

A New World Order

Towards the Ideal-Type of Bureaucracy 2.0

A stupid despot may constrain his slaves with iron chains; but a true politician binds them even more strongly by the chain of their own ideas; it is at the stable point of reason that he secures the end of the chain; this link is all the stronger in that we do not know of what it is made and we believe it to be our work; [...] and on the fibres of the brain is founded the unshakable base of the soundest of Empires.

- Sevrin, quoted by M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

**All that is solid melts into air,
all that is holy is profaned**

- K. Marx & F. Engels, *Manifesto for the Communist Party*



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SOCM11: Master/Magister Thesis
Spring 2011
Supervisor: Professor Carl-Göran Heidegren

Abstract

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Title: A New World Order. Towards the Ideal-Type of Bureaucracy 2.0

Master/Magister thesis: SOCM11, 15hp.

Supervisor: Professor Carl-Göran Heidegren

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Word count: 10878

In the *ideal-type of bureaucracy*, Max Weber outlined the creation of the modern state as an iron-cage of disenchantment and quantification. This thesis updates Weber's ideal-type on the notion that the modern nation state is declining, and the large institutions with it. Based in an ideal-type of Michel Foucault's *Biopolitics*, as *Economization* (a rational focus on quantitative measures), *Individualization* (focus on identity and repudiation of collectives), and *Decentralization* (multiplying competing actors and possible transactions), and the theory of Manuel Castells' *Network Society*, the ideal-type of bureaucracy is updated to explain its role in contemporary Western society.

On examples drawn from *Swedish Government Official Reports* an interpretation of bureaucracy as being transformed from an iron-cage into a VR-helmet emerges. This creates the interpretation that post-modernity is not the end of large narratives, but the naturalization of a market economy narrative, where the market is canonized from a perspective to a law of nature. This naturalizes the capitalist-liberal social, economical and political order of the market, and virtualizes or technologizes of control and domination in society.

Over all, this thesis is a critique of the notion that contemporary western society experiences "post-bureaucracy", which creates structures with more freedom and prosperity than the bureaucratic iron-cage of the modern age. Instead, an interpretation of contemporary bureaucracy as a possible means to the emergence of Weber's "polar night of icy darkness" is advocated.

Keywords: Ideal-type, Governmentality, Network society, Weber, Foucault

A New World Order: A Popular Introduction

In the field of sociology, the question “how is the society possible?” has been researched on both micro and macro levels. In this thesis bureaucracy – defined as “technical superiority over all other forms of domination” – outlined by the sociologist Max Weber has been criticized and developed to fit contemporary society. It is argued that the three processes: (increased) economization, individualization and decentralization, are the basis for how society has changed since the modern era (1914-1989).

In this thesis the three processes defined above are defined as the ideal-type of *Governmentality*, a concept defined by the philosopher Michel Foucault as a mental state of acting as governed. An *ideal-type* is a scientific model used for comparison between theoretical concepts and possible implementations or occurrences of those in society. Weber’s (classical) ideal-type of bureaucracy is thus updated, or imbued, with the ideal-type of Governmentality.

This new ideal-type becomes relevant, when put in a context of contemporary western policy, here Swedish Government Official Reports were chosen as examples. As well, research on how Internet and information technology has structured society, with a focus on information economy and possibilities for surveillance, is used. Drawn from the sociologist Manuel Castells’ theories on the *Network Society* to define a technological outline. The thesis argued for here is that *the dismantling of the welfare state constitutes increased control and domination on humans in society*.

Over all, Foucault’s idea of Governmental discipline is understood as the main method for domination and control of individuals in society and the new ideal type of – virtual – bureaucracy is interpreted as the method to create obedient subjects, in a society where economic efficiency is the main goal of society. This individualized and internalized obedience is expressed through a society where everyone acts as if they were surveilled, and where irrationality is interpreted as disobedience to the “natural” order of society – the market. Society’s structures are thus not interpreted as changed in their foundations. Rather, the iron-cage of modern bureaucracy has been exchanged for a helmet of virtual bureaucracy, governing through a simulation of individual freedom through economic rationality. This can be understood as a part of the answer to the question: how is the (contemporary) society possible?

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1 Introduction

In 1989 the Soviet Union collapsed and in the following years the other communist states of Eastern Europe met the same fate. The political theorist Frances Fukuyama (among others) described this as

the century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: no to an "end of ideology" or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism. (Fukuyama 1992:1)

The death of socialism separated the social democratic spirit from its administrative body. This new “specter of communism” begun to haunt the Western world¹. Not intimidating the ruling bourgeoisie with clanking chains, but as an ideological “Ghost of Christmas Past”, leaving behind a carcass for the enterprising and opportunistic to feast upon. In the UK, *New Labour* rose from the ashes, in Sweden the *New Moderates* (former Swedish Right-Wing party) won the elections in 2006 and 2010 allied with smaller neo-liberal or conservative parties. Promoting “ideas that work” rather than an ideology, resulted in a policy of *deregulation* and *dismantling of the public sector*, they present a *New World Order*.² As Fukuyama wrote, it was not the end of ideology; it was a victory for neo-liberal ideas.

In neo-liberal terms, the death of socialism and the political reforms towards deregulations and the dismantling of the public sector mean a dismantling from Max Weber’s *Iron Cage* – the end of bureaucracy and the beginning of individual freedom. Some scholars among the social sciences have defended this interpretation, that the modernist *iron cage* of bureaucracy cannot cope with present day liberalism, and that a post-bureaucracy have emerged in West. One of the concepts presented is “responsible autonomy”; that instead of the control of the iron cage, people take responsibility for their actions.³ Others attempt to defend bureaucracy from being replaced with “entrepreneurial governance”, which is interpreted as an unbureaucratic concept.⁴

My thesis is the opposite, that deregulations and the dismantling of the public sector leads to increased technological domination in society, and a new form of bureaucratic control. Formulated as a question: *How can contemporary bureaucracy*

¹ The *West*, in this context is mainly the European countries subscribing to a history of Protestantism and development of a welfare state during the modern era.

² Foucault 2008: p. 90, Gustavsson 2004: 37-67, Žižek 1999: pp. 198.

³ Johnson et al 2009: pp. 50.

⁴ du Gay 2000: p. 82, p. 94, pp. 107.

be meaningfully interpreted as increasing technical superiority over all other forms of domination? The aim of this thesis is thus to (1) *to present a theoretic model – an updated ideal-type – of contemporary bureaucracy* and (2) *from this model present an analysis of how contemporary bureaucracy can be meaningfully interpreted to increase technical domination.* This is not a refutation of Weber’s ideal-type of bureaucracy, but an aim to update it to be relevant for contemporary society.

When creating this new ideal-type for bureaucracy and presenting its increased possibilities to control, relevant examples will be drawn from contemporary Swedish Government Official Reports.⁵ These examples are delimited to enlighten the theoretical discussion.

Additionally, I have delimited the thesis to an interpretation of contemporary bureaucracy; how it is possible to in a meaningful way understand contemporary bureaucracy as “technical superiority over all other forms of domination”,⁶ foremost superiority over the modernist bureaucracy presented in Weber’s writings. This is not a claim on an ontological truth about contemporary bureaucracy, but a meaningful subjective interpretation, which I argue is relevant to comprehensively interpret contemporary society. This takes its origin in Weber’s *Verstehen*-perspective, with the aim to create a meaningful interpretation of contemporary bureaucracy.⁷

This is a focus on the inherent rationality of the bureaucratic system. There is of course a relation between individual rationality and system-rationality, but since I will not focus on actions of individuals these will not be the focus in the thesis.

My epistemological perspective aims to promote an analysis of contemporary bureaucracy that develops an understanding of its meaning. I do not subscribe to a concept of bureaucracy as an acting organism in itself. This could of course be criticized on the basis that my position delimits me from ever fully understand someone else’s interpretation of the bureaucracy. Still, that is not a reason not to try. Since my perspective adds to possible interpretations, the possibility for gathering relevant perspectives on contemporary western society is increased.⁸

The thesis has three main chapters. These are based on the three processes that are interpreted as an ideal-type of biopolitics⁹ and how they can be understood

⁵ See ch. 1.3.

⁶ Scott & Marshall 2009: 54

⁷ Weber 1976: 183

⁸ Ibid, Merton 1972: 9-47

⁹ For more details, see ch. 1.1.2.

interpreted in relation to Weber, Foucault, Castells and a range of other social theorists, e.g. Georg Ritzer, Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Richard Florida, and Slavoj Žižek. The idea is that these three chapters each will contribute to the production of updates for Weber's ideal-type of bureaucracy through highlighting relevant processes in policy. And through that an interpretation on how these processes increases rather than decreases possible control in western society.

In (1) *Economization*, I argue that the principles for how an increased demand for profit and measurability constitutes the basis for valuing behavior in the terms of economic value. (2) *Individualization* presents how the individual is promoted above the collective, and ignores social structures in society. (3) *Decentralization* concludes the trilogy covering how the structure of society goes from centralized to decentralized, aiming for protection from irregularities and waywardness and obscuring relations between individuals and institutions. In the *Conclusion* a new ideal-type for bureaucracy will be unveiled. As well, some criticisms and propositions for further research will be presented.

1.0.1 Critical Aspects on The Position of Theorists and Author

One of the most important aspects of it is that the theorists used are almost exclusively white, heterosexual (except Foucault), middle-class, educated males. Being aware of this situation, hopefully more scholars and authors who do not share all of these attributes will emerge in the future.

In the case of Max Weber, homage should be paid to his wife Marianne Weber. She edited many of his late writings, since he came down with several nervous breakdowns.¹⁰ We will probably never know the range of her own ideas found in his writings, but that is not a reason to forget her contributions.

As may be obvious from the above I am critical of this new world order. To create an understanding of how I as an author am situated: I am a white, western male, living in a heterosexual relationship and originating from an academic middle-class background. This thesis presents my interpretation of contemporary bureaucracy, and I have no illusions that my standpoint will not be present in my analysis and development in this thesis. In relation to the white male domination of theorists used, it is possible that relevant aspects on intersectionality and the position and experiences of e.g. women in contemporary society will be lost in the analysis.

¹⁰ Boglind et al 2005: pp. 129, Adams & Sydie 2002: pp. 169

Additionally, I would define myself as a critical sociologist who cultivates an outlook based on intellectual, left wing critique with a foundation in continental philosophy and Marxist and Weberian Sociology.

1.1 Core concepts and their definitions

This chapter contains definitions of relevant core concepts to the thesis. These are either disputed concepts used in various more or less well-defined ways in sociological research or complex concepts that may not be familiar to the reader. The aim is as well to interpret these concepts as ideal-types and to use them as analytical tools.

1.1.1 Bureaucracy and Rational Action

A good conception of bureaucracy found in *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* is

technical superiority over all other forms of domination, although this does not necessarily imply greatest efficiency in goal attainment, since rationality and efficiency must always be measured in relation to a clearly stated objective. (Scott & Marshall 2009:54)

However, the most famous conception of bureaucracy is Weber's ideal type; six principles which were significant for a bureaucracy to work in the modern age:¹¹

- I. [...] [T]he principle of fixed and official jurisdictional areas [...] ordered by laws or administrative regulations. [...]
- II. The principles of office hierarchy and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of super- and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower officials by the higher ones. [...]
- III. The management of the modern office is based upon written documents ('the files'), which are preserved in their original or draught form. [...]
- IV. Office management, or at least all specialized office management [...] usually presupposes thorough and expert training. [...]
- V. When the office is fully developed, official activity demands the full working capacity of the official, irrespective of the fact that his obligatory time in the bureau may be firmly delimited. [...]
- VI. The management of the office follow general rules, which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned. Knowledge of these rules represent a special technical learning which the officials possess. (Weber 1999:196-98)

According to George Ritzer, "[t]he bureaucracy embodies Weber's thinking on rationality, authority and the iron cage."¹² Bureaucracy as an iron cage is maybe one of Weber's most famous notions. It is based on the theory that the modern state is an enterprise, which is administered as thoroughly as possible by an impersonal

¹¹ The modern age in this context indicates the historic era 1914 – 1989, i.e. from the outbreak of WWI to the collapse of the Soviet Union. This era is defined by the notion of conflicting "large narratives" (socialism, capitalism and fascism) both in scientific theory and political practice.

¹² Ritzer 2005: 56

apparatus.¹³ It is an iron cage in the sense that it forces the citizens of the state to organize and cooperate towards a common goal (decided by those in charge), in the same way as the workers of a factory has to cooperate to produce different goods.¹⁴ Weber's notion of the consequences of bureaucracy is framed in the quote: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."¹⁵ Ritzer develops the idea of a developed bureaucracy, presenting the fast-food chain as the contemporary peak of rationalization and dominance in society. This creates an iron cage that predicts, controls and calculates human behavior towards the goal of economic profit.¹⁶

Some other aspects of this ideal-type of bureaucracy are presented in Weber's writings. He presents the notion of centralized, impersonal and quantified governing of society, meaning that central offices of policy and business makes decisions based on calculations of human behavior, e.g. pregnancy frequency, without regard for individuals *sui generis*^{17, 18}.

The permanent character of bureaucracy is one of the most relevant concepts. Through making more and more individuals depend on the bureaucratic order to live, it colonizes more and more of society.¹⁹ This implies a leveling of social differences and goes hand in hand with mass democracy: equality before the law, repudiation of feudal orders and implementation of the public opinion.²⁰

A concept relevant to understand bureaucracy is *rational action*. Weber defines two different types of rational action: *goal rational* and *value rational*.²¹ The relevant type in the case of bureaucracy and bureaucratization is goal rational actions. This behavior is of a teleological nature, which expects a certain action to have causal relation to a certain goal. It is based on calculated actions.²² From this, the idea of *rationalization* is drawn. This is the process where everything that cannot be causally linked to the achievement of the expected goal is discarded.²³

¹³ Weber 1999: 110

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid 1976: 182

¹⁶ Ritzer 2004: pp. 25

¹⁷ "Unique, of fits own kind" (Urdang et al 1979:1452). Meaning that the concept (here individual) is perceived as more than the sum of its parts.

¹⁸ Weber 1991: pp. 214, pp. 221

¹⁹ Weber 1991: pp. 228

²⁰ Ibid: p. 224

²¹ Weber 1968: p. 24

²² Ibid: p. 18

²³ Scott & Marshal 2009: p. 630

1.1.2 Biopolitics and Governmentality

Biopolitics is a concept, which Michel Foucault presented in more detail during the last years of his career.²⁴ However, it is present in many of his earlier writings.²⁵ In short it is a critique of the neo-liberal idea of capitalism as freedom. Rather, Foucault say, the governing is internalized into the human body. In the words of Hardt & Negri, who have developed the concept in a global context, it is “a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousness and bodies of the population”.²⁶ This control extends throughout the body, beyond the conscious processes of humans.²⁷

This is based on the principle that government should only intervene in society to assure the freedom of the market. The underlying assumption here is: business-exchange determines “the true value of things”²⁸. Thus, it exchanges tutoring for surveillance making people act as if they were watched all the time. This is based on Adam Smith’s concept of *the invisible hand*, stating that the free market is a natural order and if everyone looks after one’s own interests, everyone will benefit.²⁹

The three main chapters of this thesis are named after the three processes that Foucault presents to be relevant for the *rise of biopolitics: Economization*³⁰ (focus on quantitative measures), *Individualization*³¹ (focus on identity and repudiation of collectives), and *Decentralization*³² (multiplying competing actors and possible transactions).³³ These concepts are interpreted as an ideal-type for biopolitics where individual competition is the natural outcome as a social structure and the mode of entrepreneurship is promoted.

Governmentality is the internalization of biopolitics in one’s behavior. The word is a combination of *Government* and *Mentality*. This is a rationalization of behavior, aiming for measurable goals. Foucault uses the concept of *homo oeconomicus*, who

²⁴ The main source is *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), which contains translated lectures held by Foucault in 1978-79 at the Collège de France. Of course, these lectures are not the same as a text written by Foucault and we can never know how these reasonings would have been presented in one. Therefore it will be the general lines of thought that will be used, rather than specific examples.

²⁵ E.g. in *Discipline and Punish* (1991) part 3 and *The History of Sexuality vol. 3: The Care of Self* (1986) part 2.

²⁶ Hardt & Negri 2000: 24

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Foucault 2008: p. 46, 88, p. 94

²⁹ Ibid: pp. 278

³⁰ Foucault 2008: 2, pp. 15, pp. 224

³¹ Ibid: p. 143, pp. 148, pp. 224

³² Ibid: p. 143, 175, pp. 240

³³ See ch. 1.

accepts the “natural order” of the invisible hand and from that notion always act individualistically rational towards the goal of increased profit.³⁴ In extreme, this is internalized into the individual’s programming and individualistic, rational, and measurable behavior becomes satisfying. The individual becomes a docile body, governed by the mysterious ways of the invisible hand and its “free” will. Profit becomes pleasure without the need of self-reflexive constraints. This is since this pleasure does not defy the normative discourse of neo-liberal society. The causal consequence of this is the paradox of liberty through uniformity.³⁵

The governmental society is the society of the *Panopticon*, where the government observes its citizens with the aim to intervene as little as possible and thus promote “optional” uniformity, based in the rhetoric of “free will”. Foucault writes that members of this society are aware that they could be observed, and therefore govern their individual behavior according to the law.³⁶

1.1.3 Post-modernity and Late-modernity

The following definition of postmodernism is maybe the most precise. Yet, it is hard to grasp.

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. (Lyotard 1999:81)

The “unrepresentable” is interpreted as *truth*. This search for ideological truth promotes the emergence of *individual narratives* to impart a stronger sense of truth. This was not universal but emerged in the US and non-socialist Europe.³⁷ When the Soviet Union collapsed, the only grand narrative left was the capitalist – which was canonized to truth.³⁸ The post-modern illusion is that we are all free to choose – since the grand narrative is uncontested and thus virtualized³⁹ into a law of nature.

At this time the impossibility of distinguishing a copy from an original emerged. Appearances (illusions separable from truth) were changed into simulacra

³⁴ Ibid: pp. 278

³⁵ Ibid: p. 67, Foucault 1991: pp. 135, Foucault 1986: p. 46, 122-144

³⁶ Foucault 2008: 67, Foucault 1991: p. 102, pp. 200

³⁷ Adorno & Horkheimer 1981: p. 137, Lyotard 1999: pp. 73

³⁸ See ch. 1.

³⁹ ”1. Having the essence or effect but not the appearance or form. [...] 4. *Rare*, capable of producing an effect through inherent virtue or power.” (Urdang et al. 1979:1618) Interpreted as it (e.g. the market) has got the effect of a law of nature, but not the form.

(illusions inseparable from truth).⁴⁰ Post-modernity becomes the conviction that these simulacra are the truth, from which an era of subjectivism and frivolity emerges – an era of post-modernity. The simulations of free choices are interpreted as true freedom.

The possibility to “enchant the disenchanting world” through draping it in gizmo-magic emerged, thus defining its inhabitants as consumers and in the end as *entrepreneurs*, producing their paradoxical individualistic mass-pleasures.⁴¹ Fredric Jameson’s book-title *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*⁴² becomes a persuasive illustration.

Late-modernity is defined by the decline of nation states, manufacturing industry, and an increased network of transactions. In this second, reflexive modernity, the static grand narratives have been softened, making themselves more obscure and more flexible. The reason is the self-destruction of modernity through its radicalization into a post-industrial society, with dynamic structures and a base in a merger of capitalism and democracy.⁴³

Late-modernity is not interpreted as conflicting to post-modernity in this thesis, as some theorists seem to use the term.⁴⁴ Rather, the concepts complement each other. To paraphrase Jameson’s book-title, I would define this process as *Latemodernism, or the Natural Method of Late Capitalism*. This is natural in the sense that the naturalization of the market defines a method of governing through deregulation and dismantling of the welfare state into self-governing individuals.

To combine these two concepts, the postmodern experiences are conducted by late-modern flow-structures. These are experienced as beyond modern since the cultural expression has changed, from expressing the structure to obscuring it in post-modern veils, i.e. creating a virtual structure.

1.2 The Ideal-Type as a Method

The *ideal-type* is the method chosen for this thesis, since it was the basis for creating Weber’s ideal-type of Bureaucracy initially. The ideal-type is a theoretical concept, which aims to create a model for analysis to interpret a historically situated phenomenon. Weber writes: “the ideal-type is an attempt to analyze historically

⁴⁰ Benjamin 2004: p. 4, Žižek 1999: pp. 195

⁴¹ Adorno & Horkheimer 1981: p. 137, Baudrillard 1999: pp. 193, Ritzer 2005: 100-47.

⁴² 1992.

⁴³ Beck 1994: 1pp.

⁴⁴ Scott & Gordon 2009: 408.

unique configurations or their individual components by means of genetic concepts.”⁴⁵ The ideal-type is however not to be found in reality. It is a theoretical *utopia*, which defines the most relevant attributes of a historically situated concept.⁴⁶

It

is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct. (Weber 1999:248, original italics)

As a methodological concept, the ideal-type was introduced in Weber’s theories to enable the use of abstract theory in sociology.⁴⁷ Knowing that, the position of the ideal-type as a culture-specific phenomena needs to be stressed, since theory, according to Weber, stems from culture. An ideal-type is thus a set of culture-specific “laws” for a historical phenomenon.⁴⁸

To understand the ideal-type as a method, two new concepts have to be introduced: *Primary* and *Secondary historic individual* (PHI, SHI). How these two concepts relate to each other is somewhat vague. The most pragmatic distinction is that the PHI is the phenomenon that needs to be explained, and the SHI that which explains.⁴⁹ An ideal-type can relate to both kinds of historic individuals, but are most relevant in relation to SHI, since it is a model for explaining social phenomena.⁵⁰

To use Ola Agevall’s illuminating example, “the spirit of capitalism” can be understood as PHI in Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It is the cultural phenomenon that Weber wants to explain. It can be constructed as an ideal-type, which presents a theoretical outline for the utopia of the capitalist spirit.⁵¹ “The protestant ethic” on the other hand, is SHI. It explains how “the spirit of capitalism” came into existence. It is used as an ideal type to analyze “the spirit of capitalism” to understand if they are related and if a protestant ethic is a prerequisite for the rise of a capitalist spirit in society.⁵²

To use the ideal-type as a method for analysis an initial hypothesis must be constructed. The PHI in this thesis is the *contemporary Western bureaucracy*.

⁴⁵ Weber 1949: 93

⁴⁶ Ibid:89pp, Weber 1999: 247

⁴⁷ Agevall 1999: 168

⁴⁸ Weber 1949: p. 94

⁴⁹ Agevall 1999: pp. 171, pp. 234

⁵⁰ Ibid: p. 174

⁵¹ Ibid: pp. 234

⁵² Ibid: pp. 237

Weber's ideal-type of Bureaucracy imbued by biopolitics is the SHI: the analytic tool.⁵³ This does not create a causal relationship. It interprets prerequisites that are not absolute, but refutable if the same end could be found without this ideal-type as beginning.⁵⁴

An ideal-type has to be constructed from the concept of biopolitics, presenting attributes that are the basis of such a concept. I will argue that the three processes of economization, individualization and decentralization constitute those attributes.⁵⁵ Using the ideal-type as a method for interpretation denotes that a dialogue among a range of sociologists will be created upon examples from contemporary Swedish Government Official Reports. From this dialogue the new ideal-type of bureaucracy will rise, along side with an understanding of its meaning for Western society.

This is in-line with the anti-positivist thoughts of Weber, and the fundamental basis of his *verstehen*-sociology; it is not truth but meaningful interpretations that are the aim of sociology.⁵⁶ In principle, this holds for the more radical aim of the interpretations in the thesis as well. Yet, the usefulness to the reader of this new ideal-type of bureaucracy, and the underlying process it implies, will determine how pragmatic and relevant this interpretation is. As well, theoretical notions throughout the thesis will be interpreted as ideal-types, e.g. biopolitics or the network society, as Weber did with Marx's theories.⁵⁷

1.3 Examples: Swedish Government Official Reports

To conceptualize the development from Weber's original ideal-type of bureaucracy, the assignments given from the government to *Swedish Government Official Reports*⁵⁸ (SOU) has been chosen as examples. SOU is a government institution for publishing reports containing basic data relevant to the current issues in different committees in the Swedish parliament. These reports are then used for making political decisions.⁵⁹ In the ideal case, the parliament goes in-line with the reports, though they are not obliged to. For this thesis, nine SOU-reports were chosen. A detailed list of them and

⁵³ As a reminder, this thesis updates Weber's ideal-type of bureaucracy. The difference to Agevall's interpretation of Weber's methodology is that Weber did not start of with an older version of an ideal-type. As well, Weber analyzed development over time, while this thesis explains a phenomenon.

⁵⁴ Agevall 1999: pp. 246

⁵⁵ See ch. 1 and 1.1.2.

⁵⁶ Weber 1968: p. 4

⁵⁷ Weber 1994: xvi

⁵⁸ Statens Offentliga Utredningar.

⁵⁹ Regeringen.se 1

their topics is presented in *Appendix A*. The examples will mainly be drawn from the assignments from the government presented in the reports, since they indicate an intended political direction.

There are two main reasons for the choice of SOU reports. First, the reports are relevant indications on the direction of contemporary Swedish policy. Their aims and purposes are relevant information on the direction of Swedish administration. In a Weberian way, this reinforces the possibility to theorize “what impact these facts of thought have on the action of the masses of individuals”.⁶⁰

Second, SOU is a distinctly delimited source of examples. This reinforces the thesis’ possibility to present a stringent and relevant analysis. Examples based on ambiguous “free associations” can easily create (more or less) impenetrable conceptions (as in the writings of Slavoj Žižek⁶¹) or give an impression of opportunistic theorizing.

The examples are *not* drawn in a way so that they can empirically *prove* a direction in Swedish policy. Rather, they are used to create examples relevant outside an academic context and to show that *if* they were proven representative for Swedish, or any other Western, state policy, the theoretical conclusions in this thesis indicates the future direction for society. The reports will not be analyzed through discourse analysis. They will instead be used as examples to reinforce the development of a new ideal-type of bureaucracy.

⁶⁰ Steiner 2008: 517

⁶¹ 1999, 2003

2 Economization

This first chapter of the analysis will cover the concept of economization. The core of economization is to rationalize individuals into quantitative measurements and use the latter to determine their value.

This process will be discussed in three phases: *Rationalization*, *Quantification* and *The invisible hand*. In this chapter I will criticize Weber's interpretation of the bureaucracy as an instrumental order of democratic values, and argue that secular values such as equality and justice has been refuted for the mystic value of profit.

2.1 Rationalization

To economize is to rationalize. Bureaucracy is a rational system, and the bureaucracy that Weber defines is a result of a rationalization, or disenchantment of the western world, increasing the possibility to do calculations on society.⁶² The argument here is that the bureaucracy has been more economized than in Weber's theory. His model defines bureaucracy as an external phenomenon, which traps people in an iron cage of mundane ascetics.⁶³

As an example, the following quote is taken from an SOU regarding the arrival of relatives to newly immigrated persons in Sweden.

Many newly arrived families with children have to live in overcrowded conditions. This overcrowding affects not only the new arrivals but also the host families who let them share their accommodation. The insecure housing situation poses special problems for children. The housing segregation also makes it more difficult for new arrivals to establish themselves in the labour market. (SOU 2008:114:18)

Defining the demands on the possibilities for sustenance in the case of relative immigration, this is a rationalization in the sense that it focuses on a specific goal; to see to that immigrants are sustained for by relatives, decreasing the risk that the government has to provide for them.⁶⁴ The immigrant is divided into three measurements: housing (m²/person), sustenance (nourishment/day), and labor (€/month). This is an economization, since it provides the possibility to economize the immigrants inside the administrative body, and it is a rationalization since these measures grants increased information on how to reach the goal; as cost-effective immigrant processing as possible.

⁶² Weber 1991: p. 215

⁶³ Ibid 1976: p. 180, Weber 1991: pp. 196

⁶⁴ SOU 2008:114: p. 25

This seems in-line with Weber's ideal-type so far. But, the difference is that these measures need to be *internalized*. It is the immigrants who have to establish themselves in the labor market and assure their working capacity. It is the duty of the individual – not society – to solve these problems. This political direction advocates increased technologies to govern the self.

This internalization is what Foucault defined as governmentality – the self-governing of the body. The aim is that the immigrants should not have to be governed to do these things, but do them automatically through internalizing rationality into the mind and body. Foucault defines these bodies as docile, i.e. being possible to discipline into a certain regimen of society; profit.⁶⁵ This rationality is that every individual (in this case immigrant) should pursue the goals of nourishment, income and space. Since nourishment and space is acquired through money, this in the end becomes economization and the governed subject becomes calculable.⁶⁶

According to the Weberian sociologist George Ritzer a major corner stone of contemporary society is calculability. This is the emphasis of quantity over quality, which reduces human action into numbers and calculations in every aspect.⁶⁷ The immigrant in the example suffers the same fate. Rationalization of the individual defines it in numbers, which means that a concept, which cannot be expressed and understood in numbers, has no value.

This increased rationalization is relevant to understand how bureaucracy has internalized biopolitics, since it has developed to a stage where the individual is important, from the modern stage where it focused on collectives.⁶⁸ It is a rationalization towards more flexible rules and laws, since the road towards profit will have cultural and political obstacles. In this way, the flexibility of late modernity explains how the bureaucracy can reach into more of the life of the individual, and control it.

The means to survive is to fit in this flexible pattern, and fitting in becomes equal to being rational – to govern one self towards economic profit. It is not only

⁶⁵ Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 26, Foucault 1977: pp. 136, Foucault 1986: pp. 46, Foucault 2008: pp. 225.

⁶⁶ Deleuze 1998: pp. 197

⁶⁷ Ritzer 2004: 66-85, Ritzer 2005: pp. 75

⁶⁸ Weber 1991: pp. 216

about being obedient (rational) or disobedient (irrational), but to be dead or alive.⁶⁹ In Ritzer's interpretation, irrationality becomes suicide.⁷⁰

2.2 Profit as value

Weber presents two different types of rational action: goal and value rational.⁷¹ This is thus not to be interpreted as value rational actions do not produce goals, or that goal rational actions do not support values. Rather, goal or reason is to be interpreted as the underlying reason, or meaning of the action. Thus, goal rational actions (at least) uphold "goal rationality" as a value.

This makes Weber's notion of the relevance of values such as equality to the bureaucracy problematic, since only the quantifiable variables are prioritized. As explained in the previous chapter, the quantification is an economization; profit becomes the rational intrinsic value. The following example is from an SOU that investigates the possibility to transform parts of the national road and rail admissions into limited companies in the private sector.

When a public authority is transformed into a limited company, new economic conditions occur. A Public authority is financed through grants and fees. [...] The activity in a limited company is financed through revenue or through mortgages. A Limited company is then compelled to bear its own costs. (SOU 2007:78:22, author's translation)

Instead of the government, and in the end the taxpayers, bearing the costs of the activity it is the ones who need to use it that has to finance it. The value of the activity is determined through its revenue. To always aim for increased profit is the value produced by this action – the new value of contemporary society.⁷² The equal right to roads and rails is refuted on the value of profit.

When moving the activity from the public to the private (economic) sector it has to conform to the rules set up by the market – to compete and to profit or despair. This promotes economic ascetic to refine the capitalist spirit, through predictable and efficient practices.⁷³ This signals the value of survival on the market as the relevant value. A not self-supportive unit lacks the argument for further existence. If an activity is not profitable it is interpreted as irrelevant, since "nobody is willing to pay

⁶⁹ Hardt & Negri 2000: 26

⁷⁰ Ritzer 2004: pp. 241

⁷¹ Weber 1968: p. 24

⁷² Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 28

⁷³ Weber 1976: pp. 155, Ritzer 2004: p. 78, Ritzer 2005: p. 43, pp. 61, p. 86

for it". Therefore, in the new ideal-type of bureaucracy, non-profitable actions have decreased, or no, meaning or value.⁷⁴

The presented overall goal for the transformation is to increase competition and effective use of resources.⁷⁵ Why are these attributes relevant to increase? On a market, the admissions will have to act more rational, and thus not burden society with costs. They will have to be more profound in their rationality when they have to relate to a profit to continue to exist.⁷⁶

Understanding actions on the basis of their economic value is not only professional, as shown in the former chapter. If one takes care of "the self", one does not burden society with costs. Foucault presents sexual actions as being "evil" in a certain context, based on the indulgence in desire, or sin.⁷⁷ Non-profitable (or costly) actions become "evil" in the economic rational context, based on their indulgence in financial dependence on society.⁷⁸

For this entrepreneurial individual, a society where ones own wealth has more possibilities to grow and the possibility for other, "evil", individuals to burden them with the costs of their irrational behavior is decreased, is a better society.

Some individuals prosper in these conditions, e.g. Richard Florida's concept of "the creative class". Through their individuality, flexibility and creativeness has become the pinnacle of the contemporary western society, according to Florida.⁷⁹ In relation to the external attributes of the contemporary western society (climate change, obesity epidemics etc.) they create innovations, i.e. new ways to gain profit,⁸⁰ and are rewarded through their increased material standard and status.

2.3 The Invisible Hand

In *The Wealth of Nations*⁸¹ Adam Smith presents the concept of *the invisible hand* (TIH), which is presented as

[He conducts his work] in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, *led by an invisible hand* to promote an end which was no part of his intention. [...] By pursuing his own

⁷⁴ Castells 2010: 94

⁷⁵ SOU 2007:78: pp. 23

⁷⁶ Ritzer 2005: 24, 186

⁷⁷ Foucault 1986: 68

⁷⁸ Ibid 2008: pp. 242

⁷⁹ Florida 2006: pp. 47, pp. 103, Florida 2007:1-11

⁸⁰ Castells 2010: pp. 258

⁸¹ 1976

interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. (Smith 1976:456, italics added)

Foucault criticizes the invisible hand. He argues that the idea of TIH is the result of economic positivism and a “theological conception of the natural order”.⁸² This can be interpreted as Weber’s idea of the rise of the capitalist spirit⁸³ – reversed – meaning that the order of things is mystified and naturalized.

Foucault introduces this in the context of homo œconomicus, being the pious subject to this divine, mysterious order that always pursues their individual goal of economic profit in a rational way.⁸⁴ The following quote comes from an SOU which has investigated the possibilities to give tax-cuts for investment in small firms, giving the citizens incentive to pursue their own goals.

We will, according to the commission, investigate the demands for – and the conditions – for particular tax-incentives to stimulate individuals’ investments in small firms. [...] It is as well included in the assignment to create proposals for the formation of tax-incitements. (SOU 2009:33:55, author’s translation)

This goal-rational behavior promotes certain modes of action. It promotes being an *entrepreneur*, i.e. investing capital and through taking risks possibly gain profit. If the tax is lowered it increases the value of a sum invested and thus promotes citizens to take greater risks.

This is a way for the bureaucracy to internalize pious behavior, i.e. to promote homo œconomicus. The divine goal is economic profit; not to pursue it is to sin and mean being punished through lessened income and the decreased (or un-increased) material standard.⁸⁵

This is relevant to the ideal-type of bureaucracy. Instead of a centralized unit actively handing out material goods in a planned, conscious manner, the invisible hand is interpreted to hand them out in the best possible way automatically.⁸⁶ As long as it is interpreted as the natural order of how material is distributed, the bureaucracy has created a system where the mode of human action is controlled and rationalized. This structures human life from the inside, rather than from the outside as Weber presented it.⁸⁷

⁸² Foucault 2008: 278

⁸³ Weber 1976: 155-83

⁸⁴ Foucault 2008: pp. 269, pp. 277

⁸⁵ Ibid: pp. 279

⁸⁶ Ibid, Weber 1991: pp. 235, 244

⁸⁷ Weber 1991: pp. 221, Weber 1976: 181

In Karl Mannheim's sociology of culture the notion of "the occult" is associated with non-democratic control. He argues that a democracy needs to refute mystic explanations of an uncontrollable and unperceivable ruling order.⁸⁸ The interpretation of TIH as a deity, that cannot and therefore should not be controlled or (directly) perceived, creates the same ethic of rational ascetics as in the early protestant communities as described by Weber that created the foundation for the spirit of capitalism.⁸⁹ Internalizing this belief, it creates a norm similar to the early protestant communities – that virtue should be expressed through the actions of the believer.⁹⁰ Consequently, it is this obscure, occult order – not the will of the individual – that should be expressed through their actions. The value of being chosen by the invisible hand becomes more important to the individual than the fate of the demos. This refutes equality and justice as well as an impersonal order of society.

2.4 Conclusion

The role of increased economization for the bureaucracy is first and foremost the internalization of the economic value as an individual code of conduct. This is interpreted as rationality: actions towards the goal of individual economic profit. This value has its mysterious implications of TIH, interpreted as the economic deity that provides those who are faithful with material bliss. To the ideal-type of bureaucracy it means that rules of material distribution go from being objective and external, to subjective and internal.

In Foucault's words, this does not tend towards an end of "the establishing of sovereign mastery of oneself by oneself" rather it is "humility and mortification [which] tends towards a destruction of the form of the self."⁹¹ This criticizes the idea of the mass-democratic character of bureaucracy that Weber expresses.⁹² The self is reduced to an identity of measurable, material preferences. Other notions of value are discarded as irrational, or evil. The bureaucracy is thus prone to advocate the most effective value for governing.

Profit as the intrinsic value is a more sophisticated way to control, or program, the governed bodies – in relation supervise them towards more indefinable values,

⁸⁸ Mannheim 1992: p. 184

⁸⁹ Weber 1976: pp. 64, pp. 76, pp. 121

⁹⁰ Ibid: 109

⁹¹ Foucault 1999:157

⁹² Weber 1991: p. 224

such as equality. This is a way to make people more dependant of the bureaucratic order, in-line with Weber's idea of the permanent character of the bureaucracy, i.e. how it survives and expands.⁹³

⁹³ Weber 1991: pp. 228

3 Individualization

With profit as intrinsic value and the mystic notion of TIH the demos must be reduced to discrete, measurable units – individuals *sui generis*. Through the promotion of individual *desires*, the *repudiation of structural explanations* of social phenomena, and a modeling of society based on *The Entrepreneur*, individualization is promoted. This individual *sui generis* is a homo œconomicus – realistic (as opposed to idealistic) and true towards its rational, measurable desires.⁹⁴

This chapter will mainly criticize the mass-democratic nature and impersonal rules and orders, as well as the intensification of expert knowledge and professionalization of administration in Weber's interpretation of bureaucracy. This should not be interpreted as a conflict between Weber's and Foucault's perspectives, but rather as an acknowledgement of how rationality has increased in the bureaucratic system from Foucault to Weber.

3.1 Desires

When the order of society becomes internal and subjective, the desires of individuals become the aim of said individuals. Being rationalized, they are valued through their economic value. To promote this, the bureaucracy needs to open up more possibilities for individuals to pursue these goals. In a similar way, the religious desire of salvation was an individual matter in the early Calvinist community.⁹⁵ The following quote shows the idea that more individual desires should be possible to meet in rental apartments.

Some people are prepared to pay more to outfit their apartment to a higher standard.[...] Other tenants appreciate to be able to exclude planned maintenance or postpone the change of apartment-included equipment [...] to reduce their costs. (SOU 2008:94:13, author's translation)

Again, this goes into part VI of the ideal-type of bureaucracy.⁹⁶ Pursuing individual, subjective desires breaks down the idea of impersonal, equal rules and modes of conduct. This rather promotes the idea that different rules could apply to different people – because of their individual desires. As well, it goes against Weber's notion of mass-democracy and collective values.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Foucault 2008: pp. 267

⁹⁵ Weber 1976: 109

⁹⁶ See ch. 1.1.1.

⁹⁷ Weber 1991: p. 224

The idea of being special is described by Žižek as *perversion*, a mode of deviance to experience one-self as the chosen individual.⁹⁸ This idea fits well with Immanuel Wallerstein's notion of "the liberations of the minorities", where individuals pursue their own "minor" desires and thus refutes the "major" desires of the collective.⁹⁹ These desires constitute the *identity* of the individual *sui generis* - a soul of more or less rational perversions.¹⁰⁰ The identity is perceived as a soul – based on essentialist notions of the true self.¹⁰¹ The luxury in this context becomes irrationality – meaning non-profit morality.¹⁰²

In the apartment-example above, the individual desires of the tenants are promoted, rather than the collective desires of the building or housing area. In the "Geist" of TIH it promotes the idea that the body of apartments will gain from the pursuit of individual desires. The wish to be special, to indulge in ones perversions regardless of the consequence to society, is promoted and interpreted as the real person.

Ritzer's development of Weber covers this mode of desires. It is profitable to sell – and if everybody wants the same thing it will become easier to do it. To compete, the companies produce more and more similar products, making the consumption more and more predictable and the competition harder.¹⁰³ It creates the post-modern, liberalistic experience that individuals choose products by the notion of their own free will. They pursue their own goals – based on their identity.

From the biopolitical view, the desires of the bureaucratic order has created a governmental mode, where the desire to produce and sell products is internalized into the individual, creating a desire to buy, i.e. to (re)produce individual pleasure.¹⁰⁴ All individuals are promoted towards wanting more indicators of profit, in the apartment: washing machines and hardwood floors, or to disregard such vanity for more profit.¹⁰⁵

The same idea thus promote cheating or wangling – pursuing one's individual goals regardless of the consequences to society. To avoid this, Foucault argues that the individualized society needs to increase its surveillance of its citizens. The

⁹⁸ Williams 2006: pp. 182, Žižek 2003: pp. 131

⁹⁹ Wallerstein 2006: pp. 88

¹⁰⁰ Martinsson 2001: 104-12, Hardt & Negri 2001: pp. 249

¹⁰¹ Williams 2006: 184

¹⁰² Žižek 2003: pp. 156

¹⁰³ Ritzer 2004: pp. 97, Ritzer 2005: p. 78, 100-13

¹⁰⁴ Hardt & Negri 2000: 240-259

¹⁰⁵ Foucault 2008: p. 113

panopticon society is needed to know that the individual is pursuing their goals in the right manners.¹⁰⁶ Based on TIH the government should not control citizens by telling them what to do, but through surveiling their actions to assure they do what they do.

In Weber's perspective "increasing bureaucratization is a function of the increasing possession of goods used for consumption".¹⁰⁷ From this perspective does increased amounts of goods create greater possibilities for the bureaucracy to make people dependent of its control – to survive. The notion of identity promotes a mystic relation to TIH, since the collective goals does not matter, but the individual satisfying of desires. When the bureaucracy no longer tutors the society, the experts and their knowledge are refuted.

3.2 Repudiation of Structural Explanations

This continues with a repudiation of other explanations of how capital is distributed in society. Factors such as class, gender, sexuality, age or ethnicity are interpreted as rendered equal (internal and external) and that choices are free, based on identity. This repudiates incentives to level social differences. The choice of provider of care for elderly or disabled is interpreted to be based on these desires.

The investigator will present proposals for an individualized choice-system [...] which is easy to implement, increases the freedom of choice and influence for elderly and disabled persons and promotes a multitude of contractors. (SOU 2008:15:59, author's translation)

This ignores the possible effect of structural factors on the choice of care provider, promoting that failure always roots in individual shortcomings, e.g. prioritizing irrationally, being lazy e.g. If you do not have the competence or the interest to pursue your own desires, it is your own fault.

This refutation of collective identities mean: those who have internalized the rational order, through making calculated choices to pursue their own goals, will profit.

As a theoretical contrast: Florida's creative class has internalized this system. They are goal rational and have the capital¹⁰⁸ to make the decisions, to be creative.¹⁰⁹ As earlier stated, their creativeness is based in inventing new means to profit, directly or indirectly. Their discourse would promote a thorough process of choosing care contractor and solution.

¹⁰⁶ Foucault 1991:195, Foucault 2008: p. 67, Hardt & Negri 2000: 26, pp. 280, Deleuze 1998: 198, p. 201

¹⁰⁷ Weber 1991: p. 212

¹⁰⁸ In its broadest sense, e.g. economic capital, education, social capital, intellectual capital.

¹⁰⁹ Florida 2006: pp. 101-116

On the other hand, the American working class described by Barbara Ehrenreich does not have the capital to make these decisions; they struggle just to get along. No incentive or experience to be as calculating and motivated as the creative class has occurred in their life and therefore they lack the discourse of the homo oeconomicus.¹¹⁰ They are irrational in the sense of this new world order, and punished with poverty for that sin. Without class as a structural explanation, their situation will just be understood as right and wrong choices, in individual cases.

When individuals *sui generis* execute these choices, it is the desires of their soul that are believed to come to work. It is thus only if a group large enough to create profit out of that desire that an enterprise will supply it. It is thus not a collective, but a group of competing homo oeconomicus.

A homogenous group is easier to govern, since its actions will be more predictable. If the group then interprets these desires as essential, they must accept the means of control to know how to pursue them.¹¹¹ Foucault's concept of docile bodies returns here. They have become their own governor's. When conducting the will of the bureaucracy – behaving in a predictable manner so that the goal can be pursued as efficiently as possible – it is experienced as practicing free will, since the body has been programmed to interpret it in that manner.¹¹²

Ritzer notes Thorstein Veblen's idea of conspicuous consumption, consumption to display wealth, as the difference between social classes in an affluent society.¹¹³ In this new world order of identity, this is interpreted as an expression of identity. This is thus homogenized, and the conspicuous consumption becomes inconspicuous in a macro perspective, since the individual desires are not that heterogeneous.¹¹⁴ Rather, different identities become common among different strata, but experience themselves as differentiated through their consumption behavior. Ritzer applies this to social class, but there is no hindrance to applying it to other structures in society, since it does not demand a specific constitution of the strata.

Again, this questions the heterogeneous mass character of bureaucracy. The mass character implies leveling of social differences.¹¹⁵ A repudiation of structural explanations and internalization of a rational ethos promotes post-modern illusions of

¹¹⁰ Ehrenreich 2001:193-221

¹¹¹ Ritzer 2004: 105-20, Foucault 1991: pp. 192

¹¹² Foucault 1991: 187pp, Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 325

¹¹³ Ritzer 2005: pp. 202

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Weber 1991: p. 224

a society where social differences do not exist on a large scale. This decreases the incitements for the demos to demand leveling of social differences. As well, it makes the individual more dependent of the bureaucracy, since if one does not act in order with it – one will not survive. The late-modern, flexible structure encapsulates the individual in a web of simulacra.

Consequently, two new groups appear: rational and irrational, or obedient and disobedient, individuals. The irrational ones are interpreted as irrational by individual choice, rather than positioned in a social structure. The failure to make certain choices is thus interpreted as individual shortcomings – not being rational, or good, enough.

3.3 The Entrepreneur

To become an economic and rational individual one have to become an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is to be interpreted as an individual who profits from enterprise and is accountable of the inherent risks. An example of policy to promote entrepreneurship is F-tax for more with the following assignment:

The objective in this overview is to make it easier to start business operations, e.g. for those who contract to one or a few commissioning bodies. [...] The assignment does as well cover an investigation of if the demand on practice of business operations to be granted a Firm Tax Bill (F-skattesedel) or if there are other ways to determine who is qualified to pay their preliminary income-tax and social charges. (SOU 2008:76:23, author's translation)

Entrepreneurial solutions for bureaucracy refutes Weber's notion of a centralized and professional administration of society.¹¹⁶ As well, it refutes his idea of administration as a professional function *sui generis*, promoting all individuals, despite training, to execute administrative tasks.¹¹⁷ Tasks as the payment of income tax and social charges become additional work-tasks for the entrepreneur, despite the nature of its activities and training. Of course, some public training will be granted, since it is rational to promote the system and its rules and to survey the internalization of them.¹¹⁸

By outsourcing the administration of society (everything from accounting to cleaning) the large, bureaucratic institutions of society are fragmented into smaller units. In extreme, these take the form of entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur's possibility to pursue ones desires is direct dependent on the profit of the activity. This means that some entrepreneur's may profit more than other, depending on the nature of the

¹¹⁶ Castells 2010: 254, Castells 2004:312-23, Weber 1991: 196, pp. 198

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Foucault 1991: pp. 170

activity. To be rational is to conduct an activity on a seller's market (where the demand is greater than the supply), since it increases the possibility for profit and thus appointment of TIH.

If the entrepreneur act as a homo œconomicus, it will be both morally good and fulfilling, if not, the individual is irrational and is punished either through lessened material or socio-psychological standard (feeling bad, due to irrational mores).

Ritzer's notion of the homogenization of contemporary society goes in line with this. To compete, all entrepreneurs have to provide as similar products and services as possible, simulating the most profitable product.¹¹⁹ If they deviate, they will either prosper – and others will follow for increased profit – or they will despair. However, since it is done on an individual basis, it is dressed up in the post-modern illusions of liberty of the individual.¹²⁰

As well, the entrepreneurs have to administrate their taxes, social charges etc. that increases the demand for surveillance of their obedience to law and order. When more people are granted an F-tax bill, their economic actions must be surveilled more thoroughly than before.¹²¹ The idea of a night-watch society demands a low rate of integrity since everything has to be observed to inform the watchers where to intervene.¹²² Bureaucracy as an official, professional task is repudiated for the individualization of tax and social charges payment.

The entrepreneur, as a social and economic unit in a society where profit is the highest value, creates an individual who always can, and therefore should, engage in profiting activities. The entrepreneurial state thus becomes the means of fulfilling the mores of the rational soul, the possibility to express the material choices of the identity.

3.4 Conclusion

As discussed above the individualization of society creates new technologies of control and dominance than those expressed by Weber. When everyone is to pursue their identity – the rational soul of the individual *sui generis* – the understanding of how society works and what to desire is individualized. This discards structural

¹¹⁹ Ritzer 2005: pp. 86, p. 182, Ritzer 2004: pp. 31

¹²⁰ Ritzer 2005: 93-148

¹²¹ Foucault 2008: 174, pp. 254

¹²² Ibid, Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 32

explanations for how the surplus value is distributed in society, and refutes any leveling of social differences.

Consequently, the entrepreneur is promoted to profit individualistically from the society as much as possible, since it is its only way to gain surplus value. This results in a repudiation of other goals as irrational, and their followers are punished as sinners with decreased satisfaction. It creates an illusion of the root of individual failure as based in identity rather than social, cultural and economic structures.

This refutes the centralized, impersonal order of the bureaucracy. More effectively, control is established through a discourse of bureaucracy rather than an external structure. Since the administration is more and more outsourced, the expert of administration is superfluous. Rather, the bureaucracy employs the new expert of observation. This shifts the bureaucratic purpose from tutoring the society in the direction of the masses will, to the surveillance of identity expressions to assure that their irrationality does not harm the rationality of others.

The superior technology of control is upgraded, from a steam-engine factory, trapping all workers from without and supervising or tutoring them in their work, to a virtual network of computers, all programmed to behave in the same way and naturally behaving the same way. This network will be the topic for the next chapter.

4 Decentralization

Promoting individualization and economization, society comes to be *decentralized*. To interpret the structure of society decentralization brings about two concepts from Manuel Castells theory of the network society is used: *Network*, as the means of transactions, and *Nodes*, as clusters of capital. The mechanism that is at work in society is interpreted as *Fragmentation*, which can be illustrated as the development from steam engine to computer network. These three concepts are interpreted as an ideal-type of the network society. In this chapter, the centralized character of the bureaucracy is the main focus. However, it is thoroughly combined with part II – VI in Weber's ideal-type of bureaucracy.¹²³ This is as well the main process of the permanent character of the bureaucracy.

4.1 Network

The entrepreneurs create networks; free movement is important for the works of the market. This breaks down the bureaucratic institutions of the nation state into a post-national network; pan-national administration and global flows of capital. The difference between these two concepts is that in the factory, everybody cooperates towards a common goal; in the network, identities take advantages of other identities to pursue their own goal.¹²⁴ The following quote presents increased possibilities to extend the global network of goods and services:

the Inquiry was to review the regulatory framework and propose simplifications, improvements and additions that are necessary to safeguard the free movement of goods and services. (SOU 2009:71: 33p)

The free movement of goods is heavily increased in an informational economy. If goods and services are interpreted as packages of information, the picture of society becomes more similar to the computerized network (internet). Castells's idea of informational economy makes goods and services implicitly interpreted as information, rather than information as the most valuable asset. It though becomes a logical consequence.¹²⁵

The strength of a network is based in the idea that if a system lacks a central unit, it will be much harder to destroy. To make this network as efficient as possible, there has to be as little regulation as possible on how to send information within it (a

¹²³ See ch. 1.1.1.

¹²⁴ Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 294

¹²⁵ Castells 2010: pp. 77, 147-62

higher band-width). It becomes a space where information changes hands at a more rapid speed than ever before.

[T]he emphasis on interactivity between places breaks up the spatial patterns of behaviour into a fluid network of exchanges that underlies a new kind of space, the space of flows. (Castells 2010:429)

As well, the post-modern notion of simulacra is relevant for an as effective network as possible. Weber claims that written documents are kept in original and draught form in the ideal bureaucracy.¹²⁶ In the network, documents are created virtually and there are no secure means to determine a copy from an original. Everyone has to take part in this system, and since it has been economized and individualized, there are greater needs to transmit documents and other information, mainly between the entrepreneurs/consumers and their watchmen/producers.¹²⁷

This system is the basis for Foucault's panopticon society. It increases the means to communicate information, and increases the possibility to monitor it. As well, quantitative information is more effective to communicate and process, since it is interpreted as objective.

As well, the network is important for the homogenization of the world. If information can travel more easily, distance becomes irrelevant to the price and thus it may be more rational to consume information from the other side of the globe. This informational enterprise may thus be located geographically in very specific parts of the world. As well, the production may be located in a totally different place.¹²⁸

Hardt & Negri's idea of the empire in contemporary society is heavily based in the idea of post-geographic society and biopolitics. They argue that the transnational enterprise is a core concept for the production of biopolitics. The transnational enterprise outrivals the nation states, since the enterprises control the material wealth of global society. As well, this forces society to refute other master narratives than that of the homo oeconomicus, reproducing an unconflicted narrative of liberal values.¹²⁹

This value-based network becomes efficient for the bureaucracy to use for survival purposes. It creates a web, rather than a pyramid or grid, as a model for its hierarchy, creating a new mechanism for control without firm regulations, hierarchies, modes of expert knowledge etc. It can thus more easily be "fitted" according to its

¹²⁶ Weber 1991: 197, p. 214

¹²⁷ Ritzer 2004: pp. 112

¹²⁸ Castells 2010: pp. 176, Ritzer 2004: pp. 160

¹²⁹ Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 31, p. 286

environment to enhance its survival. The nodes floating in this network are the spiders, in an ever-changing hierarchy of capital transactions.

4.2 Nodes

The nodes are broken down into smaller, more homogenized ones, to have less value at each node and thus creating a structure that is harder to harm. The nodes thus become closer and closer to individual entrepreneurs. The following example shows a suggestion on how to break up Swedish Higher Education Institutions into more, but smaller, nodes:

This model [...] means that Swedish Higher Education Institutions (HEI) remains parts of the public sector but cease to be parts of the state. They acquire their own legal personality. This will allow them to engage in various activities and initiatives that are presently beyond their scope without ad hoc permission from the Government. The new framework will grant the HEIs considerable latitude to design their own internal procedures. (SOU 2008:104:15)

The HEI are thus a former government node that is to be transformed into smaller nodes. These are not to be governed by the government, but to internalize biopolitics instead. This autonomy means that it is up to the HEIs if the range and quality of higher education will survive; they must homogenize to compete with each other and streamline their costs. This means discarding unprofitable activities and open up for external funding, discarding the integrity of the HEI.

The same goes for the international company. The centralized enterprise is broken down into smaller nodes, from the Fordist principle of the assembly line to the Toyota just-in-time principle.¹³⁰ It is perceived as more cost efficient to order the needed parts from an outside company, than to produce them, since it minimizes the risk of over-production or unnecessary employment costs.¹³¹ If the HEI does not hire lecturers but buy lectures from them as entrepreneurs, they do not take the risk of having employees without assignments. This develops into abstract labor through a computerized network, creating rational collaboration between economic actors. This distances the worker from the actual production, and enhances the flexibility, to be as efficient as possible.¹³²

This outsourcing of public administration – both on the governed and on private enterprises – breaks down the centralized character of the bureaucracy, as well as its

¹³⁰ Castells 2010: p. 166, pp. 169, Ritzer 2004: pp. 191, Hardt & Negri 2000: p. 289.

¹³¹ Castells 2010: 254, Hardt & Negri 2000: p. 286

¹³² Castells 2010: p. 467, Hardt & Negri 2000: pp. 289

stasis of life-long tenure.¹³³ These smaller units must uphold the rational principle of profit, leading them to always act in their own interest rather than the interest of the unit they administer. The HEIs must prioritize their own survival rather than the education of the citizens.

The hierarchy inside the bureaucracy thus breaks down, being determined by the relations on the market at the moment. Of course, some companies and entrepreneurs will be very rational and thus be able to stay on top. These large actors, large by their economic assets, not by their direct production or number of employees, will act as spiders in the web. They will enforce governmentality, since they profit from the market situation it creates.¹³⁴ The iron cage has been upgraded to a network, which closes in on the individual and enforces the rational desires of the identity. Instead of tutoring actions and distribution of goods, it surveils them to act on a rational just-in-time principle. This virtual bureaucracy creates post-modern illusions of an end of bureaucracy, draping the governed homogenous actions of the individuals in illusions of individual freedom.

4.3 Fragmentation

The process to achieve this network society is the process of fragmentation. This is a process achieved through the economization and individualization of society. As a process, both Castells and Hardt & Negri present the idea that instead of taking on different roles, the concept of an identity advocates an idea of an authentic “self”, trapping the individual in a grid of desires. This externalizes the division of roles to be between individuals instead of within individuals.¹³⁵ The following example shows that the idea of individual responsibility and surveillance is defined as a way to integrate immigrants in Swedish society through the creation of rational identities.

The proposals are to strengthen the incentives for municipalities, government agencies and other actors to take measures to ensure a rapid entry into the labour market for the new arrival. [...] The proposals are also to increase individuals' incentives and opportunities for self-support in a way that leads to greater freedom of choice for the individual. [...] [T]here shall be clear financial incentives and personal responsibility for new arrivals to quickly establish themselves in the labour market and to learn Swedish. [...] [T]he Swedish Public Employment Service, together with other organisations that provide employment services, should play a prominent role and have a clearer responsibility in the entire process. (SOU 2008:58:25p)

¹³³ Weber 1991: pp. 200

¹³⁴ Wallerstein 2006: pp. 76-90

¹³⁵ Castells 2004: pp. 7, Hardt & Negri 2000: 331

This process focuses on defining a new identity for the immigrant, where a western model of individual responsibility and freedom of choice should be enhanced.

Here Foucault, Weber and Castells converge. The bureaucracy is actively internalized and through professional support progress and outcome for the immigrants is measured and surveilled.¹³⁶ Panoptic methods are used to help the immigrant to internalize the society, mainly through labor. This is as well an active method to internalize the control-mechanisms of bureaucracy, which means being faithful to the economy first and foremost, and thus not burden society with costs in the future.

When society is fragmented, post-modern images of individual possibilities drape the late-modern web of control. Ritzer's notion of re-enchanting is a distinct picture of such a process. Through spectacles and extravaganzas the simulation of liberty is communicated.¹³⁷ The individual is tempted to act rationally, on the pain of feeling trapped. This is the creation of post-modern experiences held up by the late-modern web. This is not a repudiation of the theory of post-modernity. Rather it is a theory of how late- and post-modern phenomena collaborate to increase the control of the individual.

This fragmenting process is a consequence of the implementation of biopolitics. This has been argued in the previous chapters as well, but it is important to understand that the processes presented by Castells and Ritzer are consequences of biopolitics, and that their main contribution to the theory of bureaucracy is the discovery of biopolitical implementations and where such can be found in society. In the case of Ritzer, it is interesting that even though he writes about control and discipline in contemporary society, he does not discuss Foucault.¹³⁸

4.4 Conclusion

In this final chapter, Castells theory of the network society has been discussed, and how it sketches the mode of the new world order. The collective elements in Weber's theories of bureaucracy have all been refuted through the imbuing of biopolitics. It has been exchanged for a network of entrepreneurs.

There are no more impersonal rules based on the will of the demos or access to tuition from centralized nodes of educated and professional experts. Rather, the

¹³⁶ SOU 2008:58: 60.

¹³⁷ Ritzer 2005: pp. 101

¹³⁸ Ibid 2004: 106-33

network of transactions is granted more and faster roads to accumulate profit and the collective is fragmented into rational, illusory authentic, individuals *sui generis*. For whom the (permanent) identity replaces a multitude of roles. This puts more responsibility on the specific individuals in society and less on the public administration. With this fragmentation – increased possibilities for transactions and additional but smaller nodes – the bureaucracy is obscured, or virtualized.

A virtual system is more prone to fit and re-fit to survive (in evolutionary terms). Demanding individuals to be flexible and individually rational, the bureaucracy's control or dominance of their choices increases. In the next and concluding chapter this will be the basis for creating a new ideal-type of bureaucracy.

5 Conclusion: A New Ideal-Type for Bureaucracy

The guiding thought presented in this thesis is the development of the bureaucracy, as the technically superior form of domination, from a tutoring modern steam-engine machinery bureaucracy, to a surveiling late- and post-modern computerized bureaucracy, where every body *sui generis* is programmed, like the inhaling of a gas, with a rationalist identity.¹³⁹ This new mode of control constitutes the basis for a new world order in the form of a virtual bureaucracy.

5.2 The Ideal-Type of Virtual Bureaucracy

Some may ask – is this really bureaucracy? My answer is: Yes, according to the definition of bureaucracy as the “technical superiority over all other forms of domination”. The updated ideal-type is thus formulated as:¹⁴⁰

- I. The principle of floating but official jurisdictional areas, ordered by laws and possibly surveilled by superiors.
- II. A floating network of entrepreneurs, structured depending on who is most prone to create most profit. The virtual superiors then possibly surveil the entrepreneurs, enabling them to behave as if their superiors supervised them.
- III. The management of the office is based on a network of virtual documents, which can be manipulated without regard to originals and which possibly are surveilled by the virtual superiors.
- IV. Office management is simplified to its extreme, to enable untrained entrepreneurs to manage their relevant information by themselves. Trained experts then eventually surveil it.
- V. When the office is fully discontinued, the official activities are conducted individually by the citizens, and are a part of every range of labor, despite its activities and regulations.
- VI. This individual management follows general rules which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned. Knowledge of these rules is necessary for rudimental participation in society, and thus becomes interpreted as common truths, accepted by all individuals.

¹³⁹ Deleuze 1998: 197.

¹⁴⁰ Compare to ch. 1.1.1.

As presented in the core concepts chapter, Weber presents some other aspects to the bureaucracy. First, he defines it as a centralized, impersonal and quantified governing of society. Democracy is decentralized and individualized in virtual bureaucracy. The objective ambition of equal power is exchanged for a subjective ambition of liberty. Decisions are based on calculable data, impersonal in the sense that it does not take account of explicit persons, but personal in the sense that they promote behaviors that are measurable.

This virtual bureaucracy is a direct reaction on the permanent character of the bureaucracy.¹⁴¹ Weber presents it as making more and more people dependent on the bureaucratic order.¹⁴² With the creation of entrepreneurs as more and smaller nodes, connected through a network, more possibilities for transactions appear. This use of entrepreneurs mean that more individuals are dependent on the network to sell their labor force, as well as they are more prone to directly generate profit.

Consequently, there are bureaucratic incentives not to level social differences, since this would work against the ruling order of the *invisible hand*. The modernist notion of equality, as a fair, objective society, is rejected for liberty, as every individual's right to pursue one's own identity. The rationality of this identity is then the measure of how fitting it is to the mystic order. Maybe the official administration of society has never been as close to the ways of the private enterprise as in this stage. The internal paradox to promote individuality, but at the same time homogenization, is the basis for the experiences produced by a helmet. This helmet is the superior technology of domination, creating a New World Order.

5.1 Increased Technical Domination: The Virtual Bureaucracy

The internalizing of the idea of economic and political liberalism increases the technical domination of people in society. This form of biopolitics creates a new kind of bureaucracy. Instead of being ruled externally, as a collective trapped in an iron cage, the citizens of the new bureaucracy become programmed. Computers appear to be rational, always calculating the most efficient way of executing the command from the user. In the iron cage, there were some possibilities to act inside it, maybe not much space but sure, there were some.

¹⁴¹ Compare to ch. 1.1.1.

¹⁴² Ibid.

The late-modern web of bureaucracy embeds the individual *sui generis*. Metaphorically, the iron cage has been fragmented and individualized into a helmet. This helmet is of course not made out of iron, but of flexible and cunning materials. It is a virtual helmet, producing post-modern 3D simulacra of freedom and success, hard-wired into the sensory center of the consciousness interpreting these simulacra as the work of the identity. This creates the image that everyone can become a millionaire, rock star or the next top model – given goal-rational and entrepreneurial actions in both private and public. As well, it repudiates collaboration towards these goals, since failure is based in individual shortcomings – not structural disadvantages. This VR-helmet of virtual bureaucracy is fixed on every one individual, not only controlling the stimuli to the sensory centers of the mind, but puts a leash on the throat as well. As Ritzer writes, the only completely way to escape this system is suicide.¹⁴³

The consequences of a change from physical to virtual and from collective to individual, were maybe framed in its most clear sense by Karl Marx and Freidrich Engels over 150 years ago “[a]ll that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned”¹⁴⁴ but as long as the virtual bureaucracy of the invisible hand is let to control the minds and bodies of humans and the distribution of goods and power, man has *not* been “at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.”¹⁴⁵ According to my interpretation, this development will rather result in “the polar night of icy darkness”¹⁴⁶, where individuals refute collective interests in hope of a place in the sun.

5.3 Future Research

This is a theoretical thesis, and to understand and test this updated ideal-type fully, it has to be researched empirically, with both quantitative and qualitative methods. Some areas where this may be more evident than other are policies and operations that aim at changing the means of labor and social life toward more individualized models. Especially interesting are the promotion of entrepreneurship and the sociological consequences of being an entrepreneur, since it has a strong relation to the implementation of biopolitics. As well, the increased importance of online social

¹⁴³ Ritzer 2004: p. 241

¹⁴⁴ Marx & Engels 2005

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Weber 1994: xvi

media, and its influence on the experience of public and private, or labor and leisure, is an area where further research is needed.

In general, it is the objective of a critical sociology to investigate the means of distribution of capitals in contemporary society – and with loud and clear voices present the findings to the demos. This must not be to deliberately verify this ideal-type of virtual bureaucracy, but to challenge it with possible conflicting perspectives and findings.

* * *

In the world of fiction, the internalization and individualization of bureaucracy was illustratively captured in the following words:

The long hoped-for bullet was entering his brain. [...] O cruel, needless misunderstanding! O stubborn, self-willed exile from the loving breast! [...] But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

- G. Orwell, *Nineteen eighty-four*

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7 Appendix A: Swedish Government Official Reports

SOU 2009:33 Skatterabatt på aktieförvärv och vinstutdelningar (Tax reduction on stock-share acquisition and profit allocation): A report on how to increase investments in the stock market through tax reduction on profit allocation.

SOU 2009:71 EU, Sverige och den inre marknaden – En översyn av horisontella bestämmelser (EU, Sweden and the internal market – An overview of horizontal constitutions): A report on the legislations and policy of free movement of goods and services on the Swedish inner market, concluding with a proposal on policy development to ensure and enhance free movement of goods and services in Sweden.

SOU 2008:15 LOV att välja – Lag Om Valfrihetssystem (Permit to choose - Legislation on system of options): A report aiming to develop more possibilities for competing actors on the market for elderly care.

SOU 2008:58 Egenansvar – med professionellt stöd (Individual Responsibility – With Professional Support): A report on integration of immigrants in society through the use of own responsibility supported by a professional.

SOU 2008:76 F-skatt åt flera (Firm-tax for more people): A report aiming to evaluate if the legislation on achieving a F-tax bill could be alleviated, and if there could be alleviations on the demands for starting an own company.

SOU 2008:94 Tillval i hyresrätt (Options in rental apartments): A report on how to increase the possibilities for landlords to define the costs for options in rental apartments outside altering the rent.

SOU 2008:104 Självständiga lärosäten (Independent seats of learning): A report on increased independence for Swedish institutions of higher education (colleges and universities) and its relevance for quality and efficiency.

SOU 2008:114 Försörjningskrav vid anhöriginvandring (Demands for sustentation in relative immigration): The report proposes the introduction of a financial support requirement as a condition for family member immigration.

SOU 2007:78 Bolagisering för ökad konkurrens och effektivitet (Company formation to increase competition and efficiency): A report on how to merge Swedish rail and road admissions and transform or outsource parts of their activities to external, private companies.