the media industry have altered the conditions for news print journalism today. In its assignment to report on the industrial crisis, which is the focus herein, journalism itself is in crisis as it is currently suffering financial pressure while undergoing revolutionary changes. One of these changes is the transition from traditional print to an online environment which has brought challenges to journalistic practices and routines due to going from fixed deadlines to 24/7 updates (Adams, 2013). This transforms the conditions for journalists who (already) have to navigate the tension between what is commercially viable and what is desired from an editorial perspective. In combination with the consequences of cutting staff costs, where fewer journalists are doing the same amount of work, or more, this must logically affect both the quality and accountability of journalism (Downie and

Schudson, 2009). In the contemporary newsroom there is less scope for in-depth reporting, less foreign and national news, as well as less original reporting (Rosenstiel, 2008).

The references above are to research largely rooted in an American context. According to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) analysis of media systems in different parts of the world, the North American model is a liberal one resting on commercial grounds while the Swedish media is more rooted in a democratic corporatist structure characterized by a historically strong party press. Is the American research about organizational challenges then even valid in a study focusing on Swedish print journalism? In terms of historical development it is, as professional ideals of objectivity and neutrality have grown exponentially among Swedish journalists (Wiik, 2010) and differences between the media systems in general are diminishing, now promoting political neutrality and a separation of commentaries and the objective information news style. In other words, previously separate systems are increasingly molded into conformity with a more liberal, commercial one (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Sweden is no exception to the general trend; the number of employed journalists has decreased and the overall impression of news journalism as being in crisis is also valid when addressing the rapidly increasing problems in the Swedish newspaper industry (Wadbring and Bergström, 2015). In terms of vulnerability the development at least does not seem to increase the space for journalism to fulfill its democratic assignment.

The political economy perspective focuses on the structural conditions, the (increased) linkage between the capitalist economy and the media and how this has given birth to a highly commercialized news journalism acting in accordance with profit maximizing principles, where the ideal of efficiency—rather than democracy—is constantly emphasized and promoted (e.g. Herman and Chomsky 2002; Richardson 2007; McChesney, 2008; Manning, 2013). Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model theory points to different distorting filters that govern the news reports in a way that makes the journalistic practice exposed to owners, advertisers and

other power elites. It is argued that, despite the claim of news media and journalism to be a democratic institution, media organizations resemble any company striving to maximize profit, clearly rooted in and dependent on market capitalism. Another distorting factor the propaganda model identifies is advertisers' (implicit) impact on content. Due to the increasing dependency on advertising news journalism needs to provide a content that is coherent with advertisers' political views and economic aims. The model also highlights the fear of losing access to power elite sources, which makes journalists less inclined to scrutinize political and economic elites and more inclined to give voice, space and attention to their perspectives in a less critical manner. Another filter is the avoidance of provocative or challenging content as the media company risks complaints or contempt from powerful groups in society and therefore a decline in circulation. In other words, this means staying away from anything that can be financially hazardous (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). What is left to report on then, for an objective journalism, is the common sense matters, the established perceptions, opinions and values in society, with an assignment to preserve rather than to challenge the social order.

6.1.3 Journalism and ideology

Below I will continue to discuss how the conditions mentioned above might influence the way ideology can operate in the journalistic output, especially in what way the ideal of objectivity can prevent journalists from moving outside common sense interpretations.

An anxious journalism is perhaps far from the image of alert and persistent journalists portrayed in films and series; where a hardcore reporter is constantly chasing the story and catching the bad guys. Obviously these journalists also exist in reality, exposing power abuse, fraud and other irregularities to the public. The investigative, revealing news stories can perhaps be seen as an answer to the question whether journalism is equipped to fulfill the democratic assignment of holding responsible actors accountable. These kinds of stories, however, say little about journalism's ability to challenge/work outside naturalized common sense perceptions on

an ideological level. The exposure of power abuse or maladministration is important from a democratic perspective but, as shown, the “unveiling” has a strong tendency to center on the moral failure of individuals rather than on serious systemic critique (e.g. Miller 2009; Fisher, 2009; Marron et al., 2010; Dyer-Witthford and Compton, 2014; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; Djerf-Pierre, et al., 2013; Mercille, 2013; Bickes, Otten and Weymann, 2014; Mylonas, 2012; 2015; Kelsey, 2014).

Hallin's (1986) theory about three different spheres wherein journalism can work is valuable in order to discuss the objectivity claim and the ideological constraints on journalism and why exposing malfunctions and power abuse can still be uncontroversial and safe. When situated in the first sphere, the sphere of consensus, journalism is safe from risking controversies as it is centered on uncontroversial matters almost incapable of causing harm. Objectivity is not needed as consensus is so dominant. In the sphere of legitimate controversy the objectivity claim becomes more important and the journalist sets out to be merely an observer and reporter of events. In the third sphere, the sphere of deviance, journalism is situated within a context where the rights and wrongs, ups and downs are so clearly defined and commonly agreed on that the ideal of objectivity is superfluous. Hallin (1986) concludes that journalism in this sphere can expose, condemn or exclude an event from the news agenda. In other words, this means that if journalism chooses to expose what is deemed to be deviant, rather than to keep it out of the news entirely, journalism is free here to express opinions and a clear standpoint. Analysis of journalistic output within all three spheres reveals ideological common sense assumptions about what is accepted, negotiated and opposed whereas analysis of the journalistic output situated in the sphere of legitimate controversy can also contribute to knowledge about what objectivity means, how it frames the journalistic practice in a certain ideological context. Analysis of crisis news discourses where different interests collide makes it possible to reach an understanding of what room to maneuver journalism has and in what way and to what extent reproducing, negotiating or opposing viewpoints “can” be represented within the realm of journalistic objectivity. In other words,

Hallins's theory can help us to come closer to an answer to the *why* question in this study.

In what way the impact of ideology is both a socially and ideologically controlled set of strategies where the actions of journalists are limited (van Dijk, 1988) is perhaps best explained by Althusser (1971) and his notion of interpellation and ideology; the constitutive process in which individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies. According to Althusser, interpellation indicates a circular movement where the ideology impacts the media content which in turn is interpreted by the audience which confirms and determines what is "sayable". When it comes to the relation between social power structures and media output, Fairclough's (2014) main argument follows the same line of reasoning in claiming that the output is ideologically shaped and also contributes to reproducing the social relations of domination. Fairclough stresses, which is highly relevant for this study, how language and power relations have transformed during the last three decades due to major socio-economic changes. Fairclough also emphasizes the process of naturalization in which journalism plays an important part. This process makes dominant discourses appear to lose their ideological connection and become common sense. This invisibility act is itself an ideological effect, as ideology is most effective when it is disguised (Fairclough, 2013).

6.1.4 The logic, news value criteria and routines of journalism

This section focuses on how the journalistic logic promotes a standardization and simplification that encourages certain stories, actors and explanations while neglecting others, but also how journalistic agency and creativity can make journalism move beyond this logic and hence negotiate or oppose ideology.

The structural limits and effects on the journalistic practice have been given attention above, perhaps to a point where the journalist practice can come across as a direct transmitter of neoliberal ideology. Critical theories underlining the lock-in mechanisms of structure have been criticized for

being too fatalistic and not acknowledging the potential that lies within journalistic agency (e.g. Ekström, 2003; Mulmann, 2010). As pointed out by Hall et al. (2013), analysis of journalism should take into account journalists' own logic; the ideologies and practices of journalism, and in what way they enable journalistic output to support, negotiate or counteract the neoliberal logic. The outcome of the argument posed by Hall et al., that journalistic and media output is a product of routines and choices through which ideology can operate but also be negotiated or rejected, suggests that the codes, ideals, norms and working routines of journalistic practice need to be acknowledged when answering the question why discourses are constructed in a certain way.

Previous studies introduced above showed the working class represented as passive victims, and discourses emphasizing market solutions and interpretations of the crisis, while making the question of political responsibility almost invisible. Following the argument posed by Hall et al., we should ask: what, in the journalistic logic and routines, encourages this focus of an event? The production of news is not a direct translation of ideology nor a random act made up on the spur of the moment. Instead, it has been argued, news production can be seen as the outcome of explicit rules and habits as well as of more tacit knowledge that is shaped, reproduced and negotiated over time (Tuchman, 1978; Deuze, 2009). According to Altheide and Snow (1991), media logic shapes different formats that become a framework or a perspective that is used when presenting and interpreting different phenomenon. This logic promotes a standardization and simplification that encourages certain stories, actors and explanations while neglecting others. Before the question of how to cover an event, journalists need to make a selection of what events constitute a news story in the first place. In a similar way that the journalistic logic enables events to be represented in a certain way, a set of news value criteria make the selection process of what events become news more standardized. Events that give an opening to the logics of personification, dramatization and sensationalism (see Galtung and Ruge, 1965; Hvitfeldt, 1985, also Esser and Matthes, 2013) are therefore more likely to become news.

Journalists are, according to all the above, torn between the influence of ideology and the limitations of fitting stories within a certain frame. Still journalists are far from robots. Two important things can be highlighted to give a more nuanced picture of journalistic agency: who (which journalist) constructs the story, and what the story is about. matters. It is pointed out by Bourdieu (2005) in his conceptualization of habitus that not all journalists are equal in power and agency but instead they are actors in different positions striving to understand and master different aspects and rules of the journalistic practice. At the same time, two different stories can allow for a higher degree of autonomy. Berglez (2011) has shown how media logic as a determining factor for journalistic output needs to be interpreted with reference to the specific context of the news story and the habitus of the journalists covering that story. The journalistic creativity to go beyond media logic is, according to Berglez, dependent on the knowledge, interest and position of the individual reporter. In conclusion, journalistic output can be seen as the outcome of numerous factors: which reporter gets to cover what story, the position, knowledge and interest of the individual reporter, and how conscious and creative that reporter is to go beyond media logic and reshape and negotiate ideological common sense.

This chapter has put the practice of journalism within context by discussing organizational and ideological constraints and by pointing to how the journalistic logic can make journalism more or less inclined to reproduce ideology. The norms and ideals of Swedish journalism in the 1970s have been highlighted and it can be suggested that the ideal of being an active and scrutinizing force on the side of the people that was valid then can give way to different discourses and interpretations when covering an industry crisis in comparison with journalistic choices springing more from the ideal of objectivity promoted in the journalistic practice today.

At the same time the political, economic and ideological context surrounding both the journalistic practice and the crisis event should be taken into account when we discuss why discourses are shaped the way they

are. In the following chapter both crises focused on in this study will be put within context.

6.2 Contextualizing the crises

The 1970s and the 2010s journalistic practice, the choices and routines of journalists during these different time periods discussed above, should of course be seen in the light of the wider societal context in the sense that the context provides possibilities for journalism to act in a certain manner and where certain discourses are more common and accepted than others. Embedded in this is an argument that different ideological discourses to some extent are always operating via the journalistic practice and that structure puts a limit on agency. Ideology can be more or less negotiated or opposed dependent on the extent to which it has turned into common sense and therefore is harder to be aware of—and also dependent on the conditions surrounding the journalistic practice, making it more or less vulnerable and exposed to reproducing ideology. The first section below presents the 1970s societal context and the idea of welfare, equality and full employment that was still quite present and accepted by a political majority in Sweden during this time.

6.2.1 The 1970s labor market in Sweden

Not only the role and ideals of journalism, discussed above, were different in the late 1970s compared with today. The ideology and common sense perceptions of Swedish society, as well as politics and the regulation of the labor market in the 1970s were based upon another way of organizing society and another understanding of the relation between state, labor and capital. This understanding went all the way back to the goal of Social Democracy in the 1930s when it was decided that the state should be given a totally different role than it had ever had before in order to stabilize employment on a high level. The idea of full employment was accepted by both business and labor as the state deliberately underlined their interdependency as a prerequisite for what could be called a win-win situation. Challenges were approached as common problems to be solved rather than as the “fault” of any of the three actors: state, labor or capital.

The idea of welfare, equality and full employment had been established for several decades at the end of the 1970s, implemented and distributed via a set of institutions to fulfill the social democratic project within the frames of a capitalist economy (Blyth, 2001). The idea of equality was executed by the unions implementing solidarity wages to even out differences between employers and to ensure that working-class people protected their rights in the labor market collectively instead of individually (Olsson and Ekdahl, 2002).

Given the above context it is reasonable to argue that the common sense perceptions of journalism, as well as of the working class, of politics and of the business elite about their rights and responsibilities during the textile industry crisis were different than during the crisis in the car industry. It is not the aim here to conclude that, however. Instead the 1970s can help us to discover the taken-for-granted ideology in society today as well as to understand neoliberal discourse and how it operates in media reporting about the crisis in the car industry.

6.2.2 Labor market conditions in the neoliberal era

The car industry crisis will be put into context in the following section by reviewing the socio-economic foundations on which the crisis is situated and the major changes that have occurred in Sweden and in large parts of the world since the crisis in the textile industry.

The crisis in the car industry in the late 2000s and the early 2010s, which in Sweden culminated with the closure of the Saab Automobiles factory in Trollhättan in 2011, was not a single crisis within a globally/nationally/locally stable and thriving system with business as usual. This crisis was one (of many) outbursts of the ongoing global crisis of capitalism that came into sight in 2007/2008. In a national context the crisis meant losing an important part of Swedish industry. There had been previous industrial crises in Sweden, like the textile industry crisis in the 1970s, but they had been situated in a different political context where state interventions in terms of subsidies and regulations were substantial. As

pointed out above, in the 1970s there was a consensus among the political parties about Keynesian economic policies. The redistribution of capital as well as the will of stepping in to keep employment was an explicit political aim. In the 2010s this will of stepping in had been transformed to a situation where politics did not acknowledge responsibility for industry. In a local context the closure of Saab Automobile doubled the number of unemployed people in a region with already above the average national unemployment rate. It was considered as nothing less than a local disaster.

The conditions surrounding both the labor market in general and perhaps the industry in particular have changed not only in Sweden but as part of a global transformation where exploitation of labor has been intensified in terms of increased insecurity and a decline in wages, as well as in the decline of the power of the unions during the last few decades (Hobbs and Tucker, 2009; Lazzarato, 2009; Harvey, 2005). For the Western countries the era after the Second World War was characterized by the belief in the welfare state as a protective mechanism for workers—replaced in the 1980s/90s by a neoliberal regime of capitalism that broke the previous contract (Wasko et al., 2011; Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010; Fenton, 2006). Since the 1990s Swedish politics have been strongly influenced by neoliberal ideas. The general deregulation of financial policy has been combined with the government's increased trust in market solutions and skepticism at political interventions. The role of the unions has diminished during the same period, which has had an eroding effect on the working class as a collective (Allvin and Sverke, 2000; Furåker, 2005). Taken together, the development in Sweden since the 1990s is quite unique in terms of the speed in which the ideas and principles about a strong welfare system and social equality have been replaced. The erosion of the Swedish model with the swift transformation from a combination of economic growth and full employment based on a wage policy of solidarity towards a new regime shaped more by neoliberal policies is exceptional. This has altered the conditions in the labor market as well as having completely changed the relationship between state, capital and labor in a way that makes the Swedish case special (e.g. Larsson et al., 2012; Blyth, 2003).

When looking at the situation for the working-class people employed in the crisis affected car industry it is possible to see increased freedom and rights rather transformed into increased pressure on the individual's responsibility to find new employment. The industrial context, where factories are put into bankruptcy and manufacturing is moved to countries where labor is cheapest, shapes the contour of a class-based hardship. In an era when the need to create a prosperous business and financial climate attractive to global capital is embraced by the political system and where entrepreneurial skills and flexibility are promoted by its leading representatives, massive support to protect employment for the working class has a modest position on the agenda (Harvey, 2005, p.70).

Honneth (2004) has drawn attention to this “paradox of individualization” in his analysis of the contradictory movements of flexibility and responsibility in today's labor market. Honneth points to the insidious way in which the balance in the labor market is interrupted, in the sense that the discourse of individual freedom obscures the fact that employees, in our Western capitalism, are increasingly tied to the employer and the need for continued employment. The difference consists only in the whip being disguised as a carrot, a circumstance that creates greater scope for capital and less power for the labor force. Honneth concludes that individualization, as a liberating force that empowers the individual against oppressing structures, is a contradiction in itself due to the predominance of the commercialization of everything, or as Honneth puts it; “the creeping metamorphosis of the whole society into a market” (Honneth, 2004, p.475). This is in line with Marxist arguments about freedom and capitalism being incompatible when it comes to wage labor. Marx claimed that the labor market always has to be viewed as an arena of unequal relations between capital and wage labor (1996, p.726). In other words, that recognition of class and inequality is necessary when addressing questions of freedom and flexibility.

The above contextualization of both the textile industry crisis and the car industry crisis highlights how the labor market, as well as the view on rights

and responsibilities tied to the individual worker, has changed in the last three decades. An industrial crisis in the 1970s was situated in a context dominated by the idea of welfare, equality and full employment while the situation in the 2010s has changed to emphasize individual responsibility to find and keep employment. In the analysis of journalistic discourses situated in the different contexts these changes need to be taken into account.

7. Method, cases and material

This chapter presents and discusses the method of this study. It also discusses the cases that are focused in this analysis and clarifies why two similar crises situated in different time periods were chosen. The last section in this chapter discusses the choice of material and why discourses in the two largest Swedish newspapers have been analyzed. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as method will be introduced first, followed by a section where the choice of a comparative method will be explained.

7.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

A critical analysis should not remain descriptive and neutral: the interests guiding such an analysis are aimed at uncovering injustice, inequality, taking sides with the powerless and suppressed. (Wodak, 1989, p.14)

Here I will introduce the central ideas underpinning CDA and elaborate a bit on the more concrete method for my dissertation, the common grounds for all of the three analyses as well as the specific character of each substudy.

According to CDA, discourse is seen as a form of social practice. “Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258). Put differently, discourse is socially constitutive and at the same time socially shaped in the way that it constitutes objects of knowledge, situations, relations and social identities. Discourse is constitutive in sustaining, reproducing and transforming the social status quo. In short this inevitably links discourse with ideology. CDA aims to deconstruct the ideological constructions and make the underlying relations of power visible. This points to the fact that CDA is not a dispassionate and objective part of social science, instead it is to be seen as an intervention in social practice encouraging scholars to “take responsibility” and highlight different kinds of social inequalities. Critical science does not focus on purely academic or theoretical matters, instead it takes its departure in a real social problem and chooses the perspective of those with less power, critically examining those

in power (van Dijk, 1986, p.4). The main claim of CDA is that societal changes, in terms of changes in politics and social life, include substantive elements of cultural and ideological change and have a linguistic-discursive character, which offers an opening for the discourse analyst to trace these elements (van Dijk, 1986, p.271).

In CDA, the data collection and analysis are not necessarily two separate steps, but may be carried out simultaneously. Theory and empirical data are approached in parallel in order to refine the analytical approach. It is often said that empirical research can be thought of as a circular process of selection, conceptualization and operationalization (see Meyer 2001, p.19). There is however always a first step for every analysis. In my case the very first step was the determination of a location where the understanding of the relationship between state, labor and capital possibly could be expressed, followed by a mapping of the news discourses in an attempt to distinguish the key topics of the texts and identify what discourses there are about rights and responsibilities and how the social relations of power are manifested.

The initial mapping of the main categories in the crisis news coverage to find out what the journalistic story is about and who participates in it was done simultaneously with a mapping of relevant theories regarding journalism and society. After reading, rereading and categorizing the news coverage for a total of three months about the closure of the car factory in Sweden's largest morning and evening newspapers, three overarching areas were extracted. These categories are the workers, the responsible politicians and the economic elite—highlighted herein in separate studies.

In the first study the method is partly indebted to van Leeuwen's (2008) conceptualization of how social actors are represented in discourse and focuses on whether workers and ordinary citizens are included or excluded in the news, how they are quoted and referred to, and what roles are allocated to them. The focus of the second analysis concerns questions of political responsibility, the discursive strategies that are used to legitimate

control or naturalize the social order (cf. Fairclough, 1985); how causes, solutions, consequences, expectations etc. are put forward and argued for by leading politicians—and in what way this is recontextualized and framed by journalism. The method used in the second study focuses on two dimensions of the text, the description of the political problem and the way this is recontextualized by journalism. The method of examining the first dimension: the argument strategies and how political representatives make use of modalities, evidential devices and rhetorical figures or questions, is inspired by Wodak (2001) and Chilton (2004). In the analysis of the second dimension, how journalism relates to the political frames, the text is approached in accordance with what has been outlined by Richardson (2007), focusing on the journalistic use of direct or indirect quotations, on what meanings, explicit and implicit, are expressed by the choice of words when journalism is referring to people, concepts, events and processes, as well as on what choices are made in the structure of the text, as in the order in which sources are referred to. The third analysis aims at capturing the main story, the overall message in the journalistic construction of crisis. Following the modus of analysis suggested by Jäger (2001) and Fairclough (2013, 2014), the understanding and explanation of the causes, characters and solutions of crisis, how this is brought forward (and by whom), is investigated. The focus of this analysis is also how the main topic corresponds with the interpretation shaped by the voices of experts.

CDA approaches questions of validity and reliability in a very different way than quantitative research within the positivist tradition (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). Abalo (2015) raises the question of validity in a way I also find applicable for my dissertation in terms of how to ensure the accuracy of research within the qualitative tradition. In a dissertation containing different qualitative studies we should ask questions of how well the different studies collectively capture the aim of the dissertation (p.65) and in an overall perspective how the analysis succeeds in capturing the object of knowledge. Managing to do so rests on the ability to place the object of the study within the appropriate sociopolitical as well as theoretical frame. In other words, generalizability within the qualitative tradition revolves more

around theory than the empirical findings. Taken all together and translated into my dissertation, the question is how I manage to capture how neoliberal discourse operates in the reporting, how journalism represents the actors and events involved in an industrial crisis, as well as what and how contextual settings and agency are working together in the shaping of the journalistic output. Different methods within the CDA tradition have been used in my three analyses to fulfill this claim.

As for reliability, the transparency in providing ample empirical examples from the material makes it possible for others than the writer to form an opinion about the news coverage. Common to the substudies in my dissertation is that they operate at the same level of analysis as they seek to illuminate discursive patterns of the text and establish the journalistic themes which are then discussed on a macro level; in what way the journalistic discourse corresponds with ideology and the overall social power structure. The analyses focus on the linguistic level without emphasizing the outmost and closest micro level which is a conscious choice springing from the overarching aim to understand in a broader sense what perspectives, actors and aspects are represented and in what way. The structure of the analysis, rich with empirical examples, also enables a comparison and makes it possible to highlight the disparities and similarities between crisis representations situated in different contexts.

7.2 Comparative case studies

In this section it will be clarified why two different cases are compared. Comparison is claimed to be a fundamental tool of analysis as it increases the ability of research to make accurate descriptions. It also plays an important role in “concept-formation” in the way it makes it possible to focus on similarities and contrasts among cases (Collier, 1993, p.105). Another advantage with the comparative approach is that it allows us to contextualize knowledge (Hauge and Harrop, 2007; Burnham, Lutz and Layton-Henry, 2008). The analysis of journalistic representations of similar crises separated by time and situated in very different political spheres improves my analysis and helps me to steer away from the atomistic

dilemma of discourse analysis. This weak spot of atomistic analysis is identified by, for example, Carvalho (2008), who argues that longitudinal study and diachronic analysis examining how the reporting of a particular story, theme or issue develops over time is a neglected and under-researched area, while there are numerous case studies of events isolated in time and space. Danermark et al. (1997) also stress the investigation of case studies as an adequate way of analyzing the mechanisms that generate an event, claiming that the internal relations of an event then tend to “manifest themselves in all their complexity at the empirical level” (p.126). The comparison in this dissertation hence consists of journalistic discourses in conjunction with industry crises in the 2010s and 1970s, where the latter is used as a point of reference to illuminate how the car industry crisis in the 2010s is represented by journalism. I wish to stress that the analysis is not a comparison between the two chosen mainstream newspapers. They serve to give an insight into the discourses present in the newspapers with the largest circulation.

7.3 Two cases of industrial crisis

The two different cases of industrial crisis studied herein are similar in the way that both the textile industry and the car industry represented important national industries in their time. Algots textile production went bankrupt in 1977 and closed the factory in Borås the summer that year, leaving almost 3000 factory workers unemployed. A bit more than three decades later, in Trollhättan, Saab Automobile closed its factory a few days before Christmas. The first signs of trouble for the factory, culminating in bankruptcy, had previously surfaced in 2008 when the American car manufacturer General Motors (GM), which owned Saab, announced that it was selling the company. The Swedish government was offered the chance to buy Saab, a suggestion that was rejected by the Minister of Economic Affairs. Spyker Cars, with Victor Mueller as chairman of the board, became the new owner of the company in February 2011. Saab filed for bankruptcy on December 19th of the same year, after several economic setbacks. The shutdown of Saab is the largest industrial closure in Sweden to date. More than 3000 workers lost their employment and this doubled the number of

unemployed people in a region with already above the national unemployment rate. In preceding chapters, both of these crises are put in context in a way that highlights the differences in the time periods in which they occurred. The choice of these two crises enables us to compare two contextual settings, each representing a specific period of time in terms of industry structure, political, economic and ideological context and journalistic regime. Whereas the textile crisis was situated in a context characterized by Keynesian economic policies with the aim to redistribute capital and keep full employment, the car industry crisis was situated in a context strongly influenced by neoliberal ideas. Moreover, the journalistic ideals during the first crisis are characterized by critical scrutiny and openly taking a stance against society's power elite, while the ideal during the latter emphasizes the importance of journalism as an objective observer. The idea of putting industry crises from two so different times next to each other is not to conclude that they are different but to use the news discourses of the textile crisis to accentuate how neoliberal discourse operates in the reporting of the car industry crisis.

7.4 Material—why mainstream press?

The material of the study will be presented further here. The empirical core of this dissertation is comprised of the total coverage, the 51 news articles that were published, in *Aftonbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* during the two months before and one month after the closure of Saab Automobiles factory in 2011² in order to glimpse the prelude, the actual closing of the factory, and a part of the aftermath. The choice to focus on these months springs from the idea that a bankruptcy and closure of a factory can be regarded as a critical moment/case (Danermark, et al., 2002) when the discourses and the positions taken can provide insights about the ideas, understandings and aims of different actors. It represents a moment when

² The first study also comprises television material from both the national and local news, 20 news pieces from Rapport and Västnytt.

everything is brought to a head and is therefore a case when the importance of the politics of ideas and how this is communicated increases (Blyth, 2001). The comparative ambition brought the decision to analyze also 40 articles from the same newspapers published during the same three months, before and after the bankruptcy, covering the crisis in the textile industry in 1977 (substudy 1 and 3), as well as 49 articles from 2008 when the crisis in the car industry first became visible (substudy 2). The choice to include data from 2008 was made given the fact that this was the time when GM announced it wanted to sell and offered the Swedish government the opportunity to buy the company, which implies the question of political responsibility for the industry is a valid topic in the news. The comparison with this critical moment and the moment of the actual closing of the factory is made to understand what happened to the question of political responsibility, in what way it was emphasized and negotiated in 2008 and how it was covered in 2011. In total 140 news articles from two Swedish newspapers, *Aftonbladet*, which has the largest circulation of the evening papers, and *Dagens Nyheter*, with the largest circulation of the morning papers, have been analyzed. I wish to stress once again that the comparison is not between the newspapers but between the different time periods.

The choice of newspapers was made due to the fact that these two national newspapers are the largest ones in Sweden today, where one is a morning paper considered more high brow than the other, which is an evening tabloid. These differences imply that a somewhat different logic could exist for the journalists in terms of what events to cover as well as how, which in that case provides this study with material representing a broader range of journalistic logic. The stated position of the editorial page of *Dagens Nyheter* is “independently liberal” and *Aftonbladet* is “social democratic”, and this fact, that they represent different political viewpoints, also influenced the choice to include them in this study. In other words, it is not the narrow niche press that is examined in this study but the largest morning and evening newspapers, presumably governed by slightly different logics and with editorial pages expressing different political positions which taken

together give the material some width despite the fact that only two newspapers have been examined.

In this age and time the question will inevitably pop up: why look at newspapers? It is easy to get the impression that “old media” has played its part and nowadays the news agenda is set by anyone with an internet connection and a decent amount of persistence and “followers”. Social media and blogs, that is where the action is, right? There is however research pointing to traditional news media remaining as important to society today as ever before. The blogosphere absorbs some of the traditional media’s audience share but large established organizations still distribute more original news to a larger audience than any other news provider model (McChesney and Nichols, 2010; Kamiya, 2009; Schechter, 2005). Society’s need for traditional news media as being most prominent during times of crisis has been stressed and attention paid to how the public then turns to established media, more than to any other source in search of trustworthy information and context in a crisis (Rosenstiel, 2008).

It has been suggested that the alarms about the imminent breakdown of “traditional” media are exaggerated as newspapers still play a central role in the provision of news, contributing to the gathering and distribution of local, regional or international news. Ahlers and Hessen claim newspapers still have an unchallenged track record when it comes to covering public affairs and they predict newspapers will keep on setting the news agenda (Ahlers and Hessen, 2005, p.65) Despite the fact that a decade has passed since that prediction it is perhaps wise not to dismiss completely newspapers’ ability to set the agenda and frame an issue or to rule out their news material as irrelevant to examine. At the time of the crisis in the car industry, the printed press was still the main employer of journalists in most OECD countries (Oh, 2010) and far from a whisper in the margin. The choice to analyze newspapers derives from a notion that the way events and actors are represented in the mainstream press matters for public discourses about rights and responsibilities in times of crisis.

In conclusion, the above chapter has presented the method of the study and explained the choice to make a comparison between crisis news discourses from similar crises situated in different contexts. The two cases of crisis have been further introduced and the choice of the two newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet*, has been discussed.

8. Brief review of the articles

The dismantling of the working class

The first article analyzes the representation of the working class and identifies a journalistic understanding of the soon-to-be unemployed workers as victims of an unpredictable and unavoidable crisis where no one is to be held responsible and where workers can only cling on to the hope of a “solution” appearing. The analysis points to a shared understanding of individual responsibility to find new employment and solve the situation, implied in journalistic questions about what the unemployed workers will do to cope and confirmed in the represented answers. Workers do not get to talk about what they think should be done but rather how they feel. This is the most significant result of the first study, that matters previously belonging to the political field have moved into the private sphere, a condition where feeling has become both the starting point and the endpoint for societal participation. This is in contrast with discourses that were valid during the textile industry crisis in the 1970s. The overarching journalistic discourses of that time promoted the concept of solidarity and an understanding of working-class citizens as part of a society that is ready to take action and find collective solutions to what were considered to be collective problems. The study shows that the frail bonds between citizens today, as they are represented by journalism, are built through individualized feelings instead of unifying action (cf. Kress, 1986; Muehlebach, 2012).

Derision, destruction, distortion

The second article is an investigation of the dynamics between politics and journalism and can also be read as a reply to the criticism of using neoliberalism as an explanation in analyses of societal issues (e.g. Barnett, 2010). The analysis stresses that it is important to operationalize this theory by showing neoliberalism in action—in this case the way in which leading politicians constantly give voice to the values underpinning the neoliberal ideology. The analysis of the Swedish government’s arguments, and its strategy of advancing them by constructing evidential devices, modalities and rhetorical figures and questions, illuminates the naturalization of

ideology and the compact neoliberal agenda masked as common sense, which makes the execution of neoliberal actions appear the only sane way to go (c.f. Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, about *topoi*: the argumentative schemata that are evident in political performances). The question of journalistic space and the relationship between media and politics makes it essential to investigate if, and, in that case how, journalism negotiates or opposes the assumption behind this neoliberal approach by putting forward other voices and perspectives. My study suggests that the view of the relationship between politics and media as presented within the mediatization theory should be open to the reverse scenario in complex, (de)politicized circumstances. The analysis shows no sign of journalistic attempts to question the political explanations by moving outside the hegemonic, depoliticized frame. Opposing voices, such as representatives from other political parties, receive less space and are often put in the middle of the government's introductory and closing arguments. The opposing voices do not represent a different way of viewing, but instead settle for blaming the government. This analysis deals with two different time periods, 2008 and 2011. Analysis of the news reports from 2008 shows that the political justification for leaving the responsibility to the market is transformed into common sense in the news story in 2011, when undisputed stories about the government's limited ability to support the car industry are put forward in the news coverage.

Competitiveness and market interpretations

The third article looks at the main journalistic theme in conjunction with the crisis; what is (re)presented as the causes, characteristics and solutions, and who is approached and entitled to participate as an expert source—and compares this with the crisis news discourses during a previous industrial crisis in Sweden. The study concludes that mainstream news journalism (as represented in the two investigated newspapers) today to a large extent neglects the labor perspective of the industry during crisis while focusing on the business perspectives and actors and by putting forward the voices of market-oriented experts. Despite the obvious importance for the labor force and its representatives and despite the Saab crisis occurring in Sweden, a

country known for its historically influential labor movement and strong protection of workers' rights, the news story about the Saab crisis discloses a strong market bias. This study suggests that the one-dimensional news report today fails to contextualize the crisis when it instead covers the surface drama involving the economic elite. The analysis shows how the journalistic story emphasizes certain characteristics of elite business actors, portraying them as having an almost superhuman capacity and competitive spirits. In doing so journalism neglects other aspects of the crisis and turns it into a matter solely for the market. The stories draw on expert sources (other journalists or different kinds of experts on the car industry) to interpret the legal and financial aspects. This is in line with what has been highlighted in previous research, for example, by Chakravartty and Schiller (2010), stressing that the common sense logic either implied or made explicit by those deemed to be legitimate experts in the business news constantly promotes the benefits of the flexible global markets and other features that support the neoliberal order. The study shows that during the textile crisis in the 1970s the industry is represented as an arena molded by the political agenda where the political decisions regarding industry and trade are made visible.

9. Main conclusions

This chapter will discuss the main results of the three substudies in relation to the main purpose of this dissertation as well as how my conclusions correspond with previous research and in what way it can contribute to research within the field of journalism studies. The last sections of this chapter also point out the limitations of this study and make suggestions for future research.

The purpose of the study is to examine how neoliberal discourse operates in media reporting of an industrial crisis today. The study departs from an idea that the neoliberalization of the Swedish society and labor market during the last decades has altered the relationship between state, labor and capital and that this change can be traced in the discursive shaping of an industry crisis. CDA is applied to examine how neoliberal discourse operates in the reporting; how tendencies of individualization, depoliticization and economization are negotiated in the journalistic understanding of the relationship between state, labor and capital; and how rights and responsibilities are ascribed to the working class, politics and the economic elite. Analysis of news reports on a similar crisis in the 1970s is used as a point of reference to illuminate further how neoliberal discourse operates and how the characteristics of the crisis news coverage is discursively shaped today. All through the study the *why* question is present as I seek to understand why the journalistic discourses are constructed in this way, how they are part of a wider context, and in what way this context can encourage or suppress alternative discourses. This means that the study discusses questions that are central to the field of media and journalism research; questions concerning structure, ideology and journalistic agency; and the room for maneuver and vulnerability of journalism in different contexts.

The historical comparison in substudy 1 and 3 illuminates how the classification of what is news, what journalism regards as public interest, and how journalistic assumptions about what aspects of industrial crisis are relevant has undergone a metamorphosis the last few decades. Substudy 2 has a slightly different approach, focusing on the relational dynamics

between politics and journalism as it seeks to trace, or rather understand, the way the journalistic approach to the crisis in the car industry transformed from including a view of the crisis as falling under some sort of political jurisdiction to an understanding of it as an issue solely for the market and the business elite actors to handle. Analysis shows a firm neoliberal posture promoted by the responsible ministers and journalistic discourses where the question of political responsibility disappears from the news stories about Saab in the period between the first signs of crisis in 2008 and the closure of the factory in 2011.

The first substudy shows that workers are portrayed as having very few rights or possibilities to affect their own situation. The hopelessness of the workers and their inability to affect the situation is underlined in the crisis discourse. The emotional perspective is dominant as journalism focuses on either hope or despair when workers react to a situation in which they are deemed to be powerless victims. At the same time individual responsibility is emphasized. It becomes clear that it is expected the unemployed workers will borrow money to maintain their consumption levels and individually will find solutions to cope. The analysis of the journalistic construction of the workers' situation during the textile industry crisis in the 1970s, when workers are seen as a collective represented by a strong union demanding their rights to be protected, illuminates a shift where the position of the working class today is weakened. This can be interpreted with reference to the notion of neoliberalism as a class restoration project (Harvey, 2005).

The second substudy shows that political responsibility is almost invisible in the reports about the car industry crisis while the fight between business elite actors is the main story. In discourses from the 1970s the role of the state is understood as a force that balances the power imbalance between labor and capital. The economic elite, their actions and motives, are intensely questioned by journalists who are active in holding both political and economic elites accountable for the crisis in the textile industry. The causes of the crisis are debated by multiple voices representing different standpoints, and the answers from the elite actors are questioned by

journalists who clearly take the side of the workers. This historical point of reference illuminates how neoliberal discourse operates in the reporting today, where the neoliberal characteristics of individualization, depoliticization and economization seem to alter the journalistic understanding and shaping of an industrial crisis.

The third substudy shows that the uncritical journalistic stance towards the economic elite seems to be intertwined with the depoliticized and individualized context (cf. Harvey, 2005). This gives birth to a recontextualization of the crisis where statements from business elite actors are (re)presented as facts (cf. Duval, 2005; Martin, 2007; Nerone, 2009; Rafter, 2014; Silke, 2015) and where the journalistic choice of business experts as well as how these experts are used to interpret the events further naturalizes the financialization of the crisis (cf. Cawley, 2012; Foster and Magdoff, 2009). This diminishes the possibilities to perceive it as a political and labor problem (cf. Chakravarty and Schiller, 2010). The competitiveness of the business stakeholders is emphasized and dramatized into a game in “need” of constant updates about who won and lost the last battle. This way of constructing what I call a surface drama gives the impression of journalism scrutinizing those in power without acknowledging that this, from a democratic point of view, would mean something other than the 24/7 updates about the economic elite’s struggles and measures to “win the fight”.

The question why journalism constructs the crisis in the car industry the way it does can be answered by pointing to the neoliberal context in which it is situated, at least in part. Revisiting the discussion on societal structure and journalistic agency we should also take a look at the journalistic practice and how its components; norms, ideals, routines and so forth, can encourage journalism either to support or counteract neoliberal ideology. The emphasis on the emotional perspective today, for example, when journalism represents workers and gives attention to the competitive fighting between the business elite actors, can perhaps be explained by looking not only at the neoliberal context but also at the routines and ideals of journalism. Media

logic, for example, the tendency to give way to events and actors that make dramatization, personification and simplification possible, can then help us to understand the journalistic choices better; the choice to focus on the fight of charismatic business leaders and to construct industry crisis in terms of an easily understandable game.

In the negotiation between structure and agency, the components of media logic and the news value criteria can perhaps contribute to an explanation why the discourses are constructed in a certain way. As an example, the third substudy herein points to how the CEO of Saab, Victor Muller, is the star of the story in the way that journalism highlights his every step, failure and success in so-called hour-by-hour updates. Muller's charismatic person and the drama and conflict stories that can be constructed around him in accordance with media logic would then explain the strong focus on him and other actors from the economic elite rather than explanations pointing to journalism situated in a context emphasizing neoliberal ideals as competitiveness and possession of capital. At the same time it is difficult to explain only with reference to media logic why there is so little attention given to the political actors. I find it hard to argue that the political elite is lacking in charismatic persons to build a story around or that political discussions concerning the industry crisis could not offer journalism an opening to dramatization or conflict. This explanation is not satisfactory in the case of portraying workers as emotional victims and interviewing them one by one in their homes either. Can we imagine Muller crying on his couch, talking about despair, after failing to close a deal? Something other than media logic seems to influence the roles and coverage of the different actors.

The journalistic ideal of objectivity can, however, perhaps help to explain the strong journalistic focus on the individual performances of the economic elite. Previous studies have interpreted a journalistic focus on individuals as an avoidance of a more systemic approach (cf. Miller, 2009; Fisher, 2009; Marron, 2010; Dyer-Witthford and Compton, 2011; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; Djerf-Pierre et al., 2013; Mercille, 2013;

Bickes, Otten and Weymann, 2014; Mylonas, 2012; 2015; Kelsey, 2014). It seems different components within the journalistic practice can strengthen neoliberal ideology and open for neoliberal discourse to operate in the reporting. When the ideal for journalists is to work as an objective observer this can perhaps increase the vulnerability of journalism and consequently the risk of journalism operating in a direction where its logic works to construct neoliberal consent.

My analysis shows how journalism situated within what Hallin (1986) calls the sphere of legitimate controversy clearly emphasizes the emotional and the individual perspective when covering an issue of mass unemployment. I suggest that the strong journalistic focus on emotions and individual performances or experiences in the coverage of the car industry crisis arises from the dilemma of being an objective observer. Questioning or challenging the neoliberal structuring of the labor market, for example, that power is withdrawn from the working class at the same time as they are ascribed full individual responsibility to solve their situation (cf. Honneth, 2004), would require journalists to perform a persistent accountability act and hence run the risk of stepping out of the role of objective observers by a more critical questioning of the political posture towards the crisis.

The comparison with journalism in the 1970s strengthens this belief. The ideals then (see Djerf-Pierre, 2000; Hadenius and Weibull, 2003) promoted active journalists who openly took a stance against the idea of capitalists making profit while workers lost employment. This collective posture of journalism made it possible for journalists to hold politicians and economic elites accountable. It could be argued that the societal context and the more leftist ideology and perception about the relation between state, labor and capital in the 1970s could operate in the media reporting of the textile crisis via the components of the journalistic practice that were embraced at that time; the ideal of being critical and active and standing on the side of the people. Following this line of reasoning, the news coverage during the car industry crisis can then be seen as a co-constituted outcome of a neoliberal ideology, an approach to and perception of crisis in the industry today as

something unavoidable (where the prime minister has only compassion to offer) and the journalistic ideal of objectivity. In terms of structure and agency this argument implies journalistic agency is closely related to and dependent on the structure of the surrounding society and the question posed in the first substudy, “could journalism could do it differently?” would then be given a negative answer.

9.1 Ideological closure

In short, the first article illuminates the way journalism shapes the (depoliticized) emotional order, how the focus is on individual coping, and how working-class citizens are understood as consumers rather than producers. The second article highlights the dynamics between politics and journalism and suggests an understanding of journalism as rather exposed to the firm neoliberal posture of the right-wing government. The third article points to an unchallenged perception of crisis as a question for the market. By consulting social theories about the neoliberalization of society (e.g. Bourdieu, 2002; Harvey, 2005, 2010; Hay, 2007; Lazzarato, 2009; Wacquant, 2009; Bradley and Luxton, 2010; Jessop, 2010; Amable, 2010; Giroux, 2015) I locate the journalistic discourses about the crisis in the car industry within a paradigm promoting increased individualization in combination with a depoliticized social structure and a deepening financialization of events that previously were regarded as social and political issues. In opposition to theories stressing the powerful journalistic agency and a view on journalism as an autonomous institution to which (logic) other power elites need to adapt I see a journalistic output signaling something different. The analysis in this dissertation points to what Hartley (1983) calls an *ideological closure* where alternative interpretations and representations seem to be beyond the reach or ability of mainstream journalism.

Taken together, the way the working class, politics and the economic elite are represented indicates a naturalization of the neoliberal ideology with few negotiations available for another understanding of an industrial crisis. Going back to what Phelan (2014) said about journalists reproducing a neoliberal ideology not because they are neoliberals but because they are

journalists opens the way for discussion about the room for maneuver of journalism and what level of autonomy as an institution should be ascribed to journalism.

My conclusion is that the level of journalistic autonomy is overestimated when it comes to covering an issue like the industrial crises discussed herein. The idea, or the “identification of the problem with journalism” often put forward by conservatives and right-wing opportunists, about how individual journalists leaning to the left tend to cover events and actors from a leftist perspective, is not supported in my study of news articles from the two largest newspapers in Sweden. On the contrary, it seems both organizational and ideological factors limit the possible perspectives in the journalistic story in a way that makes individual journalists’ political preferences irrelevant. In other words, the results of my study indicate a certain journalistic understanding of the relation between state, capital and labor that varies depending on within which political context journalism is situated. To judge what implications this might have is far beyond the scope of this dissertation but the way the two examined newspapers ignore or are incapable of raising questions that are of great importance for the working class, (even) in a situation where the workers could be seen as the main actors in terms of those being mostly affected, is presumably not ideal from a democratic point of view.

9.2 Contribution of my study

This study contributes with analyses showing how neoliberal discourse operates in media reporting of industrial crisis today. It shows how the two largest national newspapers in Sweden when covering an industrial crisis today dismantle the working class by the construction of discourses that prevent political and collective action, and how journalism instead promotes values within the neoliberal ideology that renders the workers ever more passive and isolated. The study also shows the disappearance of political responsibility in the news coverage of the car industry crisis as well as identifying a very lenient journalistic posture towards the economic elite.

The Swedish self-perception mentioned in the introduction is often supported by an external perception of Sweden as an outlier in the movement towards organizing society in a neoliberal order that seems to be going on “everywhere else”. This study shows that the journalistic discourses about rights and responsibilities in the two largest newspapers in Sweden are different than what perhaps is expected in a Swedish context, as well as showing the changes of conditions in the Swedish labor market and in the conditions governing the journalistic practice. The study presents three analyses focusing on the trend towards increased individualization, depoliticization and financialization, identified as the main characteristics of the neoliberal ideology, by providing an overall perspective on things that mostly have been analyzed separately, that is, by focusing on the issue of class and how workers, political responsibility and the economic elite are represented by news journalism. In combination with the historical comparison, the dissertation contributes a more overall perspective, avoiding the atomistic dilemma of critical discourse studies and at the same time questioning the alleged objectivity, autonomy and maneuvering space of journalism. My results are recognized in findings of previous research on the realm of media and neoliberalism, in analyses conducted on different representations of the working class, politics and economic elite in other countries and contexts—and my study can hopefully be a contribution to the growing body of critical research paying attention to these questions.

9.3 Limitations of my study

Here I will highlight the limitations of my study due to the limited material and the relatively short time period examined. What my study shows is crisis news discourses in two Swedish newspapers, *Aftonbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*, in conjunction with industry crisis in the 1970s and the 2010s. It is not an examination of all the newspapers or other media outlets in Sweden, nor is it a study of how neoliberal discourse operates today in media reports on other events. This limits the range of my arguments and the extent to which I can claim that the findings of this study apply on a more general level and in other contexts. As in all research, the questions put forward in this study, the method and the theories from which my interpretations and conclusions

are drawn is also a selection which gives priority to some explanations and aspects over others.

The discourses found in the two examined newspapers are often referred to herein as “journalistic discourses” or mentioned in sentences discussing “mainstream journalism” or sometimes even simply labeled “journalism” in very general terms. A more correct presentation would perhaps be to mention every time that what I am referring to is crisis news discourses in the two Swedish newspapers *Aftonbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*. I have chosen not to do that as I think it would have resulted in a very tedious style of writing. Still it should be pointed out that I have not empirically investigated other news articles about the industry crises published in other newspapers, nor have I analyzed other media. The time period that I have chosen in conjunction with each crisis is also limited. Analysis of news articles during three months around the closure of the factories shows the discourses during these months. In conclusion, this means that what I can claim is that my dissertation shows how the two largest newspapers in Sweden discursively have constructed two industry crises during three months and that the way they cover an event like this has changed profoundly in the last three decades. It is however reasonable to argue that analysis of the particular cases and newspapers at least indicates somewhat of a shift in perspective that perhaps can also be found in other mainstream coverage of an event like an industry crisis today.

9.4 Suggestions for future research

Here I will reflect on things my study does not examine or explain and that I think would be interesting topics for future research. Returning to the notion that not all journalists are equal in power but that their room to maneuver instead is dependent on their position in the journalistic field (Bourdieu, 2005) gives birth to the question: which journalists cover what event? Who covered the crisis in the labor market? It is clearly beyond the scope of this study to answer this. With reference to the idea that the characteristics of an event in combination with the interest, knowledge and position of the journalist that covers it enable more or less journalistic

creativity to move beyond standardized repertoires promoted by the journalistic logic (Berglez, 2011) it makes a relevant topic for a future study. If a stronger agency is reserved to some journalists it is interesting to know what events these journalists cover, if they cover issues of employment and inequality in a more “creative” way, and in that case how, where and why? Alternatives to the stories of industry crisis found in the mainstream press can perhaps be found elsewhere. The question then is what this tells us about mainstream discourses. If these alternative discourses are not found in the largest morning and evening newspapers in Sweden in conjunction with industry crisis and mass unemployment it could be viewed as a failure given the democratic assignment that is still connected to and expected from mainstream journalism.

I encourage more qualitative studies of mainstream journalism in conjunction with complex situations to be conducted and hope this can broaden the debate and the assumptions regarding journalistic power and autonomy. There is a need for future studies to investigate journalistic news discourses from a class perspective as well as to examine critically the assumptions underpinning other media representations of different social classes. The fact that different classes do exist, that the conditions governing citizens’ everyday lives are dissimilar and cannot always be explained by focusing solely on gender, ethnicity or individual perspectives, needs to be acknowledged more within social science in general and media and journalism studies in particular, especially from scholars examining a Swedish context . This requires that we view journalism as something other than a commodity like any that can be sold primarily for profit and instead pay attention to the democratic assignment of journalism. It requires that we view those taking part in the journalistic output not as consumers but rather as an audience, as citizens with the right to a news coverage that strives for a democratic distribution of attention on events representing issues and actors from a wider class background instead of news processed through a narrow middle-class gaze, abandoning perspectives that do not fit within a neoliberal view of the world.

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Article I

Diana Jacobsson (80 percent contribution) with Mats Ekström (20 percent contribution)

*Dismantling Discourses: Compassion, Coping and Consumption
in journalistic representations of the working class*

Published in Critical Discourse Studies (online: December 18, 2015)

Dismantling discourses: compassion, coping and consumption In journalistic representations of the working class

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate empirically how workers and other ordinary citizens are represented in the news during crisis in the Swedish labor market in two different political contexts: the textile industry crisis in the 1970s and the automobile industry crisis in the 2010s. The study suggests that journalism constructs dismantling discourses by focusing on the three main themes of compassion, coping, and consumption in the representation of the working class. The news discourses close down rather than open up possibilities of agency for the workers as hoping, coping, and shopping seem to be the only alternatives available for them in times of crisis. Based on this empirical study, we seek to highlight the relationship between the news discourse, power, and ideology. We also put forward the question of whether journalism could do their construction of crisis differently. We claim that journalism and journalism studies need a

discussion about what are the possible perspectives and the dead discourses when journalism constructs a story.

Introduction

When a large industry goes bankrupt and thousands of workers lose their employment, it could be reasonably argued that the workers in that industry should play the lead role in terms of what is at risk. Of all the actors involved, the members of the working class are those whose lives will be most affected by losing both an economic and social foundation. The question of media representation and the way in which social actors are entitled to participate is a significant one. How actors engage in and talk about societal matters is discursively constructed in the institutionalized and authoritative forms of journalism, and is an important aspect of the symbolic power of the news media (van Dijk, 1995). Therefore, from a democratic perspective it is of utmost importance whether news journalism promotes or discourages the public's sense of belonging in society, and whether citizens are portrayed as active and empowered or as powerless victims (e.g. McNair, 2000, Allan, 2005, Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011). The aim of this study is to investigate empirically how workers and other ordinary citizens are represented in the news during crisis in the Swedish labor market in two different political contexts: the textile industry crisis in the 1970s and the automobile industry crisis in the 2010s. The Swedish case offers an example of an exceptional transformation from a combination of economic growth and full employment based on a wage policy of solidarity towards a new regime shaped more by neoliberal policies. This swift turn has altered the conditions in the labor market as well as it has changed the relationship between state and citizen in a way that makes the Swedish case unique (e.g. Junestav, 2004, Larsson et.al. 2012). The main focus here is on what the news discourses are about and how they are thematically organized by journalism. The study suggests that journalism constructs dismantling discourses by focusing on the three main themes of compassion, coping, and consumption in the representation of the working class. The news discourses close down rather than open up possibilities of agency for the

workers as hoping, coping, and shopping seem to be the only alternatives available for them in times of crisis. Based on this empirical study, we seek to highlight the relationship between the news discourse, power, and ideology. We also put forward the question of whether journalism could do their construction of crisis differently.

During the last few decades, society and labor market conditions have changed rapidly, as the exploitation of labor has been intensified in terms of increased insecurity, a decline in wages, as well as the decline of the power of the unions (Fairclough, 2003; Hobbs & Tucker 2009, Lazzarato 2009). This has happened along with the idea that an open, competitive, and unregulated market, liberated from state interference is the optimal mechanism for economic development. As the profits of traditional mass-production industries have started to decline, the industrialized world has begun to dismantle the basic institutional components of the previous Keynesian welfare policies and instead implemented policies to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout various sectors of society (Harvey 2005). In the wake of this, the Western world has experienced a chain of industrial crises and mass unemployment among the working class. The arena of media representations is an important site where the “cold war” of the class struggle is fought out (cf. Skeggs, 2004). This study contributes with an analysis of what discourses about the working class in the news are valid during different political contexts. The core themes that construct the overall discourses are an outcome of journalistic decisions about the identities and settings in which the working class is represented, as well as what functions and actions in relation to the surrounding society journalism chooses to highlight.

Ideology and news discourse

Recent research points to an interest within media studies in linking up perspectives springing from political economy with ideas about the symbolic power of news journalism. When David Harvey (2005, 2010) talks about the ideological project of neoliberalism and identifies the work of the media and

journalism as cornerstones of the neoliberal construction, the theoretical frame has its origin in the Marxist inspired work of the Frankfurt School in the 1930s. This tradition of ideological critique has given birth to numerous studies within the field of media and journalism research, raising questions about the link between media content and ideology. A seminal study of the ideological parameters of news reports is the study of the Glasgow Media Group on the news coverage of a miners' strike in the British television news. The findings highlighted the difficulties of journalism to withhold an objective stance and pointed to how the news instead promoted the dominant ideology in society where the voices of the workers were suppressed and deemed to be less important than the voices of management (1976, 1980). Downey et al. (2014) claim that the critique of ideology is the most important challenge for media studies today, and it is a perspective that according to them has been hugely neglected.

The way ideology is (re)shaped in news discourse is a key issue in critical discourse studies. In *News as Discourse* (1988), van Dijk outlines an understanding of the impact of ideology and argues that the representation of news events is both a socially and ideologically controlled set of strategies where the actions of journalists are limited. Fairclough follows the same line of reasoning in the latest edition of *Language and Power* (2014), where he summarizes his view of how language and power relations have altered due to major socio-economic changes during the last three decades, and where he concludes that media output is clearly ideologically shaped and contributes to reproducing the social relations of domination and exploitation. Larner (2000) and Giroux (2004) have both drawn attention to the importance of understanding how the news media help to shape a dominant common sense within the neoliberal ideology and how news sets up undisputed assumptions that foreclose the idea that any alternative project could be possible.

Empirical studies of citizen voices in the news

Citizens are common sources and voices in news journalism (Dimitrova & Strombäck, 2009; Kroon Lundell & Eriksson, 2010). Previous research, however, suggest that citizens are often left outside political activities when their voices are represented as being affected by or reacting to more powerful actors. Over time, journalism has ascribed power to elite voices and opinions (cf. Epstein, 1973; Gans, 1980), and according to Croteau and Hoynes (2003) the concentration on powerful figures and institutions reflects the media's own interests as well as confirming and strengthening the social order. Media's role in constructing citizenship and providing a venue for citizen voices, means structuring public discourses on citizenship and also to set the parameters for what forms of expressions and emotions are deemed acceptable. Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen (2011) have investigated the relationship between anger, journalistic practices and opportunities for ordinary people to express themselves politically and concluded that anger opens up a space for ordinary people to critique power holders.

In an extensive study of the news media, the representation of ordinary citizens, and public opinion, Lewis et al. (2005) analyze television news and press in Britain and the US. Their study shows that citizens tend to be represented as observers of reported events, and what make them entitled to have a voice are their individual interests and emotions. The way ordinary people are represented in the news media does very little to encourage an active form of citizenship. In terms of democracy and the idea of a politically engaged citizen, Lewis et al. go as far as to claim that the news "in its current form is part of the problem rather than part of the solution" (2005, p. 141).

This study examines the extent to which these findings apply also to other contexts. As a counterpart to Lewis et al. (2005), we investigate the representation of citizens' and workers' voices in the context of a specific political event where the workers identity is of significant importance.

Previous research about media representations of the working class points to a middle class gaze through which the (behavior of) working class people is being measured and judged (e.g. Lyle, 2008, Bennett, 2013, Eriksson, 2014) and where structural explanations have become subordinated those of individual blame (e.g. Lawler, 2005, Wood and Skeggs, 2011) *Instead of analyzing news more generally, our study focuses on two cases of labor market crises, in different political contexts and periods of time.* We believe this approach helps to understand how the news discourses relate to broader socio-political context and ideology. *The contribution of this study is to draw attention to how news journalism today dismantles the working class by the construction of discourses that prevent political and collective action, and instead promotes values within the neoliberal ideology that further passivates and isolates the workers.*

Cases, data, and method

We have studied news from two crises which both concern important national industries of their time: Algots textile production that went bankrupt in 1977, and the Saab Automobile factory that was closed in 2011. The closure of Saab doubled the number of unemployed people in a region already above the average national unemployment rate and was considered a local disaster. In both cases, thousands of workers lost their employment. Over this period (1977-2010) the economic and political regimes in Sweden have changed. In general, Sweden can be characterized as a mixed economy with a tax-financed welfare state. State interventions in the industry in the form of subsidies and regulations have been substantial. In the 1970s, there was a consensus among the political parties about Keynesian economic policies with the aim to redistribute capital and to improve the living conditions for the working class. However, since the 1990s the policies have been strongly influenced by neoliberal ideas. The general deregulation of financial politics has been combined with the Government's increased trust in market solutions and skepticism at political interventions. The role of the union has diminished during the last decades, which has had an eroding effect on the working class as a collective (see Allvin and Sverke,

2000, Furåker, 2005). Taken together the development since the 1990s makes the Swedish case unique in terms of the speed in which the ideas and principles about a strong welfare system and social equality has been replaced by a neoliberal agenda.

The main focus of our analysis in this article is on the automobile crisis in the 2010s and the earlier crisis in the textile industry during the 1970s serves more as a point of reference. We have chosen this method in order to discuss whether journalism can do different, and what journalism seems to find as possible perspectives or dead discourses in the representation of the working class in different political contexts.

The data includes press and television news. The news articles are from two Swedish newspapers, *Aftonbladet*, which has the largest circulation of the evening papers, and *Dagens Nyheter*, with the largest circulation of the morning papers. The stated position of the editorial page of *Dagens Nyheter* (*DN*) is “independently liberal” and *Aftonbladet* (*AB*) is “social democratic.” The data consists of the total coverage in connection with the closure of the factories (46 articles from 2011 and 40 articles from 1977) and runs from two months before until one month after this critical date; this is in order to glimpse the prelude to the events, the actual closing of the car factory, as well as a part of the aftermath. All articles where workers or ordinary citizens are referred to or get to express their own voice (15 articles from 2011 and 12 articles from 1977) have been analyzed on the basis of the questions presented below. The television data comes from the main prime-time national and regional public service news and includes the 20 news reports from the selected periods comprising interviews with workers and citizens.

The method of analysis is partly indebted to van Leeuwen’s (2008) conceptualization of how social actors are represented in discourse. We analyze whether the workers and ordinary citizens are included or excluded in the news, how they are quoted and referred to, and what roles are

allocated to them. More specifically, we focus on the following categories developed by van Leeuwen (2008):

1. Activation/passivation –in what way the workers are represented as being active and in charge of a situation or on the receiving end of it; and, whether the power to act is implicitly or explicitly described as being elsewhere.
2. Identification and functionalization – the representation of the workers in terms of who they are and what they do, what part of their societal role is highlighted.
3. Social settings – how the activity and voice of the workers are situated in different private or public settings; the location where the performance takes place (in the factory, on the street, in the home).

We have found these aspects of particular relevance in the construction of what we identify as dismantling discourses. This basically concerns the hampering and obscuring of possibilities for action and unity among the working class, where workers are made passive, isolated, and without power to change the situation.

According to van Dijk (1988), news texts have a hierarchical structure whereby the most important item is expressed first in a top-down strategy, with the headline often signaling what the main news item is. With reference to this, we have examined the relations between the headlines, the lead and body of the text, and what the main event is, as well as how reactions and comments are placed in a certain context. We have chosen to analyze the text (written and verbal) and to exclude pictures and moving images. In television news, actors typically appear in soundbites and sequences of interviews. Journalists have an active role in deciding for example in *what contexts* and identities actors are interviewed, what makes actors *entitled* to have a voice, and what agendas are constructed in the design of questions (Ekström & Eriksson, 2013; Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Montgomery, 2007). The formats and styles of news have changed to some extent over the period analyzed in this study. In broadcast news, the

sound bites and the related sequences of talk have become shorter and journalists are increasingly acting in the role of interpreters (Ekström 2001; Eriksson 2011). What is described as a tabloidization of the press is manifest in for example an increased focus on people's private lives and greater space for images (Andersson 2013). However, the continuity is also evident in many aspects, and we have not included detailed analyses of the news styles in this study (see the three categories above).

Below, we first present our analysis of the automotive crisis and the overarching themes that we, by the use of our analytical categories, have identified in the journalistic representation of the working class and ordinary citizens, and how these themes or discourses are constructed by the components used by journalism. After this discussion, our question about whether journalism could do things differently encourages us to take a step back in time and examine how the working class was represented in the news during the textile crisis in the late 1970s. We use this part of the analysis as a point of reference to clarify and highlight the discursive features and main themes of the news reporting of the automotive crisis. We end with a discussion about the relationship between the journalistic discourses and ideology, and pose the question about why the journalistic representation of the working class is constructed in the way it is and what needs to be considered in order to change this.

Dismantling discourses: compassion, coping, and consumption in times of crisis

As suggested in the introduction, those most affected by the closure of the car factory in terms of the loss of an income and a social context would be expected to be the main characters in this drama, and that their voices and perspectives would be a focal point in the news reports on the Saab crisis. However, according to the editorial choices, when it comes to the inclusion and exclusion of actors, this is not the case. The workers are visible in 15 articles out of 46. In 9 of the 15 articles they are referred to by others, and in 6 articles their own voices are heard, but then only in reaction to someone else's action.

The representation of working class people and other ordinary citizens during the Saab Crisis reveals that we live in what can be labeled an emotional era. When the people are quoted or referred to, the focus is on reaction rather than action, and the reactions are individual rather than collective. A focus on reactions not only individualizes the (re)construction of the problem; at the same time it justifies a continuous emotional focus; a position where nothing else remains to do other than deal with the feelings about an unchangeable situation. Hope and despair are dominant. These are feelings that are not easily transformed into action, in contrast to anger that has been pointed out as the essential political emotion (Lyman, 1981). In the distinction between public, collective and private, individual emotions anger belongs to the first category (Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011). Anger, in opposition to for example sadness, fuels activity and conflict and can be pointed towards another (responsible) actor and lead to demands for change (see Holmes, 2004). In terms of being passive or active, this is not an insignificant fact; the focus on feeling and the journalistic attention to it can appear to be an encouragement to take action when it in fact is more likely to (pre)serve the status quo. When it comes to the workers' societal role, we identified that the emphasis on individual coping strategies is yet another way to construct the crisis as a personal matter and to obscure the structural conditions. A third ideological standpoint that becomes visible is that an interruption in the consumer's identity is more serious than the interruption in their role as producer. As will be shown below, our analysis of the representation of workers reveals that the standardized features and the decisions about the contexts and settings in which workers and ordinary citizens are entitled to have a voice constructs certain core themes concerning compassion, coping, and consumption.

Our first examples show how the workers are portrayed as isolated, powerless units left with nothing but the ability to feel. They do not demand or expect anything. Even in the context where their employment and economic foundation is at risk, their approach is represented as being far from active. In the texts, the employees essentially get to express two opposite feelings: hope and despair. When the articles speculate about the

possibility of Saab avoiding bankruptcy or when the text deals with the possibility of the workers getting their salary before Christmas, they are centered on the notion of hope; hope that something will happen rather than that someone will do something.

Example 1: Aftonbladet, 29 October 2011

The joy and the relief are huge in Trollhättan. With Chinese owners Saab has a chance.

– *I hope the factory will stay, says Andreas Eriksson, 34. (Preamble)*

(...)

– *Spontaneously, I think it sounds good and I hope the factory will stay. Here in Trollhättan there is not so much else.*

Example 2: Aftonbladet, 1 November 2011

Mattias Larsson, who recently became a father of three, was cautiously optimistic when Aftonbladet met him and his family at home in the terraced house in Grästorp yesterday afternoon.

It feels very promising. Financially strong owners, new products. It doesn't feel impossible to find new clients.(Preamble)

The choice of setting in the above example is noticeable; particularly, how the worker is at home with his family and how he is presented as a father of three. In the same article, he talks about how he had already lost his job once during the prelude to the Saab crisis:

Then I was reemployed in the fall. I hope it will be something like that now.

The workers' perception that wishful thinking is the only way to influence their future seems to be tacitly supported by the journalism, as no other perspectives or questions are put forward in the texts. The notion that hope is what is available for the employees is made explicit the day after the bankruptcy in an article with the headline "The Winners and the Losers."

Example 3: Aftonbladet, 20 December 2011

The families live on hope – the trustees of the bankruptcy make millions (Headline)

(...)

It was a real deathblow. But it was expected, even if the thought had existed that it would work out somehow, says the car builder Mattias Larsson in Grästorp.

The preamble tells us about 3400 workers losing their job (not in extract), and how one of the workers feel about this but the main focus of the text is on the trustees dealing with the legal parts of the bankruptcy, with experts talking about how bright the future looks for these trustees in terms of money and status. The headline of an article marks out the preferred direction of the entire article (van Dijk, 1988), and in this case it could be read as pointing to the inequalities between working class families and the trustees, but nothing in the text develops this perspective further. What gets highlighted in connection with the worker is his reaction. The structure where the workers get one or two sentences to comment on something that is already a fact is dominant in the analyzed articles. This suppression and backgrounding of the working class is not coincidental; it reveals important clues about the hierarchical structures in the social order (van Leeuwen, 2008). When the workers are made visible in the text, this almost exclusively means they are expressing how they feel.

In an article with the headline, “The Frustration is Huge Among Saab Employees,” the last lines of the preamble states, “The employees prepare for a new battle against the company to get their salary,” which implies a more active approach. The text presents a totally different discussion though, involving other actors including the press manager of Saab, the CEO, possible investors, and so forth. The link back to the headline appears in the last paragraph of the article, when a union representative talks about how frustrated and disappointed the employees are:

Example 5: Dagens Nyheter, 3 December 2011

There are still those who clutch at any straw and keep on hoping. Most of their frustration is because of the lack of information.

On the day of Saab's bankruptcy the headline, "Do not Dare to Hope for a Salary for Christmas" once again connects hope with the workers, but now in the sense of a feeling of loss.

Example 6: Aftonbladet, 19 December 2011

The car builder and father of three, Mattias Larsson, 30, is one of hundreds of Saab employees forced to get an emergency loan to cope financially.

Now we can get by decently, but of course you want your salary. Especially before Christmas. But I don't dare to have any expectations anymore, he says.

The focus is on individual problems and individual solutions where workers are (re)presented as being unrelated to each other, and everyone aims to get by on their own. The construction and understanding of this labor market crisis is clearly not that it is a common concern. As shown above, hope is one visible feeling in connection with the (re)action of the workers. Despair is another, more dominant one. The Saab crisis peaked only days before Christmas and it is against this background that journalism paints a picture of darkness and despair. The settings and perspectives that signal the powerlessness are supplemented and enhanced by the journalists' use of the glittery seasonal frame. The misery of the workers is in contrast with the Christmassy associations as the texts focuses on the darkest despair among the shimmering lights of the Advent candlesticks.

Example 7: Dagens Nyheter, 29 November 2011

Despite the time of Advent, no lights glitter over Saab Automobile. No salary. No clarity.

The connotations of a working class kept in the dark are quite obvious in the above preamble, as in the example below:

Example 8: Dagens Nyheter, 8 December 11

We are sitting in the family's TV-sofa (...) two lights are burning on the Advent candlestick. (Preamble)

(...)

But the problems around Björn's workplace, of course, make their mark. After 20 years as a car builder, and after being tossed between hope and despair for the last year he is convinced that he has done his last day at the car factory. The uncertainty about how things will be is wearisome for the whole family ...

The way journalism de-agentializes actions reveals the underlying presuppositions (see van Leeuwen, 2008); therefore, it is noteworthy that the text mentions this worker being *tossed between hope and despair*, an example of the way journalism draws on a discourse about the lack of someone being responsible and where the contextualization of causes is avoided. The image of this crisis as something inevitable, just like a natural disaster, is also illustrated in the example below:

Example 9: Dagens Nyheter, 20 December 2011

It is Monday afternoon and darkness falls both metaphorically and literally over the Saab factory.

(...)

One understood that it could end this way and tried to prepare, but right now it just feels empty, says 50-year-old Nick Pedersen

(...)

The bankruptcy wasn't completely unexpected, but somehow you are hoping until the bitter end.

As with the employees, on the three occasions in the total coverage of 46 news articles when ordinary people who are not employed at the factory get

to comment on the closure of the factory, the focus is on how they feel and react.

Example 10: Dagens Nyheter, 20 Dec 2011

Under the headline, “This is how People in Trollhättan React After the Announcement,” the text quotes citizens’ voices that are full of compassion:

Of course it is a tough situation for the employees.

It feels very sad.

One week before Christmas and then this happens. Well, so this was the Christmas gift to Trollhättan. When, it’s so sad. Everybody is sad and sighs.

The representations follow similar patterns in the television news reports. The voices of the workers are mainly framed by the context of what appears to be an irrevocable decision and a *fait accompli*. In relation to this, individuals express their emotional reactions of despair and hope, and describe ways of coping with the situation. Below, we analyze three parts of a larger news package. This single case is chosen to illustrate two general discursive practices applied in the television news reporting. First, when it comes to the practices of interviewing, the voices of workers and citizens are almost exclusively produced within two distinct sub-genres: the “vox pop” and the experience/victim interview (Myers, 2004, Montgomery, 2007). The vox pop represents the voices from the street. People give voice to sentiments, reactions, and feelings. What makes them entitled to have opinions is their identity as local residents. In the more extended interviews, workers (or the unemployed) are typically interviewed in their role of being directly affected by the closure and the crisis. In these interviews, the individuals’ private life, their feelings and ways of coping with the situation are put into the foreground. The news reports are typically composed of interactional segments of voice-overs and questions and answers, and the interactions are introduced and framed by the news anchors.

The first example is a vox pop that follows directly after the news of the bankruptcy has been presented by the news anchor. Three people in the street give their reactions.

Example 11: Västnytt, 19 December 2011

(NA = news, P = people, I = interviewer, VO = voice-over).

NA *..... and this is how people in Trollhättan felt.*

P1 *It's not just Saab, you know. Think of all the subcontractors, some of them have*

depended solely on Saab making nothing but their stuff, and then just before Christmas they get this news. Yeah it's a shame.

P2 *Like a lot of couples who both work there. They have houses and kids and cars, and that's tough.*

I *Yeah.*

P3 *I thought it such a shame but that's how it is.*

I *Yeah.*

P3 *I just hope they will er come up with something because there's so much knowledge here and they need to make use of it.*

The voices are framed by the news anchor as the people's opinion. As Myers (2004: 209) notes, such categorizations of general opinions is a typical feature of the vox pop as it focuses on "not 'what you say' but 'what does someone like you say'". The questions asked in the vox pop are not included, which contributes to the impression that the voices are spontaneous and not related to a journalistic initiative. The voices express

sympathy with the workers. This sign of compassion shifts somewhat with the final comment when “they” refers to a vague category of people who might be able to help solve the problems and develop business and jobs in the future. Solutions beyond the individual coping are indicated here, but this is not followed up by the journalist.

A little further on in the news package, a person who now faces unemployment is introduced to the audience in a victim interview. The first voice-over in the extract marks a shift from the conversation with a baker who expresses sympathy for the victims.

Example 12: Västnytt, 19 December 2011

(W = worker, VO = voice-over)

- VO *Business is good for the baker today, but Fredrik Willman had to cancel his Christmas shopping plans and stop by the bank for an emergency loan instead.*
- W *Things didn't turn out as expected today.*
- VO *For 14 years he's been welding coaches and now he's facing an uncertain future.*
- W *No one knows whether we have a period of notice and whether we're still employed.*
- Or what's going on. This came as a shock to all of us.*
- VO *Later this week there'll be meetings with the union to get a clearer picture. Right now he's just grateful his wife isn't a Saab employee too and he'll try to celebrate Christmas the way he usually does.*
- W *Yeah, you need to put this out of your mind over Christmas and ... enjoy yourself*
- and then after the holidays you figure out what to do next.*
- I *What are you going to do next year?*
- W *That's a good question I don't know hopefully I'll have a job somewhere .hh nobody knows right now. It's not the best time to be unemployed.*
- VO *But as always, there's a fair amount of optimism here in Trollhättan...*

The voice-over is the main journalistic feature in the presentation of the interview. It is the journalist who drives the story; however, this is as an anonymous narrator rather than an interpreter. The worker is introduced by his first name and surname as an individual who at the same time represents the group of victims. We are introduced to his life situation in a story of several contrasts, alternating between hope and despair: the planned Christmas shopping and the emergency loan at the bank versus the former secure job and the uncertain future. The story articulates the individual coping on two time horizons. For the moment, it is a question of putting worries aside and having Christmas as usual, but the future is more insecure. Instead of following up on the talk about the lack of information on the workers' rights and the meeting with the union, the voice-over is used to shift focus to the family and the private life. The only interview question included in the sequence asks the interviewee what he will do next year. The question thus implies agency, but the question is not contextualized by, for example, mentioning the workers' position within a situation of limited opportunities and power. All the interviewee can do is to hope and try to cope. The final voice-over is used to create an optimistic exit, illustrated by a humorous voice of the baker (not in the extract), who says that she hopes all people will be happy at Christmas and that they will buy cakes from her.

An interview with an unemployed person in the employment office is introduced by the news anchor as exemplifying the situation for young people: "The prolonged crisis has made it very difficult for the young to enter the labor market. Today one of three is without job."

Example 13: Västnytt, 19 December 2011

(I = interviewer, IE = interviewee)

6 I *How long have you been unemployed?*

7	IE	<i>About four months.</i>
8	I	<i>How many jobs have you applied for so far?</i>
9	IE	<i>Eh, about a hundred I think.</i>
10	I	<i>And how does it feel to apply for so many not getting any?</i>
11	IE	<i>It actually feels very hopeless.</i>

The interview is produced as an illustration of the hopeless situation of the unemployed, where workers are represented as “being in” a situation and affected by changes. They are expected to cope with this situation, as in this example when it comes to finding new employment, an approach which promotes action. At the same time this action is limited, but journalism never initiates, follows up or involves the workers in a discussion about the processes and structures behind the situation. We see this is a passivating representation of the working class where their actions are restrained within an unchangeable – and unmentionable – structure.

Whereas the loss of employment is constructed as being something unavoidable – a fixed condition that evokes certain feelings and individual strategies for coping, but without a solution in sight – maintaining consumption is constructed as being within reach. Being a consumer actually requires action, in terms of borrowing money and maintaining business as usual.

Example 14: Dagens Nyheter, 8 December 2011

The headline of this article, “Emergency Loan will Save Christmas for the Family,” is about one of the workers who gets to talk about how he feels about the crisis.

The employees have not received their salary and have less money to spend. The Saab worker Björn Rasmusson and his family try to celebrate Christmas as usual.
(Preamble)

(...)

Björn and Maria will not let the Saab crisis destroy Christmas. It will be the usual food and the daughters, Moa, 10, and Anja, 9, are going to get their Christmas gifts.

(...)

In Trollhättan many are facing a difficult Christmas. The crisis at Saab creates a spread effect and is negative for the city's shopkeepers.

(...)

Saab has been in crisis before, but Alexander thinks he can see particularly serious signs now – sales are clearly down. This affects the entire city. If you have money you shop, if you don't have any you sit at home. It is as simple as that, he says.

When workers are represented, it is either in reaction to the given facts that they cannot influence, except by finding ways to cope or to keep up as consumers. The interviewed citizens are either expressing compassion or they are represented by shopkeepers (Alexander, in the example above) hoping that business will not to be disrupted. In terms of the ideology and values being promoted in the journalistic discourses, it is interesting to note the decision to interview citizens in the parking lot outside a big shopping mall and ask for their reactions (Aftonbladet, 29 October 2011). When it comes to societal consequences of this crisis, journalism deals with individualized worries about the (in)ability to consume, and the more “collective” perspective about how crisis will reflect badly upon commerce on a larger scale.

The question that then surfaces is whether journalism could do things differently? We believe there are two ways to get close to an answer to this question: first, by identifying concrete representations that are the result of

journalistic decisions (as above); second, by comparing these with other representations of a similar case. As a point of reference and as a historical comparison we have analyzed the journalistic discourses about the textile industry crisis in 1977.

The “we” has a voice

What becomes apparent from the analysis of the people’s voices in conjunction with the textile industry crisis is that they have one. It is the strong and demanding voice of workers and citizens who expect something. The feelings expressed are more about anger than despair. In the same way, the themes of individual coping and consumption are absent from the news reports. This indicates a different relation between the individual and the surrounding society, and a clear shift in the journalistic perspective. As will be shown below, both workers and other ordinary people express their opinion about the crisis and are confident about their rights as workers and citizens. The representation of workers in this context reveals the ideological assumption that it is society’s responsibility to secure their role as workers and that the omission to do so will meet protests.

Example 15: Aftonbladet, 3 June 1977

Less than two weeks before the bankruptcy of the textile factory, there were articles about how the workers were feeling and reacting as it became clearer that their employment was at risk, a theme recognizable in the Saab reports.

Can we at all be sure to get our salaries? That question was raised sharply and fiercely when 800 members of the Textile Union held a meeting in Algots. But it wasn’t all about worrying. They also angrily demanded that the old owners should take their part of the responsibility.

The above prelude is explicit in its explanation that the workers were doing more than worry. The plural, *workers*, is not an insignificant detail. Instead of an interview with an individual employee, who is disconnected from the rest of the workforce in his or her home, we hear the voice of the collective. The question about what you feel in relation to an event is not absent, but it is

followed by a discussion about what the workers think should be done, which is a different approach from the Saab report.

And that worry will not be muted by vague statements from those in charge.

(...)

I don't think they should get away with it as easily as they seem to have done.

The article ends with the journalist's conclusion:

Everybody is united with the demands of the union.

The contrasting method of putting the news reports from different periods of time alongside each other is an illuminating project. It becomes clear that what is “missing” in the 1970s is the idea of work as an individual project; how the soon unemployed (should) come up with an individual solution to the problem. Under the headline, “The Government has to Invest 10 Million per Year,” (ex.16) the text tells us about how the employees worked to come up with a plan together with the union, and got a meeting at the Department of Industry to present their proposal – and how they were hindered by the Minister of Industry at the very last minute.

Example 16: Aftonbladet, 8 June 1977

The workers never got to present their program. The workers claim to have a realistic proposal and are now intensifying the efforts to strengthen it even more and to present detailed solutions.

The above article could be different if the journalist had decided to do an interview with a single worker in his/her home and to focus on how that person felt about the proposal being neglected. Instead, it is the collective that is being referred to, and focus is on what actions they will take to move forward.

Example 17: Aftonbladet, 9 June 1977

Less than a week before the closure of the factory, the responsible minister answered questions from the citizens under the headline, “The Hotline,” where the different voices express expectations of Government measures:

How does the government plan to solve the problems in the region?

How will the government save the jobs?

What does the government intend to do for those affected by unemployment?

The expectation that society should take responsibility and present solutions is continuously voiced by the workers and citizens in the television news in the 1970s, which indicates an understanding, shared by journalism, that the crisis is a source of common concern. Vox pops about reactions is a general practice applied in both the 1970s and the 2010s. The context and settings in which these reactions and voices were introduced and expressed is different though. The next vox pop (Example 18) is produced as part of a news report about the possibilities of the Government supporting the textile industry in a situation of crisis, which is a different approach to the fait accompli of the automotive crisis.

Example 18: Rapport, 6 September 1977

Vox pop with textile workers at the factory (W = worker, VO = voice-over)

1 VO ...160 of the 175 employees are women and many
are over 50 years old.

2 *This is what they think.*

3 W1 *My first reaction was well, almost panic, you could
say.*

4 W2 *You know the atmosphere here is like*

5 *(1.0) crisis you could say.*

6	W1	<i>... that we should go home and be housewives</i>
7		<i>we have the right to work just as all other people.</i>
8	W3	<i>We think that society should be prepared</i>
9		<i>and step in and help with all available means</i>
10		<i>in these kinds of crises / .../</i>

In the above example, workers are entitled to have a voice as representatives of the collective of workers and they are interviewed at the factory. They express their reaction, and then shift to talk about the rights and the responsibilities they expect of society/politics. The solutions are clearly not restricted to individual coping.

The context of the crisis in 1977 was clearly different, with a strong union and a political consensus concerning state intervention and support, but the question is how journalism represents the different crises. Based on our analytical questions about the identities that the working class is entitled to adopt in participating in the news, there are a few things we can conclude about the reports in 1977. Citizens, both those working within the textile industry as well as others, seem to be assured that they have a function in society. When workers are interviewed, they are together in the workplace, never at home. Their individual life plans seems to be of less interest to journalism. The text reveals no lack of emotional perspectives but the representation of worried workers is followed by the action perspective: what the workers and other citizens think should be done and who should do it. A recurrent context for the introduction of workers' and citizens voices in both press and television news in the 1970s is the discussion of the legitimate right to have a job and the responsibilities of society. Correspondingly, journalistic representations of workers' and citizens voices are not found in the data from the automobile crisis.

Conclusions

In this analysis of how the working class is represented at the time of the crisis in the labor market, we have found some overriding tendencies relating to the later crisis in the 2010s: the shaping of the emotional order, the focus on individual coping, and the understanding of citizens as consumers rather than producers. We have considered the journalistic constructions of the crisis and unemployment today as *dismantling discourses*, where the tendency to accentuate the emotional perspective can be seen as a preventing discourse, which further passivates rather than encourages active citizenship. The decision to emphasize the need to maintain consumption can be seen as a promoting discourse where agency is actually expected and within the reach of the working class. Even in times of crisis consumption patterns should remain stable and borrowing money to achieve this is represented as a natural condition.

The way journalism makes capitalistic values appear natural and commonsense is the quintessence of an ideologically shaped representation of reality in news media (cf. Allan, 1999). The orientation towards the private can be seen as an act of depriving events of power and transferring the responsibility to individuals (cf. Kress, 1986). A focus on reaction instead of action has become a cornerstone in a depoliticized public sphere (Lewis et al., 2005; Montgomery, 2007) where the proliferation of private emotion fills the political void and secures the neoliberal public (Muehlebach, 2012, p. 133). The societal tendencies towards depoliticization, individualization, and commercialization then become hidden in the journalistic recontextualization, in what has been called an ideological closure (see Hartley, 1982, p. 63) with the ability to transform a political act into a natural condition.

The way the working class and other ordinary citizens are given a voice and the contexts and settings in which these voices are allowed to be heard clearly promote a certain tone. The choice to interview workers individually in their home instead of together with the workforce outside the domestic space is significant. Isolated individuals sitting in their living room talking

about their hope or despair creates an image of passivity and acceptance. Hope and despair are not easily transformed into action, in contrast to anger that has been pointed out as the essential political emotion (Lyman, 1981). Anger fuels activity and conflict and can be pointed towards another (responsible) actor and lead to demands for change (see Holmes, 2004). The most significant result of our study is that matters previously belonging to the political field have moved into the private sphere, a condition where feeling has become both the starting point and the endpoint for societal participation. This is in contrast with discourses that were valid during the textile industry crisis in the 1970s. The overarching journalistic discourses of that time promoted the concept of solidarity and an understanding of working class citizens as part of a society that is ready to take action and find collective solutions to what are considered to be collective problems. The frail bonds between citizens today, as they are represented by journalism, are built through individualized feelings instead of unifying action. On the surface, the discourses about unemployment in relation to the automobile crisis 2010s can be dramatized and emotionalized, and the audience is encouraged to feel sympathy for those affected. We argue that this is an obvious sign of journalism reproducing the neoliberal paradigm in which it is situated, where compassion has come to replace solidarity. The journalistic construction of the crisis can be seen as an indispensable tool for the transformation of the Public Sphere, where a depoliticized form of sympathy becomes the new paradigmatic act of citizenship (cf. Muehlebach, 2012; Kress, 1986). When it comes to ordinary citizens other than the factory workers, they participate as fixed categories of witnesses in terms of compassion or consumption, expressing pity for those affected or focusing on how business will suffer if patterns of consumption are disrupted.

We argue that the news media and journalism, through this recontextualization of crisis, withdraws itself from its democratic task of providing an arena for critical debate on important societal issues and from being an agent mobilizing public participation in these matters (cf. Entman, 1998, Allan, 2005). By representing the labor force as consisting of isolated and powerless victims who are between hope and despair, journalism has

instead become an agent of the new “spirit of capitalism,” where resignation and emotion have come to replace resistance and unity (cf. Rose, 1996; Sennett, 2000; Honneth, 2004, Rutherford, 2009).

As stated in the introduction, our interest is not solely in analyzing how journalism constructs this, but it also springs from the question of whether it would be possible for journalism to do differently? Is it possible to make other choices, ask different questions, and to focus on other perspectives in other contexts and settings? To provide solid answers to these questions is not within the scope of this study, although the contours of a challenge for journalism appear in our analysis. Can it be that the journalistic aim of objectivity when dealing with political matters in a neoliberal, depoliticized sphere encourages the emotional path? Is this considered to be the safe way to go as it offers journalism an opportunity to construct drama and find an entry for a more subjective text without discussing the causes of and the questions about responsibility? In scholarly debates centered on this topic, we often meet the argument that journalism is doing exactly what it should when reporting about the reactions that obviously are “out there” – and that it is impossible to report demonstrations when there are none. Nevertheless, we argue that the journalistic avoidance of discourses connected to critical voices or alternative interpretations cements the naturalization of a neoliberal ideology (cf. Hay 2007). What are the hindrances to interviewing ten workers together instead of one, and of asking questions about causes, consequences, and responsibilities without focusing on emotions, consumption, and individual coping? What is required for journalism to do this? If we are serious about how important journalistic representations are in encouraging political participation and making citizens see themselves as part of society, these questions need to be addressed. We claim that journalism and journalism studies need a discussion about what are the possible perspectives and the dead discourses when journalism constructs a story? This analysis could be read as a call for that discussion to stay open.

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Article II

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The image of the empty hands. Politics and journalism in neoliberal times.

Accepted for Publication, book chapter in: Patrona, Marianna (Ed). Forthcoming *Crisis and the Media: Narratives of Crisis across Cultural Settings and Media Genres*, Amsterdam: Benjamins

The image of the empty hands. Politics and journalism in neoliberal times.

Introducing the problem

The function of the media and news journalism as watchdogs is viewed as essential in a democracy, and the ideal of holding those in power accountable is strong among journalists, as well as in the public's expectation (e.g. Schultz, 1998; Wiik, 2010). As is known, ideal can sometimes be one thing and practice another. The idea that journalism holds powerful actors accountable implies that it is situated within a context and works under conditions that make this possible. Debates, investigations and explanations concerning the relational dynamics between media and those it is set to scrutinize often derive from the mediatization theory - the notion that the media has the permeating power to set the public agenda, while politics must manoeuvre to adapt to the journalistic logic (see Asp 1990; Strömbäck 2008). Studies emerging from theories regarding mediatization have often been focused on elections (e.g. Strömbäck and Nord, 2013; Asp and Bjerling, 2014) or on political scandals (e.g. Ekström and Johansson, 2008), where the role of politics is a given element, and where politicians and their performances are graded and continuously reviewed. This obvious reviewing constructs a journalistic advantage, but says little about the overall relationship between politics and journalism and how political responsibility is perceived and articulated when politicians are not campaigning or defending themselves.

In opposition to the strong belief in journalistic power, it has been argued that, although journalism is free from state control, it is not free from political influence, or even manipulation. Previous research has suggested that journalistic practice appears to both encourage and facilitate this manipulation, and to create a situation in which journalists are never fully in control of the story-telling process (e.g. Entman, 1989; Franklin, 1994; Negrine 1994). In the very least it can be concluded that dominance within the relationship is not fixed. Circumstances give one of the players (politicians or journalists) dominance in a particular context (see Louw, 2010). In order to be capable of discussing the state of journalism, as well as the state of democracy, it is important to examine the dynamics of this relationship between elections. The manner in which politicians perceive and articulate their responsibility, and how journalism deals with this in the selection and recontextualization of political arguments, highlights the issues and areas that are considered to be politicians' responsibilities, as well as showing the watchdog function beyond grading and reviewing.

This article examines the relationship between media and politics by focusing on how political responsibility and public accountability is negotiated in news journalism during an industrial crisis. The empirical analysis is centered on two dimensions of the news report: Firstly, how the crisis is handled by politics, what is expressed when the responsible ministers give their opinion, how they introduce, explain or defend their decisions, actions and points of view, and secondly, how this is recontextualized and framed by news journalism; and the way in which journalism relates to, reproduces, negotiates or opposes, the dominant discourses of politics. The study of different devices of political language in the formation of public opinion deconstructs the constitutive elements of political discourse and can also unmask the ideology behind the rhetoric (see Chilton and Schäffner, 2002; Chilton, 2004; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). The topic of ideology, how it shapes, and is shaped by (media), discourse is of considerable importance within critical discourse studies (e.g. Kress and Hodge, 1979; van Dijk, 1998; Fairclough, 2014;), and is crucial to

understanding the relationship between politics and journalism in a neoliberal setting (see Phelan, 2014).

The crisis referred to herein is that of the Swedish automotive industry, which emerged during the financial crisis in the late 2000s. The data consist of news media coverage in the Swedish national press during two periods, 2008 and 2011, and capture reports regarding the eruption of the crisis, as well as the final stage of the collapse when a vital part of the industry went bankrupt in 2011. The analysis of the latter period, 2011, first identifies the overarching focus of the news report and then discusses the articles in which leading politicians are mentioned or express their standpoint. This part of the analysis consists of a short mapping of the question of political responsibility during the end of the crisis. Following this overview, we go back to the beginning of the crisis in 2008 for a more thorough investigation of the two analytical dimensions: (1) the political performances and argument strategies, and (2) the manner in which these are handled in the journalistic recontextualization.

The analysis contributes empirical evidence with regard to how a political message is introduced by the use of a set of firm argument strategies and metaphors in a repetitive operation performed by leading politicians. It also shows how journalism fails to move outside the hegemonic frames set by politics when it discursively constructs the crisis and the question of political responsibility in journalistic practice. The findings contradict the assumption of journalistic independence, and instead point to journalism acting more as an amplifier of neoliberal values than as an autonomous reviewer of political performances and measurements in times of industrial crisis.

The vulnerability of journalism

News journalism undisputedly plays a key role in democratic society. Journalism is expected to make known to the public political performances, decisions and debates, as well as the consequences of certain political measurements. This means having the symbolic power to discursively construct a topic and to represent actors and events in an authoritative form

of news journalism, influencing public perception and discourses around this subject (e.g. van Dijk, 1995; Richardson, 2007). The assumption of journalistic independence and advantage over politics in terms of interpretational power often focuses on this symbolic power and pays less regard to the vulnerability of journalism. Journalism most certainly has the power to influence society, but is itself also influenced and governed by a number of contextual constraints - the ideological, political and economic circumstances with which it is surrounded (e.g. Kellner, 2004; McChesney, 2008).

Analysis of journalistic output must consider the wider social formation, the socio-political and institutional context within which journalism is situated, as well as in which manner this affects the relationship between journalism and other actors (Richardson, 2007; Fairclough, 2014)). The mention of the vulnerability of journalism herein refers to its being exposed to contextual constraints while meeting demands to produce a commercially viable (and ideologically coherent) text. Previous studies have shown that in the relationship between journalism and politics, journalism is at risk of being the subordinate party. This is especially true in times of crisis or big political questions when, instead of independent actors, journalists risk becoming a communication arm of government in their desire to “get the story” (e.g. Entman, 1989; Bennett 1990).

The journalistic space, and the relationship with other actors, is thus affected both by the pressures of market forces and the ideological landscape within which it is situated. Analyses point to the fact that repetitive story frames in news reports produce great homogeneity, and that the range of voices and viewpoints does not support the idea of journalistic independence, but instead shows how political and economic circumstances govern journalistic practice (e.g. Herman and Chomsky, 1988, 2002; McChesney, 2003; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston, 2007). In his political economic critique of contemporary (US) journalism, McChesney (2003), points to the limits of the latter, as it is “under attack” from the market, a condition that renders journalism incapable of fulfilling its democratic

assignment. Mylonas (2012) views this vulnerable position as journalism being trapped in a “free market economic ideology”, which secures the hegemony of news production, and where journalistic output turns into an instrument of social control of the powerful elite.

One overall problem for journalism in its relationship with politics is that, in their need for information, journalists rely on the very same politicians whom they are expected to hold accountable (e.g. Entman, 1989). Another problem is the formula of journalistic practice, the tendency to focus on who, what, when, where, why, how questions, which makes journalism poorly equipped to report on complex situations. According to Tuchman (1978), this formula only serves to confirm the professional discourse of objectivity. What is reported in the name of objectivity is unthreatening controversies, leaving safe conventionality unchallenged (e.g. Entman, 1989; Louw, 2010). Hallin (1986) describes this as the sphere of legitimate controversy, where journalism can give voice to opposing perspectives (if) situated within an accepted frame - a common interpretation of possible perspectives.

The question regarding the relational dynamic between journalism and politics, what it looks like in the negotiation of the discursive construct of industrial crisis, is an empirical one. Instead of starting with the assumption that journalism has power over politics, or *vice versa*, we must first put this relationship in context and then investigate it empirically by analyzing the negotiation between political performances and journalistic recontextualizations. The ideological setting that surrounds media and politics will therefore subsequently be further discussed.

Political responsibility and journalistic space in the neoliberal regime

The interplay between media and politics does not take place in a vacuum, but must be contextualized. Every era has its own common sense - what is perceived to be the (only) sane way to view the world. It is probably reasonable to argue that journalism is also enclosed in this common-sense view, which narrows journalists' perspectives and discourses. However, this

view is not random, but is instead closely related to particular ideologies. The process of naturalization, in which journalism plays an important part, makes dominant discourses appear to lose their ideological connection and become common sense. As Fairclough (2013) points out, this invisibility act is itself an ideological effect, as ideology is most effective when it is disguised. A neoliberal political ideology has been on the rise since the early 1980s, promoting reduction of government spending and an open, competitive and unregulated market, liberated from state interference. Instead of the previous Keynesian welfare policies, measures to extend market discipline, competition and commodification throughout various sectors of society have been implemented in Sweden, as they have in all areas of the western world. Powerful ideological influences have been circulated through different channels, such as corporations and think-tanks, and not least through media, and have gradually legitimized the neoliberal turn. This turn has given birth to an ideological ground where neoliberalism is not only viewed as the guarantor of freedom, but is also successful in the act of becoming invisible as a political strategy, and instead purports to be a condition without alternatives (Harvey, 2005).

Nevertheless, the belief that politicians should be held to account, to explain and justify their actions to the public, is still considered to be a fundamental part of democratic society (Dowdle, 2006). As Bovens (2007) asserts, it is the “outcome dimension” that is of interest - to trace circumstances back to a certain (political) decision or measurement. The prerequisite for making this possible is transparency and clarity regarding the different areas of responsibility in society. However, previous research in both political and social science has pointed to the fact that neoliberalism and the transnationalization of the global economy has led to a depoliticized sphere, where questions around political responsibility have become increasingly interwoven in a complex structure, blurring the boundaries between politics, economics and civil society. This blurriness makes the origins, as well as the consequences, of political choices difficult to distinguish, and the question of political accountability less clear-cut (e.g. Behn, 2001; Lord, 2004; Papadopoulos, 2007). When responsibility is removed from politicians it

deprives the opportunity for action, limits alternatives and makes a different construction of reality impossible (Foucault, 2008; Flinders, 2008; Muntigl, 2002).

One important question is: How does journalism manoeuvre when situated in this context? In a study of the journalistic propensity to hold politicians accountable, it is suggested that journalism, when situated in a more complex and blurred socio-political context, is less inclined to hold politicians accountable in conjunction with other events than elections or scandals (see Djerf-Pierre et al. 2014). Previous research has also argued that, consciously or unconsciously, journalistic representations identify with the hegemonic neoliberal logics that repress alternative interpretations of societal events (Phelan, 2014). This kind of social architecture requires critical examination, as well as further discussion of the way in which media and news journalism address their responsibility to question a common-sense interpretation, hold responsible actors accountable and challenge the social order (Richardson, 2007; Couldry, 2010; Phelan, 2014).

Several different studies have highlighted the interplay between media, politics and ideology. In analyses of Thatcherism (1988), and the neoliberalism of the Tory government (2011), Hall identified a firm political and ideological project with the capacity to secure political consent, and pointed to the media as playing a crucial part in transforming political ideas into common sense. In our attempt to understand why, the word unconsciously mentioned above is not insignificant, but opens a central discussion regarding the relational dynamic between neoliberalism, journalism and politics. As Phelan suggests, instead of imagining journalists reproducing neoliberalism because they are neoliberals, we should explore how journalists reproduce neoliberalism by being journalists (2014:67). Peck (2010) captures the difficulty of going beyond common sense when suggesting that it is difficult to think *about* neoliberalism given how commonplace it has become to think *with* it. This line of reasoning resonates with the notion of the vulnerability of journalism, introduced above, in that the latter is at risk of being a communication arm instead of an independent reviewer in the socio-political blurriness shaped by

neoliberalism. Embedded in this argument is, of course, the notion of a neoliberal ideology as something present and dominant in society; a view that is not unanimous.

Studies deriving from critical theories around the neoliberalization of society have been criticized for having a preconstructed normative framing based on conceptual and moral binaries: market versus state, public versus private, consumer versus citizen, liberty versus equality; individual utility versus collective solidarity, etc (Barnett, 2010). The critique of using theories about neoliberalism also targets the gap between using “grand theory” to explain the various dimensions of neoliberalism that it claims to investigate. Nevertheless, the neoliberal ideology is far from being a myth, and is based on a set of beliefs that can be expressed and put into action. The critical task then becomes an exploration of neoliberalism in action - how various modalities of action are framed in the construction of hegemony. In this article, a course of events, the way in which politics addresses and discusses a large industrial crisis, and how it is framed and recontextualized by journalism, will be analyzed in order to reveal underlying assumptions regarding the role of politics in society, as well as the dynamics between media and politics and the discussion of who sets the agenda.

Case and Data

The crisis in focus here is the automotive crisis, or, more specifically, the case of the closure of Saab Automobile AB, a Swedish car manufacturer formed in 1945. Over 4,000 people (subcontractors excluded) were affected when the Saab factory closed down in December 2011. The first signs of trouble, culminating in bankruptcy, had previously surfaced in 2008, when the American car manufacturer General Motors (GM) announced that they were selling the company. The Swedish government was offered the chance to buy Saab, a suggestion that was rejected by the Minister of Economic Affairs. Spyker Cars, with Victor Mueller as chairman of the board, became the new owner of the company in February 2011. Saab filed for bankruptcy on December 19th of the same year, after several economic setbacks. The news coverage of this crisis was extensive across all Swedish media. Herein, articles from two national newspapers, Aftonbladet (AB; which has the largest circulation among the evening papers) and Dagens Nyheter (DN; which has the largest circulation among the morning papers) have been

chosen for analysis. The stated position of the editorial page in DN is “independently liberal” and in AB it is “social democratic”. The newspapers are chosen in order to provide an overview of reports on the Saab crisis. The corpus consists of the total news coverage during 3 months in the two analyzed periods: firstly in connection with the closure of Saab in 2011, and secondly around the time of GM’s announcement to sell Saab Automobile in 2008. In total, almost 100 news articles were produced with regard to Saab (almost evenly divided across the two periods). The primary focus of the present analysis are the articles that address questions concerning political responsibility, or those in which government representatives are quoted or referred to by others.

Method and focus

The view of the journalistic texts underlying this analysis is that they are always part of wider socio-cultural processes, as they are both shaped by, as well as bearing traces of, the power struggles and negotiations between the media and other institutions and actors - the government and other political organizations (e.g. Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995). Analysis of political performance and how this is represented and put into context by journalism reveals underlying assumptions about political responsibility, as well as the way in which these assumptions are negotiated between the political actors and the journalists. The focus of this analysis concerns questions of political responsibility in conjunction with the automotive crisis, the discursive strategies that are used to legitimate control or naturalize the social order (cf. Fairclough, 1985); how causes, solutions, consequences, expectations, etc. are advanced and argued for by leading politicians – and in what way this is recontextualized and framed by journalism.

How is the problem of the Saab crisis defined; what underlying notion of political responsibility becomes visible in the texts and in what way is this notion negotiated between the political arguments and the choices made by journalism in terms of quotation and ordering of sources, as well as in text structure and layout (c.f. Richardson, 2007)? With regard to the aim of

examining the relational dynamics between journalism and politics, the analysis of the articles from 2008 consistently concerns two dimensions:

1: The political problem description and argumentation strategy, what and how leading politicians from the government argue to frame discourses around the crisis.

2: How journalism relates to the political frames in the recontextualization of the governmental perspective (coherent, negotiating or opposing voices, perspectives and discourses).

The analysis of the first dimension, the political problem description, examines the argument strategies and how political representatives make use of modalities, evidential devices and rhetorical figures or questions (see Wodak, 2001). The examination of modality, the statements or embedded notions of what should or could be, reveals the attitude towards, and the confidence in, the proposition being presented. Evidential devices are words and phrases that suggest factuality (obviously, everyone knows, etc.) and identification of these devices can unveil the construction of common sense - how ideological standpoints are naturalized into objective facts (see also Patrona, 2005). By looking at the use of rhetorical figures and questions, we can discover, for example, how metaphors are deployed to support the overall argument, or how questions are posed in such a way that the answer is self-evident, and no alternative answers are possible (see Chilton, 2004). The metaphor is a construal operation that can function as a framing device, and has been recognized as being significant in ideological communication and persuasion (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2006; Koller, 2004). It is used in what has been referred to as “repetition operations”; a strategy to draw attention to preferred meanings in an ongoing persuasion act (Allen, 1991). An examination of the premises and conclusions that organize arguments, and the semantic operations through which it is performed, means making the implicit explicit by exposing the typical features of manipulation and persuasion - the

enactment, reproduction and legitimization of power and domination (van Dijk, 2008).

To address the second dimension, how journalism relates to the political frames, and advances and contextualizes the political arguments in the texts, Richardson (2007) outlined a number of questions to consider with regard to journalistic choices. The aim of these questions is to show how meaning is communicated, as well as how the constructions relate to power, ideology and hegemony. Does the journalist use direct or indirect quotations, and what effect does this have on the credibility attributed to the source and the way in which his/her viewpoint is perceived? (see also Clayman, 1995.) What meanings, explicit and implicit, are expressed by the choice of words when referring to people, concepts, events and processes? What choices are made in the structure of the text, for instance, in the order in which sources are referred to? How does reporting relate to structural and social inequalities; does reporting bolster the power of the dominant classes? An analytical focus based on these questions is helpful in reaching an understanding of the relationship between journalism and other power players, as well as of the context within which journalism is situated.

The first part of the analysis addresses the period in conjunction with the bankruptcy in 2011. This is carried out in order to distinguish the main discourses and then, more specifically, to examine the articles that touch upon the question of political responsibility. The second part of the analysis then goes back to 2008, and examines the discourses from the beginning of the crisis when GM announced that they wanted to sell Saab, mapping the political arguments and how they were framed by journalism.

The journalistic representation of the crisis in 2011

The automotive crisis had been going on for several years in Europe and the US, and in Sweden it culminated with the bankruptcy and closure of the Saab factory in 2011. Saab was in need of new capital and seeking business partners in China. At the same time, the former American owners had to release the technique license of the Saab cars to the new investors. Reports

about Saab Automobile and its struggle to get back on its feet were a common feature in the Swedish news that fall and winter, on television and radio, as well as in the press. The American company GM and Saab's chairman of the board, Victor Mueller, as well as the names of different (possible) Chinese investors and car companies, became well-known to the audience as main characters in this drama. The frequent stories describing an impending bankruptcy, with serious consequences for the employees, as well as for society as a whole, signaled that this matter was of great and common concern. Closing the factory would mean the loss of one of Sweden's biggest employers and an important national industry, and for thousands of workers it would mean the loss of their jobs. The coverage was extensive, but how was the story told? What voices and opinions were heard, and in what way were responsibilities and solutions handled and constructed in the news articles throughout the 3 months around the bankruptcy? The analysis of the news articles from 2011 shows three main findings:

1: The overarching focus is on various representatives of financial capital (owners, investors) and their struggle, as well as on measures to gain control of Saab. Speculation and news regarding numerous meetings, progress or setbacks are reported in detail.

2: Employees are represented as dealing more with emotions than demanding solutions. The workers are portrayed as passive and powerless, caught between hope and despair, awaiting a decision that determines their future (see Jacobsson and Ekström, 2015, forthcoming).

3: Political involvement is almost invisible, and on the few occasions when leading politicians are involved, their participation consists of passive responses, rather than active intervention.

From the above, we can conclude that during news journalism's fairly extensive coverage of the Saab crisis the months before the final decision to close the factory in 2011, government representatives and the question of political responsibility were almost non-existent in the mainstream Swedish

press. In one of few news articles where ministers appear and give their opinion of the crisis, there is a picture showing the Minister of Economic Affairs standing beside the Minister of Labor, raising her empty hands to the sky. A first look at the image of the empty hands as representing nothing to offer, and being without responsibility or within reach of being held accountable, is supported by a closer investigation of the news reports describing the bankruptcy of Saab Automobile. For 3 months around the closure of the factory, government representatives appear three times in 49 news articles in two of Sweden's largest newspapers. This can be interpreted as a sign of journalism connecting to a dominant frame of depoliticized discourses where a major industrial crisis is perceived as something other than a political matter.

The government is mentioned three times in the 49 articles from 2011, and in one of these, the mention is in the headline: *The government steps in to persuade GM*. The article is from November, a month before the bankruptcy. The text states that, according to the Minister of Affairs, *representatives from the government have contacted GM to stress how important Saab's survival is for Swedish work opportunities. The message was delivered at the automotive subcontractors' annual meeting in Jönköping* (a small city in southern Sweden). The picture shows the Minister of Economic Affairs gazing into the distance. The second article in which any leading politician participated is from the day after the bankruptcy, whereby the Minister of Economic Affairs said that the government *will support the former employees in a difficult time*. The type of support to which she is referring is not specified, and not explicitly asked about. Below this article is a small picture of the Prime Minister's face, and next to it a quote from his Christmas speech: *It must be terrible to be employed in a company where you have experienced this long and hard trial*.

The third article could be read almost as a journalistic defense speech on behalf of the government, as the headline states: *Saab's destiny had already been decided in the 1970s*. The text refers to a British study claiming that *Saab's former owners failed to realize that the world changed then, 30-40 years ago*. The picture above this text is the one previously mentioned, showing the

Minister of Economic Affairs, standing beside the Minister of Labor, raising her empty hands to the sky. The two ministers are standing directly under one of the exits of the Saab factory, where a sign bearing the company name is hanging over their heads. At the end of the text, the journalist states that the Minister of Economic Affairs *didn't give any immediate hope of support* when, during her visit to the factory the day after the bankruptcy, she said: *There are many different areas one could take a closer look at. But first I want to listen*. It is noticeable that the ministers appear at the car factory (and in the news) after the bankruptcy. The concept of responsibility is never mentioned when these politicians are visible in the material. Following Bovens' (2007) perception of political accountability as an essentially retrospective exercise, it is interesting to note the discourses around the image of the empty hands in 2011, and the lack of any type of accountability perspective connected to political actors in the news reports regarding the different measures leading up to the closure of Saab's factory.

Back in time

According to the above, it can be concluded that the underlying journalistic assumption is that there is little (if any) political responsibility when thousands of workers lose their jobs and a large part of a national industry disappears. At least journalism focuses on aspects and actors other than those that were political in the representation of the crisis in conjunction with the closure of the factory in 2011. When government representatives are visible, questions and perspectives implying they are responsible for the crisis in the labor market are absent. Discourses even remotely connected to political accountability are not found in the news articles. When did this understanding of industrial crisis, as being a matter for the market to address, and without political interference, become the framework within which journalism operates? In order to find possible explanations for how this depoliticized perception turned into an unchallenged way of viewing and constructing a serious situation in the labor market, the news reports regarding the eruption of this crisis will be examined.

Derision, destruction and distortion

In 2008, the coalition of the right wing parties had been in government for 2 years, during which time they had set a course towards increased privatization and deregulation, while emphasizing the importance of market freedom and reductions in state spending. In December that year, the owner of Saab, GM, announced that they wanted to sell the company. Regardless of whether Saab had been facing difficulties beforehand, this can be viewed as the beginning of the first steps towards the bankruptcy that followed in 2011. News media continuously reported on the situation relating to Saab during the 3 months subsequent to this announcement. The question of political responsibility is raised and discussed in over half of the total of news articles (26 of 41), and the Minister of Economic Affairs is the primary actor in terms of pictures, headlines and quotations in this respect. The fact that political representatives were highly visible in the news indicates an underlying (journalistic) assumption that political responsibility is expected during an industrial crisis, to some extent, or that this is at least something that must be clarified. However, when analyzing the political explanations and arguments it becomes clear that the posture of the government is somewhat different. In the compact rhetorical manipulation that becomes visible, government representatives primarily make use of a set of argument strategies:

- 1: Derision – almost every time a journalist implies, or explicitly asks about, political responsibility, it is met with a rhetorical question around whether someone really thinks government should gamble with tax payers' money and play Monopoly (i.e. bet on a business that might mean risking capital).
- 2: Destruction – to defend the standpoint that a labor market crisis is a question for the market instead of for politics, citizens are constructed as stakeholders and set against each other. Arguments in accordance with neoliberal logic are brought to life in an evaporation of the common interests of the collective welfare society, instead bolstering the interest of those distinct from the working class. The class aspect is significant in this argument strategy, as it is middle class interests that are given superior

importance. This question of class is never made explicit, but can be understood in this argument.

3: Distortion – in a naturalization act of neoliberal values, the political passiveness, the decision to take no responsibility at all for this crisis, is transformed into the most responsible approach. The alternative, to support the industry, is made equal to dismantling healthcare and schools in Sweden. The class component is also implied in this strategy, although the fact that state intervention would mean an allocation of capital is never made explicit; the middle class voters' money would directly support the working class in securing their employment.

The first example illuminates the arguments, and the modalities, the evidential devices and rhetorical figures on which they are built, as well as the minister's strategy to bring this forward. The government's posture regarding the idea that state intervention would be farfetched is made explicit by an often used 'Monopoly metaphor'. This metaphor is part of a derisive argument strategy, where journalists' questions about political responsibility are met with an almost sarcastic answer. This strategy is present when the Minister of Economic Affairs engages in discussions implying that politics may have a responsibility during this crisis. According to the minister, exactly how ridiculous, or unthinkable, the question of political ownership is becomes visible in the example below, where the headline: *The answer: Never* is followed by the subheading: *Olofsson: Should I play Monopoly with the tax payers' money?*

Example 1 (AB 2009-02-18)

The text first briefly refers to a press conference given by GM, in which it allegedly said that its discussion with the Swedish government about Saab had been fruitless. The article is focused on the minister's response to GM's statement and her perspective of what was (really) going on.

-One should be perfectly clear that GM is trying to leave Saab. GM is also trying to transfer the responsibility to others than themselves, including the government.

She explained that there are no plans of bringing in Swedish money to GM in order to save Saab.

-Do you really think I should take the tax payers' money, for which I have been trusted to be responsible, and buy a car factory that GM don't think can be profitable? Should I play Monopoly with the tax payers' money and invest it in such an insecure business? The answer is no. It is GM and not the government who is responsible.

The modality implied by the minister, which is so obvious that we should all be aware of it, is that the actor that is genuinely responsible (GM) is attempting to get rid of its burden by pushing the responsibility onto anyone, even the Swedish government. The minister makes it clear that this is an unthinkable scenario; the government has no intention of supporting the automotive industry, as the responsibility belongs to GM. The idea of state intervention when a large industry is in crisis is constructed in the manner of a desperate suggestion from a company that is attempting to escape its responsibility. The rhetorical question regarding the tax payers' money is formulated in such a way that intervening in the future of the Saab workers opposes responsibility towards another group: the tax payers. This destructive argument strategy gives the impression of being factual and objective, when in fact it is a highly political interpretation of the situation and a method of setting two groups and their interests against one another (cf. Wodak, 2001). Clearly, working class people in the car factory (who are also tax payers) are not the ones being referred to when the minister is talking about tax payers. What is constructed by the modalities, the evidential devices and the rhetorical figures used by the minister is a problem description where it is impossible to be responsible with tax payers' money and simultaneously intervene in the automotive industry to save jobs. The monopoly metaphor is used to underline the responsibility held by the Minister of Economic Affairs; she has been given the responsibility of allocating tax payers' money and she takes that responsibility seriously enough to avoid playing Monopoly. This evidentiality distorts the question of responsibility and naturalizes a political standpoint. It gives the impression that it really is impossible, as in a nature-defying act, instead of

making it explicit that it is the right thing to do according to the government's specific political ideology and their idea of how capital should be allocated.

The fact that financial value is more important than social responsibility is made explicit in an article under the headline *The government closes the door on Saab*. The picture above the text shows the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Secretary of State during a press conference. Their facial expressions, with mouths resolutely closed, signal decisiveness and a firm posture with regard to the decision not to intervene in the Saab affair. The preamble introduces the government's line of reasoning:

Example 2 (DN 2009-02-19)

The state will not take over any car factories. That it will be cheaper to let Saab employees be unemployed, than to save the car manufacturer is the belief of the state.

-GM knows every state gets worries when that many jobs are threatened, the Minister of Economic Affairs Maud Olofsson (C) said during the Wednesday press conference in Rosenbad. -It is why they try to push the responsibility over to us. But it is not Monopoly we are playing, we are talking about real money that tax payers are hoping for, to go to healthcare and schools.

After further explanation from this minister as why it would be too expensive for the state to intervene, the text then tells us how her arguments were supported by the Prime Minister:

-If the world's biggest car company has not managed, even in 20 years, to create the capacity for Saab to survive, I can't understand why the Swedish state would handle it better, said Fredrik Reinfeldt.

A closure of Saab would also cost society a large sum in terms of unemployment benefits, retraining, loss of professional competence, and so forth. This doesn't change the government's attitude.

-The financial risk of supporting Saab is considerably larger, said the secretary of state Jöran Hågglund (C). –If one counts harshly that everyone should be unemployed and none of them would get a new job we could afford to pay for that anyway during 4, 5 years. But people will look for other jobs, perhaps move, perhaps apply for education, so the bill will be lower anyway.

The message from the government is clear: Economic profit is above social responsibility. The question of responsibility is distorted in such a way as to imply that anyone who suggests state intervention is actually suggesting that the government should be irresponsible. The monopoly metaphor is accompanied by an explanation of how irresponsible gambling behavior would jeopardize the financing of healthcare and schools. Prime Minister Reinfeldt's remark strengthens the construction of how ridiculous the idea of state intervention is; if a successful company hasn't been capable of managing Saab, who in their right mind can suggest that the government can do it better?

How journalism relates to the political message

How does journalism handle the political arguments in terms of coherent, negotiating and opposing discourses? Are other voices and perspectives put forward in the discussion of political responsibility, solutions and expectations? How does journalism construct the story in the selection, quotation and recontextualization of political performances and explanations?

In the previous example (ex. 2), the way in which journalism connects with the economic frame, in a manner that is coherent with the arguments advanced by the government, becomes clear. When the text mentions that the crisis would *cost society a large sum* it is in terms of how it would affect the state budget, rather than introducing other aspects or consequences of the crisis, for example, how it would affect that part of the country where the car factory was the biggest employer, or how it would affect the entire automotive industry and, not least, the workforce becoming unemployed. Journalism does not provide an alternative view by challenging the approach

of allowing workers to become unemployed because *the bill will be lower* compared to the cost of providing more direct support to keep the car factory and secure the employees' jobs.

If we look at how journalism relates to the quotes by the minister shown in example 1, there is nothing in the journalistic representation of this issue that provides opposing voices, or another way of viewing who the tax payers are, by making visible the implicit political distinction between the working class employed in the factory and the middle class voters (and readers), or by raising questions regarding an alternative allocation of state money. This example illustrates a common structure in the news articles, where the minister's perspective and argument strategy are left unchallenged, and where large parts of the texts are direct quotations of her words.

The following example, with the headline *Government does not want to take over car company*, illustrates the way in which journalists draw attention to the fact that discussions about state support to the car industry has been evident in other countries. This attempt to criticize is met with the message that is constantly repeated by the Swedish Minister of Economic Affairs: that the crisis is beyond political interventions and responsibility.

Example 3 (DN 2008-12-04)

After an introduction, whereby journalism refers to the ongoing discussions within the EU on how to save the automotive industry in Europe, the text relates the latter to the Swedish situation and criticizes the government for being passive in comparison to other European governments:

It has been said from others that governments in other EU-countries, especially in Germany and France, are prepared to step in with more direct support to their car manufacturers. This was firmly denied by the Minister of Economic Affairs, Maud Olofsson.

(...)

Maud Olofsson underlined that not even a limited and temporary state ownership of Volvo and Saab is possible.

– It is not the state’s role to own a car company, she said.

The vague journalistic remark *it has been said by others* (that other governments are more active and supportive) can be read as an embedded notion that the Swedish government should have taken a more active approach, or at least that this is a question up for debate. The example shows the only occurrence in the data where journalists point to how other solutions are perhaps possible; a negotiation of how the crisis could be viewed and a contradiction of the message from the government regarding the role of politics. This is the closest that journalism gets to an accountability perspective in the articles analyzed.

As stated above, the main political actor in the articles is the Minister of Economic Affairs who is quoted and/or referred to in all 26 articles where the question of political responsibility, discussions about plausible solutions or expectations of political involvement are addressed. The most common structure of these texts is that the headline, pictures and the main part of the text focuses on the quotes from this minister, with only a few lines at the end of the article containing some kind of response or reaction from the political opposition or union representatives to the declarations and measures of the government. The article introduced above ends with journalism drawing attention to the Social Democrats, who were in political opposition to the conservative government, and their comments on the situation.

Example 4 (DN 2008-12-04)

The opposition disqualifies the governments’ politics. The main objection is that the government is “too passive”.

(...)

-The state has a strong responsibility to keep industry competence and it is a state responsibility to care about the labor market. It is not the same, as the state should step in as long-term owners in the automotive industry, said Thomas Eneroth.

The Social Democrats also claim that the government has scared away plausible owners of Saab by talking negatively about the company. Prime Minister Reinfeldt answers that it is better to be clear than to pretend the problem doesn't exist.

In this article, criticism of the present political strategy becomes visible, and the standpoint that the industry and the labor market is a political concern is put forward. However, more concrete solutions are not (re)presented. The opposing perspective is more about blame than about offering an alternative way of viewing or addressing the crisis. The (re)presentation of the political opposition gives the impression of providing critical voices (even if the voices fit within the same framework and make it possible for journalism to stay firmly anchored within the sphere of legitimate controversy). The Prime Minister gets the last word and the preferential right of interpretation in a comment that indicates that 'his side' is the one brave enough to face the truth, and is therefore those who could reach reasonable solutions.

Example 5 (DN 2009-02-21)

The article under the headline *High political game about the jobs* follows the same line of reasoning, whereby the government justifies their action and is blamed by the opposition. The preamble introduces the journalistic view of the turn of events around the Saab crisis:

The political game about the jobs continues after Saab's petition for a reconstruction. While the government explained that the business plans of General Motors and Saab are not good enough, the Social Democrats accused the Conservative parties of letting the employees down.

The article begins with an explanation by the Minister of Economic Affairs as to why Saab's business plan was too optimistic. In the next section, the journalist interprets the (political) situation:

The Saab case and the financial crisis meant the politicians faced a number of challenges. Voters can punish the one who makes mistakes or does too little. Moreover, the preconception of politics is that people work: without employment, no tax revenues and no reforms. Unemployment instead creates costs for society. On the other hand, it should not look like politicians spend tax payers' money on the wrong things, for example, on supporting companies that cannot survive.

What is visible here is the government defending their standpoint and the opposition blaming them for letting the workers down. However, concrete solutions or alternative interpretations of the crisis are still not (re)presented. The journalistic interpretation of the situation reveals that both politics and journalism are situated within the same interpretational frame, where politics is viewed as a strategic game to keep voters, where voters are perceived more as stakeholders than as citizens, and where discourses around crisis and unemployment emerge from the economic frame, rather than the social responsibility frame. In the above example, journalism reproduces the idea that a company incapable of surviving on its own would be the “wrong thing” on which to spend money. The comment from the Social Democrats blames the government for letting employees down, but does not provide any explanation or further elaboration on what should be done and how. The overarching ideological discussion, of what political responsibility should mean during a labor market crisis where a large national industry is at risk, is not raised here.

Ending discussion

The political arguments from the right-wing government during this crisis in 2008 are springing from a neoliberal view of the world. As a reply to the criticism of using neoliberalism as an explanation in analyses of societal issues (e.g. Barnett, 2010) it is important to operationalize this theory by showing neoliberalism in action – the way in which leading politicians constantly give voice to the values underpinning the neoliberal ideology. The analysis of the Swedish government's arguments, and their strategy of advancing them by constructing evidential devices, modalities and rhetorical figures and questions, illuminates the naturalization of ideology and the

compact neoliberal agenda masked as common sense, which makes the execution of neoliberal actions appear as the only sane way to go (see also Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, about *topoi*: the argumentative schemata that are evident in political performances). The emphasis on the Monopoly metaphor and the rhetorical question of whether the government should gamble with tax payers' money constructs a discourse of derision where questions regarding state intervention and political responsibility in this matter are reduced to something naive and almost unthinkably irresponsible. The previous idea of a common welfare state is replaced by a destructive discourse, where using tax payers' money to secure jobs is called "taking the tax payers money", as this contradicts the idea of the reason for taxes. The decision to not take responsibility is distorted and presented as the most responsible political act of all. The message that leading politicians deliver is clear: The state should not intervene in times of industrial crisis. There is no political responsibility for the labor market. Letting workers be unemployed costs less than saving their jobs. Embedded in this message is a view of humanitarian values, such as workers being capable of keeping their employment, salary and social foundation, as subordinated in the aim to spend as little of the state's money as possible. Put simply, it is made clear that economic profit is more important than social responsibility. According to neoliberal ideas, large industries, like any other company, should be governed by market logic without the interference of the state. This analysis illuminates the assumptions of the neoliberal agenda and how stringently this was put forward by the Swedish government in an act of derision, destruction and distortion during the beginning of the crisis in 2008.

If we turn to the question of journalistic space and the relationship between media and politics, it is essential to investigate if, and, in that case how, journalism negotiates or opposes the assumption behind this neoliberal approach by putting forward other voices and perspectives. The leading actor, the Minister of Economic Affairs, is visible in a large number of the articles. She is often directly quoted, and receives the greatest amount of space to introduce and explain the posture of the government. There is no sign of journalistic attempts to question her explanations by moving outside

the hegemonic, depoliticized frame. Opposing voices, such as representatives from other political parties, receive less space and are often put in the middle of the government's introductory and closing arguments. The opposing voices do not represent a different way of viewing, but instead settle for blaming the government. Consensus as a characteristic of today's political landscape may explain the narrow journalistic output, but perhaps journalism could have found a voice, challenging, questioning, or making the neoliberal ideology visible?

When journalism points to the consequences of a closure, it also means raising questions with regard to the costs to society - in what way the former workforce would be a liability to the state's finances. This line of reasoning strengthens the dichotomy introduced by the government, where "the tax payers" and "investments in healthcare and education" are placed on one side, and "the Saab workers" and "investments in an unprofitable factory" on the other. This explanation of why state interventions are impossible is a dominant perspective in the news articles and journalism does not provide another possible way in which this can be viewed.

In short, the analysis of the news reports from 2008 shows that the political justification for leaving the responsibility to the market is transformed into common sense in undisputed stories about the government's limited ability to support the car industry.

If we fast forward to the image of the empty hands of 2011, this picture is situated in a context where the downfall of a large national industry is discussed and perceived, as anything but a political question. No type of political accountability perspective is put forward by journalism. In the story describing the closure of the Saab factory, politicians are only quoted, or referred to, in three of almost 50 articles; instead, the market representatives, the companies and their CEOs are represented as the central actors. The question is whether this provides us with any substantial clues or insights useful for the discussion of the relationship between journalism, politics and neoliberalism? How independent is journalism and how much power to set

the agenda for the political discussion do journalists actually have? Needless to say, this analysis cannot give a bulletproof answer to that question. However, what it can do is to show which actors and perspectives receive the most attention in the 2008 news reports, and the manner in which the quotes and explanations are recontextualized and framed in such a way that they correlate with neoliberal ideology. Different time periods are governed by different common sense (Fairclough, 2013), and it is difficult to imagine the political and news discourses regarding the Saab crisis as situated in a context other than that during the late 2000s, when neoliberal ideas and beliefs were strongly on the rise in Sweden. Journalism has the power to shape our understanding of events, ideas and people, but this does not mean we should not consider the vulnerability of journalism; on the contrary, it means we must more rigorously investigate what sets the frames within which discourses can be constructed. It is difficult to claim that the vigorous rhetorical manipulation and argument strategy of the government in 2008, and especially that of the Minister of Economic Affairs, is a factor in some sort of causal mechanism that transformed the perception of an industrial crisis into a question for the market and made the question of political accountability invisible, and perhaps even inaccessible. Nevertheless, the resolute posture, and the derisive, destructive and distorting discourses in 2008, together with the political, economic and ideological context within which journalism is situated, must be acknowledged in order to gain a deeper understanding of journalistic space and power over its own output.

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Article III

*Business Elite Competition or a Common Concern?
Journalistic representations of industrial crises in Sweden*

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Published in Journalism Studies, online: March 29, 2016

Business Elite Competition or a Common Concern?

Journalistic representations of industrial crises in Sweden

Abstract

This article examines how mainstream news journalism reports about a large industrial crisis in Sweden today and compares it with the journalistic construction of a similar crisis in the late 1970s. Analysis shows that the one-dimensional news reports today fail to contextualize the crisis when instead covering the surface drama and exalting the competitiveness of the economic elite. In this oversimplified understanding and construction of a crisis, journalism neglects other aspects and turns it into matters solely for the market. The political and labor perspective highlighted in the crisis news coverage during the 1970s is missing in today's representation. The different voices discussing the causes, characteristics, consequences and solutions of crisis in the industry four decades ago have been replaced by several economy or market experts representing the same perspective; a narrow business understanding of what is at stake, how a crisis can be solved as well as by whom. The class aspect and the democratic implications when the interests of the working class and the view of the industry as an arena for labor are largely neglected by mainstream news journalism are highlighted in the present study.

Keywords: Journalistic representations, Ideology, Crisis, Neoliberalism

Introduction

This article examines how mainstream news journalism reports about a large industrial crisis in Sweden today and compares it with the journalistic construction of a similar crisis in the late 1970s. Different kinds of crises have erupted in the ongoing global crisis of capitalism during the last decade. As news media and journalism have a crucial role in how societal issues are shaped discursively and how they can be understood by the public (e.g. Fairclough and Fairclough 2012; Allan 2005; van Dijk 1991), the journalistic crisis news reports need to be put under scrutiny. Analysis of these discourses can enhance our understanding of how policy steps and measurements taken (or not taken) during the global crisis can become accepted, supported or even perceived as unavoidable (Kelsey et al. 2015; Whittle and Mueller 2012). Previous research indicates a common feature in the various recent crises springing from the capitalist crisis: that they are portrayed in media discourses as financial and economic crises, treated as a natural given rather than being addressed as (political) systemic crises (e.g. Kelsey 2014; Murray-Leach et al. 2014; Mylonas 2015). This study aims at examining if, and in that case how, a journalistic focus on financial and economic aspects is a general characteristic in a Swedish context as well. The case of the industrial crisis is particularly interesting to investigate due to the obvious labor perspective and the historical perspective making it possible to investigate discourses during two different political contexts. Both cases analyzed here, the automotive crisis in the 2010s and the textile crisis in the 1970s, meant the closure of factories and the loss of employment for thousands of workers and also the loss of an important national industry. These circumstances indicate that the crisis could be viewed as a labor market problem. The class dimension in the journalistic interpretation and explanation of the crisis and in the way sources are used to construct the story are emphasized in the focus on the following two questions: What is the main journalistic theme; what is (re)presented as the causes, characteristics and solutions? Who is approached and entitled to participate as an expert source; in what way do the experts get to interpret

the events? I also wish to discuss the question, why do the news reports concentrate on certain aspects of the crisis while neglecting other perspectives and actors? What democratic implications can the journalistic representations have and can this be considered problematic in any way? A common expectation of the journalistic democratic assignment is that it explains complex issues and provides opportunity for different voices and perspectives. Analysis of the crisis coverage in two of Sweden's largest newspapers shows two main findings concerning the latter crisis in the car industry: (1) Discourses centered on economy and the economic elite are fundamental in the extensive crisis coverage, and (2) Elite actors and experts from the business or legal sector are those who primarily are given voice to define the problem as an economic and legal issue. The analysis compares the recent journalistic discourses with how a similar crisis in the industry was covered by journalism in the late 1970s. The method of putting different crisis constructions next to each other not only illuminates how alternative approaches to crisis in the industry are (or have been) possible but also how concepts like hegemony and ideology can be meritorious in discussions concerning news journalism and the conditions surrounding it.

Previous Research

Previous research of crisis news discourses in a US and European context comprises analyses of a range of events emanating from the current crisis of capitalism (the collapses of banks, the housing crisis, and multiple societal incidents labeled the "Euro-crisis," focusing on debts of sovereign states, the launching of austerity programs and so forth). This growing body of critical research points to a shift in the perspectives of news media alongside the expansion of market capitalism since the 1980s, in which attention concerning broad economy and society coverage has moved towards increased coverage concerning business and finance. A distinct market-orientated point of view is expressed through a journalistic focus on various representatives of financial capital at the expense of a labor perspective (Chakravartty and Schiller 2010). One of the central observations from this research is that statements from elite sources are reported as facts by news journalism in a way that points to a lack of critical engagement and where

alternative explanations and actors are missing in the news reports (e.g. Duval 2005; Patrona 2005; Martin 2007; Nerone 2009; Rafter 2014; Silke 2015). As shown by Croteau (1998), business spokespersons were consulted by journalism six times more often than union representatives in stories about the economy. The shift in journalistic focus from attempts to explain the world of work to instead covering the interests of management and business elite is a communal feature for many countries and is located in time to the late 1980s. In the UK this shift has been quite harsh, which is noticeable in the dramatic reduction of labor and industrial reporters. Alongside with the almost disappearing number of journalists covering labor questions there has been an increase in business- and economy reporters neglecting the union perspective as well as marginalizing the interests of ordinary citizens and workers (Jones et.al. 2014).

The plethora of news stories concerning the economic elite also points to a non-systemic narrative that has been recognized as the dominant perspective in media coverage of different crises evaporating in Europe during the last years (e.g. Miller 2009; Marron 2010; Mercille 2013; Bickes, Otten and Weymann 2014; Mylonas 2012; 2015; Kelsey 2014). In a broad mapping of research on media crisis discourses in a European context, Murray-Leach et al. (2014) conclude that the dominant media narrative treats various outbursts of the capitalist crisis in a similar way, placing them within a technocratic frame that emphasizes the crisis as a natural given in terms of systemic unavoidability. This discursive shaping and the determination of who is a legitimate expert rules out alternative interpretations (and actions) and skews the debate in economic terms to an extent that makes it valid to talk about a restriction on the (public) perception of where and by whom solutions can be found.

Non-systemic perspectives and the focus on business elite actors have been identified as working in two ways: they both reduce the depth of explanations of complex processes while leaning towards conflict and easy accessible drama, as well as strengthen the marketization of news discourse and the positioning of a crisis within an economist frame (e.g. Cawley 2012).

A large scale study of the media coverage of the Euro crisis in four leading newspapers in ten countries initiated by the Reuters Institute (2014) points to individualized discourses about crisis focusing on suffering and blame. The emphasis on the individual and economic dimension of what also could be seen as social and political questions diminishes possibilities for collective action among those losing the economic competition and contributes to keeping them in their position (Amable 2010). It also implies the unequal capacity of different social groups to get attention for their cause to an extent that we can talk about a symbolic violence that further weakens the voice of the working class and ordinary citizens (e.g. Cottle 2006; Lewis, Inthorn and Wahl-Jorgensen 2005; van Dijk 1991). Bagdikian (2004) argues this is far from a random act, as newspapers want “affluent readers” (p. 227). Martin (2008) follows the same line of reasoning in pointing to the shift in the target market of US and Canadian newspapers to a niche, “upscale” audience of the upper middle class leaving the perspectives of a mass audience of the working and middle class unheard.

Sweden has a unique history of Social Democratic hegemony and a strong labor movement and is known for the well established Swedish model based on a guarantee of full employment for labor (see Blyth 2003). The conditions surrounding both the labor market in general and perhaps the industry in particular, as well as the conditions governing the journalistic practice, have gradually changed during the time period between the crisis in the textile industry and the crisis in the car industry. Putting the news crisis coverage from the two different contexts next to each other contributes with empirical knowledge about how these changes are perceived, negotiated and manifested in the journalistic output.

Contextualizing Journalism

As a clear manifestation of the crisis of capitalism in the late 00s, Sweden experienced a crisis in the automotive industry. Thousands of workers were on the verge of unemployment. As will be shown in this analysis, journalism didn't regard this crisis primarily as a political or labor issue but rather as an unstoppable fact where crisis remedy was linked to the business elites and

their “apolitical” competition in the fight over capital and the legal rights to car models. The ongoing drama is incessantly interpreted by the voices of market experts. This journalistic interpretation of the crisis should not be viewed as an isolated event but instead put into historical and political contexts. The reason for the journalistic market orientated frames and the dominance of business elites as sources when constructing news stories has been given different explanations in previous research. The development identified by for example Bagdikian (2004) and Martin (2008) mentioned above is valid also within the Swedish journalistic practice. Changes within the media landscape, the media system, as well as changes in journalistic norms and ideals should also be acknowledged. Due to an online environment the journalistic practices and routines are challenged when going from fixed deadlines to 24/7 updates (Adams, 2013). This is occurring in combination with the consequences of cutting the staff costs where fewer journalists are doing the same amount of work. Taken together this transforms the conditions for journalists who (already) have to navigate through the tension between what is commercially viable and what is desired from an editorial perspective. According to Hallin & Mancini (2004) analysis of media systems in different parts of the world Swedish media is rooted in a democratic corporatist structure characterized by a historically strong party press. Professional norms and ideals are however changing among Swedish journalists and ideals of objectivity and neutrality has grown exponentially (Wiik, 2010). Differences between the media systems in general are diminishing, now promoting political neutrality and a separation of commentaries and the objective information news style. This means that previously separate systems are increasingly molded in to a more liberal, commercial one (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

The organizational factors that have been identified, points to the increased linkage between the capitalist economy and the media system, how this provides us with a highly commercialized media and news journalism, acting in accordance with profit maximizing principles. This means that the practice of routinized information gathering in striving for maximized efficiency and under the pressure of the time-space-money conditions

influencing the *modus operandi* of journalism leads to a limited range of sources (Tuchman 1978; Herman and Chomsky 2002; Richardson 2007; McChesney 2008; Manning 2013). Few sources participating by reflex or routine seem like a reasonable consequence of these factors but it can however not fully explain the choice of sources. The journalistic perspectives – and sources – have changed over time. As pointed out by Martin (2007, 2008), alternative frames around labor existed only decades ago, side by side with the dominant idea about a strong welfare state. Questions and events regarding labor generated stories about “collective worker action within a class-based economic system” (2007, 31) as news media were expected to represent narratives and experiences from a wider class background (see also Chakravartty and Schiller 2010). It has been argued that since then the news media and the whole media industry have transformed in a way that has “orphaned the working-class market” (Nerone 2009, 354). Increased focus on economy (in a double sense; both in the journalistic production process as well as in the journalistic product) has naturalized the market frame to a degree that other narratives are closed off. The reason behind the limited stories which can be told and how is perhaps best explained by Althusser (1971) and his notion of interpellation and ideology, the constitutive process in which individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies. According to Althusser this indicates a circle movement where the ideology of media content and the interpretation of the audience confirm each other and determine what is “sayable.” The outcome, discussed for example by Couldry (2003), is that journalism, by neglecting a broader range of perspectives, actually constrains public discourses. This has been identified by Gramsci (1971) as the work done by major institutions of civil society in a form of ideological leadership where the promotion of ideas and norms being in line with the interests of the ruling elite generates public consent for structural inequalities. The way this cultural hegemony operates, according to Gramsci, is in the sometimes subtle way it “helps” people to adopt certain ways of viewing the world consistent with the social power structure. There is an obvious tension between structural explanations about what governs the journalistic practice,

whether highlighting organizational factors or ideological constraints, and ideas about journalistic autonomy. In 2011, former industrial and political news correspondents in the UK invited union representatives and press officers to a seminar examining the demise of labor related news, highlighting the fact that the focus of news stories nowadays is less on job losses than on market failure and the consequences for business. The seminar discussion about the diminishing news coverage on labor and union locates the development both within material conditions in the labor market; the disappearance of the “real power” previously connected to the union and in the owner structure of newspapers today where owners are increasingly involved in the economic system and the aim to make profit. Former industrial correspondent Nicholas Jones bluntly concluded journalists still could cover the labor market from a labor perspective, but “who is going to publish it?” (Media & Society, seminar 2011-03-16). This seminar discussion initiated by concerned former correspondents can provide scholars with an insight that the abandoning of labor news, as identified by for example Nerone (2009), Martin (2007, 2008), and Chakravartty & Schiller (2010) has its explanation in factors largely beyond the scope of journalistic agency. The view underpinning this analysis is that multiple empirical investigations of journalistic output are needed to address that question in a more initiated manner. The actual texts produced by journalism can provide us with knowledge about the negotiation between structural conditions and the journalistic agency and add to the discussions and explanations springing from journalists’ self-estimated sense of autonomy.

Contextualizing the Crises

The two cases of crises of interest here both concern large national industries of their time. Algot's textile production went bankrupt in 1977, and the Saab Automobile factory was closed in 2011. A few years before the Saab bankruptcy, the owners, the American car company General Motors, had announced they wanted to sell the company. Spyker cars bought the company and Victor Muller became the CEO in February 2011. Similar for both of the crises is that they led to mass unemployment as thousands of

workers lost their jobs when the factories closed. In the 1970s, Sweden was known for its Keynesian welfare policies and the Social Democratic principles about a strong welfare state aiming at increasing economic equality. The idea of having an influential labor movement, a powerful union speaking on behalf of the working class and demanding employment as well as reasonable working conditions, was broadly accepted and supported (Blyth 2003; Kjellberg 2002; Allvin and Sverke 2000). Decades of going in a neoliberal direction since then have led to depoliticization and a general marketization and individualization of society. This means that the political context in which the two industrial crises are situated is fundamentally different. The gradual shift towards economic and social policies that has led to an increased liberality and centrality to markets, to market processes and to the interests of capital, has transformed the whole labor market and also the view of the industry (Harvey 2005; 2010). The exploitation of labor has rapidly been intensified and manifested in increased insecurity and a decline in wages, as well as in the decline of the power of the unions (Hobbs and Tucker 2009; Lazzarato 2009). The above needs to be taken into account in the analysis of the crisis news coverage and it also underlines the importance of examining how the crises are understood and approached by journalism as well as what voices are entitled to interpret the causes of events surrounding them.

Data

The crisis coverage in the national newspaper Dagens Nyheter, the largest circulation among the morning papers, and Aftonbladet, the largest circulation among the evening papers, has been analyzed. The newspapers have been chosen to provide an overview of the crisis reports in the two largest, national newspapers. The stated position of the editorial page of Dagens Nyheter is “independently liberal,” and of Aftonbladet “social democratic.” All news articles and commentary columns where the industrial crisis is the main topic from three months during the crisis, two months before the closure of the factories and one month after, have been analyzed. The data consist of the total coverage during these three months (51 articles from 2011 and 40 articles from 1977).

Methodological Approach and Analytical Focus

Following the CDA approach, news discourses are seen here as corresponding with ideology in the way they both shape and reproduce the macro-structure of society (e.g. van Dijk 1995a; Weiss and Wodak 2003; Wodak 2001; Fairclough 2014). As pointed out by Wodak (1989) there is no one and only method for how to go about within the tradition of CDA. There are however certain traits analyses within the tradition share, as the problem orientation and the eclectic nature of theory and method (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The less detailed case study approach herein is influenced by Fairclough and his Marxist orientated critique of the capitalist exploitation of the working class, the definition of ideology as the superstructure of civilisation and the notion of language as “product, producer, and reproducer of social consciousness” (Fairclough and Graham 2002, p. 201). When it comes to analysis of discourses regarding different parts of the current crisis of capitalism specifically, Fairclough (2013) argues that the understanding, interpretation and explanation of the causes, characters and solutions of crisis, and how this is brought forward (and by whom), need to be investigated. The point of entry for the present analysis in order to identify the above mentioned features is to focus on the main topics of the crisis news discourses and also how these are shaped by the voices of experts.

The identification of main topics is closely knit to questions of control and manipulation on a macro-level: how the implementation of ideology is negotiated and brought forward by the news media. The focus on journalists’ use of (expert) sources concerns a more concrete level: how choices in the journalistic practice further determine what perspectives and voices are entitled to shape the main topics and (re)produce the perception of an event (van Dijk, 1991). With reference to the findings of previous research pointing to non-systemic news stories with a distinct market orientated perspective and a focus on representatives of financial capital and economy experts, the following questions, inspired by the modus of analysis suggested by Jäger (2001) and Fairclough (2014), are examined:

1: How does journalism represent a case of crisis in the industry; what is the major statement/the general message; what is (re)presented as causes, problems and solutions? What is the journalistic approach to the economic power elite?

2: What sources do the stories draw upon; who is entitled to contribute with expert knowledge? What assumptions can be detected through this; what notion of industrial crisis underlies the articles; what is taken for granted and what seems to be less clear?

The analysis also concerns the layout, the headlines, sub headings and pictures as well as the vocabulary, the implication and insinuations and the general style of the articles. Below the main journalistic theme during the crisis in the car industry will be analyzed first. After a short summary of the empirical findings the news coverage from the textile crisis is analyzed. The ending discussion puts the crisis discourses from different political contexts next to each other. The main features are highlighted in order to discuss what the differences and similarities can tell us about the state of journalism and its role in society as well as how we can view the journalistic output when it comes to questions about class, power and ideology.

Exploring the Dominant Theme of the News Reports During the Saab Crisis

The journalistic understanding and interpretation of an industrial crisis today becomes clear in the analysis of coverage in two of Sweden's largest newspapers during a three month period in conjunction with the closure of a Saab automobile factory. The mapping of the main topics in the total news coverage (51 articles, almost evenly divided between the two examined newspapers) shows three main findings:

1: The overarching focus is on various representatives of financial capital, who are mentioned and quoted, and whose actions and intentions are discussed in 48 articles.

2: Political representatives are nearly invisible and when they are visible their performances consist of passive responses rather than active intervention. Responsible ministers are only quoted in three articles and then as a peripheral part of the text.

3: Employees are represented as isolated, powerless and emotional rather than as a strong collective demanding solutions. The workers are quoted in six articles and then with a focus on their reaction to someone else's action or decision.

The dominant market orientated theme in the journalistic representation of this crisis is analyzed below and identifies a non-systemic story where business elite and expert sources are given the interpretational priority. It also shows that journalism stays on the surface, which opens for easy accessible drama presented in an hour-by-hour news story where crisis in the industry is portrayed more as a competition between the economic elite than as an issue concerning politics. Contextualization is reduced to journalism providing in-depth information about the business aspects of what is required to “win the fight” over the car industry: to gain access to the legal rights to different car models and technique licenses. The systemic explanations concern the legal system and avoid discussions about the economic (or political) system. Journalistic scrutiny seems to be reduced to speculations about the next steps (assumed) to be taken by the business elite actors – and the journalistic understanding of the necessity of a multitude of voices is manifested in giving voice to several experts instead of one, all representing the same perspective.

The Industry as an Arena for Competition Between Business Elites

The ethos of competitiveness has been identified as being at the heart of neoliberal ideology. The naturalization of the economic system, portrayed as an impartial mechanism allocating limited resources, encourages an individualized understanding where fighting for one's own best interest in fierce competition is turned into common sense (Amable 2010). The

underlying journalistic assumption that becomes visible in the analysis of the representation of the Saab crisis confirms this understanding in the way journalism emphasizes the competition between – and the superhuman characteristics of – elite actors.

Victor Muller, the CEO of Saab, is in constant focus in the journalistic story. His name and picture are common features and the same quote from him can be highlighted in the headline, in the preamble and in the running text. The rest of the text often consists of speculations of what will happen and draws on an expert (often another journalist), an anonymous source (“a person with insights/someone close to the Saab management”) or the journalist her/himself interpreting Muller’s words. The examples below illustrate the focus on Muller and his specific characteristics as well as the construction of the crisis as a competition between elites.

Example 1 (AB 2011-10-29)

One of all articles focusing on the surface drama, the fight between General Motors, Victor Muller and various potential investors, has the headline *It just went Pang* and discusses the solution in sight after the announcement that the Chinese company Pang Da wants to buy Saab Automobile. The preamble explains the situation:

Yesterday the joyful news came: With Chinese millions Saab will keep on going. But the former owner General Motors still can interfere.

The running text continues the explanation:

Until the end it looked bad and the threat of bankruptcy was close. But after days of intensive negotiations the solution that can save Saab was presented yesterday.

The text goes on with exact numbers, the actual price tag as well as the different stages of the deal, and then continues quoting Muller:

–I am proud that I succeeded in bringing Saab into safety. That Saab is alive. But it has been a tough commitment and it has taken a lot of me and those around me.

The sub headlines in this article capture the core of the journalistic story:

I am proud (text referring to Muller closing the Chinese deal), *Sigh of relief* (text about the reaction in the city of Trollhättan where the car factory is located), *GM can stop it all* (text referring to the imminent threat of those owning the Saab-technique) and *Turbulent times* (text speculating about possible future scenarios).

Example 2 (AB 2011-12-20)

A double-paged article in Aftonbladet the day after the bankruptcy shows the journalistic understanding of the problem. It is given the headline *The letter that sank Saab*. Under a full-size picture of a disappointed Muller and a broken Saab logo the caption states:

Fought in vain. At 03.27 Muller gets the mail where General Motors explains its position. "Move carefully – or else GM will take appropriate action to protect GM and its shareholders", GM writes. At 15.00 yesterday Muller held a press conference where he explained that the fight for Saab is over.

The subheading gives further explanation to why: *GM's ultimatum made Muller surrender: I can only interpret this as a threat.* The preamble starts with defining the letter sent by GM: *At 03.27 the night before yesterday Saab got its death sentence.* Under the label *Aftonbladet reveals* we get the journalistic interpretation of the crisis:

Yesterday morning a furious Victor Muller arrived at Vänersborgs District Court. He was there, after his two year fight, to petition Saab in bankruptcy after one last desperate attempt during the night to save the Western Swedish car manufacturer.

(...)

–I am desperate and furious, Muller said to the local newspaper TTELAs correspondent when he arrived at the District Court in the morning. Only hours earlier Saabs death sentence had arrived via mail from GM to Muller.

At the bottom of this double-paged article a summary based on numbers displayed as a digital watch presents Saabs nightmare hour by hour. The summary starts at 03:27 - *Victor Muller gets the mail* and then takes the reader through different events occurring over 24 hours.

Example 3 (AB 2011-12-20)

In a commentary piece, placed next to the article about the GM-mail and the hour-by-hour summary, the columnist adds to the explanation by elaborating on the unique characteristics of Muller as well as by proclaiming who is to blame:

Victor Muller is a master of persuasion and to enthuse. To make people go along with his ideas. He is a very special man. And he has some characteristics that I am not really delighted in. Like his empathy for others being close to non-existent. Or that he always wants to be in the center of attention. But it is with these characteristics that he has kept Saab alive until now. It is his fantastic ability to persuade others about his cause that made the Chinese Companies Pang Da and Youngman interested in investing in Saab. Now Muller is gone. Saab as a car manufacturer is also gone. General Motors made sure the rescue plan was destroyed.

The journalistic interpretation put forward in the articles about the fight over Saab almost exclusively points towards an understanding of the crisis as a competition between business elite actors. The columnist stresses that Muller is a man without empathy who loves to be in the center of attention. This is thus subordinated the fierce competitive spirit of Muller, the characteristic which according to the journalist has kept Saab alive. The oversimplified understanding and construction of the industrial crisis becomes visible in the above news article, summary and column: GM is the problem, Muller the solution.

When Chinese investors show interest to buy the car company, it results in an abundance of articles portraying those who are called “the saviors from the East.” The evening paper shows creative headlines playing with the name of the investors, Pang (the Swedish word for bam/bang), to imply

decisiveness, action and speed. That the potential investors also share the same characteristics as Muller, in the sense of being competitive and eager to win, is stressed in various ways in the articles. The layout, with bold capitals and big pictures, and the words chosen to describe the sequence of events shown in the examples above (fight, threat, death sentence) perhaps fit the expected dramaturgy of an evening paper. The way the story is told in Sweden's largest morning paper is however similar in style and revolves around the same main topics.

Example 4 (DN 2011-11-10)

The headline states that *The Chinese are not giving in about Saab* and the picture shows the smiling CEO of the Chinese car company Youngman. The preamble draws attention to the decisiveness defining the investors:

Despite total insecurity after General Motors' stopping of Saabs China deal the Chinese companies keep on going in the attempt to find a solution. Youngman's CEO Rachel Pang is sure on what she wants – they want to buy Saab. – Of course, she says.

Under hard time pressure the discussions between Youngman, Pang Da and Saab continued during Wednesday morning. Since General Motors said no to selling the technique licenses if Saab would be owned by the Chinese the whole deal needs to be changed.

The text explains how Rachel Pang in a phone conference with the news agency TT gave her view on the deal and its challenges:

– If you are scared you will not succeed in business. There are always difficulties. You have to find solutions and not just give in, she says.

Example 5 (DN 2011-12-20)

The day of the bankruptcy the reasons of it are explained already in the headline:

GM's no to China spelled the end of Saab.

The preamble continues the explanation about what went wrong:

GM hammered the last really strong nails in the Saab-coffin. Eight months of fighting is over for Victor Muller.

The article puts Muller in the center when describing his meeting with the (former) employees:

It was a downhearted Victor Muller that met the employees on Monday afternoon. His Christmas gift could have been better but the message was harsh – Saab is in bankruptcy.

– This is the darkest day in my career, probably also in the history of Saab. But there was no alternative, said Victor Muller when he began the press conference regarding Saab’s petition for bankruptcy.

The article continues reporting about the debts and loans leading up to the bankruptcy and the CEO of the Swedish subcontractors is quoted in an explanation about what has been going on during the last months:

– Everyone is feeling melancholy. It has been a fight with microscopically small chances.

The above quotation captures the journalistic representation and core understanding of this crisis: that it is an almost impossible fight. The question is, what makes the chances so small? Despite the continuously fighting Muller and the Chinese investors talking about never giving up, the factory needs to close.

The Expert Sources in the Saab Crisis News Coverage

Throughout the three month news report, journalism tries to define what makes the chances microscopically small in devoting time and space for numerous experts to elaborate on questions about hindrances and solutions. These experts are mostly (economy) reporters whose explanations are either placed as an appendix to an article with headlines like *Facts*, where expert quotes are presented in a few short paragraphs, or under the more

bombastic announcement *The expert explains*, where the experts' interpretations constitute the main perspective in more extensive articles with several experts answering questions asked by the journalist. This introduction and representation of the expertise prescribe epistemic status and truth value to their statements. Who are these experts and what questions are they asked? The example below shows a journalist-expert article.

Example 6 (AB 2011-11-01)

The headline, in bold capital letters, is *The China Plan – a long shot*, and under the sub headline *The experts answer: This is how Saabs future will be*, the experts are introduced both in text and images. One of them is a researcher in economics, specialized in the car industry. The second is a journalist and the author of a book called *The fight over Saab*. The third expert is an economy journalist from a TV channel. They all get to answer 12 questions in order to interpret the crisis and predict the future. The questions concern the plan with new Chinese investors and are focused around the first question asked, *Is this the rescue for Saab?* The questions are also focusing on Muller: *What will happen with Victor Muller? Is Muller satisfied now?* and GM: *Why would GM stop this deal? Why does GM have that power?* The last question could perhaps open for a more exhaustive and contextualizing discussion about the conditions surrounding the industry but instead provides details about the technique licenses for the Saab models: *they are developed together with GM and contain GM technique*. The last question puts the crisis in a different perspective: *500 people have been given notice. Can it come to more redundancies?* Only one of the experts' answers to the question is quoted: *–Yes, I think so.*

Who is regarded an expert in the story about Saab is not always made explicit with an exact label as in the example above. As shown in the initial examples above, the business elite actors who are involved in the drama can also be seen as represented as experts in the way they are approached, in the questions they are asked by journalism as well as in how their answers and

opinions are (re)presented as facts (see Patrona 2005 about the impression of factuality in expert talk).

The only “systemic explanations” provided are regarding the legal system instead of highlighting the economic or political system within which the crisis is taking place. The legal frame is often intertwined with the market frame in the news stories as there is an ongoing focus on the legal rights of the car models and other legal aspects of the crisis and the attempt to reconstruct the car company in crisis. The attorneys handling the reconstruction of Saab are a common feature in the articles. The following is an example of how the texts indicate that these attorneys are the ones who really can interpret the sequence of events and explain what is going on.

Example 7 (DN 2011-12-09)

In a full-paged article in Dagens Nyheter less than two weeks before the closure of the factory, the attorney Guy Lofalk explains the decision to interrupt the reconstruction of the company. *It was a high risk project*, the headline proclaims, and the image shows a face portrait of a serious man. The text goes on with Lofalk explaining why the reconstruction had to be stopped. The article explicitly outlines the journalist’s questions and the answers from the attorney. It becomes clear that we are given objective facts and that we can trust this expert to act accordingly, in a correct and unquestionable way, even if it means making tough decisions in opposition to his (personal) wishes. The preamble gives a summary of what is going on:

To save the ailing car manufacturer turned into an overly tough fight. On Wednesday attorney Guy Lofalk decided to interrupt the reconstruction. In a purely mathematical sense it was the right call even if his heart resisted due to him being a Saab-car owner.

The running text consists of questions and answers where the attorney gets to explain why the reconstruction of Saab was a high risk project and why he has made the right decision. The structure of how this interview is presented gives little room for the idea that other solutions could have been possible, as in the question-answer below:

– *Was the decision hard to take?*

– *No, it is based on purely legal and mathematical factors.*

Apart from the interesting question of who gets to participate in the news story as an expert, the journalistic approach to those contributing with “knowledge” needs to be discussed. The above analysis reveals that business elite persons are the ones journalism mainly focuses on and those given the interpretational right in the journalistic representation of the crisis, while their superhuman characteristics are emphasized. As a complement to the business elite perspective story, journalism turns to those deemed to have valuable insights and interpretational skills that can illuminate what is really going on. This means giving voice to economy journalists or people with expert knowledge about the car industry or the legal system surrounding business life. Union representatives, politicians or other sources putting the crisis in a labor or political perspective are not consulted as experts. There is a significant difference in how economic elite actors and experts are approached by journalism in comparison to how the workers are asked about how they feel (see Jacobsson and Ekström 2015, about the representation of the working class as emotional and powerless). The class aspect becomes clear in the way journalism emphasizes workers’ interpretations based on emotion while elites and experts get to interpret the events based on intellect and with their opinions (re)presented as objective facts. In the story about the Saab crisis the systemic factors (market logic, capitalistic system, the [political] transformation of the labor market and so forth) governing the industry are never made explicit. Instead these factors are taken for granted reality that all sources and perspectives are springing from. My interpretation of this is an overall naturalization of ideology where the social power relations and structural factors are internalized in the understanding of crisis and thus deemed superfluous to mention. Both ideological and organizational factors seem to restrict what is “sayable” as well as what time perspective is (re)presented in the journalistic attempts to contextualize crisis. The simplified surface drama and the actors who are used as sources obviously also need to be seen in the light of

depoliticization. As shown in a previous analysis (Jacobsson Forthcoming), the repeated message from politics when signs of crisis appeared years earlier was that the situation in the industry has nothing to do with politics. The stringent political posture about the industry being a question for the market was forwarded and in the reports about the bankruptcy in 2011 journalism has basically closed the door on a political perspective of the crisis. The fact that journalism stays away from a political perspective leads to questions about journalistic agency and autonomy. Before going into that discussion the above crisis discourse will be compared with how a similar crisis was constructed by journalism in another political context.

The Textile Industry Crisis – A Matter for Politics and the Labor Movement

There are obvious similarities between the ranges of events occurring during the two crises even though they are separated by almost four decades. A large national industry in trouble, a conservative government and a social democratic opposition sets the stage in both cases. The similarities also mean similar topics appearing in the news reports: A story about impending bankruptcy with a company in need of capital, thousands of work opportunities at risk, cancelled payments – these are all recognizable features from the Saab crisis coverage. There are however striking differences regarding the (journalistic) understanding of the crisis and in what is represented as main topics as well as in what kind of experts participate and how these experts frame the problems and solutions of the textile crisis. Put simply it can be concluded: It is mostly about the jobs. The labor perspective is dominant in the crisis discourses and it becomes clear that the purpose of keeping an industry is understood as the importance of a solid ground for the labor force rather than as an opportunity for the capitalist elite to act out competitiveness. The labor market is perceived as a political concern and the political idea about how the labor market should be organized and what is required to reach or maintain this is explicitly discussed.

Journalistic attempts to put the crisis in context and provide explanations about what is going on are present during both crises. What is considered valid background information is different, though, as is the time perspective. Instead of the “hour-by-hour” or “day-by-day” information providing details about the fight between the business elites (who said what, sent mail, had a meeting, broke a deal etc.), the journalistic contextualization of the textile crisis presented under headlines like *Background* elaborates on what has caused the crisis and what it would take for it to be solved.

Example 8 (DN 1977-06-10)

The question of what caused the crisis is discussed under the headline *Two out of ten garments are Swedish*. The running text starts with explaining the consequences:

In 1977 between 5000 and 7000 teko-workers will lose their jobs. Here is part of the background to the crisis within Algots and other Swedish teko-companies. The Swedish industry is going through an intensified internationalization. This development started already in the beginning of the 60s.

(...)

During the 60s and the 70s a liberalization of the trade policy has resulted in only two of ten garments on the Swedish market being produced in Sweden.

(...)

A third of the clothing imports come from Swedish companies that have established their production abroad. Many Swedish companies keep the label and administration in Sweden but manufacture where cheap labor is available.

The background article explains the agreement Sweden has with the EG about import and then describes the labor market conditions in the countries to where the production has moved.

In Hong Kong there is a labor shortage. Due to the fact that no working time regulation exists the workers are exploited also on the weekends. The Swedish textile workers have paid for this development with their jobs. Since the beginning of the 60s 50 000 employees within the industries have disappeared due to rationalization. The jeans market is dominated by American multinational companies.

The text goes on describing the health hazard of bleaching textiles and how this part of the production is moved to countries with poor labor legislation. The review of the methods used by the multinational companies to improve their market shares has a critical power perspective: how financial capital creates advantages (commercial campaigns, customer surveys etc.) that, combined with the absence of concerns regarding labor rights, make the Swedish companies incapable of keeping up. The background article ends with summing up the evaluation of the textile market:

Swedish companies neither have the capital nor the other resources to compete. This is part of the background to the textile crisis.

The journalistic understanding about what lies within the concept of background has clearly gone through a metamorphosis since the time of the textile crisis. In the 1970s the political system surrounding the industry is highlighted. Articles about the detailed correspondence or fights between business elite actors are not found in the data from 1977. This doesn't mean that the economic elite is absent in the news discourses. The company chairman of the Algots group and the CEO of Sweteco (a fusion between five Swedish textile companies) are represented in several articles. Their specific characteristics are however not discussed in terms of admirable superhuman features and their names are not visible in headlines. Instead these elite actors are questioned by politicians, union representatives, factory workers – and by the journalists.

Example 9 (DN 1977-06-03)

Under the headline *Millions in support blocked. Acute economic crisis*, the preamble states that *Algots is about to enter a deep crisis after the Labor department's*

decision to not give financial support. –A totally correct decision, says Ingegerd Söderlund, chairman of the Clothing union club. The company has not met the condition of guaranteed employment here for another two years. The text gives voice to the union representative and the head of the labor department about whether Algots can be trusted to guarantee continued employment for the workers. The journalist questions what is going on:

But why has it been such a fast downfall for Algots, and especially Algots Nord? Only half a year ago management believed in continued operation for another two years. According to Algots CEO conditions are worse than they could judge.

(...)

–The investment in the North was a big mistake, the chairman of the Algots group, Sten Sjöholm, says to DN. Without that investment Algots never would have ended up in this situation.

But Ingegerd Söderlund hopes that the government will take their responsibility.

–We cannot proceed under these unsafe conditions. Therefore Algots must be nationalized, she says.

Highlighting the management's mistakes is obviously a bit different than the journalistic approach to the competitive business elites portrayed during the Saab crisis. When it comes to a solution to steer away from the crisis, journalism, however, uses the same word as in the Saab coverage: *Plan*. The content of the plan and the actors it involves are different though. It is not the business elites who should come up with a plan and then fight to win. As in the example above, a solution is connected to political action. In this example the word plan refers to political plans negotiated between politicians and the demands raised by the union.

Example 10 (DN 1977-06-12)

AHLMARK: Plan soon ready for Algots crisis is the headline to an article about the ongoing discussion between the union and the government. The

preamble is a quote from the Minister of Labor (Ahlmark) about finding a solution to the Algots Crisis. The text goes on describing the investments and labor market measures to keep employment. The text under the sub heading *Four demands* illustrates the strong position of the union and how journalism identifies the discussion between the union and leading politicians as the main topic to report.

Per Ahlmark got four concrete demands from the union club, commonly summarized during the meeting. The first demand is that Algots shall be sanitized before the 50 millions are disbursed. It is also a request that a state representative will be part of the board after the reconstruction. Special consideration shall be taken to Algots Nord. Finally it is demanded that the union shall be engaged in the negotiations. – I will bring the demands to the department of industry that foremost negotiates about Algots Nord, says Per Ahlmark.

The Expert Interpretations During the Textile Crisis – Opposing Standpoints Represented

The understanding of the crisis as a common concern which is “politically manageable” (in the sense that solutions can be sought in political decisions and as an opposite to an understanding of crisis as a natural given where competitive business elite actors are identified as those with the capacity to solve the situation) is dominant during the three investigated months. Discussions about the conditions surrounding the industry and about solutions as well as the purpose of keeping a textile industry are represented by opposing expert voices in the news discourses.

Example 11 (DN 1977-06-17)

In an article with the headline *Ban on imports - solution to the clothing crisis?* the newspaper poses the question *How should we solve the crisis?* to four people with different expert knowledge and perspectives on the industry (the union chairman, the CEO of Algots, a clothes designer and a clothing purchaser in a department store). In comparison to the journalist-expert articles from the

Saab crisis, the structure is similar (question and answer) while the content of these two units is unrecognizable. The word *we* in the journalist question implies a notion of the crisis as a common concern to which common solutions are to be sought.

The CEO of the textile company openly declares that his goal is to make a profit: *—My directives are to repeal a loss situation.* Under the sub heading *Fascist states* the union chairman gives his perspective on what the directives for increased profit lead to, how multinational companies exploit the workers in other countries like South Korea and Taiwan: *—Pure fascist states where misery thrives and where Swedish companies make sure to strengthen their finances.* This statement is followed by a question from the journalist to the CEO: *—What is the opinion about this at Sveteco? You have moved parts of the production to South Korea.* The CEO defends the decision: *—My absolute and only mission in this company is to make sure it is pulled out of a loss situation.* This is followed by another critical question from the journalist: *—But Sveteco is actually a state owned company, would it not be possible to demand something else of it than profit at any price?*

After putting forward their different ambitions and goals for the industry, the four representatives all identify the low price imports as a problem and conclude the industry is in need of support. The union chairman gets to summarize the discussion:

—We also agree that one cannot handle the Swedish textile industry merely on a business economic foundation. And we also need to consider the socio-economic aspects, the Swedish employment, the production preparedness within the country. What happens if there is a global crisis? Can we imagine Sweden without a clothing industry? The state has to enter with measurements, we all agree on that here. Society needs to decide on what level the Swedish production should be, through planned economy.

The above example illuminates two things. The truth value and epistemic status of the experts during the 1977 news report are not as impervious as during the Saab crisis. The representation of different experts disagreeing opens for an understanding of the industrial crisis as a problem in which

multiple interpretations and solutions are possible. It is made transparent that the different interpretations are rooted in the experts' positions and (political) points of view instead of portraying the crisis as an unchangeable fact. The other thing it illuminates is the shift in what is sayable. Can we imagine a union representative getting the last word in an expert article today, making explicit that crisis in the industry cannot be handled merely on a business economic foundation, stressing the socio-economic aspects and advocating planned economy?

Ending Discussion

It can be concluded that mainstream news journalism today to a large extent neglects the labor perspective of the industry during crisis while focusing on the business perspectives and actors and by putting forward the voices of market orientated experts. Despite the obvious importance for the labor force and its representatives and despite the Saab crisis being situated in Sweden, a country known for its historically influential labor movement and strong protection of workers' rights, the news story about the Saab crisis discloses a strong market bias. This opens for discussions on different levels about journalism, questions concerning difficulties in the everyday news production to move beyond routine practices and interpretations of how an industrial crisis can be understood and what voices are deemed important enough to participate and shape the common perception of what is going on, as well as what implications this has for journalism in fulfilling its democratic assignment. Comparing today's news discourses with how a similar crisis situated in another political context is represented furthermore underlines changes in both society and journalism. As pointed out by Wodak (1989) critical discourse analysis makes visible how social processes inherently are linked to text and discourses. What we see today is a shorter time perspective, an increased focus on consequences and where causes are sought in a narrow understanding of the concept focusing on (personal) blame. Alternative discourses and opposing voices are not represented in the mainstream press.

This study suggests that the one-dimensional news report today fails to contextualize the crisis when it instead covers the surface drama involving the economic elite. The analysis shows how the journalistic story emphasizes certain characteristics of elite business actors, portraying them as having an almost superhuman capacity and competitive spirits. In doing so journalism neglects other aspects of the crisis and turns it into a matter solely for the market. The stories draw on expert sources (other journalists or different kinds of experts on the car industry) to interpret the legal and financial aspects. This is in line with what has been highlighted in previous research, for example by Chakravartty and Schiller (2010), that stress the commonsense logic either implied or made explicit by those deemed to be legitimate experts in the business news constantly promotes the benefits of the flexible global markets and other features that support the neoliberal order. It seems that the compact naturalization of neoliberal ideology today makes other alternatives and opposing voices that were possible during the coverage of the textile crisis to now be perceived as politically radical and therefore beyond the scope of mainstream journalism.

During the textile crisis the industry is represented as an arena molded by the political agenda; the political decisions regarding industry and trade are made visible. Different ways of viewing the crisis and its solutions are put forward. The capitalists' interest of increased profit is openly declared and the consequences are discussed from different viewpoints. The journalistic approach to the business elite is critical. But is this necessarily a sign of journalism being more autonomous and able to rise above the common sense understanding of four decades ago? It seems reasonable to argue that the overarching spirit, the way questions of class inequalities and class struggle were understood and articulated in general (due to the socio-political context) in Swedish society in the 1970s, at least made it easier for a critical journalistic stance. In terms of ideology and hegemony, where does this leave us? A common expectation of the journalistic democratic assignment is that journalism explains complex issues and gives voice to different actors and perspectives and holds responsible actors and institutions accountable. In the case of the industrial crisis today it would

mean questioning the market perspective, which is fundamental in the news coverage. The general development towards an increase in economy journalists in the editorial rooms replacing the reporters specialized to cover labor market issues and labor interests (see Nerone 2009, Jones et.al. 2014 and, for a Swedish perspective, “LOs Medieutredning” 2003) could then be seen as an aggravating circumstance. The present study shows very different understandings and representations of similar crises and suggests that explanations can be sought at the intersection of a change in the conditions governing the journalistic practice and the compact naturalization of the market logic. The remaining question then is, what is required for a more multifaceted journalistic story?

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Swedish summary

I min avhandling undersöker jag hur journalistiken representerar arbetarklassen, det politiska ansvaret samt den ekonomiska eliten i samband med industriell kris i Sverige. Analyser av hur frågor rörande ansvar och rättigheter skapas diskursivt i tidningarna Aftonbladet och Dagens Nyheter under krisen i bilindustrin under det tidiga 2010-talet jämförs med nyhetsdiskurser vid krisen i textilindustrin under det sena 1970-talet. Parallellt med att visa vilka diskurser som är giltiga under de olika perioderna diskuterar avhandlingen journalistikens demokratiska uppdrag utifrån ett klassperspektiv och problematiserar det sätt på vilket journalistikens handlingsutrymme påverkas av organisatoriska, ekonomiska, politiska och ideologiska förändringar över tid.

Journalistik i en nyliberal kontext

Det faktum att journalistiken är en institution med en central roll i det demokratiska samhället innebär att dess nyhetsdiskurser är av stor betydelse och följaktligen bör granskas. Sverige som land är intressant på grund av en historiskt stark arbetarrörelse och ett tidigare tydligt uttalat politiskt konsensus när det gäller att stödja stora industrier i kris med ambitionen att behålla jobben – i kombination med förekomsten av en stark och oberoende nyhetsjournalistik. Liksom stora delar av världen har även det svenska samhället rört sig i en alltmer nyliberal riktning under de senaste decennierna, en rörelse som är skönjbar i en ökad tendens av individualisering, avpolitisering och marknadisering. Nyhetsdiskurserna i samband med industrikris diskuteras därför i ljuset av denna politiska kursändring, hur den påverkar villkoren för såväl arbetsmarknaden som den journalistiska praktiken och journalistikens förståelse för och positionering i frågor rörande relationen mellan stat, arbete och kapital i vår tid.

Syfte och frågeställning

Avhandlingen intresserar sig för journalistikens möjligheter och handlingsutrymme att fullfölja sitt demokratiska uppdrag. Mot bakgrund av detta är syftet att undersöka hur nyliberala diskurser opererar i

nyhetsrapporteringen i samband med industrikriser, vilka diskurser som är giltiga och hur de konstrueras och förhandlas i Sveriges största kvälls- respektive morgontidning, samt att diskutera och försöka förstå varför den journalistiska diskursen är konstruerad på det här sättet. Kritisk diskursanalys och kritisk teori används för att uppnå detta dubbla syfte, att analysera nyhetsdiskurserna och få kunskap om hur frågor om arbete och ansvar konstrueras liksom att kunna förstå varför, det vill säga hur journalistikens texter är del av en större samhällskontext. De konkreta frågeställningarna är:

1: Hur representeras arbetarna och de vanliga medborgarna av nyhetsjournalistiken under två liknande industrikriser som utspelar sig i olika politiska kontexter: det sena 1970-talets textilindustrikrise och krisen i bilindustrin under början av 2010-talet?

2: Hur förhandlas frågan om politiskt ansvar och ansvarsutkrävande mellan politiker och journalister, vilka ståndpunkter ger ansvariga ministrar uttryck för, hur förklarar och försvarar de sina beslut och handlingar – och hur rekontextualiserar journalistiken politikens dominanta diskurser i termer av reproduktion, förhandling och alternativa perspektiv?

3: Hur konstruerar journalistiken det ledande temat i krisrapporteringen, vad är det övergripande budskapet: vad representeras som orsaker, problem och lösningar, vilket är förhållningssättet till den ekonomiska eliten, vem ges epistemisk status och tolkningsföreträde i rollen som expert – och hur korresponderar dessa experttolkningar med journalistikens övergripande tema?

Teoretisk ram

I min undersökning av journalistikens roll och position i frågor rörande klass, makt och ideologi tar jag avstamp i teorier som kan härledas till den marxistiskt inspirerade Frankfurtskolan. Begrepp som ideologi och hegemoni är centrala för min förståelse av journalistikens diskurser liksom uppfattningen att språket/texten bär spår av den ekonomiska, politiska och ideologiska kontext inom vilken det är producerat. Detta ligger i linje med

fundamentet för den kritiska diskursanalysen, vilket avspeglas i både teori och metod i min avhandling. Jag utgår också från kritisk samhällsteori om det sätt på vilket en politisk rörelse i nyliberal riktning har förstärkt tre centrala tendenser i samhället: för det första en allmän, och för arbetsmarknaden specifik, individualisering där kollektivets betydelse minskar. Den andra tendensen kan benämnas avpolitisering i betydelsen en minskad tydlighet kring politikens roll och ansvarsområden vilket medför svårigheter att utkräva politiskt ansvar och att definiera samhällstendenser som politiska frågor. En ökad kommersialisering/marknadisering av tillvaron där lönsamhet och det ekonomiska perspektivet blivit alltmer framträdande är också en av dessa centrala tendenser, samtliga kopplade till och beroende av varandra, som är betydelsefulla för att förstå såväl utvecklingen på arbetsmarknaden som journalistikens berättelser om arbete och ansvar i samband med industrikriser.

Metod och material

Metoden för att ta mig an det empiriska materialet är tydligt inspirerad av kritisk diskursanalys och i enlighet med rekommendationerna inom denna skola har den exakta arbetsgången modifierats utifrån vad de olika delstudierna har i fokus. Då kritisk diskursanalys innebär att man jobbar parallellt med teori och empiri för att renodla sitt analytiska angreppssätt kartlades de huvudsakliga kategorierna av händelser och aktörer i nyhetsartiklarna inledningsvis för att ta reda på vad journalistikens berättelse handlar om i samband med krisen och vem som medverkar i den. Efter denna inledande översikt extraherades tre övergripande områden som vart och ett fokuseras i en delstudie: de anställda arbetarna, de ansvariga politikerna, samt den ekonomiska eliten av ägare och investerare. Samtliga studier koncentreras kring att ringa in hur krisen förstås, vilka aktörer som spelar en central roll, hur de representeras och på vilket sätt journalistiken lyfter fram samstämmiga eller motsägande perspektiv samt vilka förklaringar som kan ligga till grund för detta. I den andra delstudien är relationen mellan journalistik och politik i centrum och analysen jämför hur frågan om politiskt ansvar framställs och förhandlas vid tidpunkten för krisens början 2008 med hur den behandlas av journalistiken i krisens slutskede.

Stommen för avhandlingen utgörs av de 51 nyhetsartiklar som publicerades i Aftonbladet och Dagens Nyheter under två månader före samt en månad efter Saabs konkurs 2011³. Avhandlingens komparativa anslag innebär att 46 artiklar publicerade under motsvarande tre månader i nämnda tidningar i samband med krisen i textilindustrin 1977 har analyserats (delstudie 1 och 3), liksom 49 artiklar från 2008 då krisen i bilindustrin blev märkbar (delstudie 2).

Slutsatser

I min avhandling om hur journalistiken representerar arbetarklassen, det politiska ansvaret samt den ekonomiska eliten i samband med industriell kris i Sverige idag blir tre tendenser tydliga. Arbetarklassen representeras som passiva, maktlösa och isolerade individer. Fabriksarbetare som står inför den överhängande risken att förlora sin anställning intervjuas en och en i sina hem med tydligt journalistiskt fokus på hur de känner, oftast med hopplöshet som en röd tråd där budskapet som förmedlas är att de inte har något annat att göra än att vänta och hoppas. Arbetslöshet framställs inte som en politisk fråga utan mer som om arbetarna har drabbats av en osynlig kraft, bortom påverkan. Nyhetsartiklarna där de snart arbetslösa fabriksarbetarna intervjuas fokuserar istället på hur den enskilda individen ska klara sin och familjens situation med frågor om vilka strategier och planer man har för att hitta en ny anställning och för att kunna bibehålla sin roll som konsument. Att låna pengar till konsumtion är den typ av agentskap som framstår som tillgängligt för arbetarklassen. När andra medborgare får komma till tals, i egenskap av boende i den drabbade kommunen, får de också frågor om hur de känner snarare än vad de tycker bör göras och av vem. Det här innebär ett tema där medlidande och ömkan med de som drabbas av krisen uttrycks, vilket förstärker konstruktionen av en kris på arbetsmarknaden som om den vore en naturkatastrof där ingen

³ I den första studien ingår även TV-material i form av 20 nyhetsinslag från Rapport och Väsnytt.

kan ställas till svars. Vid en jämförelse med hur journalistiken representerar arbetarna vid en nedläggningshotad textilfabrik i slutet av 1970-talet blir det tydligt att nyhetsartiklarna då lyfter fram kollektiv gemenskap, ilska mot de ansvariga och (möjligheten till) politisk handling. Journalistiken ställer frågor om orsaker till krisen, vem arbetarna ser som ansvarig och vad de anser bör göras. Arbetarna intervjuas i grupp och representeras som ett handlingskraftigt kollektiv som kräver rätten till arbete. Analysen visar att journalistiken vid den här tidpunkten främst förstår arbetsmarknaden som ett politiskt ansvarsområde och som en arena för motsättningar mellan samhällsklasser.

Frågan om politiskt ansvar fördjupas i den andra delstudien där analysen lyfter fram hur journalistiken modifierar sitt anspråk när det gäller i vilken utsträckning politiker kan ställas till svars eller avkrävas förslag till lösningar i en situation med massarbetslöshet. Analysen visar en politisk stringent argumentation där andra lösningar än vad som bedömts som rimligt av den borgerliga regeringen förlöjligas och framställs som grundlösa fantasier när journalistiken ställer frågor om tänkbara (politiska) lösningar för bilfabriken i början av krisen. Analysen av nyhetsartiklar under den här perioden pekar på en hårdför politisk linje där ledande ministrar explicit avsäger sig ansvar för vad som sker på (arbets)marknaden i fallet med krisen i bilindustrin och tydligt annonserar att detta är en fråga för ägare och investerare att reda ut. Att stödja en stor industri för att rädda tusentals arbetstillfällen beskrivs vara bortom vad som är politiskt möjligt, som ett ansvarslost och orättvist ingripande där man skulle ta av skattebetalarnas pengar för att rädda fabriksjobben. På så sätt skulle de pengar som samtliga samhällsgrupper bidragit med rädda arbetarklassens försörjning. Det tydliga klassperspektiv som finns inbäddat i det argumentationsmönster där en sådan lösning tydligt förkastas ifrågasätts inte av journalistiken som inte heller ifrågasätter upprepade påståenden om att ett industristöd per automatik skulle betyda mindre pengar till sjukvården. De ledande ministrarnas argumentationsteknik att ställa olika grupper mot varandra (de i behov av ett arbete och de i behov av sjukvård) representeras oemotsagt utan att journalistiken ger plats åt alternativa perspektiv, röster och tolkningar av

situationen. Vid jämförelsen av diskurser mellan krisens upprinnelse 2008 och dess avslut 2011 visar analysen att frågan om politiskt ansvar i nyhetsartiklarna ”försvinner” och transformeras till en icke-fråga under den senare perioden. I termer av anpassning tolkar jag resultaten som att uppfattningen om journalistikens makt och inflytande över politiken är missvisande vad gäller mer komplexa situationer än när journalister granskar specifika missförhållanden/skandaler eller hur politiker presterar under valrörelser. Det blir tydligt att journalistiken 2011 betraktar massarbetslöshet som något annat än en politisk fråga. Om detta har ett samband med den konsekventa hållningen och argumenten från regeringen vid krisens början går dock inte att fastslå.

Ekonomisering, marknadsivering, kommersialisering är olika ord på ett begrepp som försöker ringa in den glidning från ett socialt ansvarsperspektiv till en värdering och förståelse av olika samhällsområden utifrån främst ett ekonomiskt perspektiv som kännetecknar vår samtid. I den jämförande analysen mellan journalistikens diskurser i samband med krisen i bilindustrin och krisen i textilindustrin blir den här förskjutningen tydlig. Krisen i bilindustrin konstrueras av journalistiken som en fråga för den ekonomiska eliten vilken representeras som en stark, obeveklig och tävlingslysten grupp som besitter nästintill övermänsklig kapacitet. Det helt dominerande temat är denna grups olika förhållanden och interaktion, framställd på ett vis som pekar på en journalistisk förståelse av en kris i industrin som en tävling där endast den starkaste vinner. Genom att fokusera på spelet mellan elitens aktörer skapar journalistiken ett drama där här och nu, vem som gjort vad timme för timme, är den centrala berättelsen. Denna tävling kommenteras och tolkas med hjälp av en rad experter. Kännetecknande för dessa experter är att de oftast är ekonomijournalister som enbart tolkar utifrån ett ekonomiskt perspektiv utan att krisen sätts i ett större sammanhang där orsaker och alternativa lösningar lyfts fram. Fokus ligger helt på vad som ska hända nu, vilket exakt kapital som väntas från möjliga investerare, vad som skulle kunna försvåra ett kinesiskt övertagande av fabriken, och så vidare. När det gäller jämförelsen med den dominerande berättelsen och vilka experter som journalistiken låter komma till tals några decennier tidigare

visar analysen på mycket olika sätt att hantera nyhetsbevakningen. Under det sena 1970-talet är det arbetet som står i fokus och då främst arbetarnas rätt till försörjning och anställning. Kontextualiseringen av krisen är omfattande då journalistiken genomgående lyfter frågor om vilken samhällsutveckling som har lett fram till krisen och vad politiken kan/bör göra för att ta sitt ansvar. Experterna representerar skilda perspektiv med tydliga och explicita intressemotsättningar och journalistiken ställer uppfordrande frågor om den inneboende spänningen mellan arbete och kapital genom att ifrågasätta nödvändigheten med ökad lönsamhet för fabriken ägare på bekostnad av arbetarklassens försörjning och möjligheten att behålla en viktig del av den svenska industrin.

Journalistikens förståelse för och sätt att berätta om en kris i industrin där tusentals arbetare förlorar sin anställning har genomgått en tydlig metamorfos de senaste decennierna. Nyhetsbevakningen idag fokuserar på individen: på den enskilda arbetstagarens känsla av hopplöshet och på elitaktörens handlingskraft. En parallell tendens är journalistikens förståelse av en kris på arbetsmarknaden som en fråga för marknadens aktörer snarare än politikens. Journalistikens diskurser måste ses i en vidare kontext om vi ska kunna diskutera varför de gestaltas på det sätt de gör. Individualisering, avpolitisering och en allmän marknadisering formar villkoren för såväl arbetsmarknad som journalistikens sätt att betrakta den – liksom de villkor som omsluter den journalistiska praktiken. Färre journalister samt det faktum att de i sina rutiner präglas av idén om lönsamhet snarare än mångfald ökar förmodligen inte möjligheten till självreflektion och en kritisk medvetenhet om det egna hantverket. I min analys synliggörs hur nyhetsjournalistiken bevakar och representerar industrikris och annalkande massarbetslöshet på ett sätt som gör det möjligt att tala om ett osynliggörande av frågor som är viktiga för arbetarklassen. Med tanke på journalistikens demokratiska uppdrag är det här problematiskt. I sin rapportering om krisen i bilindustrin, dess orsaker och möjliga lösningar tycks journalistiken oförmögen att representera röster och perspektiv som sträcker sig bortom den dominerande tolkningen rörande arbete och ansvar vilket resulterar i en okritisk och endimensionell berättelse.

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