Can the Act on System of Choice Empower Women?
An interview study of female entrepreneurs’ experiences on the Swedish homecare market

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Abstract

When the Act on System of choice was implemented on the Swedish homecare market in 2009, there seemed to be an assumed understanding that by increasing competition on the eldercare market through privatization it would create better opportunities for women. Entrepreneurship was phrased as a solution for empowering and emancipating women in breaking out from a fixed role in low-status professions. The law was said to provide big opportunities for women; however, the literature review conducted on homecare and female entrepreneurship showed that small businesses and female entrepreneurs have a hard time establishing businesses on the homecare market, contradicting the established aim of the law.

Thus, the aim of this study is to illustrate how women who have chosen to start entrepreneurial businesses in homecare experience female empowerment understood as female entrepreneurship. The study highlights how female entrepreneurs at the homecare market could experience empowerment. Shaping the primary research question of: ‘How can LOV empower women when it comes to female entrepreneurship on the homecare market?’ To answer this a textual study and an interview study was conducted. The textual study was a content analysis of the government bill, and the interview study was done through qualitative interviews with female entrepreneurs on the homecare market.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of manifest, latent and dysfunctions of the law along with gendered capitalism the study showed that the male hegemonic structures shaping the marketization mindset of profit, expansion, and efficiency prevent empowerment from happening. The unequal nature of the homecare market itself because of the skewed power structure between the female entrepreneurs and the municipalities turns the process of competition testing and the Act on System of choice into an enabler of hegemonic male structures preventing female empowerment and diversity amongst providers from happening. The female entrepreneurs providing services on the homecare market today are not there because of the measures are taken to ensure empowerment and diversity but rather despite it. The study concludes that LOV does not empower female entrepreneurs as intended and the entrepreneurship that was meant to provide empowerment for women instead have concentrated masculinity ultimately steering both the female entrepreneurs’ freedom and work satisfaction.

Key words: Female Entrepreneurship, Female Empowerment, Provider Choice, The act on system of choice, homecare, Sweden, Gendered Capitalism, Function analysis, Word count 22 549
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Part 1

Chapter 1

1.0 Homecare, Entrepreneurship and Women

Catchphrases like "Empower a woman and you feed a community," "Gender economics is smart economics" and "Women are our most valuable untapped resource" often appear as rhetoric amongst politicians and organizations when mentioning female empowerment (McCarthy 2017, p 603). The rhetoric of women contributing to social, economic and environmental sustainability is well-worn, particularly when it comes to women and entrepreneurship. Talking of women contributing to social and economic welfare stem from a foundation of unequal gender structures on the labor market (Scholten 2003). The Swedish labor market is no exception, existing set structure of inequalities between women and men have shaped the labor market and the available options and opportunities. With the entering of neo-liberalism into Swedish governing new markets opened up through privatization, amongst them the homecare market. As neo-liberalistic governing developed strategies to privatize different areas of the welfare sector strategies to handle the inequalities on the labor market was put forward. The most prominent strategy was enhancing female entrepreneurship, enacted through creating support for women in entrepreneurial pursuits (Mayoux 2001, p 9).

Linda Mayoux holds a Ph.D. on women's economic empowerment from Cambridge University and has written extensively on the subject. Mayoux highlights the existence of an enabling environment with underlying structures shaping the support provide for female entrepreneurship (ibid). Mayoux points to three underlying paradigms the first one is a neo-liberal market paradigm focusing on how female entrepreneurship creates economic growth at the market such as the initial catchphrases in this chapter ‘women are our most valuable untapped
resource.' Secondly, there is an interventionist poverty alleviation paradigm focusing on providing specialized support to women, in the form of extra financial support or particular attention. Thirdly, there is feminist empowerment paradigm setting goals to achieve gender equality through development efforts for female entrepreneurs.

These three paradigms according to Mayoux are underlying in the ongoing discussions on how to develop and improve female entrepreneurship, ultimately shaping the outcome. The underlying structures that these three-paradigm shapes appear in both policy documents, the government bill and even the law itself through phrasings such as "opportunities for women in entrepreneurship." Talking of female entrepreneurship as creating opportunities is a result of the third female empowerment paradigm where the goal is to enhance women's position at the labor market to create equality and strengthen female entrepreneurship. Despite the government bill and the law not addressing female empowerment directly the sentiment behind “opportunities” are the same. Mayoux research on underlying structures and enabling environments show that the word “opportunities” in this setting carries the same weight as the word empowerment would have (Mayoux 2001, p 9-21). In line with the neoliberalist view strengthening women on the labor market is thus a form of empowerment. Mayoux describes this as a form of empowerment meant to trickle down and strengthen women in other parts of their lives. Family and home is one example where entrepreneurship as empowerment is intended from a perspective of the poverty paradigm to emancipate women from low class and low-status professions (ibid).

Research shows that viewing empowerment from one perspective like empowerment through entrepreneurship risk stagnating and hindering the process of equality (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 53). In proceeding in striving to solve the structures of inequality at both the labor market and the homecare market forged by neoliberalism, there is value in exploring empowerment through opportunities for female entrepreneurship. Through the neoliberalist development of initiating provider choice and creating a new market, women are the intended audience as
female bodies make up the labor force (Fahlgren, Mulinari, Sjöstedt Landen 2016). Definitions of Empowerment often read as authority or power that is given to someone to do something; Oxford English dictionary explains empowerment as ‘individuals are given empowerment to create their own dwellings' (www.en.oxforddictionaries.com, 2018). From the perspective of female entrepreneurship where the power given to women seemingly comes from entrepreneurship to strengthen their position on the labor market begging questions stemming from the strategies taken to adjust inequalities at the labor market through enhancing female entrepreneurship. If that is empowerment for women what does it mean for women who have started businesses on the homecare market and what are their experiences?

The underlying paradigms shaping the sentiment of empowerment through opportunity has its roots in neoliberalism shaping not just governing strategies of provider choice but also materializes through the legal setting of the act on system of choice (lagen [2008:09/29] om valfrihetssystem [LOV]). This study departs in a gender perspective on sociology of law where empowering women through provider choice as materialized through LOV are explored against the backdrop of new public management (NPM).

Reforming the Swedish public sector in the early 1990s was a management strategy now known as NPM, in line with the ideology of neoliberalism (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904). Provider choice along with LOV was a direct result of NPM strategies to strengthen the individual's position of self-empowerment (Dahl 2012, p 285). This strategy allowed private providers to establish their services in the public sector, opting for customer choice and the entrance of a quasi-market (Dahl 2012, p 283-285, Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904-905). After the governing shift in 2006, provider choice became a thought sentiment spread throughout the Swedish public sector. Particularly in healthcare enabling the client to make decisions about their care (ibid). Provider choice within eldercare initiated transferring care decisions from the state to the elderly, giving them the power to make their own decisions (Moberg et al. 2016, p 281-283).
1.1 Aim and Research Question

Concerning the underlying sentiment of female empowerment as mirrored by female entrepreneurship, there also seemed to exist an underlying belief that by creating a competition-friendly market it would improve working conditions for women along with career opportunities and status (Dahl 2012, p 283-285, Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904-905). The government bill reads:

‘Through facilitating and encouraging municipalities and county councils to implement free choice (through LOV), innovation and diversity are encouraged, and better opportunities created for female entrepreneurship, and opportunities for small companies to provide services to the public sector are increased’ (Prop. 2008/09:29:134, my comments in brackets).

The government bill enhances the picture already presented of how facilitating female opportunities, is understood as ‘female empowerment' (Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 282). Further understanding female empowerment as multidimensional and listening to women's experiences, will provide valuable insight into how to ensure the continuing empowerment of women in the field of homecare (ibid). The law as manifested in the government bill was supposed to create big opportunities for women, however, the question of whether that has happened or not remains. The thought sentiment that LOV would create market opportunities facilitating empowerment for women on the homecare market is an unexplored area of research. Exploring LOV through the eyes of empowerment as a multidimensional concept will further ensure continued empowerment for women establishing businesses on the homecare market along with treading a path in an unexplored research field. Thus, to gain more insight this study aims to illustrate how women who have chosen to start entrepreneurial businesses in homecare experience: female empowerment. The study highlights how empowerment could be experienced by female entrepreneurs on the homecare market.

The primary research question of the study is: ‘How can LOV empower women when it comes to female entrepreneurship on the homecare market?’
The primary research question is explored through three sub-questions:

- Why do women choose to start a business on the homecare market?
- When do they choose to start their business?
- In what way is the homecare market empowering women?

1.3 Disposition

The thesis consists of three parts as displayed below:

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The first part of the thesis consists of chapter 1-3, with introduction, background and literature review. This part is designed to provide the reader with an understanding of the research field and the relevance of the study. The part display research motives along with the aim of the study, research questions, how neoliberalism have come to enter the Swedish public sector and a systematic literature review on homecare and female entrepreneurship.

The second part of the thesis consists of chapter 4-6, displaying methodology, main aims of LOV, analytical and theoretical framework. This part provides the reader with an understanding of the methodological considerations made, the tools used along with an insight into what the government bill manifest concerning female entrepreneurship. It also provides the reader with the theoretical framework in two parts. The first part display different functions of the law and the second explore gendered capitalism. The theoretical developments of Gendered Capitalism are not a standard theoretical framework within sociology of law but rather a feminist framework; it is suitable when seeking to understand empowerment of women that is the aim of this study.

The third and final part of the study consists of chapter 7-9 and presents the reader with the study’s main findings. The part provides a presentation of the collected material from the interviews with the informants, the analysis, conclusions and future research.
Chapter 2

2.0 Background

2.1 The Social Democratic welfare regime and Neo-liberalism

The Social Democratic welfare regime and especially Sweden are characterized by an extensive public sector with governmental dominance (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 903). As neo-liberalistic views have gained more attraction over the past four decades, the welfare regime and the Swedish social system are changing (Dahl 2012, Hartman 2012, Stolt & Winberg 2009). Neo-liberalism is well debated in contemporary research, due to the elusive usage as an analytical concept and the amount of already existing research within the field defining, along with critically and reflexively evaluating has sparked some controversy (Dahl 2012, p 283). Dahl lands in a definition that is pointed out to resonate agreement with all ‘neo-liberalism has been a traditional discourse that has recently changed the public organizational culture and redrawn the boundaries between the private and the public in various ways' (ibid).

Since the early 1990s, Sweden has undergone a comprehensive system change when it comes to the production of welfare services (Hartman 2012, p 3). In the past two decades, Sweden has transformed from a country with public welfare monopoly to allowing profit-gaining actors to enter the market. Since the postwar era, Sweden has been strongly governed by ideologies supporting a strong public sector, the roots of neoliberalism did not start gaining stronger foothold until the governing shifts in 1991 and 2006, (ibid). LOV is a consequence of neoliberalist roots in Swedish governing strategies and facilitates access to the market for both the municipalities and private actors, amongst them female entrepreneurs (Hartman 2012, p 3).

Neo-liberalism is characterized by the belief that the public sector is inefficient, the ideas sparked after the 1970s oil crises that initiated a worldwide decline in economic condition and rising unemployment (Banakar 2015, p 250-251, Stolt &
Winblad 2009, p 904). Criticism towards the public sector due to insufficient handling of resources then quickly became a reality. There was a belief within the neo-liberalistic movement that the public sector was eating up too many resources, this belief later sparked ideas of introducing deregulation, privatization, low taxes and economic competition to make the public sector more efficient both financially and bureaucratically (Brennan et al. 2012, p 377-387). These new liberalistic winds are often referred to as a set of ideas that materialized into what we today call NPM (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904). The core of NPM is believed to have been spearheaded by Thatcher and Reagan, classic business and market principles along with management techniques from the private sphere were embraced and applied to the public sector (ibid). When facilitating the entrance of market forces into the public sector there was a need for as Winblad and Stolt (2009) put it ‘[...] decentralizing hierarchical public bureaucracies and transfer authority to lower-level units’, since the first governing shift in 1991 this has become visible in how the public sector is managed (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904).

A steady transfer of legislative decisions concerning the public sector from the state level to municipality level has been a big part of NPM strategies. In 1992 the elderly reform act\(^1\) was implemented. The reform was specifically designed to transfer the primary responsibility of eldercare to local government level (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904). The intention of the reform fell in line with the primary objectives of NPM, increasing productivity by opening the private market for outside competition (Brennan et al. 2012, p 378). A principal argument used in promoting NPM has been the economic boost privatization of the market would bring, in the early 90s, the economic situation for the Swedish municipalities was alarmingly weak. Most of the municipalities struggled with net losses, a solution to this was the expenditure of eldercare to the municipalities (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904-905). Cost-reducing reforms were essential to restore revenue flow and the general economy within each municipality (ibid). This reform led to an increased presence

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\(^1\) ÄDEL-Reformen

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of private providers, and the first roots of neo-liberalism established with the elderly reform act (Dahl 2012, Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904-905).

The Nordic welfare state is often talked of as both generous and universal; everyone is taken care of regardless of social belonging. Women-friendly is another term used relating to the opportunities created for women where they do not have to choose between work and family anymore (Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 276). One of the stronger lines of opposition towards neo-liberalism ground their critique in questions concerning structural inequalities between men and women. The neo-liberalist movement provides an argument to address the concern for gender inequality and the effects by highlighting women's participation in the labor market. Participation will provide women with financial autonomy and are considered a key to gender equality; paid work is seen as emancipation for women through employment (ibid). Emancipation of women is the liberation of economic and social ties from set gender inequal structures in which women are dependent upon ultimately preventing achieving gender equality (Andersson & Kvist 2015, Fraser 2013a, Fahlgren, Mulinari & Sjöstedt Landén 2016). LOV embodies the opportunity for women's emancipation through creating work through opportunities for women to establish a business at the homecare market.

2.1 Provider Choice and LOV

Visions of incorporating provider choice into the public sector started in 1991 with the elderly reform act and provided a foundation for LOV that enabled privatization of the care market as a means of competition testing the organizations (Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 274). LOV was implemented in January 2009 and provided a legal framework for provider choice meaning that elders were given legal right to choose what provider they wished for their care services (Moberg et al. 2016, p 285).

The motives for implementing LOV stem from both political and financial agendas. Ideologically there is a belief that enabling work by making the market more accessible, lowering taxes to free up provider choice at all levels would benefit the economy (Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 276, Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 910). Opposing
is also a belief that a strong public sector and a safety net for all citizens, through higher taxing and inclusive policies should be strived for. These dividing opinions have enabled a unique situation in which the law can be used as a rope in a political tug of war (ibid). Due to the decentralization of public care reforms where state influence has been removed from the equation ultimately leaves responsibility and decision making to the municipalities (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 910). Provider choice is particularly vulnerable to this type of tug-of-war because at the receiving end of the law there is a vulnerable group of elders in need of care (ibid).

Financial motives are based on a belief of rendering revenue flow through an open market that will gain profit (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904, 910). LOV was part of a set specifically designed market-oriented strategies to gain revenue flow boosting the Swedish economy (ibid). When implementing LOV in 2009, the financial crisis was a harsh reality for most western countries, including Sweden (Brennan et al. 2012, Dunér et al. 2017, Fredriksson et al. 2012). The economy had taken a hard hit and solutions for how to regain revenue flow and avoid raising the unemployment percentages were in desperate need. Because of the financial crisis and the economy, the implementation had quick and smooth sailing. The primary concern at the time was creating revenue flow to stabilize the Swedish economy and the Swedish market (ibid).

The purpose of LOV was for the municipalities to have the option of competition testing their organizations within health and care services. Providing the client with the option of choosing their care services initiated a liberation of the market (Stolt & Winberg 2009, p 904). The law defines its purpose as:

‘LOV regulates the directions and how they apply for municipalities and county councils that want to competition test municipalities and county council organizations, by letting the "client" or "patient" choose the provider for support, health- and caring services. (SFS 2008:962)’.

Concepts like LOV, NPM and provider choice, all play their part in shaping female entrepreneurship and female empowerment (Hartman 2012, p 3). The sentiment that LOV will provide big opportunities for women on the Swedish homecare market is well debated in current research, apart from female empowerment.
Seeking to understand what empowerment is for female business owners in homecare and their role in the market is a starting step in finding sustainable solutions for how to empower women in low-status professions, which is of vital importance in the pursuit of gender equality (Stolt & Winberg 2009, Sundin & Tillmar 2010).
Chapter 3

3.0 Systematic Literature Review

The methodological process of scanning the research field has conducted a systematic literature review following the process presented by Urinboyev, Wickenberg and Leo (2016, p 524–542). The choice to use the systematic literature review was due to its characterization of being pragmatic, transparent and reproducible, strengthening cumulative research (ibid). The focus for this study is Sweden, but when scanning the research field, other countries are of interest in external factors affecting the Swedish conditions, NPM in which external influences affect the Swedish care market is one example. From the literature review, three themes could be extracted and will be further developed in coming sections.

3.1 Homecare a Complex Market Field

3.1.1 Physical, Social and Economic Limitations

Elders are a known vulnerable group in society both physically, socially and economically often in need of help services such as personal care or service care in a precarious situation dependent on the helper (Lymbery 2005, p 27-29, Vamstad 2016, p 2164-2166). Seniors often experience limitation when it comes to their physicality due to the age that causes them to seek help from working professionals (Lymbery 2005, p 27). Social limitations are commonly experienced by the older population when friends age, partners are no longer with them, and children have their own families and lives limiting their available time. Physical difficulties are also a central factor in social limitation, getting out of the house or apartment becomes harder ultimately limiting societal exposure and influences (Vamstad 2016, p 2163). Economic limitations are critical for most elders as many have limited income from the pension payment, affecting their everyday lives which affect the decision making (ibid). The purpose of LOV as established in the
government bill was to aid the elder in influencing the care they wanted (Prop:2008/09:29, p 131).

Most literature displays the complexity of privatizing the market, the core center of these market-oriented strategies such as provider choice is empowering elders through facilitating their option of choosing a provider (Brennan et al. 2012, p 282, Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904). As stated in the government bill the objectives of provider choice were to ‘strengthen the individual’s rights to self-determination’ (Prop. 2008/09:29, p 134, Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 277). To fulfill the objectives that the bill sets out to reach the elder must assume the role of a consumer (ibid). Deciding between providers are equivalent to browsing the market, but to understand the market and what is offered to resume the role of a market-conscious consumer is necessary for the elder if the intention of LOV is to be upheld (Vamstad 2016, p 2164). However, what previous research show is that the elders do not act as the consumer that the market expects and are designed for (Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 277-278)

3.1.2 Making an Informed Choice

Firstly, the key to strengthened self-determination is the option of conducting an informed choice, to make that choice the elderly must be presented with all information. The intention behind provider choice can be explained like this

‘The objective behind provider choice is to create competition for users and thereby increase their influence and consumer power. In addition, provider choice is expected to increase the quality of the services provided, as it is expected that users will select the ‘best' or most highly performing providers’ (Dixon et al., 2010b in Moberg et al., 2016).

The lack of information available for the elders along with the difficulty of attaining it prevents elders from making an informed choice. One explanation provided to the inadequacy of available information for the elders was that the government had not considered the cost of providing that amount of extensive information (Moberg et al. 2016, p 292). Accessing information considering the developing technological age is an obstacle hard to overcome for many elders, unless the available material
and information arrive in their home it will not be received (Moberg et al. 2016, p 283-286). For LOV this means that the manifested intentions of aiding elders are not actualized.

The next step in keeping informed about the different providers is the ability to process the information presented (ibid). Several research articles show that the intended clientele of provider choice is not capable of processing the information needed to make an informed choice. Despite being presented with the information what classifies as an informed choice cannot be met (Moberg et al. 2016, p 283-286). The purpose of provider choice and LOV was increasing consumer power but if a client is incapable of conducting decisions the idea of strengthening through choice can be questioned (Moberg et al. 2016, p 282). A client that is incapable of making an informed decision challenges the purpose of having an existing system like provider choice at all. Especially since the core clientele that provider choice targets often struggle from a variety of challenges one of them precarious health that more than often can render client's incapable of conducting an informed choice without external help. Often debated are if the client has received help in making their decision, is the decision really theirs, or has someone else's influence guided their decision (Vamstad 2016, p 2167-2169).

3.1.3 A Quasi-Market

Another critical component in the complexity of the homecare market is the quasi-market, there is a complication when the primary buyer is the local government, and an end buyer is a senior (Vamstad 2016, p 2164). This because the power balance becomes severely skewed, favoring the municipality. The fact is that the two actors competing for the best available outcome are not compatible with the market when the price incentive has been removed (Vamstad 2016, p 2164-2168). There is a problem in which the elderly do not think of themselves as consumers, yet the provider choice system is rigged with the expectation of elderly assuming this role (ibid). As explained by Vamstad elderly will end up suffering the consequences of removing price competition from the equation will leave a fallout consequence of lowering the quality (Vamstad 2016, p 2164). These consequences
ultimately manifest themselves through the clients' inability to impact their care situation directly contradicting the intentions of LOV (ibid).

Provider choice is designed to exclude providers who cannot measure up quality wise from the market. Clients who are unsatisfied with their services are in accordance with the business strategy of provider choice supposed to change provider thus, eliminating low-quality providers (Prop. 2008/09:29: p 131). What research continuously show are that elders do not tend to change their provider despite lacking quality (Vamstad 2016, p 2169). Just as the first process of selecting a provider, changing to another is equally complicated. The concern of staff continuity renders the decision to switch provider even harder (ibid). It is well established within research on elderly homecare that staff continuity is the most highly valued trait of all (Trydegård 2005, p 121, Vamstad 2016, p 2166-2169). Many elders develop an emotional connection to their care workers, adding the question concerning loyalty as well. Seemingly switching care provider feels like an insult to their care worker making the decision even harder (Dunér et al. 2017, Fredriksson et al. 2012, Moberg et al. Trydegård 2005, Vamstad et al.).

Concluding this section researchers on provider choice and homecare are unanimous in their opinions, elders are not capable of acting as the consumer they are supposed to. For elders the effort it takes to impact their situation is not worth the outcome, and when elders are not able to express their voice the quality indicators that the market is built on faulter and the intention of LOV is lost (Dunér et al., 2017, Fredriksson et al., 2012, Moberg et al., 2016, Vamstad, 2016.). Strengthening the field itself has been argued as a solution, by increasing actors that know the field and the work the quality care that is given will be higher ensuring better care for elders. Since the field of homecare is primarily female-dominated both historically and presently, strengthening women's position in the care market through entrepreneurial opportunities is a critical argument to be developed in the next section (Dunér et al., 2017, Fredriksson et al., 2012, Vamstad, 2016).
3.2 Homecare a female-dominated profession

The second theme extracted was the female domination of the care sector, specifically the homecare sector. When talking about homecare and its development second wave feminism in Sweden is often referred to. Around the decades of 1960 and 1970, the private became public and sparked a political discussion on reproductive rights and fair pay for fair work (Scholten 2003, p 12). With reproductive rights like improved childcare, women's right to their own body and sexuality along with the criminalization of violence against women a new era was formed (Scholten 2003, p 12). Along with these rights came more working opportunities for women as they were no longer bound to the home to the same extent (Chodrow 1988, p 226-229, Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55). With middle-class women entering the labor market the opportunity to use domestic work experience created a new branch of care that previously had been done within the home by daughters, sisters and wife's (ibid). What had previously been unpaid labor conducted by women in the home embarked a journey towards rightful compensation (Scholten 2003, p 12). Liberating women from a fixed role became the face of what is considered second wave feminism today. Fair pay for fair work provided a financial liberation of women that have shaped both the coming generation of women and society in whole (ibid).

The Swedish public care sector is female dominated, both historically and presently the ‘bodies’ physically working in care professions such as homecare are female (Scholten 2003, Sundin & Tillmar 2010). Due to the care sector being female dominated seemingly it has created an illusion of empowerment within the sector. Statistics presents an image indicating that when it comes to positions of power in the form of management roles both in the public sector and the private sector, they are male-dominated (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 53-56).
3.3 A Gendered Market

3.3.1 Masculinization of the homecare market

The third theme continues to build on the previously presented themes ultimately tying them together. Sundin and Tillmar published an article in 2010 pointing out how the care sector as female-dominated are subjected to masculinization. The contribution of three components concerning entrepreneurship and gender as presented by Ulla Johansson in 1997 was highlighted. The first was ‘the gap between the number of women participating and the inclusion of female perspectives on public sector developments,’ secondly ‘the management discourse implies a masculinization’ and thirdly ‘the deeply institutionalized patriarchal devolution of the logic of care and responsibility’ (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55). Johansson argued that despite the efforts of increasing the number of women in areas of the public sector where they were underrepresented, the male mindset as traditional, logical and economically focused were incorporated into the culture (ibid).

The hope for provider choice and LOV was that it would be more favorable to small businesses primarily female driven to establish their services (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 56). However, studies conducted concerning gender and the care market strongly imply that the market is designed to favor the male mindset. Amongst the municipalities, the result shows that for those who have implemented provider choice, large male driven businesses have procured a majority of the market leaving smaller businesses struggling to put down roots (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 57-59).

The market today is governed by male-gendered measuring instruments, an example of this is the term entrepreneurship that is characterized by innovation, change, risk-taking, opportunity, recognition, driving force and economic growth (Ahl 2006, p 601-602). Entrepreneurship is reflected as an instrument for economic growth, and it is constructed as something positive leading to improvement (ibid). Entrepreneurship might not seem to favor men, women are innovators, risk takers and driving forces just like their counterparts. In fact, there is no evidence that
women are ‘less' entrepreneurial than men or are underperforming in comparison (Ahl 2006, p 602). Yet Ahl (2006) study show that women in relation to entrepreneurship are discussed as ‘Having a psychological makeup that is less entrepreneurial or at least different from that of a man’s’, ‘Having less motivation for entrepreneurship or for growth of their businesses’, ‘Having insufficient education or experience’, ‘Having less desire to start a business’, ‘Being risk averse’, ‘Having unique start-up difficulties or training needs’, ‘Using less than optimal or perhaps “feminine” management practices or strategies’, ‘Behaving irrationally by turning to unqualified family members for help’, ‘Not networking optimally’, ‘Perceiving other women as less cut for the role of entrepreneurship’ and ‘Attributing loan denials to gender bias instead of flaws in the business plan’ (Ahl 2006, p 603-604). Ahl concludes that ‘The assumption of essential gender differences is a strong discursive practice’ (Ahl 2006, p 604). The construction of women being ‘less' entrepreneurial than men is a sentiment that rules the market and female entrepreneurship overall (Ahl, 2006 & Sundin, Tillmar 2010).

The review display one way in which it is done, namely by the government supplying women with start-up and microloans to contribute to the family income (Ahl 2006, p 605). Microloans, as provided for start-up businesses, are considered a helping tool in empowering women and entrepreneurship since it enables women to work flexible hours around their husband’s schedule, managing both work and family (ibid). The man is the primary breadwinner here, and the family is seen as the woman's responsibility. What this means is women juggling two primary responsibilities – work and family- cannot compete on equal terms with men despite pursuing work in the same line of business (Ahl 2006, p 605). Gender inequality and what is portrayed as gender inequality on the market are two different things. The perception that women are less entrepreneurial is shadowing the real issue of gender inequality prohibits women from competing on the same terms as men, due to ‘the family' being the responsibility of the woman. Establishing services in homecare ultimately favor male entrepreneurs, not because of the entrepreneurship itself but because the conditions between men and women differ. The female entrepreneurial opportunities that were highlighted with LOV are
seemingly shadowed by gender inequalities shaping the market in which the opportunities are to occur.

3.3.2 Establishing Business on a Gendered Market

Proceeding the step of entering into a gendered market when deciding to establish a business in homecare today can be explained as a process in three steps. The first step is the ‘bidding and territory process,' where the businesses who wish to establish their services in accordance with the Public Procurement Act bid for the geographical areas that they wish to provide their services within. The second step in the process is the ‘authorization,' where the municipalities confirm that the applicants fulfill the requirements needed to be certified. Here the applicant has the option of choosing what service they wish to provide, personal care, service care and meal services. The third and final step in the process is the active choice where the providers who have procured territories and been accepted by the municipalities can launch their services to reach potential clients (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 57-59).

The different steps in the process of entering the market have all shown different challenges; the market bidding has shown a gendered issue where the main procurers of the procurement documents are male-driven large corporations (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 59). The procurement process displayed by Sundin and Tillmar showed that larger corporations made zero-cost bids in the most attractive geographical areas, taking big losses, in the beginning, to increase the market and gain more customers in the long run (2010, p 59-61). Having a start-up capital large enough to cover no revenue the first months sometimes even years are something that most small businesses cannot do. Previous research has shown that staff continuity is the trait that elders value the most and once they have chosen a provider making a change is highly unlikely (Trydegård 2005, p 121, Vamstad 2016, p 2166-2169). For small businesses, it means that larger corporations have procured the market, and elders do not change provider there is no existing market left for smaller businesses to provide services within (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 60). Thus, small providers are often referred by the market to more undesirable
areas such as the rural countryside (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 61). LOV’s intention of facilitating opportunities for small businesses mainly female-driven to establish services at the market seems lost at the hands of larger corporations.

When it comes to representation on the market, the numbers show that female-driven businesses are not represented to the extent it was hoped for. There is a ‘think-big logic’ that characterizes the market considering larger corporation procuring most of the shares. This logic does not suit the smaller business model often driven by women, causing an already gendered market to reproduce itself. Despite that most of the care sector is dominated by female bodies, the leading positions are still mainly filled by men (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, 55-60). Female empowerment through entrepreneurial opportunities that was one of the key intentions of LOV and provider choice seems to come to a halt when taking the step to enter the market (Yates 2011, p 585-587). Begging the question if empowering women in low-status professions such as homecare through entrepreneurial opportunities are possible? A direct response from established female entrepreneurs within home care on what the process of empowerment has been for them has been hard to find in published research.
Chapter 4

4.0 Methodology

The study aims to illustrate how women who have chosen to start entrepreneurial businesses within homecare experience; *female empowerment*, along with highlighting how they could experience empowerment on the homecare market. The primary research question posed to provide an answer for the study's aim was: ‘How can LOV empower women when it comes to female entrepreneurship on the homecare market?’ A textual study along with an interview study was conducted to answer the posed research question. Methodologically this meant that the foundation for the study was rooted in a qualitative research approach (Berg & Lune 2012, Bryman 2012).

4.1 Research Design

The material for the study is gathered through interviews with female entrepreneurs on the homecare market and textual study in the form of a content analysis of the government bill on LOV. Gathering the material was conducted at a single point in time, and the interviews provided a variety of cases. These trades along with the possibility of spotting patterns made a cross-sectional research design with a qualitative approach suitable (Bryman 2012, p 59). Collecting the material was done in two steps first taking a look at what the government bill on LOV says about female entrepreneurship and secondly an interview study exploring the experiences of female entrepreneurs on the homecare market.

The government bill on LOV is the pre-work to the law addressing different topics and the considerations made upon implementation. The document is 195 pages long and what makes the government bill particularly interesting is the option to partake in the manifested aims of the law. Like a policy document, the government bill displays the aim of the final product; in this case, the final product is the
implementation of LOV. Using the tools, of locating patterns and spotting central themes as highlighted in the research design was facilitated through the use of content analysis. In line with the aim of the study, to gain a deeper understanding of how the female entrepreneurs experience female empowerment and empowerment on the homecare market, a closer look at how the government bill addresses female entrepreneurship are made. The government bill is the foundation for facilitating the implementation of LOV that in turn have created the market where female entrepreneurs are actively providing services. Therefore, to understand how LOV can empower women who have chosen to start their businesses on the homecare market gaining an understanding of how female entrepreneurship is addressed in the government bill is helpful.

The content analysis was not the primary source of material for the study; therefore, the parameters were set to extracting themes and subjects relating to female entrepreneurship. Bryman notes a strategy within content analysis where the researcher can look for manifest and latent aims in a text (Bryman 2012, p 295). Through reading the government bill on LOV with the perspective of manifest aims of women and empowerment the category of female entrepreneurship was extracted. Since the focus of the study concern, women and empowerment on the homecare market other themes than female entrepreneurship will not be explored further. The main findings are presented in chapter 5.

The second part of collecting material was the interview-study accessing the experiences female entrepreneurs had of their entrepreneurial process which the study aims to explore. By conducting semi-structured interviews, the female entrepreneurs' experiences could be accessed through them telling their stories. The questions posed in the interview guide that can be found in Appendix A helped to answer the primary research question in that they aimed at reaching the female entrepreneurs' experiences of the process of starting and running their business. The questions in the interview-guide particularly answered the posed sub-question that ultimately help to answer the primary research question of ‘How can LOV empower women when it comes to female entrepreneurship on the homecare market?’. The
framework for the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions to treads picked up during the interviews (Bryman 2012, p 471). Creating open-ended questions invited new topics into the conversation and allowed the informants to develop their thoughts and experiences.

4.2 Feminist Reflexivity

The study is rooted in Sociology of Law but is incorporating a gender perspective. From a methodological viewpoint, the gender scientific method called feminist reflexivity is relevant to explore when gaining further insight to interviewing women in qualitative research. Feminist reflexivity is a method in which the researcher reflects upon their position in the research process, personal background culture and other experiences can potentially shape interpretations of the researchers creating bias material (Creswell & Creswell 2018, p 182). In social research avoiding bias may seem like a minefield where one step can erode the research conducted. Janet Parr comes at this with a perspective in which she says that ‘researchers approach the interviewing process both as academics and as individuals with personal history’ (Parr 1998, p 87). As a feminist researcher, Parr meant that rather than fighting ones' experiences embracing them was more gainful since ones' experiences can just as well be a positive influence for the process (Parr 1998, p 87-93).

It is noted that as an interviewer one should refrain from expressing views or opinions on the topic. Presenting personal information that could bias the informant should be refrained from, and the interviewer should focus on the task and not chat away (Bryman 2012, p 229). Although as a feminist researcher to be facing questions of a particular kind and not answering would be unethical, therefore, nurturing ones' position as a standard-bearer in a field in progress carries great importance. Holding this position as a female researcher requires a certain amount of self-consciousness concerning ones' own (un)-voluntary participation (Bryman 2012, p 492).
Using semi-structured interviews as a tool have enabled the informants to express ideas and thoughts in their way and get their voices and stories heard. By embracing the role of being a woman interviewing other women on topics relating to the role of women in society, was advantageous for the study. Follow-up questions during the interviews based on personal experience led to unexpected positive discoveries. Maintaining the stereotypical approach in which the researcher should refrain from such interaction would in this study have led to risk missing out on valuable information. Embracing personal history and ones' experience of being a woman allowed the informants' to be heard through their voices and their stories to further expand instead of limited.

4.3 Sampling Informants

Choosing suitable informants for the interview-study was done through purposive sampling with a criterion sampling approach (Bryman 2012, p 418). The criterion sampling approach meant the informants were not selected on a random basis but rather chosen based on a set of criteria to be met ensuring that the informants reflected the homecare market through their entrepreneurial experiences validating the information shared. The informants chosen for further contact was female entrepreneurs who were running or/and had started their own business on the homecare market. Part of their business focused on providing homecare services as delegated through LOV, along with having a current procurement document with a municipality. Financial backing was a set criterion as highlighted by Sundin & Tillmar in the literature review due to the significant differences in how a business can establish at the market depending on economic conditions (2010, p 59-61). Lastly, due to the study's timeframe, the geographical criteria were set to interviewing informants within Skåne County.

4.4 Selecting Informants

The timeframe of the study presented some challenges, narrowing the pool of candidates to Skåne County was one. Since the sampling of interview candidates was purposive and not random the candidates had to be researched in advance
(Bryman 2012, p 423). Reaching potential informants was done through the website (www.seniorval.se). Seniorval\(^2\) is the most extensive search and information service when it comes providers for seniors in Sweden. It is the official site most seniors use when searching for potential providers. Two relatives to seniors started the site, and the company states that their loyalty lays with the users of the site. The site is not owned or dependent on any governmental, care- or housing organization or other organization that would bias the presented information or champion their interest ahead of the seniors (www.seniorval.se, 2018).

Seniorval is connected to each municipality in Sweden and all their active providers, and in March 2018 1188 providers were competing on the Swedish homecare market. Seniorval was the most time efficient tool when it came to researching informants. In Skåne County there are 131 providers of homecare services the county hosts the second largest number of providers in Sweden second only to Stockholm County (www.seniorval.se, 2018). The number of providers in Skåne represents almost ten percent of all Swedish homecare market providers (ibid). The choice to focus on Skåne county was partly due to the reasonable number of providers to research but also because of Skåne’s geographical abilities. There are both larger cities as there are smaller, both rural and urban reflecting Sweden's geographical conditions. Despite the variety of communes and providers functioning within them solely interviewing female entrepreneurs in Skåne cannot be representative for all of Sweden. Therefore, this study will be treated as a pilot study for what can hopefully develop into a more significant project researching the entire Swedish homecare market.

From the starting number of 131 providers, 17 remained after the initial set of criteria was applied. An additional six fell out due to financial backing that did not fit with intended candidates, that left 11 possible informants. The informants were contacted via email, describing the project and its intent asking if they would consider participating. Three informants got back immediately scheduling time for an interview. The other eight candidates were contacted via telephone, and four

\(^2\) Senior-choice
agreed to participate. One said no due to lack of time, two could not be reached and the last one fell out due to men running the business. Ultimately this left ten possible informants in which seven agreed to participate.

In qualitative research on women, there is a methodological approach addressing how to handle interviews in which the experience is central. Davies and Esseveld (1989) call this creating a subject-subject relation where the interview takes a form of solidarity (p 25-29). For this study, it was a helpful tool in that it allowed one's personal experiences as a researcher to influence the connection made with the informant breaking down the subject-object relation. The subject-object relation allowed for a friendlier environment where the informant could feel safe in sharing and making it easier to disclose information about individual experiences.

4.5 Telephone Interviews

The informants did not have time to schedule physical meetings for the interviews. Thus, the choice to conduct telephone interviews was made providing a middle way in which the material in the form of their stories and experiences was accessible while the informants' day was affected to a minimum. During the interviews, the difficulty for the informants to find time in their schedule was evident as several interviews were conducted in their car while transporting themselves between clients.

There were a few considerations to be made after the decision to conduct telephone interviews. Certain groups are not appropriate to interview, for instance, those with no or limited access to a telephone; this was not an issue since having a phone was a crucial part of the informants' business. One consideration to be made was how interviews that take a long time could run the risk of making the informant feel dissociative since the interviews were between 30-60 minutes this did not present a problem. Another consideration was the observation of body language that is not possible to make when conducting telephone interviews. For this study, the value laid in having the informants participate through sharing their stories and experiences, due to the time strain observations was not an option. Lastly,
technological issues were taken into consideration, it did not affect the outcome of the interviews, but it presented a few challenges.

It should be noted that the interview questions do not directly address empowerment itself. The concept of empowerment is addressed through questions concerning the informants’ entrepreneurial experiences. Considering the notion that female empowerment comes through female entrepreneurship the focus for the questions concerning the entrepreneurs working experiences. Along with the entrepreneurial process of starting and running their business. Questions such as ‘why they had decided to start their business,’ ‘how they had experienced their entrepreneurial process’ and ‘advantages and disadvantages with their businesses’ was asked.

4.6 Handling the Material

There is an undeniable advantage of having recorded the interviews. Recordings provide the option of going back in the interview and see small details that memory and notes might miss. Transcriptions provided a visible overview of the material and facilitated the content analysis of the material (Bryman 2012, p 488). Recording the interviews presented a few obstacles. The telephone used was an iPhone, Apple Inc. does not allow the recording of phone calls. Despite a variety of apps available to use, due to the ‘no recording' policy none of them worked. Ultimately the problem was solved using a video camera in the researchers' possession. The camera was able to take up the sound and therefore served the same function as a regular recording device.

To resume anonymity of the informants and maintain a quiet surrounding for the recording the interviews were conducted in the researchers’ home. During the interview the informant was put on speaker phone enabling the recording device to take up sound. Afterwards the recording was uploaded to the researcher’s computer and one external hard drive for a backup copy. The computer was only accessible through the researcher’s fingerprint or a special code, the external hard drive was locked in for safe keeping, the recording on the camera was deleted after the

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3 Supervisor and examiner had access per request.
interview. The transcriptions were handled in the same manner. All interviews were conducted and transcribed in Swedish, the presented material is translated to English by the researcher.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

4.7.1 Harm to Participants

The first area of possible harm to participants was addressed through protecting the identities of the informants. For the study this meant presenting the collected material in such a way that the informants cannot be identified through certain spoken signifiers that can be just as clear as the mentioning of a name (Bryman 2012, p 135). Guaranteeing anonymity was important since several of the informants critiqued state agencies and authorities that can affect their livelihood.

4.7.2 Lack of Informed Consent

The second area concerning lack of informed consent meant clearly presenting the study and what it entailed for the informants, giving them the option of making an informed decision concerning participation. To provide the information the informants were contacted via mail and telephone to ensure that the informant would feel safe in participating information about recordings, transcriptions and how the material would be handled was given. To ensure ethical consent the literature suggests signing a consent form, for the same reasons that the interviews were held over telephone consent form were deemed too time consuming. Through a clear presentation of the project and its process an adequate decision concerning consent could be met via mail or over telephone.

4.7.3 Invasion of Privacy

The third area concerning whether there is an invasion of privacy meant ensuring that the participants were okay with sharing their personal experiences. There is always a risk when interviewing informants about their experiences that it crosses over to personal and private topics of conversation (Bryman 2012, p 142). The leeway that the open-ended questions provided in the semi-structured interviews
gave the informants the opportunity to decide how much of their personal experiences they wanted to share. This type of open-ended question allowed for the informant to stop or change the subject at any point without feeling that they had not answered the questions adequately (Arksey 1999, p 43-49). The interviews aimed at exploring the informants' experiences, part of the experiences in the work-life connects to the family life. The connection between work-life and family life meant ensuring anonymity for other family members like spouses and children.

4.7.4 Deception

The fourth and final area acknowledges the aspect of whether deception has been involved. Deception occurs if the project is presented as something that it is not (Bryman 2012, p 143). For this study, there were no benefits in deceiving the informants for the sake of the study to gain a particular set of results. Keeping in mind the role the researcher has when picking up on information shared and asking follow-up questions was necessary. This to ensure that the interview was kept on track and the questions did not become too personal for the sake of prying rather than focusing on their experiences.
Chapter 5

5.0 Main Aims of LOV

The government bill on LOV presented in 2008 covers a variety of topics that the implementation of a provider choice would bring to the table. Other than competition testing the market and strengthening the individuals' right to choose the bill covered a variety of topics, amongst them female entrepreneurship. Understanding how female entrepreneurs experience empowerment which LOV aims to facilitate calls for an understanding of how LOV addresses female entrepreneurship. In this chapter, the position on female entrepreneurship as manifested in the government bill will be presented.

5.1 Female entrepreneurship

Health and social care is a profession dominated by female bodies, compared to other sectors there are more female business managers in health and social care than any other sector (Prop 2008/09:29, p 131). A key point addressed in the government bill is how both municipalities and county’s implementation of provider choice have resulted in greater opportunities for women, to establish businesses in health and social care (ibid). In the government bill, Nutek and Almega are referred to as a primary source of information. Nutek was discontinued in 2009, the organization continued as Tillväxtverket, Nutek now Tillväxtverket is a governmental organization functioning under the Industry Ministry (www.tillvaxtverket.se, 2018). Contrary to Tillväxtverket, Almega is Sweden's leading organization for service businesses; it is a member-driven organization (www.almega.se, 2018).

According to Nuteks entrepreneurship evaluation, women are more positively inclined than men to start businesses in health and social care; however, they also note that having the opportunity does not necessarily mean that one starts a business (Prop 2008/09:29, p 131-132). The surveys conclude that the existing norms that create inequality in the labor market can be found in the health and social care sector despite being female dominated. This because entrepreneurship is more common
amongst men than women. Addressing the differences through implementing efforts of promoting female entrepreneurship is believed to increase both interest and knowledge of entrepreneurship amongst women. In the government bill both Nutek and Almega highlight the importance of efforts focusing on presenting information regarding entrepreneurship and advice in health and social care educations. Supportive efforts for the ones who are already employed in the care sector is one measure to be taken, Nutek and Almega mean that focusing efforts on the ones who are already interested in starting businesses and are familiar with the sector will increase competition and result in a stronger competitive market. Increasing competition is argued as necessary to ensure employment and growth in the future (ibid).

Moreover, the government bill encouraged municipalities and county councils to let their personnel leave and start businesses on the market. In the considerations, it is highlighted that the municipalities and county councils who choose to implement LOV will benefit smaller businesses mainly female entrepreneurship. The number of small businesses is believed to increase thus, the diversity of providers will increase on the market. The threshold for new businesses to establish on the market would lower which would particularly be positive for women who wanted to start a business. Continuing, a key argument presented was how a freedom of choice module benefits diversity and provides opportunities for smaller businesses, idea-based organization and cooperative of different kinds to access the market. The government notes that ‘provider choice should have positive effects on women’s entrepreneurship, which is an area where Sweden is behind in comparison to the international standard’ (p 133-134).

The decision to move the government bill forward was made on following remarks.

‘Provider choice according to LOV creates motivations to meet the customers or community residents needs from the stated quality to be met. Poor customer satisfaction will lead to the client or resident choosing another provider, which will stimulate the provider to develop their business to meet the standards. Since the provider is not guaranteed any production volume, the provider must develop their business from expressed needs. The provider cannot influence the price which means
that provider choice in accordance with LOV creates quality competition in a predetermined cost frame' (Prop 2008/09:29, p 134).

In the final remarks by the government on female entrepreneurship, it is noted that ‘the government recognizes that the labor market is segregated due to gender’. Women work to a greater extent in the health and social care sector and have by tradition had the public sector as their employer’ (prop 2008/09:29, p 134). It is pointed out that the municipalities and counties who choose to implement provider choice give women a greater opportunity to start and run entrepreneurial businesses in the health and social care sector than what is optional today. The government considers provider choice as an option for clients to easier have their needs met along with the quality they wish for. Through quality competition organizations and businesses are stimulated to develop and profile themselves, which in return will give incentive to a greater diversity and effectiveness along with an increase in smaller businesses (ibid).
Chapter 6

Part 1

6.0 Theoretical framework

In the study’s theoretical framework two different theories have been incorporated to provide the tools for a well-rounded analysis covering both LOV and empowerment as seen through female entrepreneurship. The framework draws upon different functions of the law as explored by Merton and Mathiesen and gendered capitalism explored by Acker and Fraser as a tool for understanding female empowerment through entrepreneurship.

6.1 Function Analysis

The assumed understanding that LOV would create better opportunities for women to establish businesses on the homecare market ultimately leading to women experience empowerment through the entrepreneurial opportunities presented requires a closer look at LOV and the different functions it entails.

Function analysis is an explanation in which the following of a phenomenon are essential conditions for the phenomenon's existence (Merton 1968, p 118). The phenomenon's existence is explained with certain consequences known as social functions. These consequences are necessary for the survival and fast consistency of the system itself (Allardt & Littunen 1978, p 58). Robert Merton, one of the most prominent theorists of functional analysis, explained functions as ‘Functions are those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system ’ (Merton 1968, p 118). In function analysis, two significant terms can be distinguished, manifest functions and latent functions (Allardt & Littonen 1978, p 58). Merton developed this further by introducing the concept of dysfunctions, 'those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system’ (1968, p 118) These functions will be explored further.
6.2 Manifest, latent and dysfunctions

Merton defines manifest functions as ‘those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which is intended and recognized by participants in the system’ and latent functions as ‘correlatively, being those which are neither intended nor recognized’ (Merton 1968, p 118). Manifest functions will further be discussed in relation to LOV. The more obvious manifested functions of LOV seen was the insertion of competition on the market and the increase of provider choice. Benefitting smaller entrepreneurs specifically female entrepreneurs was another manifested function if not as prominent as competition testing and provider choice the government bill pays special notices to the benefits it would bring. Specifically mentioning that introducing provider choice would induce diversity, effectiveness, give an increase in smaller businesses and have a positive effect on women's entrepreneurship (Prop 2008/09:29, p 131, 134).

Relating to Merton's definition of manifest functions as an objective consequence that is intended and recognized by participants in the system. Who is a participant in the system can be interpreted in different ways', the leeway that the term participant ensue allows for the term manifest to transcend into a new form as Merton explores with his development of dysfunctions. In this case, the participants in the system are the government proposing the government bill in which previously mentioned notices are manifested. The establishers at the market are participants as well as the customer of services, however, for the deciding process of issuing a government bill, the system participants ensuing change are the government. These manifestations in the government bill leave the expected benefits of female entrepreneurship as a manifested function, leading empowerment and female empowerment as a latent function. Merton states that a latent function are those that are ‘neither intended nor recognized’ however, both Allardt & Littunen and Mathiesen argue this by saying that a latent function does not necessarily have to be unknown to the implementer but rather not be the primary intention thus leading it to not be a manifested function (Allardt & Littunen 1978, p 58, Mathiesen 2005, p 70-71).
Merton’s more prominent work centred on his development of dysfunctions within function analysis. A dysfunction appeared when a manifest or latent function did not fully function as intended or changed shape (Allardt & Littunen 1978, p 58-61, Mathiesen 2005, p 70-72, Merton 1968, p 118-123). A dysfunction according to Merton are likely to happen if a phenomenon itself is dysfunctional (Allardt & Littunen 1978, p 58, Merton 1968, p 118-123). Allardt and Littunen further explain manifest and latent functions as transcending into dysfunctions as first presented by Merton. As groundbreaking as Merton's development in function analysis was his writings are complex, especially for a beginner in the field, for comprehension reasons the choice to focus on Allardt and Littunens description was made. Allardt and Littunen explains a dysfunctional phenomenon as a hindering of the system process, the dysfunction can appear following a manifest function that is not achieved or the phenomenon’s previous latent function are not at hand any longer (1978, p 58). When this happens a manifest or latent function can transcend into a dysfunction instead. An example of this is in relation to LOV is provider choice, as presented in the literature review research show that elders have a hard time acting as the customer the market needs the elder to (Vamstad 2016, p 2167-2169). The manifested function of the law was to increase provider choice but when the customer cannot choose for a variety of reasons the manifested function cannot be achieved and thus transforming into a dysfunction that works against the aim of the act itself, ultimately decreasing provider choice. The analysis will further explore dysfunctions in relation to female entrepreneurship and empowerment but first the manifest and latent functions along with dysfunctions and the connection to the law will be explored.

6.3 Latent Layers of the Law

Manifest functions and latent functions are distinguishable by how they manifest themselves and dysfunctions are a result thereof. Continuously throughout this text these functions have been related to the law, in this case LOV when in fact function analysis has a long-stemmed heritage in sociology (Allardt & Littunen 1978, p 57). When further explored by Merton it was presented as an analytical framework with
deep roots in sociology (Merton 1968, p 118). The connection to sociology of law
and its application to the different functions of the law has been made by several
scholars but was well presented by Thomas Mathiesen. Mathiesen speaks of
different layers of the latent functions of the analytical framework when it comes
to law, the law according to Mathiesen have several latent functions that can be
more or less latent (2005, p 74). Mathiesen uses an example of labour law where
three different layers of the latent functions of the law are presented. These three
variations can all be related to LOV that is the focus for this study.

Firstly, Mathiesen presents a latent function that he calls a 'symbolic function,' this
type of latent function provides more of symbolic value, partly to compensate for
not being a manifested function, to begin with. Empowerment of women through
LOV is one example, it is not a manifested function and the research presented on
the subject before the implementation of the law show that empowerment due to
societal structures will most likely not happen. Empowerment thus becomes a
symbolic function; it is commonly mentioned in debates by politicians before its
implementation yet not established as a manifest function. In the era of ever-
evolving feminism, leaving women's empowerment unmentioned is not an option.
This way female empowerment serves a bridging function in which its symbolic
status brings together the feminist movement with the politically ideological one.
Mathiesen highlights conflict resolution as a prominent factor of a symbolic
function.

Secondly, Mathiesen presents a latent function with obscuring characteristics, what
this means is that the legislation tends to present itself in a better light than what it
might have grounds for (2005, p 74). When relating the obscuring latent function
presented by Mathiesen to LOV it might seem similar to symbolic functions, but
unlike the first one that serves a purpose of conflict resolution the obscure functions
are ostensibly, and only ostensibly. From this perspective, female empowerment
can be seen as merely a curtain maintaining appearances such as those presented in
the previous section. Here female empowerment does not make any difference but
instead maintaining the illusion that it does, making it even harder to exercise actual change since the appearance states it is already in motion.

Thirdly, the latent function serves an integrating purpose in which it incorporates the negotiating aspect by bringing both parties of a conflict to the table Mathiesen 2005, p 75). Though this latent function again might sound similar to the first one, there is a distinction to be made, Mathiesen states that ‘in which the integrating function is not identical to the symbolic function but rather related’ (ibid). The integrating function still works under the premise that the legislation had an obscuring veil but opposed to what happens in the obscuring function where it remains the same, here it instigates negotiating tactics for better-conjoined work and progress (Mathiesen 2005, p 75-76). However, Mathiesen notes explicitly that whether this is a good or bad thing he is not entirely sure of, but that it is related to ones political and ideological standing (Mathiesen 2005, p 75). From the vantage point of female empowerment, this presents a more positive outlook compared to what the two previous functions have provided. This function aspires to build social, political and economic ties that prevent conflict, from a perspective of female empowerment this means a strengthening relationship between the system and the concept of female empowerment (Mathiesen 2005, p 75). More specifically, linked to this study the integrating function are to happen between the different municipalities and the female entrepreneurs.
Part 2

6.4 Gendered Capitalism, A Developing Field

With the entrance of neoliberalism, a new governmentality has arrived alongside it, where the market has become a model of societal organization, both in economic terms but also in terms of (free) competition. The responsibility that was previously in the hands of the state is now in the hands of the individual (Fahlgren, Mulini, Sjöstedt Landén 2016, p 16-17). The reorganization of the welfare state has shifted sentiments of what could previously classify as collective group responsibility to the sole responsibility landing on the individual. The strength of the individual is a prominent feature within neoliberalism and along with it the growing role of capitalism to support the neoliberalist vision (ibid).

In recent years there is a subcategory within capitalist theories that have developed in connection to feminist readings of classical theories, called gendered capitalism. This theoretical branch is spearheaded by feminist scholars such as Joan Acker and Nancy Fraser. In this part, Ackers and Fraser's key findings within gendered capitalism are presented.

American sociologist Joan Acker spent much of her academic work battling questions of class, gender, and race. In her later work 4 Questions concerning neoliberalism, capitalism and her contribution to a somewhat undiscovered field, gendered and racialized capitalism were the focus. Gendered capitalism is also American critical theorist and feminist Nancy Fraser maybe most noted scholarly work, strongly relating to social justice and women's role in society. In their work both Acker and Fraser draw upon the scholars from the early 1980s riding on the aftermath of second-wave feminism (Acker 2006, p 76-77, Fraser 2013a, p 227).

In an article published in The Guardian in 2013 Fraser states:

“In a cruel twist of fate, I fear that the movement for women's liberation has become entangled in a dangerous liaison with neoliberal efforts to build a free-market society.

That would explain how it came to pass that feminist ideas that once formed part of a radical worldview are increasingly expressed in individualist terms. Where feminists once criticised a society that promoted careerism, they now advise women to "lean in". A movement that once prioritized social solidarity now celebrates female entrepreneurs. A perspective that once valorized "care" and interdependence now encourages individual advancement and meritocracy.' (Fraser, 2013b).

Fraser separates herself from Acker with a more feminist critique whilst Acker anchors her work in classist critique, but despite differing approaches their critiquing points align. Later Fraser goes on to develop her theory that stems from critical points within the developing branch of gendered capitalism. Before exploring diving into Fraser's theory, the key structures within gendered capitalism will be presented.

6.5 Labour Structures and Unpaid Domestic Work

As displayed in the literature review, stemming from second-wave feminism and when the private became public there is an essential difference between men and women when it comes to domestic family work (Scholten 2003, p 12). Not just the division of chores but there is an essential difference in how society is designed to cope with domestic work, both in economic policies, social policies and the labor market itself (Acker 2006, p 77-83, Fahlgren, Muliniari, Sjöstedt Landén 2016, p 14-17). Acker is keen on pointing out the differing existing terms that men and women have when entering the labor market. She states that the expectations of ordinary capitalist workplaces are still built on hidden assumptions about a gendered separation of production and reproduction, which has embedded the image of the worker as a man (Acker 2006, p 92).

Despite "The worker" technically being a gender-neutral term, as in being both genderless and raceless the concept conceals the assumption that the disembodied worker is a white male and work, therefore, is constructed upon these assumptions. Thus, work is organized on the assumption that reproduction concerns are left at home, that the worker has no other responsibilities that might interfere with total attention to tasks or projects assigned by the employees, such as women in lower-level services and clerical jobs or men in manufacturing jobs, than for those in managerial or professional positions (Acker 2006, 92). As shown in the literature
review the Swedish homecare market is no exception to these gendered structures (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55-60).

Fraser as Acker argues that the ideal of a male breadwinner is central to the state-organized capitalism. Fraser means that this form of capitalism relies heavily on women's waged labor and just like Acker pointed out in her argument Fraser notes how especially low-wage work in service, care and manufacturing are in question. These jobs are performed by all types of women regardless of ethnicity, nationality or relational status, women globally have been pouring into to the labour market for decades now making the societies all around the world not just affected by the female labour force, but entirely dependent on them continuing (Acker 2006, p 79-82, Fraser 2013b). The actual effect of this is pointed out by Acker as a key point in gendered capitalism, the expectation of women filling a role solely for traditional purposes of having filled that role for decades (Acker 2006, p 90-92). In the literature review a sentiment building on traditional hegemonic structures of how the homecare market is expected to function as it always has only with the addition of entrepreneurship could be found (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 53-56).

Quoting Elson from 1994, Acker presents a somewhat bleak outlook of what the labor force sustaining our global economy looks like today and how the policies created to move society forward on equal terms reproduces themselves to fit an unequal structure.

‘Macroeconomic policy, representing the interests and perspectives of production, implicitly assumes that ‘there is an unlimited supply of unpaid female labour, able to compensate for any adverse changes resulting from macroeconomic policy, so as to continue to meet the basic needs of their families and communities and sustain them as social organizations’ (Acker 2006, p 91).

When presenting what a future society should aspire for regarding domestic work and gendered capitalism Acker highlights Sweden as an example of prominent countries when it comes to policies that facilitate the combining of both work and family life. An example of this is paid parental leave, where both parents have a certain number of months of paid leave where they are guaranteed not to lose their job when giving birth or adopting a child (Acker 2006, p 92). Parents with young
children can reduce their working hours and or pick up their children earlier than expected from day-care without retaliation from the employer despite consequences the employer are facing such actions. Reduced hours mean finding someone to fill in, having to leave to pick up children might mean stalling an ongoing work process and assignments that are not finished may be passed onto other employees risking altering the work environment (Acker 2006, p 92).

Despite generous paternity leave and overall child-friendly work policies for both women and men, women are still much more likely to use the family-friendly measures provided. Lengthy leaves and reduced hours therefore often lead to different career paths for men and women, thus continuing gender inequalities on the labor market (ibid). As shown in the literature review the responsibility of family more often falls on the woman leaving her with pursuing two paths, work and family (Ahl 2006, p 605). For women that meant that they could not enter the market on the same premises as men due to the extra workload that family entails thus, reproducing the already existing inequality (ibid). Today women make up almost 50 percent of the labor market in Sweden as well as the UK and the US many of them mothers providing for their family. Acker sums this up as ‘The family life has been transformed to meet the needs of paid work, but paid work has not been transformed to meet family needs’ (Acker 2006, 93).

6.6 Violence, Privilege and Masculinities

Violence, privilege, and masculinities are three terms often discussed separately but when put in the context of capitalism, specifically gendered capitalism they are hard to separate. Violence, privilege, and masculinities are intertwined, together they shape the neoliberalist society ultimately reflecting a need for the gendered perspective on capitalism. In this section, the intertwining of these three somewhat dominant terms will be explored to understand further today's capitalistic society and how a critical gendered perspective can display these strongly linked hegemonic structures.
Acker devotes part of her work on gendered capitalism to discuss the intertwining of these three terms. In her opinion, hegemonic masculinities and violence are strongly linked together stemming from a foundation of privilege (Acker 2006, p 82-83). Acker declares capitalism to be a white male project, and not just any white male but the one possessing the right attitude. In this case, the right attitude is having a certain mindset, and this mindset contains a strong sense of leadership and an almost aggressive entrepreneurial spirit, these mentalities are often found in industry and finance (Acker 2006, p 82). The literature review showed how there was an existing "think big" logic shaping the homecare market where masculinity played a leading role (Ahl 2006, p 605, Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 59-61). However, Acker is careful in mentioning masculinity and rather pointing out that it should be talked of as masculinities because there are several ways of being a man in any society and it is shaped by cultural images and practices (Acker 2006, p 82).

Hegemonic masculinity legitimates power for those who embody it, validating mindsets such as aggressive, decisive, competitive, focused on winning, defeating the enemy and taking territory from others (Acker 2006, p 82). These specific mindsets mentioned can be found in almost every organization dominating the capitalist market, most positions are filled by men and those who are filled by women, are women who have most likely adapted to the already formed hegemonic masculine structures (Acker 2006, p 83). The larger organizations dominating the market are therefore mostly dominated by these typical hegemonic masculine mindsets, thus, shaping capitalistic structures once again in an already set model of the privileged white male. On the Swedish homecare market, this could be seen in how most procurement documents were procured by large male driven businesses (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 59-61). This Acker connects to a belief among business organizations which states a consensus of what is right for capital, in general, is good for the country and the world. From that vantage point commercial organizations in themselves are privileged, Acker phrases it as ‘they come first over the needs of women and men and their families and communities' (Acker 2006, p 99).
Violence is an essential component of power, what can be determined with research and supported by scholars in all parts of academia is how it stems from a foundation of privilege (Acker, 2006, p 83, Sjöstedt Landén 2016, p 54-56). There is a privilege in exercising power and violence as acted out is frequently legitimized by all levels of the system from low-level bureaucrats to governing politicians. For this study power that has taken roots in low-level bureaucracy which Acker calls ‘power exercised by bureaucrats’ is of particular interest in relation the Swedish quasi-market of homecare. In Acker's work, it is only briefly mentioned and rather than dwelling into bureaucratic responsibility she highlights the issue of non-responsibility amongst corporate businesses steering the capitalist market.

6.7 Emancipation Theory of Marketization and Social Protection

Experiencing a gap in discussions between the capitalist market and the social protection provided for citizens in societies shaped by neoliberalism Fraser developed her theory on how to unite them. The theory starts with a critical view of Polanyi's key concept of disembedded markets and social protection where she later applies her foundation in feminist reading and thus evolving Polanyi's analysis into a modern day take on women in a neoliberalist society favoring men.

Polanyi's work in Fraser's belief focused on social protection and marketization without addressing the struggles of marketization becoming an oppressive tool (Fraser 2013a, p 233). Fraser state that Polanyi's framework needs revision and by exploring emancipation as a bridging tool between marketization and social protection she provides the foundation for her theoretical development. Fraser argues that the system is oppressively designed by traditional shapings of hierarchical structures where women are of lesser value than their male counterparts (Fraser 2013a, p 234-235). Making feminist claims of emancipation hard since social protection and marketization are both shaped by hierarchical traditions (Fraser 2013a, p 235). Fraser continues by reflecting upon women's emancipation and waged labor, the existing gender hierarchy Fraser notes have been valiantly

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5 Karl Polanyi - The Great Transformation 2nd edition (1944)
fought by second-wave feminists. The interaction of marketization where the enabling of capitalism in the public-sector Fraser notes has helped emancipate women (Fraser 2013a, p 240).

With middle-class women streaming into the labor markets the ideal of the male breadwinner has shifted, the previously fixed forms of women's unpaid domestic work have altered along with increasing marketization (Fraser 2013a, p 240). There is a dilemma Fraser points out in which marketization emancipates women financially from dependence on a partner by assuming roles of part-time work, temps, and low wage services. The dilemma occurs when social protection has been left out leaving women still dependent just on another entity than the male breadwinner. The intended emancipations do not happen, and instead, women are caught in the grips of capitalism, leaving an important task in the strive for equal rights in the hands of neoliberalism. For this Fraser suggest further studying and devotion to emancipation and social protection, striving to lift the ambivalence surrounding neoliberalism and feminism (ibid).

6.8 Gendered Capitalism and The Swedish Quasi-Market

When exploring gendered capitalism both Acker and Fraser cover critical themes like the labor market, domestic work, masculinities, privilege, and violence. Acker highlight non-responsibility and Fraser shine the light on social protection, both stem from the same place, of wanting to induce a layer of protection for the individual within a rather deep pool of neoliberalist capitalism. Both Acker and Fraser paint a clear picture in which the tradition of hegemonic structures of masculinities prevents complete freedom for both men and women to enter the market on equal terms. They both believe strengthening organizational responsibility will achieve greater equality, giving women a fair opportunity to work and earn without traditional societal attachments weighing them down (Acker 2006, Fraser 2013).
The similarities in both Acker and Fraser's theories provide a well-formulated framework when criticising hegemonic masculine structures and the effects of a neoliberalist market ensues. However, this study is battling a decentralized public sector in which local government holds most of the power unlike private corporations and large businesses as Acker and Fraser mostly refer to. The Swedish care market is an interesting example in that it is a quasi-market shaped and governed by political and financial interests (Stolt & Winblad 2009, p 904). The intention of a free market and marketization itself is to be governed by an ‘access and demand’ principle in which it is self-regulatory (Le Grand & Bartlett, 2007). As seen from the literature review, having elders that cannot act as the expected consumer and municipalities governing both the market, how it is designed and who can enter it to quasi-market like the Swedish care market does not function as a regular market (Moberg et al. 2016, p 282, Vamstad 2016, p 2164). This study connects the two parts of the theoretical framework to provide a framework suitable for analyzing both LOV and empowerment. Explicitly designing a theoretical framework adequate to take on the complexity of the quasi-market is a challenge for future research.
Part 3

Chapter 7

7.0 Presentation of material

To gain an initial understanding of how female entrepreneurs experience female empowerment qualitative interviews were conducted. Female empowerment as shown in the literature review have been fixed in a role of entrepreneurship; thus, the interviews intended to give an insight into women's entrepreneurial experiences of starting and running a business on the homecare market. Through listening to their experiences and stories, an understanding of what empowerment is to them and ultimately understanding how LOV can empower women, specifically female entrepreneurs on the homecare market.

All informants were between 40-55 years old, they all lived and worked in a variety of communities ranging from smaller villages to larger cities. The interviews lasted for 30-60 minutes depending on their responses; they had all been established providers on the market for 4-11 years. Those who had started businesses before LOV was implemented applied for contracts when their municipality implemented LOV. The informants provided a range in showing care markets in both rural and urban areas, the variety in communities show a resemblance of what different markets around Sweden can look like. The interviews rendered three different categories after the transcribed material had been coded, the labor market, family and the municipalities. For anonymity reasons the coded categories and subcategories will reflect the informants' experiences rather than the other way around, this to prevent outsiders from figuring out who the informant is. Before exploring the coded categories, a presentation of the informants' general experiences of the process of starting and running their businesses will be provided.

7.1 General Experiences
There was a consensus expressed by all informants that starting their businesses had been a positive experience in which they had grown through the process and learned a lot not just of the working field and the business itself but about themselves through the process. One of the informants said, ‘you develop through the process of running your business because you do everything yourself and you learn all these things.’ Another informant said that the most positive thing about starting the business was that she had a job and she did not have to be unemployed anymore.

When asked about the advantages of having started their businesses the responses from all informants could be summed up in one word, freedom. Freedom to shape their work, decide over their own time, and adjust working life to fit other aspects of their lives. One informant said,

‘I get to choose what my working day will look like […] If I work a Saturday instead of a Monday it doesn't matter. I can take an afternoon off and spend it with the children, that I might not have had time for otherwise. It might just be an hour or so but it's gratifying’.

Another informant said that although she might work with her phone in bed at 5 in the morning it was still freedom to her, which she valued a lot. Similar experiences as these could be found in all interviews; freedom is seemingly the highest valued trait amongst the informants when it comes to entrepreneurship and their businesses.

Another experience that rang true for all informants was the feeling of making a positive difference. They all felt that their business was creating change in a positive way one informant questioned about the advantages of having started her business responded,

‘What has been an advantage is that we truly feel like we're making a difference […] we can make ourselves heard, and because of that we can make a difference for our customers, and that has been the most rewarding thing of all.’

The same informant continues by saying: ‘And that I can offer a place of employment for my employees […] That’s what’s positive, making a difference’. For the informants who had decided to expand beyond a one-person company all said that employing others, despite hard work was a joy. One of the informants who
originally had wanted to start a baking company but was rejected due to bureaucratic rules started a small cleaning business instead. She said that having given other women work and having 'her girls' meant 'so very much' to her and although having been given a choice to start a baking company at the time she did not regret starting her cleaning business. Early on she could expand and give an acquaintance work; this sparked an initial growth of the business that she had not thought possible and today she felt very proud and happy about that.

Here the presented image of female entrepreneurship on the homecare market may seem both positive and empowering for women, to be presented is another image where the coded categories extracted from the transcribed interviews display a rather complex picture.
7.2 The Labor Market

The interviews display different motives for each informant and why they wanted to start their businesses. What could be spotted through the interviews was two underlying structures that seemed to shape or at least influence their decision. The first structure detected was a gap in the labor market experienced by the informants inspiring them to start their business. One informant said to the question of why she had started the business, ‘My company was started as a cleaning company, at the time I ran a small store within the commune, and I noticed that there was a need for cleaning help and people who were also in need of a job.’ Another informant said, ‘I made an active decision to start providing homecare services, in my family, we thought it was terrible to have that many people entering your home.’

The other structure visible was linked to the market but instead of the homecare market as the first structure suggests this structure pointed towards the labor market itself. Several of the respondents said that the pushing reason for starting their business was unemployment and that entrepreneurial opportunities within homecare were presented. Worth noting is that several of the informants started their businesses as cleaning businesses often coming out of unemployment. One informant said, ‘As I was let go from my workplace I was without a job, then one of my friends said: ‘why don’t you start a cleaning company?’’

Another informant who was taking over the business from her mother who had started out as a cleaning company divulged the following story of how her mother's struggling experiences with the labor market:

‘My mother applied for a lot of different jobs, she worked in a flower shop before, but she resigned to start her own company. She wanted to do something different, the work was heavy, and the labor rights were poor. It was about that time the government started talking about deductions on services when using cleaning companies and she decided to try it […] The tragic thing about her work in the flower shop was that she didn't feel comfortable with the boss and the labor conditions were terrible. She applied for about 50 different jobs; she was 50 years old at the time. She applied for office work, and other jobs, she didn't get to come to a single interview. Eventually, she got tired of it.’
The labor market at the time faced challenges with the incipient financial crises. The literature review along with Acker's perspective on gendered capitalism showed that there seemed to be an existing belief that empowering women could be solved with societal aid focused on getting women out of the house and into the labour market (Acker, 2006, p 78-82, Ahl 2006, p 605, Scholten 2003, p 12). All informants interviewed who at the time faced unemployment or was actively looking for other jobs all had interactions with the unemployment agency who both recommended and supported the starting of cleaning and homecare businesses. The informants expressed in the interviews that what was empowering with entering the labor market was the ability to make a difference with their work along with the freedom to govern their own time.

7.3 Family and a woman’s role

The second category extracted from the coded material was family and ‘a woman’s role’, talking about a woman’s role might sound presumptuous and even sexist but as the literature review displayed there is a difference between women and men both in the entrepreneurial sector but also in family life (Scholten 2003, p 12, Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55-60). The responsibility of the family, children, and domestic work lands on women regardless of employment, work life and family situation (Fahlgren, Mulinari, Sjöstedt Landén 2016, p 15-17). The interview guide did not address direct questions concerning women and their roles as wives or mothers, but rather the questions focused on entrepreneurship and their experiences as entrepreneurs. What soon became evident after starting the interviews was that the informants' role as a woman and the responsibilities that came with could not be separated from their experiences as entrepreneurs. Acker argues within the roams of gendered capitalism that this is because women are expected to fill the role of carrying the responsibility of the family, the labor market is dependent upon it (Acker 2006, p 79-82). The informants carried their family life into their work life ultimately shaping the experiences of entrepreneurship. Adding a question about the informant's perspective on family life and their role as women yielded both interesting and rewarding responses.
How the informants view their businesses today, their family life and their role as women seems to have impacted their experiences greatly. One informant expressed that it was hard to juggle both work and family, an extract from the interview below displays her experiences.

Informant – My husband just said that, ‘what will you do about vacation time?’ And I have no one that can back me up when I need time off. When you have two children you can’t work all the time, you can’t be available all the time.

Researcher – Do you feel that the responsibility for your family lands on you?

Informant – Yes, it has been very stressful. You want to, or I don’t want there to be anything different for the children, you want to have time for them whilst at the same time the business must work. And everything else, I mean life keeps on going. Balancing everything has been hard even if I have a husband who has taken over dinners and these things.

Researcher – Do you feel that there is a pressure for you in your role as a mother and as a wife to do certain things?

Informant – Yes, absolutely.

Researcher – If you could choose anything that would facilitate in making your everyday life easier, what would you want?

Informant – I think more family members would help. My husband isn't always home due to work, can't do much about that. But I have a sister who lives in Stockholm and sometimes I just wish that we would have lived close to each other, she says the same just because we could have helped each other more […] So, I would have wished that we live closer to each other because then it would have been easier with the children. They would have had more friends and I wouldn't have to feel guilty about it or feel bad because they don't have much else to do.

This segment of the interview displays a position in which the informant feels like the family life and work life are hard to balance. One informant, a single mother of four, highlighted in her interview just how hard balancing work life and family life can be, while at the same time how inseparable they are along with the effort that goes into trying to separate the two. She said, ‘The problem with being a woman is that I have a lot with my family and then you are supposed to provide an income and set aside time to start a business.’ At the time of starting her business she was going through a separation feeling an even stronger need to produce an income, she said, ‘I worked evenings and weekends I would never take vacation time, heading to customers was all the
time. Now she says that she has tried to limit the business by making it more of an 8-5 job, in her experience when not limiting work an internal stress started building up. She notes in the interview that her colleague that she is running the business with did not particularly seem to mind that the work and home life was intertwined but that there was a difference in her having children that were grown up. When reflecting upon both work and family, she said

‘I feel that despite working full time now and sometimes more than that, the business is harder to limit yourself from compared to a regular job. Also, you want to be that parent that now when it's Easter break you try to work a little less. My time is completely scheduled up because I have three teenage children that said, ‘what are we doing for Easter?’

The other informants recognized themselves in the hardship of balancing family and the business, a few of them had started their business after their children had grown up and therefore, did not experience the burden to quiet the same extent. Common for all was the feeling that there is a certain role placed on you as a woman. This role seemed neither helpful nor empowering; one informant said that there was a time when the stress of both family and her business were so much she felt she was almost running herself into the ground. Another said that she worked so much the first three years after starting her business that staying home with sick children would not have been possible. From a perspective of gendered capitalism both Acker and Fraser highlight the difficulty in escaping this role due to the hegemonic male structures shaping the homecare market (Acker 2006, p 82, Fraser 2013, p 236). When asked what could be done to help facilitate the balance between the two, a common answer was aid from the municipality. Throughout the interviews, the informants repeatedly returned to the role of the municipality in almost every question asked.
7.4 Municipalities

7.4.1 Information

Several of the informants shared their struggles with receiving information from the municipalities regarding their business. The informants experience the struggle with information in several stages of the entrepreneurial process. The focus in this section will be on the information received early in the entrepreneurial process. The section on communication will process the information flow in the later stage.

When asked about where the informants had received information about the option of starting their businesses no one said the municipalities. The information had come from either the unemployment agency or friends, acquaintances, and family. When the informants had decided to start their business most of them experienced that there were not much of additional information to attain, everything had to be looked up for themselves. The available information came from free courses held by the Swedish Tax agency in bookkeeping or a ‘start your own business’ course held by the unemployment agency. One informant said ‘I received no information or help from them, all information I had to look up for myself.’

Similar experiences as this informant could be found in all seven interviews, from the informants' perspective there seem to be no information to forego from the municipalities themselves. The informants who had already started their business before LOV was implemented, all said that when their municipalities had implemented LOV, and they could apply for a procurement document they still had not received any specific information from the municipalities about the option of procuring services. The lack of communication between the entrepreneurs and the municipalities seemed to follow even after their businesses were established and continued despite having been active providers for years.
7.4.2 Communication

The decision to implement LOV is the municipality's; they design both the market and the procurement documents leave the entrepreneurs establishing on the market dependent on the municipality and the relationship that they have (Moberg et al. 2016, p 285). Seemingly from the interviews, this has left the informants with both positive and negative experiences. One informant said that she did not see it as a problem, another informant did not share the same experience as the previous informant. In the interview, she shared her experience of the communication process between her and the municipality after LOV had been implemented.

‘There have been two rounds in our commune, and we've been a part of it both times. It wasn't that long the first time around because the political governing changed, and suddenly they took it away. Then one two three it was back again, but it has us worried again that they are about to take it away, but they don’t tell us anything’.

When asked about the communication the informant responded that it had been very poor, she then shared a story of how the municipality had restricted their allowed time per customer without informing them. ‘We had nothing to say about that, they just threw it in our face like ‘here you go, this is how it works now.' The only thing to do was either accept it or leave it'. She continued by explaining how they had demanded new contracts, but four months had passed, and they had still not received any. When she had asked the municipality how they were supposed to provide a good standard for their customers, the response was that if the customers were not satisfied, they could complain. When asked why she thought they were treated this way she said, ‘I don't know, but it feels like if they get enough complaints, they will have a reason to terminate it again.’ When asked if making an official complaint was possible she said that she was not sure how to do that and the only contact they had was for someone within the municipality, no outside counsel.

Ultimately this caused stress for her, and in her business, she had three employees who only worked with customers provided through LOV. If it were terminated again, she would most likely not be able to keep them. Having employees facing
possible unemployment was something that she felt the municipality did not care about at all. This interview shows how lack of communication can leave the entrepreneur stressed but also in the hands of the municipality. From Weber's perspective on bureaucracy and the bureaucrats, the actions taken by this municipality can be interpreted as control of information flow which in turn provide a foundation of secrecy and manipulation (Parkin 2002, p 88).

7.4.3 Structure

As an entrepreneur starting out in the field of homecare money is not always flowing in to start with. Many businesses lose money the first two years before starting to break even and eventually earning a decent income (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 59-61). When establishing a business on the homecare market the municipality that you have a procurement document with, compensate you for the financial expenses. If you provide the services for a customer, the customer pays the municipality and then the municipality pays you, simply put the municipality pay your salary. One of the informants explained that the payment differs for each municipality, some pay for 20 days and some for 30, sometimes it even stretches to 40. During this time as an entrepreneur with employees, you must pay salaries, taxes, employment fees and social fees.

The same informants shared how for a small business this can be challenging when you have yet to receive revenue from the municipality. ‘You may not have a financial buffer yet, but you still must front with money that you do not have.’ From the informant’s experience, this can easily be adjusted by changing payment days from 30 to 20 days which benefits the establishing process for the smaller businesses. However, there seemed to be an unwillingness to do so.

‘We have had to leave several municipalities where we have noticed that there is no cooperation, they do not want to cooperate. Also, we must cooperate with them, especially with the care managers. If they are not on board, it doesn't matter what the politicians decide, because if they don't want provider choice, there will be no provider choice’.
Ultimately this causes unnecessary difficulties for entrepreneurs in the form of official notices from the enforcement agency if you are late on a payment. If the municipality is late with a payment, the entrepreneur will pay the direct consequence as displayed by the same informant. ‘I got a notice last year despite transferring the money right away, and at that time I was about to lease 13 new cars, and the bank said, ‘no you have a notice,’ and so I had to front with cash, it was pure luck that I had all that money’.

Evident from the interviews was how municipalities that worked with model time severely affected the entrepreneurs’ businesses and their customer contact more than anything else. It was a hinder in the entrepreneurial process; the same informant stated that there seemed to be a ‘profit off the swings what you loose on the carousels’ sentiment amongst the municipalities who worked with model times. She continued by saying that ‘as a small business you might not be able to do that because you might not have any other carousels’. Model times come up in all interviews as a troubling result of municipalities economic restrictions, regardless if you have care services or cleaning services time restrictions happen to all.

Connecting back to why they started their business to begin with which was rooted in the willingness to make a difference for elders. Seemingly as expressed in the interviews the consequence for the female entrepreneurs are free labor. The emotional connection that care work entails both personal and service care affect their relationship to the work. When having a relationship with the client, the emotional aspect influences how the informant conducted the work. When faced with decisions concerning whether their jobs could be done satisfactory or not, the choice to do a good job despite knowingly working for free when they ran out time weighed heavier than stressing through it and not getting the job done. Contradictory this has seemingly been a winning concept from a perspective of advertisement and gaining clients who also provided the entrepreneurs with a feeling of satisfaction ultimately leaving them feeling empowered through their work.
7.4.4 Advertisement

Gaining new clients and promoting oneself was vital for the establishment and financial survival of the business. However, there is a significant difference between a regular market and the Swedish homecare market. Here the municipalities control what you can and cannot advertise. This is meant to function as an equalizer between different businesses, a larger business with more finances should not be able to outshine a smaller one with more advertising, everyone entering the market are to gain customers on equal terms (Moberg et al. 2016, Vamstad, 2016). The information pamphlets often have a similar design with the same information, they are accessible on the municipalities webpage, and the businesses own webpage along with being sent home as a physical copy to the elders. Care managers when conducting the introductory meeting with the elders who are to choose homecare provider for the first time are obligated to inform about all available options (Prop 2008/09:29, p 90-92).

What seems to be a rather simplistic process has been declared through the interviews to be a rather complex one. The informants shared stories in their interviews of a process that seems not just unfair but undermining of the entire concept of competition testing the homecare market. One informant said that relatives to elders often called them saying that they did not know their business was available to choose because no one had informed them, instead they had heard from acquaintances, someone at the grocery store or neighbors. Seemingly the role of the care manager played a big part; one informant said ‘It’s dependent on the care managers position, whether they support provider choice or not. The care managers can affect with small instructions what the client chooses’. The experiences shared by this informant could be found in almost all interviews. Several of the informants stated that depending on what care manager that handled what customers they could experience a rise or fall in the number of clients available to them. Reflecting upon Weber’s developments of the role of the bureaucrat introduces questions concerning where the care managers loyalty lays.
One informant said that their commune was divided into six geographical areas where there was one care manager for each area, in the beginning gaining customers had been slow, and they only got customers from one area. Then one of the care managers resigned, and a new was hired, and suddenly new customers started coming in from that area where they had not had any clients before. She like the previous informant experienced that the municipality and the care managers did not advertise their business, they did not tell potential customers that they were available to choose. When reflecting on how they gained customers many said that it was through the process of ‘word by mouth,’ their customers told their friends and their neighbors that then decided to switch provider to them. Connecting back to the structure of free, in the end, the informants said that staying true to their vision and doing a good job earned them customers it was just sad that what should be naturally provided through the system had to be done in this way.

7.4.5 Demands and Bureaucracy

With a quasi-market such as the Swedish homecare market bureaucracy in the form of paperwork has become an increasing necessity. The process of paperwork starts when applying to become a provider. Every municipality has a procurement document with specific demands that every applicant should fulfill (www.SKL.se, 2018).

As seen in the literature review a keenly pressed argument when implementing provider choice was the empowerment of women in a low-status profession through the option of starting their own business (Ahl 2006, p 601-605, Yates 2011, p 585-587). However, the interviews paint another picture depending on what care you chose to provide personal, service or meals vastly differs. The differences are not just in the tasks themselves but in the demands stated by the procurement document that the municipality has constructed. These demands are often focused on education, organization and financial status and are directly contradictory to what the manifested aim of empowering women in low-status professions. A few signifiers for a low-status profession is a field in which the employees have no or little education, there is manual labor in the form of care work, inventory, etc. and
the field is predominantly female (Scholten 2003, p 12, Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55-57). The procurement documents often require a certain percentage of the employees to have a specific healthcare education, and the owner of the business to have a three year – 180 credits college degree. When conducting the interviews, the informants expressed differing feelings towards this.

Shared by the informants was how entering into the care services was too much work, the demands in the procurement documents were too high. One informant answered the question if they had wanted to expand into the care services ‘No, other conditions need to be fulfilled.’ Delegating personnel on medication, educating them further and hiring more skilled personnel was seemingly too much for a small business. What differed between the informants was their outlook on the care services, they were all in agreement on the sheer amount of work to be done. However, half of the informants would have wanted to provide services if there were some way to ease up the established demands. The other half was not at all interested in providing care services due to these demands and the amount of work that was required to put in.

A middle way expressed by one of the informants in which she thought that altering what is care services and what is the other services could be done. She said ‘As of now, services such as showers and walks outside, and social time spent with the elders are delegated to providers providing care services but could easily be done by us.’ From the interviews, many of the informants are already providing these services by having extra services that the customer can purchase privately from them. Due to the reduced cost of using cleaning and other help-services as introduced by the government in 2003, private service businesses can provide extra services such as showers or lawn mowing. Ironically it seems as presented by the informants that purchasing a shower service privately from them is cheaper than purchasing the same service through the public system.

Lastly, expressed by the informants who had established their businesses before the implementation of LOV was experience an increase in paperwork and other bureaucratic processes. The informants estimated that 15-20 percent of the work
week went to paperwork and documentation. Revenue-wise these 15-20 percent does not bring income and calculating final income the informants revealed that either you work these 15-20 percent outside of your 40-hour week or the income from the other 80-85 percent will have to cover these unpaid percentages. Connecting to Weber, the bureaucracy is usurping the entrepreneurs through increasing the amount of paperwork thus, establishing the power-relation between the two.

When asked about how they felt about the time that went to paperwork instead of active work with the customers most informants sighed before responding ‘it's bureaucracy there's nothing to do.’ Financial contributions from the municipalities were wished for but then again if that was received many of the informants said that they would most likely spend that time on the customers instead of the paperwork. Allocating resources is an area to be explored in future studies.
Chapter 8

8.0 Analysis

8.1 The Labor Market of Entrepreneurial Homecare

The interviews displayed that both why and when women decided to start a business on the homecare market were interconnected. When decoding the material, two underlying structures could be detected to why women chose to start their businesses. Either they experienced a gap in the labor market in which they could fill a need with their business. Alternatively, they were unemployed at the time and starting a business rectified the situation through providing work. The same structures shaping why the women decided to start their business seemingly played a part in when they started their business. The informants who expressed that they started their business as a way out of unemployment did so during or in the aftermath of the financial crisis. As for empowerment in their work that seemed to stem from different tasks and challenges that will be explored further down in the section.

The first step in the analyzing process was applying the manifest and latent functions of the law. The interviews show that the manifested functions of the law of creating entrepreneurial opportunities for women to enter the homecare market have been achieved (Prop 2008/09:29, p 131). However, no indicators were given for to what extent women should enter the market so simply by having women in any capacity entering the labor market through the entrepreneurial process the manifested aims of the law were achieved.

Evident from the interviews was how the homecare market due to the established demands in the procurement documents was not accessible for the female entrepreneurs to the full extent as manifested in the government bill (Prop 2008/09:29, p 134). Accessibility is the first latent function of the law to be extracted. Accessibility occurs as a latent function when the manifested function of having women entering the labor market cannot be achieved due to the market being
restricted from full access. Applying Mathiesen, accessibility can be traced to the first latent function, symbolic function (Mathiesen 2005, p). It becomes a symbolic function in that there is value in presenting an image of entrepreneurial opportunities for women, as for functionality the aspect of accessibility prevents the function itself from fulfilling its true aim thus rendering it symbolic. When applying the perspective of gendered capitalism, it can further be argued that the reason for accessibility becoming a symbolic function is due to the structures of the labor market favoring larger businesses mainly male driven (Acker 2006, p 82, Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55-60).

The two underlying structures detected to why women started their businesses pose different challenges. They both face limited accessibility but depending on their entering point there are different aspects to be addressed through the lens of gendered capitalism. For the women who saw a gap in the market and started their business successfully from an entrepreneurial perspective, the manifest function of the law has been achieved, as have the latent function of empowerment. The general impressions of entrepreneurship extracted from the interviews display a work satisfaction amongst the informants in providing effective services that make a difference for their customers. Empowerment thus came from the feeling of making a positive difference and successfully meeting the manifested intention of their business vision. The problem did not occur until their vision was obstructed by external factors such as municipal agency or familial needs to be fulfilled, this will be analyzed further in coming sections.

The underlying structure of unemployment can be viewed from both the literature review and Acker as a solution to moving women out of unemployment and into work (Acker 2006, p 79-82). As shown in the introduction there is an underlying thought that the process of entrepreneurship will empower women through starting businesses (Andersson & Kvist 2015, p 282). Applying perspectives of gendered capitalism to the homecare market in Sweden structures of inequality and the model worker as a white man unveils (Acker 2006, p 82). The efforts to get women out on the labor market can be viewed as trying to adjust the opportunities on an unequal
labor market (Acker 2006, p 92). However, the interviews display that most of the informants experienced difficulties in starting their businesses, it was hard gaining customers, to begin with rendering economic difficulties and the process of starting the business lacked the right information and aid needed. A few informants said that the process strengthened them, but overall the experience was a feeling of dependence and being at the mercy of the system that they had entered in to.

In Fraser's take on emancipation, she argued that when social protection is lacking women's emancipation does not happen and they get tossed into the hands of capitalism rather than wielding it to the benefit of their business (Fraser 2013a, p 240). From the interviews the lack of information and accessibility are visible, from Fraser's perspective this can be argued as causing the empowerment and freedom that was meant to come with the entrepreneurship to instead tossing the female entrepreneurs from the grips of the male breadwinner into the grasps of capitalism (ibid). What this means is that the inequality that was aspired to be adjusted has instead created a power shift in which the women are subordinate a quasi-market designed by male hegemonic structures (Acker 2006, p 82, Fraser 2013a, p 240). On top of this what separates the Swedish care market further from other markets are the nature of the quasi-market in which these women are not just caught in capitalism and a power shift but in the hands of a quasi-market steered by local government ultimately governing not just the market but these women’s empowerment and freedom.

8.2 Family and Women’s role

As displayed in the literature review and with Acker and Fraser the interviews as well unveiled a sense amongst the informants of having a role to fill both as women and as mothers (Acker 2006, p 92, Fraser 2013b). When reflecting upon their experiences as female entrepreneurs, the informants unanimously expressed that their family life affected their entrepreneurial life. Balancing both the work life and the family life was an occurring theme for all the informants as was entering work life with dual responsibilities. The responsibility landing on women to care for their family is not a new concept, the unequal structures of family responsibility Acker
argue stems from male hegemonic societal structures in which women have been second class citizens for a long time (Acker 2006, p 92).

Sweden is a prominent country as viewed internationally in working with questions concerning gender inequality in the labor market (Towns 2012, p 163). So, when implementing LOV, it should come as no surprise that gender inequality on the labor market and particularly the role of family matters to the outcome for women and female entrepreneurship. When reading the government bill, there is no mention or manifestation when it comes to handling the influencing role of family, thus leaving it to be a latent function. Out of Mathiesen’s different latent functions, the obscuring characteristics are applicable due to how something is presented in a better light than it might be (Mathiesen 2005, p 74). The obscuring characteristics can be detected in how the narrative of the law is framed towards enhancing opportunities for women whilst not mentioning the restraints that come with an unequal labor market particularly the market for entrepreneurship which is both demanding and time-consuming.

Reviewing the experiences of women in relation to the obscuring characteristics from a perspective of gendered capitalism show how the labor market has become dependent on unpaid female labor. As expressed by Acker, in which women are expected to fulfill the family role of cleaning, cooking, taking care of the children all while maintaining a fulltime job, excelling at work and not letting reproductive responsibilities interfere (Acker 2006, p 90-92). The informants clearly state that the balance between the two is hard but also that the expected norm of society affects their feelings in needing to excel in both areas. In battling the difficulties of this Acker holds Sweden high as an example of a country with strong social policies. However, when it comes to starting a business or entering the labor market in the capacity as an employee, the conditions differ (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 55-60).

Ultimately the effect that comes with the pressure of filling both the family role and the role of the entrepreneur left the women feeling exhausted and overworked with an incipient feeling of tiredness towards their business. Although this feeling
eventually went away after the business had come up on its feet, there was not a single instant in which the informants experienced empowerment. The process itself did not assure them, and despite a supporting family, the role seemed inescapable.

The obscuring characteristics of the law portray female entrepreneurship in a light that actively excludes displaying the burden that comes with the role of being a woman and having a family. From a perspective of gendered capitalism, the hegemonic male structures can be detected in the law and its configuration (Acker 2006, p 77-83). The literature review display, as well as Acker and Fraser, highlight how the male structures and mindsets have designed both the market and the legislation in which it is not adjusted for women especially women with reproductive responsibilities (Acker 2006, p 93, Fraser 2013b, Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 59-61). Ultimately what it means is that their obligation to their role as women hinders women's empowerment in entrepreneurship.

Further along in the business, the informants do experience empowerment in freedom, freedom to take time off and spend with their families and freedom to not be tied down by restraints of being employed. However, this empowerment did not come until after years of immeasurably hard work. From conducting the interviews and looking through the lens of gendered capitalism what becomes clear is how the legislation itself - LOV is designed to fit entrepreneurs following in the already set masculine structures (Acker 2006, p 82, 93). Thus, in this step of the process female empowerment is not achieved. From a perspective of the different functions of the law, the latent function that is the role of the woman transforms into what Merton (1968) defines as a dysfunction when the aim is not achieved (Merton 1968, p 118-123). What this means is that simply being a woman is counterproductive and ultimately works against the aim of female empowerment through entrepreneurship on the homecare market.
8.3 The municipalities and a quasi-market

As explored in the literature review the quasi-market that is the Swedish homecare market presents a few challenges that a regular market does not present. Mathiesen’s third latent function, the integrating function where the parties are brought to the table for negotiation to strive for better-conjoined work display how the quasi-market are built up by three components, the market itself, the municipality and the entrepreneur (Mathiesen 2005, p 75-76). The integrating function brings parties to the negotiating table, in this case, the municipality and the female entrepreneur. This to build social, economic and political ties that will favor conjoined work and enhance the market in which they both provide services (ibid).

Through the interviews, a pattern could be detected where the informants experienced how neither communication nor receiving information from municipality worked along with an unreliable structure and high demands. This left them feeling unheard and ignored; it has also led them to feel that their influence to develop the care market were not being taken into consideration. The three components are meant to function in such a way that the two components of the municipality and the entrepreneurs are brought to the negotiating table to further develop the market through conjoined work (Mathiesen 2005, p 75-76). From the experiences expressed and the stories shared by the informants, many times it seems like the municipalities and the officials such as administrative personnel or care managers are not listening.

What can be noted when applying the integrating function to the quasi-market are how the negotiating aspect is to be initiated. Mathiesen states that both parties are to be brought to the table, but nowhere can a detached third party be found (Mathiesen 2005, p 75-76). The market itself cannot serve as a third party since it is dependent on the municipality as they hold the power. The elders who make up the market cannot act as the customers that the market needs to fill the role of instigating the negotiations (Vamstad 2016, p 2164). Seemingly in the absence of an objective third party, the bureaucrats mainly in the form of care managers have stepped up to fill that role. From a perspective of objectivity and fair negotiation
there is a problem to this equation, the bureaucrats are beholden to the institution of the municipalities who pays their salaries and provide them with work (Mathiesen 2005, p 74-76). This begs the question of the role of the bureaucrat, there is seemingly no controlling factor to the role of the bureaucrat, and the instigator of negotiations are beholden to one of the negotiating parties ultimately weighing the negotiation in favor of the municipality.

The readings on gendered capitalism and particularly Acker and Fraser do not offer any solutions for how to handle a skewed quasi-market with bureaucrats steering the mix. However, Sjöstedt Landén argues that the reorganizing of the labor forces that neo-liberalism has brought causes economic power structures to manifest through entering peoples lifeworld in both different and concrete ways shaping a new (governmentality) (2016, p 33-35). When the informants are experiencing the change in the care managers role that is a result of a new neo-liberalistic governing taking place.

Drawing on the interviews there is a collective experience amongst the informants that the bureaucrats especially the care managers loyalty that is meant to lay with the elders not always does so and that their felt obligation to the municipality as their superior shadows their objectivity. The collective experiences amongst the informants indicate that the primary function of the municipalities role in a quasi-market is not achieved. The informants’ experiences correlate with the findings in the literature review displaying how the components to build a functioning market are not equal, and those particularly affected are smaller businesses, female entrepreneurs (Sundin & Tillmar 2010, p 57-59).

Connecting back to Mathiesen and Merton, the latent integrative function cannot achieve its intended aim of initiating negotiation. Thus, transforming it into a dysfunction ultimately hindering the relationship between the municipality and the female entrepreneurs and their ability to develop lasting social, economic and political ties that will further develop the market and benefit its customers, the elders (Mathiesen 2005, p 75-76, Merton 1968, p 118-123).
Chapter 9

9.0 Concluding Remarks and Future Research

9.1 Hijacking the Homecare Market

In concluding the analysis, there are a few final remarks to be made. Connecting back to previous section stating that small female businesses are inferior to the power possessed by the municipalities, this can be interpreted as depending on the lack of protection from an independent party protecting the interests of actors such as small businesses and female entrepreneurs (Fraser 2013a, p 240, Mathiesen 2005, p 75-76). From the perspective of gendered capitalism, the lack in protection for female entrepreneurs would be argued as the established domination of male hegemonic structures shaping both the institution of bureaucracy, the legislative institutions, the homecare market as well as Swedish society in general (Acker 2006, p 92, Fraser 2013a, p 240). Despite gender equal measures currently advancing, this study shows that for these female entrepreneurs the traditional setting of the white male as the standardized model is a present struggle in which they are subordinate to power structures actively working to prevent them from fully succeeding at the homecare market.

The female entrepreneurs’ subordination to power structures set by hegemonic male traditions can be interpreted as the manifested function of providing women with opportunities on the homecare market as having been hijacked by gendered capitalism, ultimately transferring the manifested function into dysfunction. Due to the masculine hegemonic structures and its reproduction through tradition within the system the manifested function of creating female opportunity cannot be achieved thus, altering it into a dysfunction that hinders the entire process of not just female entrepreneurship but the female empowerment that was to come with it (Acker 2006, p 92, Ahl 2006, p 605). Here dysfunction happens in two stages, first through an already set labor market and a set role for women to fill, fitting into hegemonic masculine structures (ibid). For the female entrepreneurs entering a negotiation with the municipality, this means that dysfunction of their role as
women and entrepreneurs has already happened limiting them for the sole reason of being women. The minute the negotiation starts the female entrepreneur is already in disadvantaged position to the municipality.

This disadvantage manifests itself in two stages just like the dysfunctions, firstly, the power structure between the components of the female entrepreneur is skewed since the municipality both create the market and enter their player (Moberg et al. 2016, Vamstad 2016). Secondly, the set role of the labor market and the set role for women has limited the freedom in the entrepreneurial role (Acker 2006, Scholten 2003, Sundin & Tillmar 2010). The role of a female entrepreneur has thus become inferior to the municipality before even entering a negotiation. The other dysfunction happens when the first dysfunction does not allow the female entrepreneur to enter a negotiation on equal terms. When the entrepreneur cannot enter the negotiation on equal terms sustainable ties of social, economic and political nature cannot be made. Moreover, when lasting relationships between the two components shaping the market cannot be established the environment, in this case, the market risk being toxic for one party, in this case, the female entrepreneurs.

What this means for female entrepreneurs entering the homecare market to start their business is that the dysfunctions currently existing create a straitjacket. The straitjacket allows the female entrepreneurs to function, but the surroundings are always restricted, and it becomes a constant uphill battle. Ultimately this creates an unhealthy and unfriendly work environment where external factors out of the female entrepreneurs control to shape the outcome of their business along with their entire entrepreneurial process.

9.2 Freedom, Work Satisfaction and Inequality

The power structure because of the unequal market has transferred the manifested function of competition testing the market into a dysfunction. As stated in the government bill and the law, LOV is meant to facilitate the process of municipalities who want to competition test their organizations, but when the market is unequal the point of competition testing gets lost (SFS:2008:962).
What this study ultimately unveils is the realization that the privatizing of the homecare market as argued on the premise of increasing opportunities for female entrepreneurship as a tool to empower women have been nothing more than a rhetorical promise. Due to the reproductive structures of a gendered society, not just the market but society itself female empowerment through female entrepreneurship on the homecare market is a pipedream. From the interviews, the reviewing of the law and the theoretical and analytical framework we can see that the labor market, women's role, and the municipalities collectively but in differing manners present obstacles for both female entrepreneurial opportunities and the empowerment that is to stem from it. Empowerment does happen in the form of the female entrepreneurs experiencing freedom and work satisfaction. However, this study begs to question if that is the case. Looking at all the pieces, the freedom the entrepreneurs are experiencing are governed by external factors in the form of neo-liberalistic governmentality (Sjöstedt Landén 2016, Vamstad 2016, p 2164-2168). The study shows how the reproductive system have launched female entrepreneurs from a domestic grip into a capitalistic grip (Fraser 2013a, p 240). Fraser argued a strong need for emancipation, this study concurs, as long as women are bound by someone else’s agenda arguing freedom as a result of female empowerment on the homecare market provides a false image, or in Mathiesen’s words simply a symbolic function (Mathiesen 2005, p 74).

When expressing a sense of freedom in their work the informants' experiences are honest and real, they do experience freedom this is not to be argued against. However, connecting the pieces of a larger puzzle show that this freedom is just like the women bound to and shaped by external factors such as skewed power structures, bureaucratic management and traditional hegemonic male structures begging the question if what these women experience as freedom really is freedom or rather an illusion of freedom in which they continuously are steered by perimeters outside their reach and control?

The other instance in which the female entrepreneurs experienced empowerment was through work satisfaction. What the study show is that gaining work
satisfaction did not come cheap, it came for the price of unpaid free labor conducted by the entrepreneurs to keep their businesses afloat and their moral compasses intact. This begs the question of the municipalities role and the role of a quasi-market concerning marketization and empowerment. Work satisfaction comes from a healthy and friendly work environment, as concluded through the analysis was how the appearing dysfunctions actively prohibit this from happening.

Answering the posed research question of ‘How can LOV empower women when it comes to female entrepreneurs on the homecare market?’ Bluntly said, it cannot. When piecing the puzzle together, going through the patterns and taking a closer look at the whole picture we can see that LOV which was implemented to facilitate privatization through the option for the municipalities to competition-test their organizations have transformed from a manifested function in the government bill and law into a dysfunction. Ironically the male hegemonic structures shaping the marketization mindset of profit, expansion, and efficiency are what prevents it from happening. The unequal nature of the homecare market itself because of the skewed power structure between the female entrepreneurs and the municipalities turns the process of competition testing and LOV into an enabler of hegemonic male structures preventing female empowerment and diversity amongst providers from happening. The female entrepreneurs providing services on the homecare market today are not there because of the measures are taken to ensure empowerment and diversity but rather despite it.

9.3 Contribution and Future Research

From this study, we can see that the entrepreneurship that was meant to provide empowerment for women instead have provided a concentrated form of masculinity ultimately steering both the female entrepreneurs' freedom and work satisfaction. This study can be considered a pilot study and to draw further conclusions concerning female entrepreneurship, empowerment, provider choice and LOV a larger study exploring the entire Swedish homecare market is suggested. This study contributes to displaying the challenges female entrepreneurs are experiencing through the set masculine hegemonic structures. To further understand these
challenges in the pursuit of gender equality exploring concepts such as freedom, dependence, emancipation and gendered capitalism concerning quasi-markets particularly the Swedish care market and the municipalities role as well as the role of the bureaucrats are topics for the future. Empowerment of women is a vital topic in ensuring women's position in society as equal to men's. Seemingly in the entrepreneurial sector as the analysis displayed there is a sentiment where women are inferior to men simply for being born women.
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Regeringens proposition 2008/09:29 Lag om valfrihetssystem


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Appendix A

Interview guide

How come you decided to start your business?

What do you think about the business, what have the entrepreneurial process been like?

Before you started your business, was there anyone who suggested that you should start a business such as the insurance agency, the unemployment agency, friends, family etc?

- Did you receive any help from them?

Have you taken any entrepreneur course or course in Bookkeeping or anything else?

- If so, what was your experience – easy, hard?

Do you have employees?

What are your experiences of running a business and having employees?

My study concern LOV, what do you know about LOV?

How long have you had your procurement document with the municipality? – was it hard to get? – Were you many who competed for the contract?

What services does your business provide?

- Combined services, any reason for not providing care services?

What services do you provide outside of LOV?

What have been the advantages of starting and running your own business?

And what have been the disadvantages?

If you were to advice someone else in starting a business what would you say to them?