Linköping Studies in Arts and Science No. 692

(Un)bearable freedom. Exploring the becoming of the artist in
education, work and family life.

Sofia Lindström

Department of Culture Studies
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Linköping University, SE-601 74 Norrköping, Sweden
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At the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Linköping University, research and doctoral studies are carried out within broad problem areas. Research is organized in interdisciplinary research environments and doctoral studies mainly in graduate schools. Jointly, they publish the series Linköping Studies in arts and Science. This thesis comes from the Department of Cultural Studies (Tema Kultur och Samhälle, Tema Q) At Tema Q, culture is studied as a dynamic field of practices, including agency as well as structure, and cultural products as well as the way they are produced, consumed, communicated and used. Tema Q is part of the larger Department for Studies of Social Change and Culture (ISAK).

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Sofia Lindström

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to explore and understand three important social contexts for the construction of an artistic subjectivity: *education, work and family life*. The empirical data consist of interview material with alumni from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, staff of the institute, and a survey material from the Swedish National Artist's Organization (KRO/KIF). Generally, the thesis employs a theory of conflicting understandings of labour as well as the importance of discourses and narratives for the formation of subjects. The contribution of the thesis is the analysis of a continuing conflict between *being* and *working* as an artist actualized in the social contexts explored. The arts education encouraged a romanticized understanding of art as unrelated to market value, which clashed against societal norms of career progression, survival and supporting a family. This conflict informed the subjective way in which the respondents relate to their activities as artists, workers and relatives. The concept of freedom can be understood as mediating this conflict in the sense of forming the basis of attraction to the arts but also a burden as it relates to insecurity. The analysis found several subjective representations of the artist that indicate strong norms of individuality and self-direction, understood as the outcome of a working life fraught with personal responsibility for coping with insecurity. As such, the thesis is part of ongoing research on changes in working life towards non-standard and sometimes precarious working conditions.

Keywords: Cultural work, visual artists, subjectivity, discourse analysis, narrative analysis

List of included articles

Article 1.

Lindström, Sofia (2015). Constructions of Professional Subjectivity at the Fine Arts College. *Professions and Professionalism*, 5 (2). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.869>.

Article 2.

Lindström, Sofia (2016). Artists and Multiple Job Holding—Breadwinning Work as Mediating Between Bohemian and Entrepreneurial Identities and Behavior. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*. 6 (3): 43-58. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v6i3.5527>.

Article 3.

Lindström, Sofia (coming). "It always works out somehow" Artist's formation of trust and hope in relation to the insecure or unsuccessful career. Submitted to *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*. Revise and resubmit, Oct. 2016

Article 4.

Flisbäck, Marita and Lindström, Sofia (2013). Work-family Conflict among Professional Visual Artists in Sweden: Gender Differences in the Influence of Parenting and Household Responsibilities. *Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2(16): 239-267.

Article 5.

Lindström, Sofia. "Maybe I disfavoured the family quite a lot". Exploring work-life balance and the gendered (in)ability of immersing in work among artists. Manuscript.

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Norrköping, August 2016

Sofia Lindström.

Introduction

This thesis focuses on certain social contexts where professional artistic identities are shaped, transformed and negotiated. It thus explores the understanding that professional identity is socially constructed, a situation also referred to as subjectivity in the sense that it emphasises a social and constructive understanding of identity. Behind this lies the sociological question of the resources and freedom people have in terms of creating the life and the identity they desire, and the circumstances which limit or permit these ambitions – in this case a career and a work identity. Earlier research has studied similar issues, but this thesis contributes a perspective where different, but interconnected situations are analysed to indicate the similarities and differences involved in important social contexts where artistic identity is formed. These situations involve artists' education, their work experiences and family relations.

Earlier research has studied how social relationships of power, especially aspects of gender and class, affect the characteristics of artistic institutions such as arts educational establishments (Andersson, 2008; Edling, 2010; Ericsson, 1988; Flisbäck, 2006; Gustavsson et al. eds., 2012; Oakely, 2008), as well as how the processes of these institutions and the structure of the art world affect artistic subjectivity (Becker, 1984; Edström, 2008; Einarsdotter-Wahlgren, 1997; Menger, 1999; Røyseng et al., 2007; Singerman, 1999; Stenberg, 2002; Taylor and Littleton, 2012). Cultural sociological research has explored how the economic importance of artistic work affects artists and the way they make sense of their situation. It has also considered the importance of working conditions and income in terms of precarity and self-exploitation among artists. See, for example, Bain and McLean (2012); Banks (2010); Bourdieu (1996); Eikhof and Haunschild (2006); Flisbäck (2014); Gerber (2015); Gill and Pratt (2008); Helms (2011); Hesmondalgh and Baker (2011); McRobbie (2004); Oakely (2009); de Peuter (2014); Taylor and Littleton (2012); Witt (2004). In terms of establishing a life as an artist, issues relating to gender, family and parenting have been explored by researchers such as Banks and Milestone (2011); Cowen (1996); Gill (2002; 2014); Flisbäck (2013); Hesmondalgh and Baker (2011); Pollock (1983). Finally, other relevant research for this thesis involves studies on the importance of (Swedish) cultural (arts) policy in terms of opportunities to live and work as an artist (Blomgren, 2012; Ericsson, 1988; Duelund, 2003; Flisbäck & Lund, 2015; Frenander 2005; Mangset, 2009; Sander & Sheikh, 2001; Vestheim, 2009).

However, the contribution of this thesis is to explore aspects of education, work and family in terms of artists, with the aim of understanding how some of the processes and conflicts which shape professional subjectivity can recur. These three aspects or phases should not be seen as exhausting the experiences which inform an artistic identity, but more in terms of the rich resources, as well as constraints they provide for the formation of identity. They are understood to form points where the individual's understanding of the relation between herself and her profession is tested, transformed, resisted and sometimes even lost.

Why is the visual artist appropriate for a study on work-related subjectivity?

Artists are interesting in terms of thinking about the (changing) meaning and significance of work, as well as how this affects the subjectivity of workers. An important feature of changes in working life which is of interest to the theory of artistic work is the growth in numbers of non-standard jobs, which are declining in quality (Allvin, 2011; Edgell, 2006; Quinlan et. al., 2011). The growth of temporary jobs is understood in relation to the academic debate on the precariat, a concept used to convey the development towards poor legal protection of workers and an increase in insecure and temporary work (Kalleberg, 2011; Rodgers, 1989; Standing, 2011; Thörnquist and Engstrand, 2011). Critical research sees this as a process where working lives are increasingly determined by individual resources, with the consequence that fluctuations in the market affect the individual more and more (Grönlund, 2004)¹. Another feature of the destandardisation of work is the rise in self-employment which, according to Edgell (2006), can be understood to involve political, economic and sociocultural factors. The rate of self-employment in Sweden rose from 2% in the 1980s to 9% in the 1990s, and has shown few signs of diminishing since. Self-employment was a typical work arrangement prior to industrial capitalism, but declined in the wake of large-scale capitalism. In the current state of deindustrialisation and the growth of the service sector, economic factors are pushing people into self-employment, often as a survival strategy (Taylor, 2015; Thörnquist, 2011). Another aspect involves the “involuntary self-employed”, who would rather be in employment but who are forced by employers to have an F-tax card². There is a difference between self-employed subcontracting and freelance, where the former is related to manual

¹In Sweden, the image of the new world of work is slightly different, as most employees (85%) still typically have permanent employment (Allvin, 2011). The percentage of temporary workers on the Swedish labour market

²An F-tax card is a business certificate issued by the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket) to self-employed workers (Thörnquist, 2011).

work and the latter to work involving specialised knowledge. It is more common today to have mixed employment status (Castells, 2001), and to hold multiple jobs where part of the work is done through freelancing or subcontracting.

As we shall see, these types of employment situations (temporary jobs, self-employment and mixed employment status) are, and have been, very common among artists. According to Lingo and Tepper (2013: 340), the study of artistic careers is important for three main reasons:

Firstly because of their non-standard nature, such as the oversupply of artists (Menger, 1999), the common status of self-employment along with its association with entrepreneurship, and because of the unpredictability of rewards. Artists have very fluctuating income from their work, as well as extreme income variation. According to Towse (1996), the distribution of artists' income is so uneven that it becomes unreliable to use the median as a measure of typical income. Artists have been found to turn down lucrative jobs and remuneration in order to lead an economically insecure life (although art work can also be a very well-paid occupation: Taylor and Littleton, 2012). They have also been found to consider their work a fundamental human act, true to an individual artist's subjectivity, where their work goes beyond monetary value (Gerber, 2015; Stenberg, 2002). However, the claim that art is "more" than just work can become the very reason why arts professions have weak labour rights.

Secondly, the study of artists has become interesting in relation to how intellectual property, such as art, media and culture, constitute a growing part of the economy and GDP of cities and nations. This is especially true in relation to the "creative economy" (Gustavsson et al. eds., 2012: 11), and also in terms of the connotations of innovation and entrepreneurial skills involved in creative work. These claims have attracted the attention of policy-makers and academics during the past decade (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Florida, 2002; McRobbie, 1998; Tomson, 2011; Towse, 1996). Cultural sociologists Angela McRobbie (1998) and Pierre-Michel Menger (2002) were some of the first to write about the artists as "future worker" in this type of economy: inventive, mobile, motivated by inner drive, but also exposed to risk and insecurity:

Dans les représentations actuelles, l'artiste voisine avec une incarnation possible du travailleur du futur, avec la figure du professionnel inventif, mobile, indocile

aux hiérarchies, intrinsèquement motivé, pris dans une économie de l'incertain, et plus exposé aux risques de concurrence interindividuelle et aux nouvelles insécurités des trajectoires professionnelles (Menger, 2002 : s 9)³.

According to Brouillette (2013, in Taylor, 2015), the image of the artist as ideal for innovative future worker was conceptualized by American psychologists in the cold war period, as they were seen to be able to live with uncertainty in their search for fulfilment and self-actualization. The new importance of culture and creativity is seen to be in line with an overall “culturalisation” of contemporary society and economy (Beckman, 2012), i.e. a shift in the requirements of contemporary capitalism, where innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship are important ingredients for success (Gielen & De Bruyne, 2009). This marks a clear shift in relation to the classic understanding of the art world, where the economic logic has been said to be reversed, i.e. artists have traditionally nurtured an ethics of denouncing economical success to more intangible values such as reputation within the field (Bourdieu, 1996; Gustavsson et al. eds., 2012).

Thirdly, artists and creative workers are often understood as “litmus paper” for understanding trends in employment and careers (McRobbie, 2004). As noted above, the type of non-standard work common among artists, such as project-based work, self-employment and holding down a number of jobs, is on the rise in the general workforce in most economies (Throsby and Zednick, 2011). Understanding artists’ success stories and coping strategies thus becomes important for the broader work force (Lingo and Tepper, 2013).

In the context of the so-called “culturalised” economy, it is interesting to understand how subjectivity functions in creative, entrepreneurial individuals in terms of their work (Allvin 2011). Creativity, or being creative, is often associated with a “personal drive and search for fulfilment” (Taylor & Littleton, 2012:3). Artists may seem to embody the ultimate individual, free from the constraints and decorum of standard work, and representing difference, distinctiveness and genius. Artists have also been found to highlight their identities and personal experiences prominently in their creations (Stenberg, 2002). The role of artists in

³ “Current representations would have the artist be the embodiment of a worker in the future through the figure of the inventive, mobile, rebellious to hierarchy, and intrinsically motivated professional, who is also caught in an economy of the uncertain, and thus more exposed to inter-individual competition and the new insecurities related to professional trajectories.” (translation: Melanie Foehn).

providing meaningful communication and opportunities for reflection on human existence, or simply providing us with beauty, has been addressed by various writers and philosophers throughout history (see, for example, Heidegger, 1989; Kundera, 2005). In the work of Taylor and Littleton (2012) on contemporary creative identity, this established image of the artist as *auteur* (McRobbie, 1998) still resonates among other creative workers such as designers, and forms part of the attraction to creative work. In contrast, scholars on creative work have described the specially endowed, talented person as a romantic or charismatic myth, who serves to obscure the social conventions and collective efforts which shape the art world, or to encourage the individual artist to continue the quest for an artistic career in spite of the very slim chances of success (Becker, 1982; Røyseng et al., 2007; McRobbie, 1998). It is thus important to understand how artistic identity is formed in the fine arts, as self-fulfilment and the opportunity to generate meaning in creative work seem to function as a justification for the often precarious work situations artists face (Gill & Pratt, 2008; McRobbie, 2012). The specificities of the (Swedish) art world will be outlined in the chapter “Perspectives on artistic identity and its contexts”.

The research presented in this dissertation has been driven by an interest in, and curiosity about, artists and the experience of an artistic career from a Swedish perspective. It is mainly⁴ grounded in a qualitative analysis of interview material following a discourse-narrative approach, and explores a group of artists with a master’s degree from the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm. It is thus based on the analysis of a group of people who are trying, or who have tried to find feasible ways of working as artists. The prestige of their art college education means my respondents belong to an elite group with what would appear to be good prospects for an artistic career (Gustavsson et al. eds., 2012), an important aspect in terms of discussions on the risks and insecurity of these careers. The overarching understanding of this study is that work is important for the individual’s sense of self, i.e. her subjectivity. As pointed out by Misevic (2014), this is illustrated by the way unemployment can trigger feelings of uselessness, both in the individual herself and in the surrounding social milieu. It is also illustrated by the fact that the question “What do you do?” is often part of a conversation between strangers (Wendling, 2012). Professional subjectivity therefore

⁴The thesis also involves a quantitative analysis of survey material which explores the significance of Swedish artists’ domestic commitments and responsibility for children. Sweden is often thought of as the most gender-neutral country in the world, but the art world (as well as the general labour market) still bears signs of gender inequality, where women artists fall behind in terms of economic remuneration and work opportunities. The article presented here is the first to explore these issues on a more general scale in a Swedish context.

becomes an identity project which is related to work and education. This subjectivity is also understood as dynamic, formed by discourses as well as experiences (this approach will be outlined further in the theory section). As such, it is argued that it is a form of social practice rather than an individual, isolated project.

The aim and research questions of the thesis

The overall aim of the thesis is to investigate how certain contexts, deemed to provide especially important resources for shaping identity, relate to how artists form, maintain, and renegotiate the subjective concept “artist”. These contexts involve the art college, experiences of (un-) employment and work, and having a family. The specific questions which have guided this thesis are as follows:

1. How is a sense of self as a (professional) artist shaped in the context of the arts college? Which characteristics are understood to be important, and how do art students relate to these characteristics?
2. How do certain work experiences, specifically holding down multiple jobs, relate to the formation of an artist’s (professional) identity?
3. How do artists cope with the prospect of not succeeding or being able to sustain their artistic identity and activity?
4. How is the ability to work and identify as an artist affected and informed by having a family, mostly in terms of having parental responsibility but also in terms of being someone’s child or partner?
5. What general knowledge regarding artistic work and the formation of an artistic identity and career can be found from the different analyses of education, work experiences and family life?

The first question is explored in article 1, but is also revisited in other articles, notably article 3. The second question is mainly explored through article 2. The third research question is explored through article 3, but is also touched upon in article 5. The fourth research question is explored jointly by articles 4 and 5; however, they use different empirical material and a different form of analysis. Research question 5 functions as a synthesis of the three aspects of education, work and family life, in order to discuss the overall contribution of the thesis.

Outline of the thesis

The introduction presents a short background, the aim and the research questions of the thesis. This is followed by a section on the issue of defining who constitutes the group of artists. The next part discusses previous research and perspectives on the issue of work, family and artistic education with regard to art and the art world, and positions the thesis in relation to these perspectives. The next section focuses on the main theoretical perspectives of the thesis, and each article uses specific theoretical models in relation to these. Following this, the data and methods are discussed. The penultimate section contains a summary of the five articles included in the thesis. Finally, a concluding section with final remarks and a summary in Swedish ends the first part of the thesis. The second part consists of the five articles.

Defining the artist

Professional artist, serious artist, working artist, real artist. Around here, these are fighting words. They mean so much in part because we don't agree – can't agree – on what they mean (Gerber, 2015:233).

Defining who is to be understood as a professional artist can be a methodological and theoretical problem, especially in terms of defining artists in large-scale empirical studies in order to map and investigate their occupational situation (Karttunen, 1998; Melldahl, 2012). It is also important to define the groups who are eligible for government bursaries and scholarships, with specific reference to artists. The definition put forward by UNESCO in 1980 emphasises commitment to artistic creation, and thus establishes a standard based on self-assessment (Jeffri and Throsby, 1994). According to Shaw (2004), researchers mainly use three criteria to identify artists: the amount of time spent on artistic work, the amount of income derived from art work and membership of a professional artists' group or association. This is a rather normative understanding of work guiding the definition which may pose problems to researchers. As will be discussed in this thesis; many artists can't work full time with their artistic work but need to have other, income bringing work, they have very small and fluctuating income, and the arts associations favour older artists with a more stable career. Melldahl (2012) and Solhjell (2012) raise concerns about defining professional artists as members of artists' organisations, as not all established artists choose to be members.

In a large study by the Swedish arts grants committee⁵ in 2009 on the income and work of Swedish artists, there were found to be approximately 30,000 professional artists in the categories of visual arts and design, dance, film, music, musical, theatre, word and literature⁶. Approximately 25 per cent (~5300) of these worked in the visual arts, illustration or arts and crafts, i.e. the types of artist mainly explored in this thesis. In a study by Melldahl (2012), the proportion of artists in the Swedish population doubled from 1960 to 1990. The largest artistic association in Sweden, Konstnärernas riksförbund och Föreningen Sveriges Konsthantverkare och Industriformgivare (KRO/KIF)⁷ counts around 3000 artists among its members. Criteria for membership include a degree from, or being a student at a higher arts education institution, or being involved in documented professional activity⁸. As noted by Einarsdotter-Wahlgren (1997), KRO's membership criteria have been seen to function as a safeguard in terms of artistic quality, and thus prestige, but have not guaranteed economic security for individual artists.

American art sociologist Howard S. Becker (1982) has explored mechanisms of selection in the art world in terms of who is understood to be an artist. Becker opposes the more open definition of artists as “everyone who wants to be”, and defines the membership of the art world in terms of social mechanisms, suggesting that acquisition of “membership” is done by the acceptance of other actors within this world. These mechanisms do not necessarily involve talent, and artists are accepted on the basis of others, who help them produce their work. Being a successful artist therefore depends on finding a position among those who control rewards in the art world. Similarly, Taylor and Littleton (2012) stress the importance of informal and formal connections in the creative world which enable creative working. The situation of the individual producer or creator obscuring her place in the artistic field is labelled a “charismatic ideology” by Bourdieu (1996: 167). This is not exclusive to artists, but is also relevant to occupations in medicine, academia and industry, for example, as the actions of colleagues play a major part in the outcome of careers in general (Becker, 1997). Becker distinguished between “integrated professionals” and “mavericks”, where the former category

⁵The aim of the Swedish Arts Grants Committee is “to ensure that government agencies consider artists’ specific circumstances in their activities” (www.konstnarsnamnden.se, 2014-03-15).

⁶Those understood to be professionals include artists who have grants from the committee or who had them in 2004-2005, those who applied for grants in 2002-2006 and members of the different artistic interest organisations and unions.

⁷ Since the year end of 2015, the Swedish National Artist’s Organization (KRO) and The Swedish Arts Craft and Industrial Designer Organization (KIF) is one organization (KRO/KIF).

⁸“The applicant’s artistic profession should be described in terms of educational qualifications, professional qualifications and artistic and technical quality” (author’s translation, <http://www.kro.se/kriterier>, 2014-03-15).

inhabited an art world of museums and elite galleries, arts centres, biennales and art colleges (Becker, 1982). “Mavericks” are artists who are unwilling to conform to the conventions of the organised art world, but who nevertheless orient themselves towards it in the sense of seeking recognition from it. Their innovations are therefore often easily assimilated into the conventional art world. Becker also distinguishes “naïve” and folk artists, who are likely to have no connection with the art world at all. Naïve artists may create unique work because they have never internalised or acquired the conventions offered by training (Becker, 1982).

Among the artists in a Swedish rural community in Einarsdotter-Wahlgren’s study (1997), it was especially important to distinguish “non-artists”, defined by respondents mainly as illustrators, amateurs and handicraft artists. In contrast to the artist, the illustrator strives to meet the demands of a buyer, and in contrast to handicrafts, real art has no use-value. The criteria for being an artist mainly involved an inner drive and dedication; art in this form was seen as a way of life rather than work. Signs which indicated a lack of this inner drive included a desire to succeed commercially, i.e. to make money from art. Also, a real artist did not give up art in times of economic difficulty. However, Einarsdotter-Wahlgren (1997) did encounter what she called “down-to-earth” artists, who considered art a form of work rather than an expression of an inner need. These artists did not see sales of art works as a sign of any lack of authenticity, and as a rule they were not members of the national artist’s organisation, KRO. There are thus different ways of being an artist, although a strong romantic ethic against commercialism can be found as a mechanism of distinction and separation.

The definition of authentic art is therefore that which is produced without reference to the wishes and demands of the audience (Becker, 1982). Like the artists in Einarsdotter-Wahlgren’s study (1997), and similar to Gorz’s theory that paid work is detrimental to autonomy (1999), the jazz musicians in a study by Becker (1982) considered true artistry to be opposed to service provision.

The musician is conceived of as an artist who possesses a mysterious gift setting him [sic!] apart from other people. Possessing this gift, he [sic!] should be free from control by outsiders who lack it. The gift is something which cannot be acquired through education; the outsider, therefore, can never become a member

of the group (Becker, 1997:85f).

“Real art” is thus constructed in such a way that artists are sometimes forced to choose between survival and artistic standards. The artists in Gerber’s study (2015) and the creative workers in Taylor and Littleton’s (2012) study spoke of practising art as a calling, a need or a continuation of a childhood interest. In this way, they positioned art against “general” employment. This perceived autonomy and distance from market demands implies that a meaning-making process is involved in engaging in artistic work. Artists also nurture strong beliefs in the value of art for the good of society (Gerber, 2015; Oakely, 2009; Stenberg, 2002).

On the basis of the above discussion, it is clear that the definition of the artist can be diverse, changeable and also normative. This normative aspect of the definition of an artist provides insight into the socially-constructed sphere of artistic work. In this thesis, respondents were selected irrespective of their sphere of activity, which included painting, illustration, film-making, photography, installation, etc., and irrespective of the frequency of their artistic work, their success or whether they had other jobs which were unrelated to art. The criterion was that they must have undertaken the masters programme in fine arts at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (or be a member of staff at the Institute). The logic behind this choice of respondents lies in the significance of the Institute’s position in the Swedish art world. As noted by Ericson (1988), Edling (2010) and Gustavsson et al (eds., 2012), the Royal Institute of Art has historically functioned as the basis for an exclusive or elite set of professional artists. The close contact between the Institute and the elite galleries of Stockholm has encouraged the students and professors of the school to produce high quality work. At first sight, then, my respondents typically belong to the category of integrated arts professionals (Becker, 1982) and should, on paper, have excellent career prospects.

Perspectives on artistic identity and its contexts: education, work and family life

The context of the Swedish arts college – producing exclusivity in the art world
The importance of art colleges in providing opportunities for support, dialogue with peers, access to networks and mentors, make them rich sites for negotiating and constructing an artistic identity as well as discourses about art (Hansson, 2015; Stenberg, 2002; Taylor and Littleton, 2012). Although Sweden has five university colleges in the visual arts, the Royal

Institute of Art in Stockholm stands out in terms of its history and prestige (Edling, 2010; Ericsson, 1988; Gustavsson et al. (eds., 2012)⁹. The Institute has been analysed in relation to the production of exclusivity – its function of producing an elite set of arts professionals to a relatively autonomous art field, as well as being one of the organisations which appoints artists to government art-purchasing committees (Börjesson, 2012a; Ericsson, 1988). In Sweden, a masters from the Institute has also been understood as a route through which academically “weak” upper-class students can acquire a prestigious position in society, and therefore an opportunity to maintain the social status of their background (Andersson, 2008).

Another characteristic of Swedish art colleges is that they have been found to recruit from the middle and upper-middle classes. Especially noteworthy was the prevalence of students from homes with large cultural capital, where parents or/and grandparents were artists themselves (Börjesson, 2012b). Conversely, the background least represented in higher arts education involved students from the working and lower-middle classes. Börjesson (2012b) also noticed an increase in recruitment from homes with more educational capital since the 1980s. He relates this to the increased popularity of theoretically-grounded conceptual art at the art schools, which could favour these students. Today, a Ph.D. in Fine Arts is beginning to replace the MFA, providing artists with new ways of funding their work (Börjesson, 2012b; Gerber, 2015)¹⁰, why we might speak of an “academization” of the higher arts education. Edling (2012) also studied the gendered impact of the Institute, notably the fact that no female professors were taken on until 1983 due to informal, collegial decisions by (male) professors. Edling (2010) also noted a distinction between “female art” and “traditional art”, where the latter was seen as neutral and thus important in characterising professors at the Institute.

In terms of careers, Ericson (1988) explored the relation between the artist and an arts education in Sweden which culminates in some form of integration into the art world, and which she considered to involve three stages. The first stage is a period of socialisation into the art world through studying at a Stockholm art school, beginning with preparatory art schools and culminating in enrolment at the Royal Institute of Art. The second stage is a period of integration as a professional artist, where the individual tries to establish herself in

⁹ The Royal Institute of Art was founded 1735 and was incorporated into the state-run higher education in 1977 (Edling, 2010).

¹⁰ However, persistent informality in creative career development depends on personal contacts, and this suggests that artistic careers are likely to be resistant to the kind of managed development which is often associated with professionalisation (Taylor and Littleton, 2012).

the art market through regular exhibitions in Stockholm, around the country and abroad. In the final career stage, the artist becomes a well-integrated professional and acquires some of the important positions, commissions and exhibitions with which the Stockholm art world rewards its famous artists. Most artists never reach this career stage, but continue to seek recognition in the art world. “Stagnation and failure” threaten their career at each stage and may bring it to an end (Ericson 1988: 73). This image of the Swedish visual artistic career was later more or less confirmed by Gustavsson et al. (eds., 2012).

Although occupations in the arts do not function as a profession, as there is no real closure of the market (Brante, 2013), an MFA from an arts college acts as a passport into the art world. Educational institutions influence who is admitted to co-operatives, communities of interest, exhibitions and galleries (Gustavsson et al. eds., 2012; Witt, 2005). Arts education also affects how identity is formed. According to Edström (2008), art students need to develop an ability to “rest assured”, in other words develop a capacity to trust their own ability. Students must learn to be trusting and to feel secure in terms of their individual expression, in the work process in relation to self-discipline and in the uncertain, as uncertainty is a “distinguishing feature of artistic work in itself” (Edström, 2008:104; c.f. Menger, 1999).

Art college students also indicate their identities in discourses in terms of how an artist is or should (not) be. Researchers such as Flisbäck (2006), Stenberg (2002), and Taylor and Littleton (2012) found that their respondents considered their identity as an artist to be maintained by effort. In a study of female students at a Swedish preparatory school¹¹, Flisbäck (2006) found that art students longed for a career which would grant them mobility and freedom, but also wished to have security. Their understanding of the artist was grounded in an “ideology of the will”, which can be described as a view where hard work is seen as a route to success (Flisbäck, 2006: 111-112). The young students at an arts institute in a similar study by Røyseng et al. (2007) spoke of hard work as the only route to success. Røyseng et al. (2007) understand this as a charismatic myth, which functions as a way of making the insecurities of the artistic profession bearable to artists. The myth bears a strong resemblance to the Weberian concept of the protestant ethic – hard work as a route to being selected. None

¹¹The system of Swedish preparatory art schools involves a hierarchy where schools with a broad orientation towards different artistic techniques have low prestige. Other, more prestigious schools are oriented towards preparing students for continued study at the university art colleges, notably the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (c.f. Ericson, 1988).

of the art students had alternative career plans, regardless of any difficulties involved in establishing themselves in the art world. Art students may reject a life associated with more conventional aspirations, such as a nine-to-five career or the domesticity of family life (Taylor and Littleton, 2012). Røyseng et al. (2007: 9) found evidence of the charismatic myth in the way artists had imagined their careers during their student years as “totally enchanting”. However, they also valued “a good, safe family life”, and thus displayed ambivalence towards economic aspects of their occupation as this would require economic stability.

According to Singerman (1999), art students are forced to embody the artistic identity, an identity constructed in and through the discipline. This identity involves notions of genius, eternal value and mystery, and sees the subjectivity of the artist as the object of an arts education. The Swedish art college education has been shown to be marked by a notion of freedom, where freedom has meant a lack of curriculum and a focus on individualisation during the five-year course, in which obligatory courses are minimal (Edling, 2010). Fundamental to this idea of flexible education is a strong belief in the notion of creative genius; people cannot learn to be artists, which is why the professors are seen not as teachers but as mentors. This educational framework for flexibility can be explained in terms of the Institute’s prestigious history and its relative autonomy from the state (Edling, 2010). Echoing how some doctoral students see their identity (Peixoto, 2014), arts training has been shown to encourage choosing a life rather than a career. This is referred to by Singerman (1999: 211) as “the cruelty of current art training”, where the artist is positioned as both the object and the subject of graduate training, as it “psychologises and personalises” failure. As the training targets the person, it will necessarily discipline her rather than her objectives or her skills. Edström (2008) also discusses the concept of self-directed learning at art schools as a consequence of the need to develop an ability to manage the uncertainty artists face after graduation, and their need to motivate themselves. She also notes traces of informal agendas to exclude students who could not handle the excessive self-direction demanded by art schools. Although art studies have been found to be grounded in collaborative work, Ericson (1988) noted the acceptance of an individualistic school culture. Ericson also outlined how teachers, in not sharing the difficulties of the art world with their students, separated themselves from the students in an attempt to prevent their identity as professional artists being replaced by the identity of an arts teacher¹².

¹² In contrast, Flisbäck (2006) found that female art teachers at a preparatory school shared stories of their career

In sum, although the art world would seem open to anyone with an artistic or creative talent, arts education form an informal “passport” to an unofficially “closed” art world. These educations encourage an individualistic understanding of the artist, based on certain romantic notions of the particularity and autonomy of the art world. This is prevalent not only in Swedish arts education but shows similarities to arts education studied in the USA and in the UK.

The organisation of creative work: the creative industries and it's relation to the art world

If the art world (not only in Sweden) traditionally has maintained a position of autonomy in relation to the state, the notion of creative industries signifies a potential breakdown of the gulf between art and economics. In their work *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, Adorno and Horkheimer (1997; c.f. Adorno, 2001) criticised the culture industries’ encouragement of the commercialisation of art, and their use of art to stimulate a demand for mass-produced commodities. They therefore supported the idea of artistic production as an activity outside a capitalist framework, and their view of the creative worker and the creative individual is not unlike the romantic ideal (Taylor and Littleton, 2012). The modern economy has made commodities with symbolic value more important, and their value involves the meaning they have for people (Klein, 2002). Researchers on creative industries and creative entrepreneurialism have studied the relationship between economy and art, and concluded that there is no longer a clear separation between the two (Banks, 2010; Frey, 2003; Guillet de Monthoux, 1998; Stenström, 2000; Tomson, 2011). The art world has been of interest to business economists since more or less the 1990s, when art and management became a field of research (Stenström, 2000). The creative industries have received a great deal of attention from policy-makers and academia since the late 1990s, associated with goods and services of an artistic or cultural nature, or in terms of entertainment (Caves, 2000; Hartley (ed.), 2005; Hesmondalgh, 2007). According to Eikhof and Warhurst (2013), these areas are based on the fact that creativity, talent and skill are considered important. Witt (2005) argues that the work and occupational behaviour of the craft artist can be understood in relation to the Schumpeterian definition of the entrepreneur – creating innovation as opposed to inventions. Thus, art and creative work can be seen to have increased in importance in contemporary

progression, debunking myths of talent and genius, and instead openly discussing the social conditions of the art world.

capitalism in the sense that they add symbolic value to products.

The film and television sector was one of the first to adopt a more flexible production model with its structure of project-based work (Blair, 2001; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). Attention to the creative industries in terms of policy first took place in the UK, when former Prime Minister Tony Blair launched the concept of the creative industries in 1997, and emphasised their importance for the future of the British economy and labour market (Tomson, 2011). Since then, more western governments have paid a good deal of attention to the creative industries in terms of policy, because of their alleged link to GDP growth, urban regeneration and employment (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). The beginning of an interest in the creative industries in Sweden is described in detail by Tomson (2011). The idea of culture as a catalyst for economic growth started to take shape at the beginning of the new millennium, inspired by investments and by discussions on the cultural industries in the UK. The idea acquired organisational support from the Swedish Knowledge Foundation, financed by money from the former Rehn-Meidner plan. In Sweden, more and more attention was being paid to the successful export of music and design. In a Nordic context, Duelund (2008) also identifies that the last decade of cultural policy was characterised by political will in terms of increasing corporate sponsorship of the arts.

It is difficult to write about the cultural industries without taking into account the impact of Richard Florida's *The rise of the creative class* (2002). According to Florida (2002), creative workers in occupations involving art, design, media and knowledge, in the same way as science, engineering and computer programming, are becoming more and more important for national economies in terms of their ability to spur economic growth in certain regions such as the Silicon Valley. He is sometimes considered to be the researcher who has most encouraged policy-makers' interest in the creative industries, arguing that they not only drive economic growth but also promise a more egalitarian world of work. Because of the persistence of talent in these sectors, a more progressive and meritocratic economy is allegedly on the rise (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; c.f. Pine and Gilmore, 1999). The centrality of talent and creativity is important in understanding the kind of project-based, flexible organisation of work which has developed in the creative industries. However, claims involving the importance of these industries in creating economic growth and jobs have been contested (Oakely, 2004). In their critical paper on the prevalence of discrimination on the

basis of gender, class and race in these industries, Eikhof and Warhurst (2013) raise serious concerns about the more positive accounts of a meritocracy in the new economy promulgated by Florida in terms of how work is organised (2002; c.f. Gill, 2002; McRobbie, 1998).

How has these changes affected the arts market? Exploring the modernisation of the art market, Stallabrass (2004) mentions the move from galleries to the secondary market, giving major auction houses, sponsorships and corporate collecting as examples. The last phenomenon indicates the way business has moved from charitable sponsorship to building partnerships with museums and other institutions. Today, art markets are more and more globalised to include regions and nations beyond Europe and North America (Philipsen, 2010). The biennial/triennial model, hosted by cities like Gothenburg, Shanghai, São Paulo and Havana, functions as the most popular form of exhibition today. Although concepts like “new internationalism” have arisen to challenge previous anglo-centrism in art, critical voices have also pointed to the heavily western influence of the growth of art academies and markets in places such as Africa and China (Philipsen, 2010). There is also evidence of business increasingly turning to commissioning, exhibiting and even curating art. (Stallabrass, 2004). According to Stallabrass, this has resulted in an emphasis on work suitable for magazines and on the image of youth, the rise of the celebrity artist, spectacular and costly work, and a reduction of critical content in art works. This suggests that the art world has changed according to more business-like models, and the cultural industries are relevant to these changes as they actualize the relationship between economy and cultural work/art. According to Bourdieu (1996), several social actors share the *illusio* of the art field, i.e. the belief in the importance of art and the importance of the autonomy of the arts field. These social actors may, besides artists themselves, be politicians, arts administrators, gallery owners, audience and so on (Hansson, 2015). If parts of these social actors question the *illusio*, the art field itself is likely to protect and defend its former rules, but also to change.

What is the role of art in the creative industries, and how does it relate to the art world? Cultural economist David Throsby (2000) suggests that art is at the “core” of the creative industries, and symbolises an area where inspiration and creativity originate. However, it is not always clear how the arts function in relation to other areas which are more easily identified as belonging to “industries”, such as fashion, design or computer games. As outlined by Tomson (2011), many cultural workers, typically in the fine arts, opposed

attempts to consolidate the concept of creative industries in Sweden, ultimately refusing to take part in the events organised by the Swedish Knowledge Foundation in the 2000s. The reason they gave involved the diametrically-opposite motivations and ethics which drive the arts and other creative sectors. Artists in Sweden thus tend to defend the autonomy of the arts field from the logics of business and economy which speaks of the continuing relative autonomy of the art world. Bourdieu (1996) outlined how artists needed to turn away from the general audience and not be guided by the market or rules of society in order to enjoy reputation on the arts field. Even contemporary artists are found to strive to communicate to an exclusive audience, not to a broad public, in order to gain recognition (Hansson, 2015). Young artists in Sweden are still characterized by pursuing self-realization and peer recognition rather than profit (Hansson, 2014). However, artists have been found to form the example to which other creatives are attracted to creative work (McRobbie, 1998), and as exemplified by some of the respondents in this thesis, the cultural industries (work such as design or advertising), may offer temporary or permanently positions for income-bringing work for artists while simultaneously trying to uphold the artistic career as unrelated to those types of activities. Thus, the art world and the cultural and creative industries may still be symbolically “divided”, but the latter is still important due to its connotations to art, culture and economy as interconnected.

Artistic precarity?

A number of theorists have analysed artists in relation to the precariat (Oakely, 2009; Helms, 2011; Bain and McLean, 2012; De Peuter, 2014). They have noted their often uncertain material and existential lives, and how they bear the cost of their own professional development, insurance, benefits, sick and maternity leave (National Arts Grants Committee, 2011; c.f. Gill and Pratt, 2008). Others, such as Oakely (2009), have questioned the possibility of artists taking collective political action because of their often elite status, fierce competition and the fact that the consideration of art to be “work” is not characteristic of the art world. As discussed above, artists might voluntarily choose the relative autonomy of a working life which pays less, but which provides an opportunity for meaningful work (Gerber, 2015; Witt, 2005). This “voluntary” opting out of conventional routes to material privileges differentiates them from the “genuinely poor” in terms of status and control over their life (Oakely, 2009: 290). However, the issue of precarity, genuine or not, is important for understanding the kinds of working conditions artists generally are likely to face during their attempts to build a career

in the arts.

The working conditions of artists has been the focus of interest by scholars and governments; in Sweden, governmental reports and reports from artists' interest organisations have outlined their general situation (for example, SOU, 1997:190; SOU, 2003:21; Swedish Arts Grants Committee, 2009, 2010, 2011). Artists have been found to spend more years in education. They are younger and have lower incomes than the working population in general (Menger, 1999). Their general work situation has been labelled a 'portfolio career' (Throsby and Zednick, 2011:10; Taylor and Littleton, 2012) as they are often working on a number of commissions simultaneously, paid or unpaid. However, artists may also have long periods without work. In order to understand the nature of the artistic work situation, Throsby and Zednick (2011) categorised how artists allocated their working time in terms of three types of work: creative work, arts-related work and non-arts related work. It is common for artists to have bread and butter jobs alongside their artistic work, a situation Taylor and Littleton (2012: 8) call "the double life". This double life poses problems in terms of juggling different work situations, but it also allows artists to survive financially.

Self-employment is the typical employment status of artists (Menger, 1999). A large-scale study in 2010 found that approximately 66 % of visual artists in Sweden were self-employed, compared to 10% of the total working population (Swedish Arts Grants Committee, 2010). Swedish visual artists typically have different employment contracts alongside their self-employed artistic work (KRO/KIF, 2014). Being self-employed in Sweden often entails a certain vulnerability, as most social security benefits are tied to formal employment. Because they are self-employed, artists have sometimes been described as operating as small businesses (Menger, 1999; Throsby, 2010). However, a Swedish study by Karlsson and Lekvall (2002) found that, on the whole, artists did not identify with the concept of business and entrepreneurship, mainly because they did not tend to run their business for purely economic purposes, a situation also discussed by Mangset and Røyseng (eds., 2009). The majority of businesses in the cultural sector were also found to be micro-businesses or sole-proprietor operations, i.e. one-person companies.

The associations with art and "working for yourself" functions as an attraction to workers in creative industries, as discussed by Taylor (2015). It has also been understood to function as

an inducement for them to tolerate uncertainty (McRobbie, 1998). Self-employment has also been related to undermining trust and solidarity between workers, as it encourages competition and self-interested ambition (Junestav, 2011). As such, this common status of self-employment may have a bearing on why visual artists have no union in Sweden, while actors, with a stronger tradition of employment, have their own union (Ericson, 1988)¹³.

Artistic work in Sweden and its relation to cultural policy

As a political concept, there was disagreement for many years in Swedish politics about what culture involved, or even if it could be defined as a policy area. However, it was defined by the establishment of *Kulturrådet* in 1968, a government body for the administration of Swedish cultural policy (Klockar Linder, 2014). The Scandinavian countries have largely adopted the British model of the arm's length principle (Mangset, 2009). The Nordic region has generally seen a strong relationship between freedom and welfare, and artists have not been seen as outsiders so much as in other liberal western societies (Lindsköld, 2013; Sander & Sheikh, 2001). The Swedish state organizes stipends and bursaries for artists, and upholds important artistic institutions such as the Modern Museum of Art and the Royal Institute of Art, but has safeguarded the autonomy of these as a result of the arms-length principle. One important Swedish policy measure for improving the situation of artists has been the 1% rule, where one per cent of the construction costs for new public buildings must be allocated to artistic decoration.

In Sweden, social democracy has traditionally equated the rights of citizens with their position on the labour market (Thörnquist and Engstrand, 2011). However, artists have managed to escape this logic through the fact that their products are valued for their status outside the logic of capitalist accumulation (Ericsson, 1988). In their study of the changing landscape of cultural policy in Sweden, Flisbäck and Lund (2015) have argued that few other professions have managed to convince Swedish policy-makers that they have value and contribute to the public good as arts professionals have, an example being the importance of the arm's length principle in policy. State investment in arts education, as well as bursaries and stipends for artists, are also significant in terms of this "outside" status.

¹³ Although Swedish actors have been subjected to more flexible working practices and fewer employment opportunities. See, for example, Miscevic (2014).

The concept that culture is democratic has been criticised by cultural policy researchers such as Blomgren (2012) and Vestheim (2009), who oppose the tendency for democracy in Nordic cultural policy to be interpreted as experiencing the culture which institutions consider best, as opposed to a culture which reflects the will of the people. Citizens have little influence over the activities of cultural organisations and institutions. Instead, power has been consolidated with professions in the cultural field, and as such it is a “democratic problem”, (Blomgren, 2012: 527). However, this can be said to reflect the corporatist tradition of cultural policy of these countries, which gives artistic unions and other interest groups influence in this particular policy area rather than a more populist understanding of democracy (Ericson, 1988; Duelund, 2003). However, according to Mangset (2009), the influence of artists in state policy has declined rapidly, and may even be in the process of being dismantled. In an anthology of artists’ writing, Sander & Sheikh (2001) suggest that the relation between the state and the role of artists since the 1950s can be seen as having changed from producing welfare to being a product of welfare.

The rather elitist structure of the Swedish art colleges, with their exclusive tendencies, presents a contradiction in Swedish cultural policy. Since 1974, the Swedish welfare state has largely viewed art as a component of a good social environment and, according to Ericson (1988), has taken the view that the arts should not be the product of an elitist art world, but be part of citizens’ everyday lives. However, this notion of art available to the masses clashes with the rather elite bourgeois ideology of the established Swedish art world. Ericson (1988) argues that quality is seen as the domain of a set of superior artists and is displayed to a set of distinguished audiences. There is therefore a tension between the art world itself and an understanding of art involving welfare. The Swedish art world (centered in Stockholm) is thus a system with a “bourgeois private art market core and a somewhat inhibiting but mostly reinforcing structure of public and private institutions with a welfare ideology” (Ericson, 1988:41). However, Ericson (1988) argues that the private market is more powerful than the public sector because of its ability to generate channels for distributing art and building artistic reputations. The welfare state thus supports elite art institutions despite stating that arts and culture should be for the good of the people and accessible to all (Ericson, 1988).

The autonomy of the art world has also been seen as a result of the evolution of a differentiation process in society (Luhmann, 2000). Processes which reverse this

differentiation between the sphere of art and, in particular, the economy have been quoted as a sign of weakening autonomy (see Stallabrass, 2004 and Volkerling, 1996). However, this is contested by Nordic cultural policy research (see Frenander, 2005 and Mangset, 2009). According to Frenander's (2005) analysis of cultural policy discourse in Sweden during the 20th century, although Sweden has formulated its aims for national cultural policy three times, in 1974, 1996 and most recently in 2009, not much has happened in terms of this policy as a whole. There were substantial similarities between the first two (Frenander, 2007), which were understood to be a result of political compromises, as well as a social, political and ideological hegemony of the concept of the *folkhem* (people's home) in Sweden (where art and culture was understood to benefit the population as a whole). Frenander considered one ideological marker to these aims: the formulation to "counteract the negative effects of commercialism". In the new policy objectives from 2009, initiated by the centre-right government, this formulation was removed. This can be understood to mark an ideological shift in cultural policy discourse, as it can be argued that the previously safeguarded notion of the reverse economic logic of the art world is no longer considered a policy issue. When the former centre-right government removed the previous guaranteed income for artists and the policy statement involving protection from the negative effects of commercialisation, Swedish artists were welcomed into the market place more than ever, and valued as producers of objects and services valuable to modern capitalist markets¹⁴.

Writing from a primarily American and British viewpoint, Stallabrass (2004) identifies two current threats to the autonomy of the arts: the suggestion that art should be useful, "promulgated by the state and business" and the "modernization of the art market" (Stallabrass, 2004:124). Recently, the motives for state funding and governmental involvement in the arts have changed in line with more general social, political and economic changes (Gray, 2007; Vestheim, 2009). In the 19th century, art was seen as the bearer of national values and pride, and was thus understood as a requirement in promoting national glory. In the Nordic countries in the 20th century, art was seen as a bearer of universal democratic values. Although some scholars claim that cultural policy has been a means for the state to reward the educated middle classes in order to maintain their support (Volkerling,

¹⁴However, Frenander (2005) argues that the cultural field in Sweden has managed to maintain a position of relative autonomy in relation to the wave of managerialism and economic rationalisation which has permeated other public sectors like education during the last 20 years.

1996), the public funding of art has also been taken for granted, as art was understood to produce values which were existential and universal to society at large (Frey, 2003). Today, there is an increasing demand for primarily economic, but also social forms of justification (Gray, 2007). Art has frequently been debated and understood as a way of boosting the economy (in relation to the cultural and creative industries), as a way of stimulating regional development, as a vital component in the health of individuals and as a tool for education and reducing crime (Stallabrass, 2004; Vestheim, 2009). These ideological shifts are likely to affect the art world and the subjectivity work of artists.

Creative work, gender and family life

The celebration of autonomy in the art world has been interpreted as autonomy from the conventions of family life (Bourdieu, 1996; Pollock, 1983). The art world has historically fostered gendered assumptions about the separation between women and men artists, largely related to issues of care and domestic responsibilities (Cowen, 1996; Pollock, 1983). Women artists are known to reject having a family in order to fulfil an artistic career (Chicago, 1979; Pollock, 1983). Although the new creative economy has been described as “cool, creative and egalitarian” (Gill, 2002:70), researchers such as Adkins (1999), Gill (2002) and Eikhof and Warhurst (2013) argue that the cultural occupations, because of their frequent reliance on networks and informality, are profoundly discriminatory towards women and non-white people. In their study on ‘good work’ rather than alienating work, Hesmondalgh and Baker (2011) touch upon issues of balancing life, family and work in terms of enjoying opportunities in working life. Creative workers found ways to combine freelance work and family life, but experienced isolation and a lack of solidarity with other creative workers. Hesmondalgh and Baker (2011) argue that the aspect of defining themselves through work, which artists generally do, makes their work-life balance precarious. However, they argue that the work-life balance is part of a greater problem of how self-realisation through work has become more important today than self-realisation through other means, such as caring for others, bringing up children, sustaining friendships or taking part in local communities.

Historically, the structure of the art world has involved a division of labour by gender, where women artists have traditionally worked with materials such as textiles, whereas the areas of sculpture, painting and woodwork have been allocated to men (Witt, 2004). Although women have been found to have higher levels of education than men, they derive lower incomes from

their artistic work (Swedish arts grants committee, 2010). Witt (2004) discusses this in relation to the principle of the reversed economy: women are more educated, and their symbolic capital is therefore high, while their turnover is low. Male artists (in her study, arts craft workers) acted more as entrepreneurs, whereas women were more often employed in other jobs in addition to being self-employed. Thus, the explanation to womens subordinate position in the art world would be a result of a gendered separation, not hierarchization.

In contrast, Flisbäck (2013) argues that symbolic and economic structures must be taken into account in exploring artists' ability to "create lives", and to understand why women have historically fared worse as artists compared to men. For example, the modernist or romantic notion of artists devoting their whole person to their work clashes with the norm of motherhood as an all-embracing activity. Other aspects of the symbolic structure involve the ideology of artistic talent and the modernist concept that artists are freedom-seeking; these generate normative understandings of the artist. Economic structures involve difficulties for artists in sustaining a living from their artistic work and their precarious situation, and these also affect their ability to start families. This can help explain why many female artists have felt pressured to abstain from having children in order to be seen as "serious" artists (Cowen, 1996). In her study on artists as fathers, Bain (2007) argues that male artists wish to separate their family lives from their work by having a studio outside their domestic realm, in an attempt to safeguard their identity as artists. For some, this results in them escaping domestic responsibilities and even opting out "of certain aspects of fatherhood" (Bain, 2007:259), something female artists are unlikely to do. This thesis will discuss the issue of artists having a family or choosing not to have children, as well as the consequences of the situation and norms of artistic work for those who do decide to have a family (whether male or female), as their decision tends to be seen as illogical and career-negative.

Theory – is art work labour?

Each of the articles in this thesis makes use of different theoretical frames in terms of the research question and theme they are exploring. However, an overarching understanding of artistic work in the thesis rests on Wendling's (2012) discussion of *the two understandings of labour*. The concept of labour is understood as central to western social and political thought, from the repudiation of labour in ancient thought to its positive significance in modern philosophy, exemplified by Locke and Hegel (Wendling, 2012). According to Wendling

(2012: 4), the concept of labour has been deployed in two different ways but with two overarching meanings: either labour is understood as 1. “an ontology of the human self, invariant over time, present in all forms of human action” or 2. “as a historical mode of human activity, variant over time, changing in character and sense according to this variation”. Additionally, Wendling (2012: 4) proposes a third understanding of labour which is a function of the first two: “a category whose historical operation (labour 2) requires an ontological sense (labour 1)”. Thus, capitalist modernity requires us to understand labour in an ontological way, i.e. as a non-historical condition of human action and subjectivity.

Art as fundamental human action

The notion of art as labour belongs to the first understanding of labour, because it is non-specific. According to this understanding, labour can be “doing”, “creating” or “activity”. It does not allow us to distinguish work from play. Artists often cite pleasure, freedom, creativity and opportunities for personal growth as the most rewarding aspects of artistic work (Banks, 2010; Flisbäck, 2006; Witt, 2005). This echoes C. Wright Mills’ (1956) theories of ideal work as a combination of work and play, or the concept of *Homo Faber* by Arendt (1998). Conversely, if labour is deemed to be unfree, uncreative and something which denies individual autonomy, art cannot be labour (c.f. Gorz, 1999). The desire to manage and control one’s own work and life, to engage in meaningful work beyond the logic of the market, and to have the freedom to choose when to work and when to rest, often outweigh the economic disadvantage and insecurity of artistic work (Witt, 2005). For example, in producing their art, the art students in Stenberg’s (2002) study sought to combine their personal, existential need for expression and meaning with social participatory ideals, thus hoping for a working life where their work was meaningful and could encourage questions about social change.

In an earlier work on the Swedish art world, Ericson (1988) claims that although Swedish artists have managed to hold on to a more romantic notion of the artist as an individual, involving creative genius, they have also been forced to admit that they are part of a work context, pursuing careers. She contrasts Swedish artists with New York artists, who were found to work in a more careerist, calculative and aggressive manner in order to survive. This marks a change, noted by Gerber (2015:37), towards an increasing understanding of visual art practice as “work” in terms of an “occupational turn” (c.f. Lingo and Tepper, 2013). The occupational turn is considered to be related to an increase in university-trained artists and the

importance of a higher arts education for the professional status of artists (c.f. Singerman, 1999). Another reason for this occupational turn is linked to the 1960s understanding of the “art worker” (Bryan-Wilson, 2009, in Gerber, 2015:37). This can be illustrated by the 1963 strike against Swedish national Radio-TV (Bergman, 2010). According to Bergman (2010), the 1960s can be seen as a period where the prevailing image of the artist changed from that of a largely voluntary worker driven by inspiration, to one where artists saw themselves more and more as workers with the right to demand pay and fair working conditions. “Kulturarbetare” (“culture worker”) became a word which equated artists with other workers in society, but which was fiercely rejected by some artists who felt they were losing their identity as creative individuals (Ericson, 1988).

Art as part of a historically-specific understanding of labour

The above discussion relates to the second understanding of labour (labour 2), which is historically specific. In capitalist economies, labour is a normative activity tied to the concept of wage earning. According to Marx et al. (2001), this historical economic system requires the worker to be free in a double sense: free to sell his or her labour and free from other obligations in order to devote their time to labour. The state plays a crucial role in this capitalist socio-economic order, as it creates incentives for wage labour by organising education and support systems for the unemployed, etc. In Swedish modern history, welfare services and rights are often related to the status as employed. According to this understanding, some forms of activity do not count as labour, and these activities reveal the boundaries of the concept (Wendling, 2012). For example, if earning income from artistic work were a criterion for art to be considered labour, very few would be able to call themselves artists (Jeffri and Throsby, 1994). There are difficulties in using earnings and income as criteria for defining labour, as artists have very fluctuating income from their work, as well as extreme income variation. Another aspect of the normative understanding of labour is its association with suffering, and its distrust of activities which are satisfying or pleasurable, such as art. As noted by Weber (2009), suffering as a defining aspect of labour fits with capitalism in terms of his understanding of the protestant ethic (Wendling, 2012). This is why artists sometimes wish to be seen as “hard working” in a subjective sense, in order to conform to a normative understanding of labour, which could otherwise exclude art from the category of “real work” and make artists feel guilty (according to Ericsson, 1988, especially so in a Swedish context as the political landscape in Sweden have traditionally

rested on an ideological understanding of the reciprocity between the worker and the welfare state.).

Arts professionalism can be understood as an attempt to remedy the exclusion of art from a definition of labour, as it imposes criteria on activities. These can include income derived from artistic activity, having a formal education and belonging to a union or association, as well as being recognised by peers and the public (Jeffri and Throsby, 1994). The term professional implies belonging to a collective of members with specific skills, knowledge and competence (Nyström, 2009). With this status, professionals can claim legitimate control over certain kinds of work and tasks based on their specialised knowledge and professional responsibility. This gives the different professional groups an autonomous position in society, but this position is only given to professional individuals if they subject themselves to the demands of the profession in terms of quality (Nyström, 2009). Professions have also been given their status on the understanding that their performance is related to the public good. As outlined in the section on Swedish cultural policy, artists have been seen as bearers of this public good in terms of democracy and autonomy. However, in terms of the first understanding of labour (labour 1), professionalism clashes with views of art as a fundamental human activity. The notion of belonging to a group with specific skills also clashes with the individualism of the art world, celebrating the lone (male) genius). The ontological understanding of labour (and art) is also incompatible with the second understanding of labour (labour 2), which places art outside normative definitions of labour in capitalist production. This is why the difficulties of bringing the concept of professionalisation into the arts relate to how artists may see creative work as “not work” (Gerber, 2015; Taylor and Littleton, 2012:113). As the importance of cultural goods has grown in the contemporary economic structure (Florida, 2002), another important aspect of whether artists and other creative workers can be seen as workers involves the emergence of the creative industries and the concept of artists as entrepreneurs who contribute to the overall “culturalized” economy.

In the second understanding of labour (labour 2), our work is tied to our status, entitlements and obligations as citizens. As Marx pointed out, labour in the context of a specific historical and economic structure relates to issues of social and political value (Wendling, 2012), such as classism (as this system involves judgement, different rewards and different symbolic value such as intellectual and cultural labour vs. manual labour), sexism (where domestic labour is

not considered labour or of lesser worth than other types of labour typically held by men) and racism (where racialized bodies are more frequently found in low-wage, low-status work sectors). In modern capitalist societies, labour is implicated in normative regimes which involve subjectivity, exemplified by the fact that what we do for a living is an almost inevitable part of a conversation with new acquaintances. Our identity is almost determined by what we do, and the assumption is that we identify with work (Wendling, 2012). As will be discussed in the articles of the thesis, physical illness can arguably be regarded as weakness, within this normative context of how labour is understood, as can temporarily opting out of work in order to care for children.

The two understandings of labour can be related to the analysis of the field of art as structured by the conflict between two opposite systems of production (Bourdieu, 1985): 1. The system of large-scale production with general audiences, which would require an understanding of labour close to the normative labour understanding (labour 2), 2. The system of restricted production, where recognition from peers is more valued than economic gain (Hansson, 2015), which would relate to labour understanding 1. Bourdieu's (1996) term, "economic logic reversed" is often cited in terms of understanding artists' behaviour and how they shape their identity. It is also cited in linking the genius of the individual artist to the romantic notion of art for art's sake, encouraging a subjectivity which contrasts with careerism and economic gain. Artists often consider their role to engage in social discussion by testing social, juridical, private and physical limits (Stenberg, 2002), which is not compatible with normative understandings of labour (labour 2). The thesis analyses how the conflict between these two understandings of labour and its relation to art continues to affect the identity work of contemporary Swedish artists.

"Becoming" through the use of language – discourse theory and subjectivity theory

This thesis is interested in the importance of language in creating meaning, as well as language as an important source in the construction of the self (Wetherell et al. (eds.), 2001a; 2001b). A key claim in this thesis is that language positions people, and that discourse creates subjectivities. These subjectivities provide us with a way of "making sense of ourselves, our motives, experiences and reactions" (Wetherell, 2001:24). I am interested in how discursive resources become productive as they structure "a sense of who we are" (Edley, 2001:191), our subjective experiences. The positions created by discourse and narratives provide social actors

with ways of making sense of themselves, their experiences and their feelings, etc. (Wetherell, 2001), but may also position them as “unfitting” and unable to make sense of themselves in social environments.

Traditionally, discourse analysis does not share the western understanding of the subject as an “autonomous individual” (Winter Jørgensen, 2000: 48; Edley, 2001). The concept of identity in this thesis is defined within the sociological understanding that a sense of self is related to social contexts, where the self is a process of becoming (Staunæs, 2003; Stenberg, 2002). Social relations are not considered to exist only within language, but are made meaningful through discourse and narrative (Potter & Wetherell, 1992; Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000; Börjesson & Palmblad, eds., 2007). As such, language is understood to be a component in identity, not only describing and reflecting a sense of self, but actively taking part in its creation (Ricoeur, 1992; Wetherell et al. (eds.), 2001b). This is in contrast to more psychological views of the self which involve “looking inside oneself”, i.e. a focus on internal psychic structures and processes (Bacchi, 2005). Also, the term is employed with regard to how actors are engaged in a production of self, but also to how people have access to certain discourses and subjectivities more than others, and to how different values are conferred on certain subjectivities, which is why the shaping of identity is a process bound up with power (Edley, 2001; Skeggs, 1997; 2004). Subjects are thus understood to be positioned by discourse, but in different ways by different conflicting discourses. For example, this can help explain difficulties experienced by women artists in combining an artistic career with parenting, as understandings of both motherhood and an artistic career imply full-time activity (Flisbäck, 2013). Social categories, often understood as variables such as “woman” or “middle class”, involve subjectivity. They are not understood as something one is, but particularly as something one does or something which is done to the subject (Skeggs, 1997; Staunæs, 2003).

In their study of contemporary creative work, Taylor and Littleton (2012) make an analytical distinction between identity and subject. The authors prefer to use the concepts of identity and identification over subject and subjectification, as they reject the completeness associated with subjectification theories in Foucauldian studies of “becoming” as a process of governmentality (Rose, 1991; Knights and Willmott, 1989). These theories risk the subject being understood as a victim of “false consciousness”, a governed “docile subject” or a

“cultural dope” (Taylor & Littleton, 2012: 38). Using narrative and discursive psychology, Taylor & Littleton’s work (2012: 40) approaches the contemporary creative worker “as a constrained but not wholly dominated subject, negotiating ‘who I am’ out of the various possibilities and limitations given by multiple meanings and positioning”. In this thesis, I do not share the view that subjectivity theory risks individuals being represented as “cultural dopes”. Although it is important to recognise the critique that subjectivity theory does not allow individuals to be reflexive, changeable or able to resist, it seems to be an oversimplification of the content of the theory. Rather, I consider that subjects are presented with images of “who they are” throughout their life, and by identifying with these images, they create a sense of self which is never whole (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). On a whole, the thesis has taken an interest in the limitations given by discourse, as it gives us understanding of power performed in the contexts explored.

Through understanding a variety of ways of talking about the artist, it is possible to study how meaning-making, and powerful collective and individual understandings, form certain activities which are, for example, closely related to the self or an individual’s identity. Following Wetherell et al. (2001b:5), this involves “the possibilities that discourse and its normative and conventional social organisation make available, and what people do in discourse”. Every artist must relate to the broader image of the function and role of the artist, as being an artist involves significant expectations of how to be, behave or speak (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000:48). The way subjects are positioned is also seen as contradictory, and when positions overlap, they provide a basis for “awareness and reflexivity” (Fairclough, 2010: 68). Social positions (such as gender and class) function as a way of hindering “movement” between certain subject positions or making it possible, or the possibility of attaining a desired subject position. Being born into a family of rich cultural or economic capital can have a powerful effect on the subjective ability to be identified as an “enduring artist”, for example, as it involves an ability to remain in a risky situation, which requires the help of others.

The positive status of the outsider artist is be related to the 18th century concept of genius linked to artistic creation, where genius signified exclusivity, a way of experiencing the world which was closed to all but a few special individuals (Bürger, 1992). Artists can thus be said to have been understood as ‘others’, but nevertheless “elevated” others, because of their

symbolical links with individuality, genius and autonomy (Bourdieu, 1996). As previously discussed, artists themselves can project a positive image of their “otherness”, as they possess a talent or a gift which others do not have (Becker, 1997; Stenberg, 2002). Oakely (2009) also indicates the political/ethical possibilities art schools seem to promise, as art students graduate with a strong sense of the importance of art, not only for themselves but as a benefit for the wider public. However, artists tend to choose their education and occupation for their own satisfaction, as a way of expressing themselves. Using Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration, Stenberg (2002) criticises theories that limits the ability of individuals to influence their life situation (such as those of Foucault and Baudrillard). This involved a study of Swedish art students who could envisage having power over their own lives, as well as having the resources to create meaning. Inspired by the work of sociologists (notably Skeggs, 1997; 2004 but also Bourdieu (1996; 1975) and Becker (1984) the current thesis will criticise the idea that artists are in full control of their own lives and trajectories. This kind of individuality, according to Skeggs (1997; 2004), has been reserved for those with certain privileges, which is why theories of the self-authoring subject, such as Giddens’ (1984, 1991) understanding, reproduce the norm of a subjectivity which is essentially middle-class.

Following other work which explores the construction of subjectivities by discourse, such as Skeggs (1997), this thesis is interested in the way people engage in certain types of meaning-making related to their professional role. For example, in Aurell’s (2001) study of cleaners, the workers made an effort to construct a positive work-related identity, and succeeded in doing so, even though cleaning was seen as the prototype of a low-status job by the surrounding milieu. “Becoming”, in relation to an occupation, has been presented by theorists as a complex process involving routines and practices, as well as boundaries between practices where collaboration or conflict can occur which impacts on feelings of belonging to the occupation (Wenger, 1998). Socialisation processes are understood to influence the individual in a professional role, and to encourage people to aspire to one, but individuals will negotiate or reflect over these processes, and even reject them. Based on my empirical data, this can be exemplified by visual artists rejecting or conforming to distinctions between ‘free art’ and handicraft art or design. As such, a professional identity is developed over the course of social interaction, and some ways of being an artist, for example, may not be accepted by the art world (Becker, 1984). Ericson (1988) noted that, as it is important for artists in Sweden to obtain credentials certifying their status as professionals, elite art colleges can function as a

way of creating “closed” markets, and can represent excellence in a field of diffuse professional standards. As my respondents all have an MFA from a prestigious arts college, they have the right to claim a status which makes them more than lay people. In line with Paquette (ed., 2012:3), I refer to a type of “work-based form of agency” in discussing artists as having a profession or being professional.

In this work, I am interested in the constraints and possibilities experienced by individuals when they negotiate a professional role, in the sense that work will become part of their identification processes. However, I do not wish to reproduce a view of artists which represents them as the ultimate individuals with opportunities to shape themselves in relation to their activity. Nor does this mean that subjects have no power over their identity process, but that this process never takes place in isolation or without negotiation with powerful institutions, societal norms and power. Understanding identity as the “social positioning of self and others” (Bucholz and Hall, 2005:586) provides a theoretical framework which allows me to analyse the process of being and becoming by taking into account the dialectics of the way we are shaped and shape ourselves socially and through our experiences.

Epistemological positioning of the thesis

In this section, I aim to discuss the balance between the interpretation of the analysis and the challenge of remaining loyal to both the material and the respondents. This thesis is grounded in my interest in the meaning of work, both socially and in the lived experience of individuals. The focus lies in how structural or symbolic features affect the subjectivity of individual artists in terms of discourses surrounding art as an occupation, in social contexts as well as the conditions of this type of work. The perspective of this thesis is rather similar to other studies of both symbolic and economic structures in terms of understanding artists’ work and life (notably Flisbäck, 2006; 2013; Taylor and Littleton, 2012). Its contribution, however, can be found in an analysis of (the possibility of) developing artistic subjectivity through the course of education, working life and family life from a Swedish perspective.

Compared to the humanist approach to art, focussing on issues of quality and aesthetics, the sociology of art has been referred to as “the view from outside” (Zolberg 1990:9). Sociologists tend to view art and the artist as dependent on social context and deriving their value from external conditions rather than intrinsic to the art works themselves. Exemplified

by Becker (1984) and Bourdieu (1996), the artist is understood as worker, part of a collective process rather than an individual genius or divinely inspired creator. She is understood to fill the societal position of the artist and conform to the rules of her field/the art world (Bourdieu 1975; Hansson, 2015). Although they differ regarding the centrality of conflict and struggle for resources in the perspective of Bourdieu and the greater focus on cooperation in Becker, they both view art as a social construct (Zolberg, 1990). The two sociologists are criticised for positioning artists as “passive” and for being too focused on processes of trying to maximize chances for success (Zolberg, 1990: s. 129). The understanding of the collective process of the art work as well as the social construction of the artist represented by sociologists such as Becker and Bourdieu often contrasts with the more individualistic way artists understand themselves (Heinich, 1997; Zolberg, 1990). Through an analysis of the artistry of Van Gogh, art sociologist Natalie Heinich (1997) argues that singularity is the central value of art, and that the modernistic concept of art is the epitome of this value regime. The artist thus becomes the embodiment of the value regime of the singular, unique individual. In her 2009 article, Heinich argues for a sociology that is not focused on collective processes but in line with the logic of artists’ understanding of art works as the expression of a singular person.

How does a theoretical perspective incorporate itself into research? Firstly, I have chosen my perspective in a constant dialogue with my material. Theory is used as a way of placing my material in an explanatory framework, in order to reach conclusions which are transparent and hopefully consistent. It is also based on certain interests, as well as in relation to other research perspectives of my field. In this thesis, I adhere to Eikhof and Warhurst’s (2013) claim that any research should incorporate a perspective on social divisions of labour arising from different social categories, such as gender, race and class. My point of departure particularly involves a class and gender perspective, which will be elaborated upon further in the methods section. One of my most acute interests involves how my respondents refer to certain mental capacities in terms of coping with their existence as artists. Artists as individuals are fully capable of reflecting on and interpreting these contexts in their own life histories (c.f. Taylor and Littleton, 2012). In working with the survey for the alumni report (Lindström, 2012), I noticed that one of the free text answers suggested that art schools should arrange courses to help give students more confidence in terms of coping with working life after graduation. Other abilities, such as being self-reliant, enduring and trusting, coping with loneliness and having integrity, were also prevalent as resources understood to help

coping in my material.

My respondents tended to oscillate between structural and individual understandings of their situation, with an emphasis on the former. They could compare the presence of galleries, museums and other art venues in Stockholm with larger European cities, and talk about the implications for their ability to work, then resort to saying things like: “maybe I’m not entrepreneurial enough for success” (Isabella). They often spoke about how to improve their situation, and their responsibility for doing so, then spoke about incidents which were beyond their control, such as “My gallery closed down during the economic crisis” (Kajsa). As I have outlined, arts researchers also highlight mental abilities such as “working within the uncertain” (Edström, 2008) and being confident (Taylor and Littleton, 2012) as important traits of an artist. In this sense, I position myself more structurally in this thesis, as I consider this perspective to be missing in the respondents’ stories of themselves, although it clearly affects their work and their opportunities in terms of identifying as artists. Thus, social categories such as gender and class formation are still considered to matter in ‘individualised’ working lives such as those of artists (c.f. Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). In order to theorise these views on the capacities of the mental self in relation to the social, I have turned to subjectivity theory, as it represents the utterances, discourses, narratives and language in my material.

The use of discourse and narrative theory and method has implications for how my respondents’ answers are understood. The analysis did not ask whether they were honest or not in their descriptions of events, feelings, attitudes, identity, experiences¹⁵, etc. This does not mean that I consider them unreliable, but that the interest lies in the constructive ability of

¹⁵Experience has acted as the basis for a great deal of research – notably feminist research (Skeggs, 1997). As women have been positioned as not having the right to have important experiences, individually or subjectively, feminist research has used women’s experiences as the basis for better and more objective theories (such as questioning the fact that universality is grounded in male experience in standpoint theory; see Harding, 2004). The problem, as outlined by Skeggs (1997) and Winther Jørgensen (2002), is a tendency to create hierarchies between what are taken to be right or wrong experiences, such as when experiences are used as “proof” of legitimate claims to knowledge. Equally, women are not a homogenous group with similar positions in relation to power. The critique is that standpoint theory risks reproducing the ruling division of “them” and “us”. Experience here is not used as a way of defining ‘true’ ways of experiencing things, such as the true artist. Instead, following Skeggs (1997), experience is understood not to ‘belong’ primarily to subjects but to be part of what constitutes subjects. Experience produces subjects whose identity is always under construction. However, also in line with Skeggs (1997), I do not believe subjects can move in and out of their positions or roles simply by the strength of their will, as theorised by Becker (1982). Instead, subjects may find themselves in troubled positions which they struggle to find a way out of, and may have little or no power to do so.

their extracts, how it builds understandings which create something from that which is being described, and what the consequences are of that description (Winther Jørgensen, 2002). In this thesis, discourses have been chosen in order to investigate what seems to be taken for granted, considered natural, or impossible to change, such as the notion of innate talent and the fact that it is impossible to teach someone how to be an artist, as noted in article 1. The thesis also attempts to understand the consequences of these statements. However, not everything is analysed as language in my material. In article 3, I analyse the importance of the support of family and spouse for the construction of a trusting and enduring subject position, and this support is understood as an (often economic) asset rather than a point which is interesting for discourse analysis. Similarly, article 2 explores the impact of identity formation and work experiences on the narratives involving holding down a number of jobs. As Wetherell (2001) discusses, discursive accounts can be understood to reflect underlying authentic material, as well as physiological and subjective experiences, but the analytical task also involves understanding how the social world consists of descriptions, words, narratives and discourses in terms of activities which contribute to meaning.

In accordance with Winther Jørgensen (2002), I believe that it is important for researchers to take a critical position, not in order to undermine certain understandings of the world but in order to allow that the subject of our study could be different, and that some understandings can take the form of certain truths, locally and socially. I believe that researchers take risks when they participate in constructing or upholding existing discourses. For example, when researchers on artistic education suggest that a “free” art school curriculum is the best way to prepare art students for their future work, their claims become naturalised and consolidated instead of being problematised as powerful discursive constructs which create certain subject positions. These, in turn, make other positions unavailable or “troubled”. That which is taken for granted is often related to power (Winther Jørgensen, 2002). This does not mean that the claim is not “true”, but that it is productive; it serves to create an understanding of artistic work in a way which excludes other possible ways of organising it. The claim also obscures the culturally and historically situated properties of the discourse (c.f. Haraway, 1988).

This means that in doing research, I also take a position as a researcher, which makes it possible to interpret data with the aim of meeting the requirements of scientific enquiry and therefore of contributing important knowledge. This interpretation of my data is not always

compatible with the interpretation of my respondents, which is an ethical issue for any researcher who engages with the lived experience of people. For example, Skeggs (1997) claimed the right to her interpretation even when it did not conform to how her respondents wished to present themselves (as working class). Although Skeggs (1997) did not wish her readers to see her respondents in fixed categories, it became clear to her that their situation was characterised by fixation rather than movement, and her concept of respectability became the key to understanding this. In this thesis, the concepts of artistic work and freedom, as understood differently by different actors, have functioned the same way in terms of understanding how the respondents (or significant actors such as their educational institution) act differently and are differently positioned in their quest for the life and career they want. For me, the aim and aspiration of critical analysis is to “dig deeper” than aspects which are taken for granted, and to seek different meanings in the material from those which are apparent on the surface (Winther Jørgensen, 2002).

Exploring the ‘becoming’ of the artist

Collection of the empirical data

The dissertation consists of empirical findings using qualitative and quantitative methods. Empirical data collection for the studies was carried out in the period between 2011 and 2013. In 2011, I was assigned the task of producing an alumni report for the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. The report consisted of a survey sent to all former graduates of the Institute who had studied from 1995 to 2009. It was produced in collaboration with my employers at the Institute, and was accepted by the vice chancellor. The report also consisted of interviews with eight former students (Lindström, 2012). The survey had a response rate of 43% (n=160), similar to earlier alumni reports made by the Institute. The report was compiled and has been used as background data for this thesis, especially for article 1. Following the report, 12 former students from the arts Institute were interviewed, all of whom graduated between 1995 and 2010. For the first article, additional interviews were conducted with two professors at the Institute, along with the vice chancellor at the time.

The study presented in article 4 consists of survey material sent to all members of the Swedish National Artists’ Organisation (KRO/KIF) in 2011¹⁶. It represents a more comprehensive and

¹⁶The survey is part of the research project *Artistic careers and family life. A sequential study of uncertain work strategies*, directed by Marita Flisbäck, Ph.D, Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of

generalisable study in the thesis, as the issue of work-life balance had not been explored in the context of Swedish artists before. Using survey data, the study explores the significance of gendered allocation in terms of the ability to work as an artist, not only in the professional sense, but also in the sense of domestic and care work. The studies presented in articles 1, 2, 3, and 5 are primarily based on interview data. A discussion of this method will follow below.

Interviews

Alongside the survey material from the alumni study and the work-life balance study, interviews were chosen for collecting empirical data to help understand how individuals articulate, negotiate, understand and resist their situation as artists in different life situations. The set of interviews began during the work with the alumni report. I wanted the interviews to be open-ended, so that the respondents could have ample space for telling their stories. In this sense, the idea of the interviews was to capture respondents' narratives regarding their work and identity, from their family background to their educational years, their current situation and their thoughts about their future. A semi-structured interview guide was constructed and used for the remaining work, with some alterations, throughout the alumni- and the post-alumni report interviews. As the perspective of the graduates is the focus of the thesis, the number of staff and graduates interviewed was deliberately non-proportional.

All in all, 20 graduates from the Institute were interviewed, 11 women and nine men, plus three people from the staff at the Institute (see Appendix 1). One lecturer was a former student of the Institute, and was questioned about her experiences as a student, an artist and a member of staff at the art college. In the selection process, consideration was given to ensuring a heterogeneous age and gender constellation. The respondents' age varied from 30 to 51 years at the time of the interviews, which took place between autumn 2011 and spring 2012, and in spring 2013 (see Appendix for list of respondents). The interviews were typically one hour long. They were conducted in cafés, or in the homes or workplaces of the respondents, such as studios and offices.

The interviews were subsequently transcribed, and the quotes have been translated from Swedish to English. The transcriptions were firstly made verbatim, with pauses, laughter and

Gothenburg, from 2009 to 2014. The project was funded by the Swedish Research Council (Dnr. 2008-1304). The survey was administered by Statistics Sweden (SCB). I worked for the project full time for 5 months in 2012.

verbal “mistakes” such as double wording or repetition. Where excerpts appear in my texts, however, the utterances have been made “proper” i.e. double wording and multiple pauses have not been included. This is because in the process of analysis, I was interested in the activity of language use and signification, not the language itself, as would be the case in conversation analysis (Taylor, 2001). It is also because of comments I received from respondents who read their transcripts and expressed some embarrassment over how their speech looked in text form (pauses which are normal in conversational interaction may give the impression of insecurity or slowness when they appear as text). In the text, the respondents have been given pseudonyms, with the exception of the professors and the vice chancellor who are noted according to their professional roles.

The respondents interviewed after the alumni report had given consent to be contacted in the initial survey. During initial contact and at the interview, the respondents were given information about the scope and aim of the study, and told that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any time during the work. They were informed that their answers were to become the material of both the alumni report and, by extension, this thesis. The respondents are represented anonymously and had the opportunity to read the transcripts after they were completed. Four of the respondents wished to do so. The vice chancellor of the Institute consented to his participation despite the fact that he could easily be identified. He was given the opportunity to read the transcript of the interview and the drafts of the article itself, and was asked to consent to the use of quotes.

Analysis

At a general level in the work on this dissertation, I have found the idea of “the analytic hierarchy” useful (Ritchie & Lewis eds., 2003: 212). The analytic hierarchy is a model for depicting the stages and processes involved in qualitative analysis, starting from initial data management, such as identifying initial themes, and moving “up” to summarising data in descriptive accounts, in order to reach the analytical “top”. This involves detecting patterns, developing explanations and seeking applications to wider theory. I used the analytic hierarchy to illustrate my analytical process as it was not linear. Instead, the stages of the analytical process can be compared to a “ladder” which the researcher moves up and down during the process of analysis, shuttling between levels of abstraction (Taylor 2001; Ritchie & Lewis (eds.), 2003). This process is also called an iterative analytical process (Taylor, 2001).

Following narrative analysis, these themes summarise turning points and inaugural events in my respondents' lives. These events involve their training and graduation, their experience of working, artistically and non-artistically, and having a family. The themes are represented by the different studies in this dissertation, with the addition of a study of survey material involving more general aspects of work and family for artists, as this theme was previously under-researched in a Swedish context.

Qualitative analysis - exploring discourse and narratives

Following a theoretical understanding of language as structured, with implications for the way we understand ourselves and act in our social reality, the analysis focused on finding, describing and explaining this structure in terms of social practice (Potter & Wetherell, 1992; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). I was curious to investigate how certain aspects of social reality are produced, how certain statements become "common sense", how meaning is constructed and what consequences this has (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000; Wetherell et al. (eds.), 2001b). In order to do so, this dissertation uses discourse and narrative analysis.

Broadly speaking, discourse analysis is understood as a "set of methods and theories for investigating language in use and language in social contexts" (Wetherell et al. (eds.), 2001a:i). An analysis of discourse is often interested in the boundaries surrounding phenomena, and the social consequences of certain discourses (Potter & Wetherell, 1992; Börjesson & Palmblad, eds., 2007). Examples include what it means to be categorised as "female artist" or "creative" (c.f. Skeggs, 1997). Narrative analysis contributed to a post-war rise in humanist approaches which aimed to focus on life histories, and in a secondary way, formed part of a poststructuralist interest in narrative as socially constructed and constructing (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Andrews et al., 2008). In my work, the focus lies in experience-centred narrative as opposed to an approach which considers narratives to involve simply recounting particular events (such as in Labovian analysis). Here, narratives are understood to be integral to a subject's sense of self, as they give expression to individual and shared effects, experiences and thoughts (Andrews et al., 2008). As the analyses involved categorising respondents' stories into three overarching, significant themes in the interviews, (education; artistic work and other work; family life), some of them did not exclusively involve the discourse genre, and I employed the definition of discourse which was understood to be best for working with institutional structures (Skeggs, 1997). As some of the articles do not relate

to a clear institutional structure, the analysis was altered to fit better with the respondents' stories. However, I employed a form of narrative analysis which fit with discourse analysis, as it focused on the construction of meaning. The analytical approach was much more appropriate for the kind of stories which emerged and which were considered to belong to certain themes. As such, the aim was to develop a close relationship between ontology and epistemology, theory and material.

In article 1, which focuses on the educational background of my respondents, I specifically adopted the concept of discursive repertoires. Discursive repertoires are "broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images" (Potter & Wetherell, 1992:90). They are resources for constructing versions of reality and for performing particular actions, and therefore act as "building blocks" to help organise the content of discourse. In a discussion by Edley (2001:202), the concept of 'repertoires' is used by researchers who place more emphasis on "human agency within the flexible deployment of language" than on the concept of discourse as it is used from a more Foucauldian perspective which, as earlier discussed, views people as subjected. However, my aim was to analyse how actors contribute to a co-construction of language which establishes certain positions in terms of subjects. This, in turn, may have effects which do not benefit the individual actor (c.f. Skeggs, 1997). The concept of (un)troubled subject positions was employed to avoid subjects being seen as determined by social systems or discourses, and in order to indicate how these processes involve elaboration and paradox (Staunæs, 2003). The concept is used for understanding spaces (such as an arts institute) where subjectivities/identities become difficult or inappropriate, or where they challenge assumptions which are taken for granted. The untroubled subject position, in contrast, is a subject "in sync" with discursively constituted assumptions or norms (Staunæs, 2003). This makes the subjective experience of a higher arts education different for different actors. In line with Edley's (2001) analysis of the production of masculinities, I have attempted to show how constructing an identity as an artist is complicated, and is co-produced with people who act as gatekeepers for the resources which construct this identity. This is bound up with issues of power, as cultural, social and even economic privileges can be associated with this status (Gustavsson et al. eds. 2012).

On a general level, the analysis served to explore how different actors with different access to

power use discourses and narratives as resources for creating a certain understanding of desirable behaviour, and whether or not my respondents could understand and navigate this. I focus on narrative as a way of expressing personal experience because I am less interested in the structure of language in analysis (Squire, 2008) and more interested in the meanings or the social positioning narrative produces or reflects, i.e. "what narrative does" (Andrews et al., 2008:8). Concentrating on how narrative is formed allowed me to study identities and focus on the local practices through which it is produced, as well as understand how the respondents might draw on a wider cultural understanding of phenomena (Phoenix, 2008). I understand my transcripts to contain both the story of an objective "lived life" and a "told story" (Squire, 2008:45), which encompass meanings specific to the narrator. The told story might cover the respondent's journey through graduating from a specific degree, setting up a business and juggling childcare with being the breadwinner and finding time in the studio. Also, links were sought between discourses, narratives and identity, in statements such as "I am (not)/I was (not)", i.e. narratives of belonging or not belonging (Foster, 2012).

In sum, my method consisted of narrative-discursive analysis of text and use of language. I began my analysis at text level (in my case, my transcripts) in order to understand how my respondents used language to construct their sense of themselves and the social environment they acted in. I looked for choices of word, metaphor and utterance which characterised people or actions, or the level of certainty or problematisation of what was described. The analysis also entailed attempts to understand whether the utterances described any overarching theme, such as change or powerlessness. This process was undertaken to support interpretation and provide evidence from the text (Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). In the last stage of analysis, I explored the relationship between discursive narrative practice and social practice. Does the discourse in the material involve social implications? Here, I applied wider theory, such as changing labour markets and gender theory, in order to understand how my material fit into processes and activities (Taylor, 2001).

Quantitative analysis – exploring correlation

The aim of my discursive and narrative analysis was therefore to offer an interpretation of the meaning or significance my respondents gave to the overarching themes of this dissertation. The quantitative analysis in article 4, in contrast, involved a more deductive method of understanding or predicting the relation between the dependent variable work-family conflict

and gender, in order to understand the importance of certain aspects of work-family conflict in a more explorative fashion¹⁷. Although quantitative analysis in the social sciences is also used to investigate the phenomena involved in meaning (Djurfeldt et al., 2003), it separates the meaningful from the random, where qualitative analysis serves to understand processes of meaning-making. Quantitative analysis is suitable for research questions involving correlation and relationships between variables, such as gender and different kinds of operationalised variables like work-family conflict.

The analysis in article 4 is predominantly deductive and hypothesis-driven. Its purpose was to outline general patterns in the material, such as variation and other properties of variables, as well as to identify important mechanisms behind certain social events, such as family-work conflict (as operationalised by me), and explore them in more depth. The census was sent to all member of the Swedish National Art's Organisation (KRO/KIF), 3154 individuals and has a response rate of 64 per cent. Social events are understood to be caused by a "complex combination of mechanisms that in turn are activated by a series of conditions" (Djurfeldt et al., 2003:36). The role of social science is to identify these and to analyse which mechanisms might be more important than others, as well as to discern which correlations might be spurious. In article 3, factor analysis was used to find patterns in the covariance of a number of variables in terms of whether they measure a similar phenomenon. An index was constructed to add these variables together, and this was used as a way of operationalising what we called work-family conflict. We could see that female gender negatively affected this conflict, but the hypothesis was that other independent variables were also affecting work-family conflict. In order to test this, we used multiple regression analysis with dummy variables, and thus examined how much of the variance in the dependent variable could be traced back to the independent variables. However, the theory accepts that it is not possible to capture and measure all causes in a statistical model. The aim instead is to try and find a model which explains the variance in the dependent variable in ways which are open to discussion and theorisation.

Why use different methods and analysis?

In her summary of research carried out in the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s on artists' working lives, Shaw (2004:2) concluded that, although census data and labour market surveys

¹⁷ See article 4 for a more detailed description of the operationalization of the dependent variable.

are valuable for exploring trends, the methodology may not sufficiently reflect “the complexity of artists’ working lives”. Nor is it clear whether census data captures the majority of practising artists in a country. Using trade unions and professional associations is a common way of accessing more general data on occupational groups, and since membership of these organisations has traditionally been high in the Nordic countries, researchers turn to them for data (Røyseng et al., 2007; Flisbäck, 2013). However, given the conditions of the art world, where it often takes a long time to be recognised and to develop a stable career, and where some never do achieve recognition, these associations favour older artists, a fact which was mirrored in our survey. Surveys like these are therefore valuable, but will miss artists who do not belong to formal structures. This is why more qualitative approaches to artists’ working lives are important. However, survey data and analysis is still valuable in research on the arts, especially in terms of more explorative studies such as the one in article 4 of this thesis. The choice of material and methodology is related to the kinds of question the researcher considers it important to ask, and the kinds of question we asked in the survey material were best suited to the ways in which it was analysed.

Summary of the articles

Article 1.

Lindström, Sofia (2015) Constructions of Professional Subjectivity at the Fine Arts College. Professions and Professionalism, 5(2) <http://dx.doi.org/10.7577/pp.869>.

In this study on alumni from a prestigious arts college in Sweden, the core of the training was found to involve the positioning of the students as required to construct their five years at the Institute freely and independently. The staff held strong beliefs about endowment and freedom to choose, and this (among other factors) resulted in ambivalent understandings of the artistic role among the alumni. In other words, being trained in what it meant to *be* an artist was in focus, leaving what it meant to *work* as an artist untouched by the staff of the Institute. These notions of freedom and endowment are analysed as discursive resources which shape a self-reliant subjectivity. Some students were more in sync with the pressure of being able to navigate in a laissez-faire situation, where they were able to choose within a space of infinite choice. These were labelled as having untroubled subjectivities. On the other hand, this environment could make students question themselves as artists if they were not sufficiently self-reliant in making the right choices. Some students also questioned the lack of educational

outline and lack of career preparation at the institute. These students were labelled as having a troubled subjectivity. Although the master's degree functioned as a powerful asset in order to construct an identity as a professional artist, failure to be able to work after graduation was mostly seen as resulting from poor choices or low self-confidence, rather than being related to their training or to the structures of the art world. In my study, part of the ambivalence involved in regarding art as an occupation or a career choice, or even rejecting the idea of art as work entirely, resulted largely from an understanding of art as a continuation of a childhood interest, not an instrumental choice of career.

Article 2.

Lindström, Sofia (2016) Artists and Multiple Job Holding—Breadwinning Work as Mediating Between Bohemian and Entrepreneurial Identities and Behavior. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*. 6 (3): 43-58. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.19154/njwls.v6i3.5527>.

In order to understand how the experience of having multiple jobs relates to artists' identity, this study explores artists' narratives of their income-bringing work which is either unrelated or only partly related to their artistic work (breadwinning work). The analysis is basically concerned with two broad categories of narrative: breadwinning work as considered as more or less "beneficial" or "detrimental" to artistic work. These narratives relate to different forms of identity or work behaviour which are categorised as "bohemian", "bohemian-entrepreneurial" or "entrepreneurial". Artists with a more bohemian type of identity tend to strive to build a career free from market demands, and tend to use the salary from their breadwinning work as a means of making time for creating art which does not involve the need to bring in an income. These artists tend to have a subjective understanding of success, which involves the ability to create in a focused, but flexible way unrelated to the needs and wishes of a buyer. This kind of non-market oriented artistic identity has traditionally been encouraged by Swedish arts policy as well as higher education in art. Other artists might develop a bohemian identity in the sense that they consider art to merge with the identity of the artist, but their work behaviour will be geared towards objective, outward success and visibility (in the art world first and foremost). This work behaviour is labelled entrepreneurial behaviour. These artists will strive to avoid breadwinning work as it damages the development of their identity as professionals. This behaviour was partly encouraged by the artists' college as part of a discourse of self-reliance involved in their education, and is also related to recent cultural policy measures which encourage entrepreneurship in the arts. The

category involving purely entrepreneurial identity and behaviour was defined by wanting to achieve success also outside the art world. These were found to be very rare, but provided an interesting discussion on the different ways in which artists engage in art work. However, experiences of poor or exploitative conditions in breadwinning work were ultimately found to affect the artists' attitude towards this type of work, regardless of identity/work behaviour. As many artists find themselves in a position where they have to hold down a number of jobs, deteriorating work conditions will be an issue for cultural policy, as well as for artists trying to build a career and a professional identity. An example involves the new rules for temporary employment in Sweden.

Article 3

Lindström, Sofia (coming) "It always works out somehow." Artist's formation of trust and hope in relation to the insecure or unsuccessful career. Submitted to *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*. Revise and resubmit, Oct. 2016

This article is a discursive exploration of how Swedish visual artists cope with the uncertainty of success in their chosen field, and the discrepancy they may experience between their actual lives and the career they would like to have. The theoretical model in the article, based on Simmel's concept of trust, defines trust as a "leap" (suspension) from interpretation of a current situation, across the unknowable, to a favourable expectation. Respondents' discourses showed that their main expectation was to continue their artistic activity and to develop their creative identity. This was represented by sound bites such as "it will work out somehow", which was analysed as examples of suspension. The reason they remained positive (could form a positive interpretation) was mainly related to their previous experience of being able to sustain their artistic work and keeping their artistic identity intact. Having an MFA from an arts college would logically be a 'good reason' (interpretation) why an artist might expect to undertake an arts career. However, the acceptance to the arts college itself was found to form part of the respondent's first expectation in itself, as the college is considered exclusive and prestigious. Due to the intense competition to get in, the respondent's temporarily left the issue of future survival aside, and enjoyed having passed the eye of the needle of art college acceptance. At the end of their five years, the respondents needed to form new expectation as they drew nearer to college graduation and the uncertainty after.

However, the model of trust presented above does not take into consideration how some

individuals might make a leap of faith without necessarily having favourable expectations about the results. This is likely to apply to many artists embarking on an artistic career with little chance of success. The Simmelian model of trust is therefore reworked into a model of hope, in order to develop a better understanding of why artists embark on, or remain in, an insecure and sometimes unrewarding career. As discourses on an arts education at the art college attended by the respondents placed little emphasis on art as a professional career, the respondents needed to resort to hope rather than trust during their studies at the college. Hope is understood as involving a negative interpretation (it is unlikely that it will work out), but nevertheless making a leap of faith towards the expectation of continuation. The analysis suggests that trust and hope involve not losing an investment in identity, or the opportunity to develop an identity, and that the following subjectivity of the discourse of holding on to hope and trust is the subjectivity of the enduring artist. Thus, the art world is shaped by whoever is able to demonstrate trust in terms of endurance, as in terms of abilities in the individual, not in terms of certain resources, such as social and economic support affecting the ability to endure.

Article 4.

Flisbäck, Marita and Lindström, Sofia (2013) Work-family Conflict among Professional Visual Artists in Sweden: Gender Differences in the Influence of Parenting and Household Responsibilities. *Nordic Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2(16): 239-267.

The historical construction of the (male) artist as opposed to a mundane life involving children and family, is tested in this article in relation to contemporary Swedish artists' self-reported levels of work-family conflict. This conflict is considered to involve gender, as well as housework and care-work practices. Sweden is understood as a particularly interesting case for understanding these issues, as it has a history of gender equality policy targeting men's and women's ability to work and have a family. Artists are understood as an occupational group with atypical and often precarious work conditions, and are seldom the focus of studies of work-family conflict. The material consisted of survey data from the Swedish Artists' Organisation (KRO/KIF), which was sent to all members (the final response rate was 64%). The dependent variable was operationalised through factor analysis of four survey questions relating to the ability to combine work and family. The subsequent analysis of the correlation between work-family conflict, gender, division of housework and parenting responsibility was analysed through multiple regression analysis.

The results found that overall levels of conflict were moderate. However, women artists reported greater conflict than male artists. The conflict was also found to be in the direction of family to work, i.e. women artists primarily reported that they had problems finding time for work due to their family responsibility. The results could also show that parenting responsibility negatively impacts on work-family conflict. For women, this already happens with their first child, and for men with the second, and the impact for men was greater than for women. For men, there was also a strong correlation between work-family conflict and being single. An unequal division of labour impacted most on women's work-family conflict.

It is suggested that the stronger correlation between work-family conflict and single parenting in men with two children involves their greater reliance on a partner in terms of managing the demands of family and work in heterosexual relationships. In Sweden, where the normative environment involves a strong discourse on gender equality, women still taking the lion's share of household work may impact on the way they report work-family conflict, as they may consider it unjust. The article thus indicates an ongoing dynamic in the private sphere in terms of the ability to engage in an occupation which is often seen as requiring a great deal of time and devotion, but offering large internal rewards. In terms of the way choosing a more flexible and insecure working life is currently understood, it is argued that the gendered experiences of work and family among artists are of more general interest than artists alone.

Article 5.

Lindström, Sofia. "Maybe I disfavoured the family quite a lot". Exploring work-life balance and the gendered (in)ability of immersing in work among artists. Manuscript.

Artists are known to blur aspects of work and home as a result of incorporating their identity into their work. As artists tend to enjoy their work, policies targeting a citizen's ability to maintain a work-life balance have little meaning. However, the article argues that gendered allocation of care and domestic work, as well as welfare policies which aim to remedy gender inequality, still affect artists' ability to work and identify as artists.

Using a discursive-narrative method, this article seeks to understand how the gendered issues of family and domestic work are negotiated and constructed by male and female contemporary artists from Sweden, and how these narratives and discourses relate to identity

and power(lessness). The analysis found that a discourse of immersion influenced the subjective work of the respondents. Immersion is a temporal concept relating to the ability to concentrate on the immediate work situation and renounce other aspects of life for work. The women artists tended to consider that the care of (small) children demanded the same level of immersion as art work, and they struggled to combine the two. As they were seldom economically successful as artists, they compensated by putting more effort into caring for the family, which clashed with their ability to project themselves as work-oriented. The male artists, in contrast, could find ways of immersing themselves whether they contributed economically to the family or not. Thus, the analysis found different patterns of dependence for male and female artists, although they indicated a similar devotion to work in their narratives. In order to immerse themselves fully, women indicated that they were dependent on child care and help from parents, while the article argued that men were more dependent on their wives or girlfriends in terms of care work in order to be parents and artists. The article draws on feminist theory of love as a source to give or to exploit, which is used differently by the sexes, why in heterosexual couples, gender inequality can persist due to gendered norms in spite of gender equality legislation.

When it came to sharing their care-work pattern, women and men equally risked disappearing from the art world because of the need for constant visibility and the demands involved in immersing themselves in their work. However, not every artist demanded immersion or adhered to the discursive formation of art as a lifestyle. Some, instead, formed narratives of art as “a job”, and consequently advocated a separation between art and identity. The analysis found that artists often involuntarily blur aspects of work and life, thus problematising the image of the artist as someone willing to be seen as totally immersed in his/her work. These results indicate that policies towards gender equality still resonate among artists, particularly when women artists speak about child care. An example involves the way they see the months of paternity leave as their means of building a work identity alongside an identity as a mother, on more equal terms with men.

Becoming an artist - Concluding the thesis

This thesis has focused on the subjectivity of artists in terms of their work. Since roughly the 1970s, the structural organisation of work is said to have changed, becoming increasingly

insecure, flexible and precarious (Allvin, 2011; Edgell, 2006; Grönlund, 2004; Rodgers, 1989; Thörnquist and Engstrand eds., 2011). Artists and cultural workers are sometimes seen as forerunners in experiencing this trend towards flexible working lives (Menger, 1999). Artists tend to be targeted by researchers and politicians for their cosmopolitan, international and entrepreneurial character, and because they are seen as a “core” occupation for the much-publicised cultural industries (Florida, 2002; Throsby, 2010; de Peuter, 2014). Artists have not always been (and are still not) necessarily seen as workers, but the importance of university training for the professional status of artists (Singerman, 1999) has taken a turn towards an “occupational view” (Gerber, 2015:37) where art is seen as work rather than vocation or lifestyle. However, critical research also points to the fact that creative, free and self-fulfilling work is often characterised by insecurity, such as short-term employment, long working hours, low pay and the risk of self-exploitation, including the difficulty of distinguishing between work and leisure (Banks, 2014; Flisbäck, 2014; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Menger, 1999; Oakely, 2009; Taylor and Littleton, 2012).

The aim of the thesis is to understand the importance of different life situations for the formation of an occupational or professional artistic subjectivity. These situations are categorised as education, work and family life. The exploration of these involves understanding patterns of language, discourse or narrative, or more statistical patterns where different properties of variables or mechanisms affected or described a social event. The reason for exploring artists in relation to the formation of subjectivity lies in the nature of the new flexible, individualised work in contemporary society and economy, which affects workers’ identities. These include traits such as entrepreneurship and employability. The characteristics of workers in these forms of employment are sometimes said to no longer depend on collective properties but involve self-motivation (Allvin, 2011). This understanding of work is particularly compatible with views of the art world as highly individualised, where work is typically organised in the form of temporary projects involving fierce competition. It is also compatible with the ethics of devotion and hard work, as well as experiences of pleasure and meaning, where individuals blur aspects of their work into the rest of their life.

The conclusion of this thesis will begin by outlining how the articles addressed and answered the research questions. It will end with a segment outlining how the overall results of the articles can be considered to contribute to the research field of artistic subjectivity and careers.

The questions this thesis seeks to explore are as follows:

1. How do (professional) artists shape their sense of self in the context of the arts college? Which characteristics are seen as important in an artist, and how do art students relate to these properties?
2. How do certain work experiences, notably holding down a number of jobs, relate to the way artists formulate their (professional) identity?
3. How do artists cope with the prospect of not succeeding or not being able to sustain their artistic identity and activity?
4. How is the ability to work and identify as an artist affected and informed by having a family, mostly in terms of parental responsibility, but also in terms of being someone's child or partner?
5. What general knowledge can be found in the different analyses of education/work experiences and family life in terms of artistic work and the formation of an artistic identity and career?

A key claim in this thesis is that language, analysed as narratives and discourses, creates subject positions (Skeggs, 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1992; Winter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000; Börjesson & Palmblad, eds., 2007; Andrews et al., 2008). These positions provide us with a way of “making sense of ourselves, our motives, experiences and reactions” (Wetherell, 2001: 24). This thesis employs the sociological understanding of the self which involves social contexts, in contrast to more psychological views of the self as internal psychic structures and processes (Staunæs, 2003; Bacchi, 2005). In addition, the term is employed with sensitivity to how actors are engaged in their production of self, but also to how certain discourses and hence subjectivities are more available to some than others in this process, which a process closely linked to power. Not everyone is able to embody the category “artist”. Thus, the interest lies in the way certain social situations affect the production of self and meaning-making in relation to an occupational activity. By understanding various ways of talking about this activity, it is possible to study how powerful collective and individual understandings and meaning-making contribute to the way artistic work is created, and the way it relates both to the self and to social categories such as class and gender. In sum, different social contexts such as educational years, work experiences and family situation offer subjects positions they can either “fit into” or find themselves unable to

embody. Issues of work, education and family are clearly not specific to the art world. We are witnessing a historical moment where non-standard work is increasing (Allvin, 2011; Castells, 2001; Edgell, 2006; Kalleberg, 2011; Standing, 2011; Lingo and Tepper, 2013), and artists can function as useful windows for understanding how this type of work is experienced, how it contributes to the identity of the worker, and what it means for wanting or having a family. Their stories reflect the viewpoint of non-standard workers or employees (Gerber, 2015).

The following sections are designed to answer each of the research questions of the thesis, followed by a synthesis related to research question 5.

How the artist is positioned by the discursive resources of higher arts education – obliged to be free.

In the Swedish art world, educational credentials are important for art world acceptance (Ericsson, 1988; Witt, 2004). In the analysis of the arts college in article 1, a number of ideas, interpreted as discursive resources, were found in official documents or put forward by the staff. Discourses were analysed as collectively-held meanings and values, patterns of talking and ways of controlling understandings of concepts such as the artist. These were found in speech acts involving how people and situations are, were or need to be (“the students have to...”). Statements regarding the impossibility of teaching creativity (learning how to be an artist) were common, as well as statements on the necessity of a free curriculum for creativity or the creative person to flourish, i.e. an individual’s freedom to design his or her educational years as he or she likes. This is positioned as the most fertile ground or optimal platform for artistic development. Thus, a discourse of freedom encouraged a subjectivity of self-reliance, such as a capacity for self-motivation and self-responsibility. This position was connected with romantic notions of relating the freedom of the arts to understandings of the individual creative genius. At the Institute, freedom, seen as self-reliance, entailed the ability to choose within a space of infinite possibilities, and to navigate these possibilities by yourself. The self-reliant artist was responsible for his/her own trajectories, as they were positioned as the results of rational choice. It was analysed as a moralising discourse, which favoured those who were able to handle the pressure of making the right choices. The function of the discourse is thus understood to create a situation of selection – who is fit to be a free artist?

The alumni gave emotional responses to this self-reliant subjectivity, largely discernible in two categories: the untroubled or the troubled subject position. Some could, without much

“friction”, embody the self-reliant subject position and incorporate it into the construction of their identity. These individuals typically constructed their artistic subjectivity in relation to hard work, and in opposition to art as a career choice, i.e. constructing art as something one is rather than something one does. They saw the arts college as a platform for the artistic subjectivity they had already formed. This subject position could clash with experiences of the art world and work after graduation, where the lack of recognition, opportunities and support could stand in sharp contrast to the privileged situation at the Institute. Those understood to form troubled subject positions were not able to fit into the self-reliant position demanded by the Institute. They were largely discernible because they expressed discomfort or displeasure in terms of the limitlessness and lack of transparency of the situation, and wished for more structure, information, help or guidance. These individuals also shared experiences of having been met with silence by the staff of the Institute when they asked them about working in the arts, how to make a living from art or seeing art as something one does rather than something one is. They shared the understanding that an arts education provides the means to develop artistic skill and subjectivity. Thus, in relation to the troubled subject position, an art student was obliged to be free. This attitude could be identified very clearly in the statements concerning the alumni’s experiences after graduation, where they felt the great responsibility of a risky and precarious working life. Being self-reliant involves being able to navigate insecurity and uncertainty.

Thus, forming a professional identity during a higher arts education was fraught with contradictions. Individuals who could embody a self-motivating position, constructing “artist” as an identity rather than an occupation, were rewarded by the Institute. These rewards could be in the form of bursaries, but also something more intangible, such as being acknowledged by the professors as “interesting” and therefore “right”. The opposite position, a more vulnerable one which sought information on how to survive, was not rewarded. However, these positions were not equally available to all: some protested them or fell short in embodying them. Ultimately, the art students were not rewarded for “acting like students”, i.e. for being in the process of becoming, but needed to show that they could already embody the category of “artist”.

After graduation, resources outside the college provided the alumni with the ability to identify as artists, particularly in terms of access to a studio, support from peers and professional

acknowledgement such as commissions, sales and exhibitions. The prestige of the MFA functioned as a resource for the alumni in developing a professional identity. Although the formation of artistic subjectivity is not restricted to an arts education, and is also reliant on experiences in the broader art world, an arts education is a powerful producer and upholder of a discourse which positions individuals in different ways according to certain pervasive norms and values. It is my belief that powerful institutions, such as the arts college studied in article 1, not only help construct the art world as a system permeated by invisible power hierarchies (and thus insecurities), they also contribute to the formation of subjectivities and subject positions which support the reproduction of this system. As individuals in these institutions are considered responsible for their experiences of the art world, and this responsibility is linked to freedom, it can continue to conceal a systemic structure which rewards some more than others.

Positioning the artist in relation to work experiences: breadwinning work and the bohemian(-entrepreneurial) artist.

Artists are known to often juggle a variety of jobs, many of which (at least in Sweden) are in low-skilled, low-paid sectors¹⁸. As outlined in the previous discussion on the role of an arts education, powerful discourses tend to construct the preferred position towards art as a vocation, not a profession/occupation. Nonetheless, when alumni graduate from an arts college, most if not all of them nurture the prospect of being able to make a living from art. However, most derive their main income from other types of activities, often referred to as breadwinning work. The respondents' attitudes and constructions differed in two ways in terms of breadwinning work. It could be said to be "detrimental" or "beneficial" in terms of their ability to identify themselves and work as artists. This can be understood in relation to their subject position as artists, which can be characterised as either bohemian or entrepreneurial. It is argued in article 2 that analysing artists' experience of holding down several different kinds of job involves understanding the relationship (mediating) these two positions, or the difference between them, but also needs to be understood in terms of the conditions of their breadwinning work.

Article 2 analyses identity formation, work behaviour, and subjective and objective understandings of success, in order to understand artists' narratives on how they earn a living.

¹⁸Artists may also work in more highly-skilled technical sectors, such as the gaming and IT industries, which also reflect precarious working conditions (c.f. Flisbäck, 2014)

A bohemian artist constructs his or her identity as someone who does not produce art works for commercial success but for the internal rewards. This means that, in terms of narratives involving freedom, breadwinning work can be defined as creating a space free from creating sellable art work. It is therefore understood as a beneficial experience which satisfies certain artistic needs, such as being independent or working at your own pace, irrespective of what buyers want. These artists typically construct themselves in relation to “subjective success factors”, working as they themselves wish, not just creating work which is visible or which fulfils the wishes of a buyer or a commissioner. The latter subject position can make the experience of producing art an alienating one, especially in terms of making work visible or targeting funders for work.

Conversely, breadwinning work is seen as an interruption when an artist wishes to develop a career, focussing on visibility and contact with customers or collectors, or even commercial success outside the art world. This is considered a more entrepreneurial behaviour. Artists with a more bohemian identity can still be entrepreneurial, as art can still be seen as a way of life, i.e. a vocation rather than an occupation, in which case the artist is described as “bohemian-entrepreneurial”. These artists create their artistic identity in accordance with more “objective success factors” such as outward, visible work and deriving an income from their art work. Discourses which see taking on other jobs in order to survive as “failure”, or which speak of breadwinning work as “shit jobs”, are typical of these artists.

Neither this work behaviour nor these ways of forming an identity protect the artist from needing to earn a living in precarious jobs with exploitative conditions. The artists had experienced insecure and time-consuming work which demanded considerable effort but which offered almost no reward. More than anything else, ‘bad’ breadwinning work undermined their ability to maintain any continuity in terms of artistic work or careers. Sociological and economic theories which consider working lives to be becoming more polarised, precarious and insecure (Kalleberg, 2011; Standing, 2011) echo a common narrative among my respondents, who spoke of their difficulties in finding stable breadwinning work. They commonly experienced exploitative and deteriorating working conditions, and these must be taken into consideration in order to understand their different experiences of work, as well as the relation between these experiences and an artistic identity.

In earlier studies of the Swedish art world (notably Ericsson, 1988), artists were beginning to

understand themselves more and more as part of a work context, even though, compared to American artists, they had managed to perpetuate a romantic idea of an artist's individual creative genius. The analysis of the context of a specific higher arts education in this thesis concludes that this romantic ideal is still prevalent, positioning art as a vocation rather than an occupation, and that it continues to influence the subjective work of contemporary Swedish artists. This was labelled bohemian subjectivity. However, like Eikhof and Haunschild (2006), I argue that aspects of bohemian subjectivity, such as individualism and self-steering, go hand-in-hand with certain entrepreneurial behaviour. In this form of behaviour, the freedom to be your own person translates into a preference for self-employment and other professional behaviour, such as forming professional networks in order to enhance employability and exposure. This is why I argue that the concepts of bohemian, bohemian-entrepreneurial, entrepreneurial behaviour and subjectivity can be fruitful for understanding contemporary artistic subjectivity and art worlds.

The positioning of the artist in relation to family, and the need for trust and endurance
My respondents belong to a growing number of artists in the western world since the 1970s who contribute to what Menger (1999) calls an oversupply of artists. Article 3 explores the distance between a lived life and a desired life and career for artists, as well as the discursive strategies they employ in order to manage or close the gap. Having previous experience of continuation forms the basis for trust, as there is a promise of success somewhere. Hard work and education should be rewarded; it is only reasonable and fair. However, in the art world there is no such logic or fairness, and no such unofficial contract (Flisbäck, 2014).

In a competitive situation, artists have been found to nurture strong ethics of endurance, despite the precarity of their situation; a real artist is prepared to make sacrifices in order to remain in the art world. My empirical data does not reflect this attitude in a straightforward way, but understands the concept of endurance as a lack of alternatives, where artists have exhausted all other options for alternative careers. It can also be understood as not being prepared to lose the often substantial time they have invested in their career and identity as artists. They refuse to lose an investment they have made into their choice of a specific life. The respondents who had achieved success spoke about being lucky. A belief in luck can help artists cope with the fact that others who do not make it, even if they have the right requirements such as talent, education and hard work, might just have been unlucky.

However, if luck truly played a significant role in success in the art world, success would be less clustered around categories such as male gender, as found by research on the structural conditions of art worlds (Cowen, 1996; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Gill, 2002).

In order to endure their situation, artists create narratives of trust, hoping that everything will work out somehow. They also shield themselves from negative information about other artists' conditions. Related to this are narratives involving an acceptance of insecurity, fluctuations in commissions and income, and working for free. These narratives position the artist in terms of endurance, which can become a value judgement, i.e. a precondition of making art. The subjectivity involving the endurance of artists becomes logical in terms of their investment, as well as their perceived powerlessness in relation to an arbitrary art world. However, endurance also functions as a sign of worthiness. The focus on an individual struggle to endure and cope with insecurity thus forms the basis for a 'non-politics' of work, as the focus is on the individual capability to endure rather than the structural conditions of the relation between the state, the art world and work. Also, a focus on individual endurance obscures artists' dependence on others. The ability to trust relies on material security provided by others, notably parents and partners. Not everyone can be said to have the resources to formulate a self which is considered to endure.

The issue of support from family and spouse is explored in relation to forming an artistic subjectivity in terms of the positions this support allows the individual to take. It was common for my respondents to have their arts interest encouraged from an early age, as well as to have family members who undertook creative activities. The analysis found that this narrative position had a material basis in the form of support, primarily economic, from the artists' parents and spouses. This created a position of dependence which worried most respondents. Trust and endurance are thus understood in relation to the structural and social possibilities certain groups have to embody these positions, rather than context-free abilities of the individual psyche.

Family responsibilities made it difficult for the artists to position themselves in terms of seeing artistic work as "limitless" and requiring a great deal of time. The analysis found that the ideal ability in terms of being an artist was the ability to "immerse" themselves in their work, both in the context of the immediate work situation where they had to concentrate, and

in the general work situation in the sense of not being interrupted by demands from home or other types of work. The subjectivity resulting from this ideal was discussed as the ‘immersed artist’. Caring for a small child during parental leave, for example, could be framed in similar discourses of immersion, why the two activities could be difficult to reconcile; especially for women.

In relation to not bringing in income, women more than men spoke of compensating by spending more time caring for their families. It was also found that they did more domestic work, which contributed to the conflict they reported, where aspects of caring for their families could negatively affect their ability to do artistic work. The women’s narratives also involved more issues of emotional support towards their (male) partners, while the emotional content in male respondents’ narratives primarily involved a guilty conscience about not being at home because of their work. When men had similar care-provision patterns to their female partners, especially in relation to parental leave, they expressed equal fears about the risk to their career while they were not working, a risk of disappearing from the art world. The findings of the analysis suggest that men and women artists equally form a strong occupational identity – they equally long for immersion, but have unequal access to the ability to act on this identity in terms of the uninterrupted work and career they would like. The women’s ability to maintain an occupational identity as an artist was largely dependent on provision of child care by the state, but also on support from family members such as parents. Male artists’ ability to maintain their identity was dependent on their (female) partner taking more responsibility for domestic work. The artists’ strong occupational identity meant that they hoped that aspects of everyday life, such as domestic work and child care, would not invade their work space. Contrary to theories which suggest that artists integrate aspects of work and everyday life because of the pleasurable and limitless nature of their work, any blurring of work and life was found to be undesirable and largely beyond their control.

What is the contribution of the thesis to our understanding of the life and work of contemporary artists?

The contribution of this thesis involves an analysis of the possibilities and constraints involved in forming an artistic subjectivity in three different situations relating to an artistic career: education, work experiences and family life. The different phases of an artist’s career are analytically separate throughout the thesis, but the respondents largely experience them in an integrated way: the legacy of their educational years through discourses on self-reliability,

experiences of the art world and the labour market, their role as family provider and a continuing dependence on “original” family. Only an individual artist has the collected understanding of what is required to handle the different demands of these situations, and underpinning these demands are different understandings and norms in terms of labour, norms the artist engages in, criticises or supports, but has little power to control or change. This conflict was labelled “being an artist” or “working as an artist”, and it is clear that it continues to influence contemporary artistic identity.

In the art world, the predominant normative base still involves contacts and social networks, as well as a norm of subjective disinterest of art as work or incomebringing activity. Although this provides the artist with symbolic power in terms of art as a meaning-making, creative and valuable activity, this understanding is in conflict with a more normative understanding of work and labour, which particularly involves earning a wage and the ability to support themselves through their work, a prerequisite most artists will never be able to fulfil. This damages artists’ ability to understand themselves as professionals, and even as adults, as it forces them to depend on others. The state has played an important role in upholding the value of the arts and in valuing artists, despite, or even because of, their outside status vis-à-vis the realm of market logics. However, it has partially withdrawn this support through the removal of certain state measures which aimed to protect artists from the “negative effects of commercialism”. Parental responsibility pushes artists towards more normative behaviour in terms of their work, either making them more entrepreneurial in their artistic activity as they find ways to support themselves and their family through artistic work, or resulting in more day jobs, where they try to keep a few days or hours a week free for their “disinterested” artistic activity. However, they consider parenting something which should not disturb their activity, whether this is positioned according to the norms of the art world or according to the norms of the regular labour market. Partners, children, bodies which might fail the individual due to illness, are all things which might affect an artistic career. Individual artists experience difficulties when they are judged in terms of their overall effort, and may feel like failures as workers, “disinterested” artists or parents.

In line with the normative aspects of the art world, outlined by Bourdieu as the “reversed economy of the arts” (Bourdieu 1996), where artists would lose recognition if they displayed interest in economical gain or careerism, I would argue from the findings of the thesis that this

has shifted: during their college years, the respondents was rewarded for a careerist behaviour; to act as an already accomplished artist; holding a company, taking commissions, and so on. The respondents did not speak of economic gain as a flaw of the artist (although it should not be the primary interest of the artistic activity). However, the careerist behaviour has to be directed towards the art world. Thus, I would argue that the bohemian artist (the artist who is wholly internally motivated) is not the most valued subjectivity in the art world today, but the bohemian-entrepreneurial subjectivity, an identity that is turned towards a careerist endeavour in the art world. If the artist turns towards other more generalized audiences and buyers, it is still the case that she is at risk of losing the artistic identity (inspite of having a masters from an art college) and may start calling herself “designer” or any other concept more related to the cultural economy sphere. I argue that this relates to structural changes such as increaring competition and a changed societal discourse of the importance of the arts. The boundaries surrounding the artist role have simultaneously shifted and remained intact.

I argue that the more holistic perspective of this thesis enables us to compare the respondents’ actual situation to what they had hoped for as students in terms of achieving the life and self they wished for in relation to their work. As the “promise” of being chosen to the elite education did not result in a successful artistic career for the majority of respondents, this thesis explores the discrepancies between experiences of being “chosen” for an elite education and a precarious position on the labour market and in the art world after graduation. This perspective relates to how artists may nurture an understanding of art as a fundamental human activity (labour understanding 1), but also how their situation excludes them from the more normative labour concept of *career progression*. With hard work and dedication, they had hoped that the initial years of insecurity in the art world and on the labour market would eventually lead to a more stable trajectory and increasing chances of the working life and comfortable home life they desired. In contrast, the actual career and work experiences of the respondents generally contradicted the norm of career progression. They have had ups and downs and temporary successes, only to find themselves back at “square one”, despite any early successes. As one of my respondents said, slightly laconically: “the art world is like a fleeting gas”.

Artists engage in a working life where it is never possible to relax or feel safe. This is a kind

of “broken psychological contract” (Flisbäck, 2014), where hard work, education and dedication are never traded in for a more stable career pattern or a chance to feel secure and be able to predict their future. Among other psychological issues, this makes it hard for artists to adhere to norms of parenthood, as it is bound up with the way consumption patterns and material comfort tend to be constructed and understood. This situation highlights the fact that there is still a strong discourse on effort-reward agreement among the respondents, very much in line with the protestant ethic, an agreement which gives outcomes and rewards to hard-working individuals. It is a broken psychological contract as the working lives of artists seldom adhere to this kind of logic involving progression and effort-reward. This is where a more holistic approach is valuable for understanding artistic work and careers. Researchers such as Stenberg (2002), in contrast, argue that the opportunity for artists to envision an activity where they can create meaning as well as having power over their life contradicts social theories which suggests that individuals have limited power to develop their lives independently. The art students in his study envisioned wonderful opportunities for developing their career and their work as they wished. However, I argue that it is open to question whether this actually becomes a reality after they leave university.

This study shows that these ambitions rarely come to fruition, and this leads to speculation about the validity of theories which suggest the individual is capable of establishing a free, creative work situation. This goes beyond the immediate experience of artistic work, which is regarded as free from constraints, decorum, routines and uncreative processes. Following Skeggs (2004), these theories of self-propelled individuals supposedly in control of their own destiny can be seen as a construction of certain privileged positions, and they are ultimately problematic, as they reproduce the individuality of those with privileges. I therefore argue that, in terms of the life and career they aspire to, my respondents have less power to influence the trajectory of their lives than they think (c.f Bourdieu, 1975), and this is partially linked to issues of gender. It is also closely related to a welfare state which has not kept pace with changes in work practices. This means that people with working conditions like those of artists (mixed employment status, temporary work, insecurity) are in a very precarious position vis-à-vis the Swedish social security system. Pervasive norms of self-reliance and endurance mean that artists have few ways of making individual sense of the discrepancy between the career and life they would like and the perpetual insecurity in their working lives. Their only way around this is to individualise their situation even further in terms of the way

they understand the need for individual strengths, such as effort, or to resort to discourses of luck.

However, this does not mean the respondents belong to a powerless, or clueless group. As Hesmondalgh and Baker (2011) suggest, there is a crucial difference between those in monitored work situations and those who internalise commitment to hard work. The important difference between the artists in this study and many others with precarious and insecure working conditions is that my respondents love their work and activities, and they often have economic and emotional support, educational merits and stable middle-class backgrounds. They deliberately seek continuity in terms of their ability to work as artists, despite the insecurities they face. It is thus a study of what could be termed precarity of the privileged.

Artists who find themselves unable to be immersed and self-reliant, or to endure hardship as an artist, can problematise and complain about their situation, but they seem to have little power to change the structure of the art world or to relate it to broader work structures (c.f. Halrynjo, 2009). Therefore, having a certain work-related identity (for example, constructing artists as disinterested in financial reward) arguably involves being positioned in a power relationship. In her work on the danger of producing bad theory, Skeggs (2004:173) asks us to “stop theorising the conditions of possibility of the middle-classes”. I do not agree, as studies of the middle-classes provide rich insights into contemporary subjectivity as well as precarity, in a world of work which no longer rewards what is considered effort, and can even be in opposition to educational assets. We should be careful, however, not to universalise the findings from these studies. Class is an important ethical issue in terms of understanding the identity of artists in relation to their background. They cannot be reduced to their background, but without understanding it, I argue that we cannot understand the basis for the quite remarkable trust and coping strategies they develop and are forced to adhere to in their pursuit of artistic work. As they themselves speak of the need to have confidence, I argue that a more sociological understanding of the material basis of trust is important. I do not claim that it is more valid than psychological perspectives on resilience, confidence and trust, but that it is a “missing” yet interesting link in the process of becoming an artist.

During the work on this thesis, I have not wished to argue for or against understandings of the value of art in terms of capitalist market logics (“commercialism”), or an outsider status

involving freedom from conventional work or capitalist logics (“autonomy”). It was more interesting to outline how this conflict plays a major role in the identity work of Swedish artists. It is clear that art can function in terms of both of these forms of logic, and that the work and identity of individual artists can relate to both or one of them. It is likely that the conflict between these two understandings of how art work should be valued will continue to affect the way those engaging in art work identify themselves. Moreover, in line with Wendling (2012), I argue that the conflict fuels the particular kind of workers artists are, and that it cannot be resolved. In terms of the third understanding of labour (labour 3), a category which historically (labour 2) requires an ontological perspective (labour 1), the art world (which is intimately linked to capitalist markets as well as state operations) requires artists to understand themselves as engaging in work which is not historical but which is a fundamental human act (Wendling, 2012). This relates to the concept of freedom, as artists need to present their products as unique and the result of a free, unique individual. This is a more fruitful approach than engaging in questions about the position of art in a capitalist market order, or as something which challenges this order (c.f. Adorno, 2001; Banks, 2010; Caves, 2000; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006; Flisbäck, 2013).

The concept of freedom was an aspect which appeared repeatedly in all three themes of the thesis, albeit in different forms and defined in different ways. Traditionally, the notion of freedom is linked to what Simmel (1981) considers the desire to maintain autonomy in the face of pressure to adapt, and independence from market pressure (Bourdieu, 1996). It is a result of differentiation processes in society (Luhmann), or understood in cultural policy as the freedom of the arts from political intervention, such as that practised by fascist and communist regimes (Frenander, 2005). Freedom has also been discussed in relation to rejecting normative aspects of life such as comfort, having a family and a nine-to-five occupation (Becker, 1982; Bourdieu, 1996; Taylor and Littleton, 2012). In the same way as Marx et al. (2001) indicated how “freeing” workers in a capitalist society relates to individualised vulnerability, this is a romanticised form of freedom which leads to a special kind of vulnerability for those unable to attain it. The partial rejection of this kind of freedom was the most prominent aspect of my material on Swedish contemporary artists. In the section on education, freedom was defined by the Institute as students being free from having to navigate a curriculum, and being able to guide their own studies. In the section on work experiences, freedom could be constructed as being independent of the stress of financial

insecurity. It could also relate to freedom from regular wage labour (in terms of artists' own income) and from the logistics of the market, such as the requirements of buyers and commissioners. Self-employed artists aim to be free of a situation where others dictate their work hours or job assignments. This freedom can be contrasted with aspects of artistic careers which did not match my respondents' expectations, such as the need to develop work in line with the requirements of funding agencies, or the constraints of their frequent inability to make a living from their work, so that they found themselves dependent on the care of others. In the section on family life, freedom was understood as being able to work without interruptions, both in terms of their career and in the immediate work situation, and the ability to concentrate on their work. Freedom, understood differently and for different reasons by different actors, still plays an important role in the construction of a contemporary artistic identity. It actualizes the question of what exactly is understood as "unfree" or "uncreative" about contemporary "ordinary" labour markets (as Taylor and Littleton (2012) suggest, this is sometimes stereotypically constructed by artists themselves).

Throughout the analysis, several subject positions or subjectivities of the artist were found: the self-reliant artist, the bohemian(-entrepreneurial) artist, the artist who endures hardship, and the immersed artist. All these subjectivities are seen as created and negotiated by the individual in relation to powerful norms and discourses surrounding art, and to the working conditions of the artists. They can be discussed as properties required or demanded of modern workers by a working life fraught with self-responsibility and risk. Self-reliant artists were specifically discussed in the context of the art college. Bohemian(-entrepreneurial) artists were discussed in relation to their experience of work after graduation, notably holding down a number of jobs and breadwinning work. The subjectivity involving the endurance of artists was explored through narratives of trust and hope in relation to continuity in artistic careers. The immersed artist was mostly discussed in relation to artists' narratives surrounding work, identity and family. All these subjectivities speak of strong norms of individuality, self-responsibility and a blurring of identity with work, although they could be contested and resisted. This thesis argues that the subjectivities found in the course of the analysis need to be understood as the result of the circumstances involved in an artistic career, from the institutional and educational norms of art colleges to the conditions of the art world and the gendered norms of modern family life. In addition, the thesis discussed two more subject positions which were spoken of but never put in the forefront of the respondent's narrative:

dependent artists, who rely on family support to survive, and artists who separate their work and their identity. These subjectivities speak of the need to be cautious in portraying artists as models or ideals of a new, individualised, self-propelling working life. Firstly, the dependent artist does not fit particularly well into a self-propelling image, and artists who separate themselves from their work do not compute with the passionate worker willing to sacrifice other aspects of life for work.

Final remarks

As sociologists before me have outlined, the dream of becoming an artist is by no means an internal wish of creative individuals but is largely related to social categories such as class privilege. However, the issue of who can define creative identities and careers in our society remains important in a climate where this identity and work is not only surrounded by discourses of importance and value, but emotions of meaning-making and pleasure. In this thesis, I wished to develop an understanding of working subjects and work experiences which is not only influenced by structural changes such as a changed cultural policy and working life, but also formed and reformed through powerful discourses and narratives. These involve values and assumptions which are sometimes taken for granted, as well as the consequences these have for individual artists and the systems involved in the art world as a whole. Although this thesis does not pretend to completely encompass the processes involved in the experience and subjectivity of all artists, I consider it of interest to more than the artists who were interviewed or those who took part in the survey.

On a political level, this thesis is driven by a concern for the kinds of job arrangement and productive discourse prevalent in the new world of work, as they seem to lead to structural effects involving inequality, insecurity and even illness, and it is increasingly considered the responsibility of the individual to cope with these. The freedom offered by these types of arrangement can indeed seem like a heavy burden to bear. With this kind of analysis, I hoped to develop understandings of how the social and the psychological meet, and even how they can be difficult to separate in ways which make sociological query important in terms of what we conventionally see as the inner workings of the mind, such as notions of self-reliance, confidence, trust or enduring hardship. The issues of work, education and family life are of interest to anyone trying to remain hopeful about a professional life which is considered atypical and fraught with insecurity. Worryingly, I myself, as a Ph.D. student, have often

reflected on the striking similarities between the art world and the academic world (c.f. Gill, 2013; Peixoto, 2014).

This thesis was driven by a sociological interest in the interconnection between social action, individual speech acts and broader social issues and changes. As Eikhof and Warhurst (2013) note, creative work is offered as a paradigm for the future of work. The creation of art work is experienced as fun, meaningful and rewarding. Who does not deserve such a working life? Occupations in the arts, media and cultural industries are also often glamorised, but there are other sides to this, as I and many other social researchers have outlined (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Gill, 2002; McRobbie, 2012; Oakely, 2004; de Peuter, 2014). The world of art, as seen in the stories of my respondents, does indeed often seem like a place for the strong, the autonomous, those responsible for themselves, the confident and the persevering, with powerful mechanisms weeding out those considered needy, weak and the ones with responsibilities outside work. This is hardly the full picture of the art world or of art as a form of work. However, in accordance with other critical researchers, I believe that these issues need attention. In accordance with de Peuter, (2014:265), the model of the creative worker and the art world does not seem to be much of a template for economic and social justice, let alone emotional or physical well-being in terms of work conditions, as opposed to the actual work of creating art. We therefore need to separate how the creation of art work and the organisation of creative work are understood, in order to understand the discrepancy between pleasure and insecurity.

Ultimately, this dissertation is about the meaning and significance of work, and how it forms our understanding of self and the kind of life we would like. By adopting the view that professional artistic subjectivity is a dynamic relationship between different aspects of life, it is possible to problematise a view where work identity is exclusively created in the sphere of work experiences. This is not to say that work and life are, or necessarily should be, inseparable. Instead, this study provides an opportunity to understand how different aspects of life affect and create boundaries in terms of accessing the identity - and by extension the life - we would like. I therefore believe that researchers, in the course of their research, not only develop a representation of the world, but that this representation is productive. It does something to the world by contributing knowledge and theory which can form the basis for social change. My research delivers a specific understanding of reality because it aims at

something specific. At the same time, it is one of many possible descriptions of reality which invite further discussion (Winther Jørgensen, 2002). The research in this thesis aims to help understand what it means to have and identify with a certain profession, and how circumstances such as an institutional context, work arrangements, family and normative understandings surrounding this occupation are enmeshed in individual attempts to live and work as an artist. It is also a critical study of norms and values which are taken for granted in the material, how they come into being and the consequences they have. In this way, I wish to position my investigation in relation to other research, and contribute to knowledge about the modern world of work.

Svensk sammanfattning

Denna avhandling undersöker tre olika sociala kontexters betydelse för möjligheten att kunna arbeta som och identifiera sig som (bild-)konstnär. Konstnärers arbetsliv karaktäriseras av osäkerhet och risk – få kan försörja sig på sin konstnärliga produktion trots att de generellt har långa utbildningsbakgrunder. Deras status som egenföretagare innebär ofta en sårbar position i relation till trygghetssystemen. De hanterar ofta flera konstnärliga uppdrag samtidigt och har vanligen brödjobb – inkomstbringande arbeten som kan vara orelaterade till konstnärligt arbete. Samtidigt kan den konstnärliga karriären erbjuda möjligheter till frihet att självständigt forma sin karriär efter aktiviteter man finner meningsfulla, kreativa, roliga och självförverkligande. Konstnärer har funnits knyta sin identitet till sin konstnärliga produktion och roll så starkt att vissa förnekar att konst kan vara ett arbete utan snarare är ett kall eller en livsstil. Dessa villkor och sammanhang har gjort att konstnärer ibland analyseras som föregångare eller till och med idealpersoner i ett arbetsliv som blir mer och mer flexibelt och kräver självständighet, passion och risktagande, i kontrast till ett arbetsliv där arbetsgivaren tog mer ansvar för riskerna på arbetsmarknaden. I relation till ett arbetsliv i förändring är det av vikt att förstå hur dess villkor påverkar och positionerar dem som redan verkar i ett arbetsliv som uppvisar sådana tendenser och villkor.

Den här avhandlingen tar sin utgångspunkt i bildkonstnärer med en master från Kungl. Konsthögskolan i Stockholm med syftet att undersöka betydelsen av tre olika livssituationer; utbildning, arbetserfarenheter, samt familjesituation (i betydelsen ursprungsfamilj och att vara familjeförsörjare), för formandet och omformatet av en (professionell) konstnärlig identitet. Avhandlingen baseras på fem artiklar som undersöker frågorna 1. Hur skapas en professionell identitet som konstnär på en konstnärlig högskoleutbildning? 2. Hur relaterar

arbetserfarenheter, specifikt att ha flera jobb samtidigt till konstnärers (professionella) identitet? 3. Hur hanterar konstnärer osäkerhet kring att inte "lyckas" som konstnär, att inte kunna behålla en konstnärlig identitet och aktivitet? 4. Hur påverkas möjligheten att arbeta och identifiera sig som konstnär av att ha en familj, delvis i betydelsen av att vara någons barn, men framförallt i betydelsen att vara familjeförsörjare och partner? 5. Vilken generell kunskap kring formerandet av en konstnärlig professionell subjektivitet kan studiet av dessa tre situationer; utbildning, arbete och familjeliv, ge? Artiklarna undersöker dessa frågor mer eller mindre enskilt, utom artikel 4 och 5 som studerar fråga 4 genom olika material. Fråga fem diskuteras i kappans avslutande del.

Avhandlingens material består av främst av intervjuer med 20 alumner från Kungl. Konsthögskolan, samt två professorer och f.d. rektor på skolan. En alumna intervjuades även i egenskap av sin roll som lärare på skolan. Utbildningsmaterial från skolan har även lästs och analyserats. I tillägg använder sig avhandlingen av ett enkätmaterial av medlemmarna i Konstnärernas riksorganisation (KRO/KIF) inriktad på frågor kring föräldraskap, familjeliv och konstnärligt yrkesliv. Detta material analyserades hypotetiskt-deduktivt m.h.a. faktor- och multipel regressionsanalys för att isolera och identifiera betydelsefulla mekanismer i relation till konflikt mellan familj och arbete.

På en generell nivå använder sig avhandlingen av en teori kring två förståelser av arbete (labour): 1. en ontologisk förståelse, där arbete ses som en fundamental mänsklig handling, oberoende av tid (arbetsförståelse 1); eller som en historiskt specifik handling, varierande i tid och föränderlig i karaktär i enlighet med denna historiska variation (arbetsförståelse 2). Den andra arbetsförståelsen relaterar specifikt till en normativ förståelse av lönearbete i en kontext av en kapitalistisk marknadsekonomi. En tredje arbetsförståelse diskuteras även, vilken relaterar till hur arbete som kategori inom ramen för kapitalismen måste skapas som ontologisk, d.v.s. förstås som en grundläggande mänsklig aktivitet, för att motivera arbetare. Konsten kan definieras i enlighet med båda dessa förståelser, men har traditionellt ställts i kontrast till arbetsförståelse 2. Detta skapar en konflikt för konstnärer i deras försök att skapa mening i sitt arbete och i sina försök av överleva på sin konst, en konflikt som förstås påverka deras identitetsarbete i alla tre studerade situationer. I takt med att kreativitet, innovation och symbolvärden får allt större betydelse för kapitalistisk ekonomi, bryts den tidigare motsättningen mellan konsten och arbetsförståelse 2.

Avhandlingen använder sig även av teori kring identitet som skapad i sociala kontexter, specifikt i relation till en yrkesroll. Den använder sig ofta av begreppet subjektivitet synonymt med identitet för att understryka den sociala formationen av självet i kontrast till mer psykologiska eller aktörscentrerade förståelser av jaget. Individen kan förhålla sig till, förhandla och tom förkasta normativa förståelser av en yrkesroll, men detta behöver inte betyda att de har makt att förändra dessa förståelser så som de kan positioneras av t.ex. en utbildningsinstitution. Professionalitet förstås som ett sätt att utmärka seriositet, yrkesmässighet och distinktion till dem som utövar konst som hobby. Betydelsen av universitetsutbildade konstnärer, tillsammans med förändringar i förutsättningar i konstvärlden, så som större konkurrens och ett tillbakadragande av statens förståelse av sig själv som en beskyddare av konsten mot kommersialism, förstås har skapat öppenhet för en mer karriärsinriktad subjektivitet hos konstnärer att prata om ett "yrkesskifte" inom konsten (arbetsförståelse 2). Detta går emot en mer romantisk förståelse av konsten som en aktivitet i relation till individuell genialitet, meningsskapande, testande av normativa gränser både i relation till yrkesliv och familjeliv (arbetsförståelse 1). Konsten har särskilt teoretiserats i opposition mot marknadslogik och bruksvärde, ofta värderat just för sin opposition och förmåga att få människor att lyfta blicken bortom det förutsägbara och givna. Detta kallas ofta för konstens frihet, vilket beroende på samhällsstruktur måste försvaras eller konsolideras.

Avhandlingen använder sig även av en teoribildning kring blivande eller positionerande genom diskurser, narrativ och erfarenhet. Diskurser förstås som resurser för tillblivande genom instruktioner för hur något förstås som naturgivet eller oföränderligt (hur något "är"), vilket dels ger en känsla av meningsskapande kring våra erfarenheter och motiv, men kan också skapa subjektspositioner som är "skeva" eller "besvärade" ifall man inte kan förkroppsliga den påbjudna subjektiviteten erbjuden av rådande diskurser (inte kunna vara hur något "är"). Exempel på detta är hur respondenterna positionerades i relation till vilka som kunde ikläda sig en redan färdig konstnärsroll under sin utbildning, och på så sätt betrakta konsthögskolan som en plattform för denna identitet, medan andra positionerades som "fel" i relation till att ikläda sig rollen som studenter i behov av stöd, råd, hjälp och utbildning. Diskursanalys är framförallt använt i artikeln om subjektsskapande på konstutbildning genom att undersöka de sätt personer med makt (gränsvakter) pratar om hur konstnären är eller bör vara. Narrativ analys används för att förstå hur mina respondenter ger uttryck för delade och

individuella erfarenheter och tankar i relation till utbildning, arbete och familjeliv, men också för att förstå vilka positioner och subjektiviteter dessa narrativ reflekterar och medskapar.

Artikel 1 analyserade vad hur en konstnärsidentitet skapas på en högre konstnärlig utbildning. Institutioner så som konsthögskolor förstås skapa subjektspositioner så som ”konstnären” genom diskurser kring hur man bör ikläda sig den rollen genom ofta uttalade normer och värderingar. Institutionen fanns skapa starka diskurser kring frihet som frånvaro av styrning genom schemalagda aktiviteter och obligatorier, samt starka idéer kring omöjligheten att lära ut konst. Detta fanns i citat så som ”någon som inte har det kan man inte lära ut”. Detta i sig förstods att influera en föredragen studentsubjektivitet som relaterade till förmågan att vara självtillräcklig och att forma sin egen utbildning genom att göra självständiga val, samt idéer om talang och geni. Detta har beskrivits som en fri utbildningsstruktur av skolan själv. Vissa alumner kunde utan friktion förkroppsliga den självtillräckliga subjektiviteten. Dessa alumner formade starka ideal kring konsten som livsstil eller kall. De konstruerade institutionen som en plattform för en redan erhållen konstnärsidentitet, en hållning som belönades av skolan. De beskrev sig själva som hårt arbetande och seriösa, men kunde uppleva tiden efter examen som en ”chock” eller som att ”gå in i en vägg”. Detta förstods som att deras förmåga att passa in i den självständiga subjektiviteten var beroende av det stöd och uppskattning de fick från skolmiljön. Andra formade istället en ”skev” subjektivitet i relation till självtillräcklighetskraven. Dessa alumner kunde mötas av tystnader när de frågade om tips och råd kring hur man överlever inkomstmässigt som konstnär, dvs. relaterade till konst som ett yrke. De uttryckte behov av mer guidning, mer transparens, stöd och hjälp. Dessa alumner förstod institutionen som en utbildning och en plats att söka stöd för att kunna skapa sig en konstnärsidentitet, en inställning som inte belönades av skolan. Dessa alumner upplevde tiden direkt efter examen mindre som en chock, då konstvärldens ”ointresse” speglade deras upplevelse av sin utbildning.

Att forma en identitet som professionell konstnär under högskoleåren kunde alltså vara motsägelsefullt och inte tillgängligt för alla. Alumner med dåliga erfarenheter av sina år på Konsthögskolan kunde ändå vara tacksamma över att ha fått fem år att kunna arbeta fördjupat med sin konst. Eftersom de förstår konstvärlden som godtycklig och osäker, accepterar de en förståelse av att högre konstutbildning inte kan utgöra en garanti för karriärmöjligheter. Istället tenderar de att skapa förklaringar kring brister hos sin egen person vid

karriärmisslyckanden. Efter deras examen kunde prestige av en master från konsthögskolan fungera som en viktig resurs för att identifiera sig som seriös konstnär, även om erfarenheter av att få utställningar, uppdrag, stöd från kollegor och tillgång till ateljé också spelade stor roll.

Artikel 2 studerade erfarenheter av brödjobb i relation till hur man förstår sin roll som konstnär. Analysen använde sig av olika former av identitetsformation, arbetssätt och definitioner av framgång för att förstå konstnärers olika narrativ kring brödjobb. Det är vanligt bland konstnärer i stort och även så bland mina respondenter att ha inkomstbringande arbete vid sidan av den konstnärliga produktionen, ofta i branscher som karaktäriseras av osäkra villkor och låga löner så som äldreomsorg och sjukvård, restaurang och handel. Även om de flesta önskar sig en arbetssituation där de bara fick ägna sig åt konstnärligt arbete kunde vissa av respondenterna vara mindre negativa, eller till och med positiva, till brödjobb än andra. Studiens syfte var att förstå varför. Analysen fann att konstnärer som konstruerar sin konstnärsroll i opposition mot marknad och kommersialism hade mer positiva narrativ kring brödjobb. Dessa kategoriserades inom en bohemisk identitetsformation. Dessa konstnärer använde sig av en subjektiv framgångsförståelse som relaterade till förmågan att kunna arbeta i enlighet med den egna visionen, inte utifrån köparens eller beställarens önsknings. De kunde skapa mer positiva narrativ kring sina brödjobb eftersom de kunde ge dem frihet att arbeta konstnärligt utan krav på att vara kommersiella under resten av tiden i enlighet med sina ideal. Dessa konstnärer jobbar hellre brödjobb än antar ett entreprenöriellt arbetssätt. I motsats till denna position kunde narrativ kring brödjobb vara mer negativa där det positionerades som avbrott i den konstnärliga verksamheten och karriären. Konstnärer typiska för detta narrativ anslöt sig typiskt till en mer objektiv framgångsförståelse relaterad till synlighet och förmåga att försörja sig på sitt konstnärliga arbete. Detta kategoriserades som det entreprenöriella arbetssättet, vilket inte uteslöt en bohemisk identitetsformation, framförallt genom narrativ kring konsten som livsstil snarare än yrke. Dock hade de flesta respondenter oavsett identitet eller arbetssätt erfarenhet av brödjobb med dåliga och t.o.m. exploaterande villkor. Dessa erfarenheter vittnar om ett arbetsliv med försämrade villkor vilket måste tas med i kalkylen om vi vill förstå konstnärers förmåga att identifiera sig som och arbeta som konstnärer.

Artikel 3 undersöker hur mina respondenter hanterar vetskap kring osäkerheten att kunna jobba och försörja sig som konstnärer genom att utöva tillit och hopp. Tillit är teoretiserat som

bestående av ett "skutt" mot förväntan genom en positiv tolkning av sina möjligheter. Respondenterna formar diskurser kring förväntan på en kontinuerlig karriär, d.v.s. oavbruten konstnärsaktivitet. Detta utgör vad de antingen har goda anledningar att lita på kunna hända, eller vad de hoppas på om de saknar goda anledningar att uppnå kontinuitet. Kontinuitet utgör deras förväntan eller förhoppning då det konstnärliga arbetet upplevs som stimulerande, intressant, roligt och tillfredställande. Det ger dem friheten att kontrollera sina arbetstider och att vara "sina egna". Analysen fann även att respondenterna räds att tappa en investering i ett livsprojekt och därmed en identitetsformation genom diskurser kring att inte ha några andra karriäralternativ. Att ha goda anledningar att kunna lita på kontinuitet handlar främst om att en tolkning av att ha tidigare erfarenheter av att kunna upprätthålla en konstnärlig karriär. Tillit har funnits i uttalanden som "det ordnar sig alltid". Respondenterna skapar också diskurser kring tur när de varit framgångsrika, vilket kan förstås som ett sätt för konstnären att förklara varför vissa blir framgångsrika i konkurrens med andra med lika goda förutsättningar (talang, utbildning, kontakter). Konstnärernas högre utbildning fungerade initialt som förväntan i sig på grund av den prestige som är kopplat till institutionen. Att bli antagen blev ett mål i sig, tillfälligt skilt från framtida möjligheter eller utmaningar. Dock hade respondenterna svårigheter att omskapa deras mastersgrad som god anledning till förväntan på kontinuitet, då konsthögskolan positionerade sig själv som icke-utbildning. Att utöva hopp är teoretiserat som att utöva ett "skutt" mot förväntan trots en negativ tolkning av möjligheterna till en kontinuerlig konstnärlig karriär. Att skaffa barn trots en negativ tolkning kring att kunna försörja en familj följer samma logik; man längtar så starkt efter något (barn, vara konstnär) att man gör det trots dåliga utsikter. Utövandet av tillit analyserades som ett diskursivt fenomen som påverkar en subjektivitet kopplad till uthållighet. En aspekt som ofta hamnade i "bakgrunden" av diskursen var att ha stöd från föräldrar och partner som förutsättning som uthållighet. Uthållighet riskerar bli därför bli en moralisk dimension i relation till den konstnärliga karriären då alla inte har samma möjlighet att utöva denna subjektivitet.

Artikel 4 undersökte begreppet "konflikt mellan arbete och familj" ur ett genusperspektiv. Det är den första studien i sitt slag som undersöker fenomenet på konstnärer som yrkesgrupp i en svensk kontext. När konsten definieras i linje med utmaning av normer och konventioner får det konsekvenser för hur speciellt kvinnor kan förena en konstnärlig karriär och familj. Historiskt har kvinnliga konstnärer tenderat att antingen välja bort familj för att kunna vara konstnärer, eller avslutat sina konstnärliga karriärer när de fått familj. Idag präglas strukturen

kring konstnärligt arbete av vad som kallas atypiska förhållanden i relation till majoritetsbefolkningen: enmansföretagande, långa arbetsdagar, låga inkomster och en sårbar position i relation till socialförsäkringssystemen. Detta borde skapa svaga förutsättningar för konstnärer att kombinera familj och yrkesliv. Att studera denna konflikt mellan arbete och familj vad gäller svenska konstnärer idag är av särskilt intresse då Sverige har skapat politiska lösningar för tvåförsörjarfamiljen och har typiskt understrukit betydelsen av jämställdhet mellan könen för möjligheten att kombinera familj och arbete. Betydelsen av balans eller konflikt mellan arbete och familj ligger i teorier kring individers välmående i relation till behov av möjligheter att både få självförverkligande och samhällsbetydelse genom arbete samt ha möjlighet till kärleksfulla relationer. Baserat på kunskap om konstnärliga arbetsvillkor ställde analysen fyra hypoteser kring konstnärers konflikt mellan arbete och familj: 1. att konstnärer upplever konflikt mellan familj och arbete, 2. när konstnärer upplever konflikt kommer denna handlar om behov av mer tid för arbete än familj, 3. Att föräldraansvar kommer öka upplevelsen av konflikt, 4. Att ha huvudansvaret för hushållsarbete kommer öka upplevelsen av konflikt. Alla dessa hypoteser antogs gälla i högre grad för kvinnor än för män. Datamaterialet bestod av ett enkätmaterial skickat till samtliga medlemmar i Konstnärernas riksorganisation (KRO/KIF). Svarunderlaget blev 64 procent och n=2025.

Analysen utgjordes av faktoranalys samt multipel regressionsanalys. Resultaten visade att hypotes 1 inte kunde verifieras: respondenterna uppvisade medelvärden snarare än höga värden av arbete-familj konflikt så som det definierats av faktoranalysen. Däremot fann analysen signifikant högre värden av konflikt hos kvinnor än män i materialet. Analysen kunde även bekräfta att konflikten framförallt handlade om att finna mer tid till arbete än tid för familj, speciellt för kvinnor, något som relaterade till arbetstid: kvinnor som arbetade halvtid rapporterade mer konflikt familj-till-arbete, medan kvinnor som arbetade hel-eller mer än heltid rapporterade vilja ha mer tid till familj. Analysen visade även signifikant för högre värden av konflikt när man hade barn, för kvinnor vid första barnet och för män efter det andra barnet. Vid två barn var effekten på rapporteringen av konflikt större för män än för kvinnor. Jämfört med att ha en jämställd fördelning av hushållsarbetet var effekten negativ för kvinnor att ha en fördelning där de gjorde mest. Samma effekt gick inte att hitta hos män. Däremot fann vi att effekten av att vara singelförälder på rapportering av konflikt mellan familj och arbete var signifikant starkare för män.

Artikeln argumenterar för att resultaten pekar på att män i högre grad än kvinnor förlitar sig på en partner för att kunna ha en konstnärlig karriär. Att vara singelförälder kan därför upplevas relativt högre för män. På samma sätt kan upplevelsen av föräldraansvar vid andra barnet upplevas relativt högre för män där det för kvinnor upplevs som högt redan vid första barnet. Resultaten pekar på att en genusmedvetenhet och ett familjeperspektiv är viktiga som del i förståelser gällande konstnärers arbetsvillkor.

Artikel 5 relaterar även den till frågor om familj och konstnärligt arbete dock genom en kvalitativ analys av det intervjumaterial som presenterades tidigare. Att förstå konstnärlig aktivitet som ett kall eller en livsstil uppmuntrar att sammanblanda vad som teoretiskt kallas ”arbete” och ”privatliv”. Denna uppdelning kritiserar av vissa arbetslivsforskare för att inte ha relevans för personer med hög utbildning och arbeten som är kreativa och har kontroll över sin arbetstid och produktionstakt. Denna studie undersöker konstnärers förståelser av konstnärligt arbete och hur det relaterar till möjligheter att ha eller skaffa familj. Den studerar även frågan från ett genusperspektiv då konstvärlden har funnits uppvisa traditionella mönster av kvinnor tar mer ansvar för familje- och hemarbete, ett mönster som i klassisk genusteori har förklarats relatera till en dualistisk logik där könen utför olika arbeten, samt teorier kring kärlek som en kraft att antingen ge eller utnyttja. Ytterligare teori kring arbetsmarknadens behov av ”obelastade” arbetare är av betydelse för studien. Med ”obelastad” menas förmågan att kunna fokusera på inget annat än arbete, vilket fungerar som en norm som avgör strukturerande belöningar så som karriärmöjligheter och löneutveckling. I kontrast, de som fokuserar tid på t.ex. familj (oftast kvinnor) tvingas ofta göra avkall på karriärutveckling. Analysen fann ett tydligt narrativ kring konstnären som kan försjunka eller fördjupa sig i arbete i relation till temat arbete – familj. Att vara försjunken har en kroppslig och mental aspekt då det relaterar till det faktiska arbetet att skapa verk samt aspekten av hur konstnärligt arbete tenderar att inte ”lämna huvudet”. Det relaterar till en förståelse av att kunna dedicera längre perioder av tid på konst och försaka annat, samt till en mer omedelbar tidsaspekt av att kunna fokusera och koncentrera sig på sitt arbete. Sysslor så som städning, matlagning och barnomsorg kan konstrueras som avbrott i förmågan att vara fördjupad, varför vissa av respondenterna har valt att inte skaffa barn eller skjuta upp beslutet att skaffa barn. De kvinnliga konstnärerna skapar narrativ kring nödvändigheten av barnomsorg så som förskola för att kunna vara konstnärer. När de inte kan bidra till sina familjer med ekonomiska medel

kompenserar de genom att bidra med mer hushållsarbete och barnomsorg, vilket hindrar dem ytterligare från fördjupning.

Manliga konstnärer skapar narrativ kring att missgynna sina familjer och låta sina partners ta lejonparten av hemarbete för att de fördjupat sig i sin konstnärliga produktion. Därmed kunde de skapa sig en subjektivitet av medvetenhet om genusorättvisor utan att förändra det system som gynnade dem. Analysen fann ingen skillnad i identifikationen till den fördjupade konstnären vad gäller kön, dock olika tillgång till att kunna efterleva den. Om män uppvisade samma omsorgsmönster som kvinnor, speciellt i relation till att ta ut lika delar föräldraledighet, delade de samma risk att falla ur en konstvärld som kräver ständig visibilitet och därmed straffar föräldrar. Respondenterna skapar också ett beroendenarrativ till sina föräldrar, som tillsammans med beroendet av en partners inkomst skapar obehag i relation till en förväntan på karriärprogression och förmåga till egenförsörjning som inte uppfylls då konstvärlden inte garanterar sådan norm för progression.

I motsats till teorier om människor med kreativa, fria arbeten som frivilligt sammanblander privat och arbete fann analysen att respondenterna gärna separerade sfärerna i ett led att skapa sig en professionell identitet. Detta handlade ofta om spatiala möjligheter att separera arbete och hem genom en ateljé eller arbetsplats som inte var i hemmet. Om de arbetade under tid de egentligen skulle dedicera till familj, så som under föräldraledighet, berodde det på att deras osäkra arbetssituation gjorde dem oroliga för att inte alltid vara tillgängliga samt att arbetsgivare sällan respekterar deras ledighet. Att få barn innebar ofta en anpassning till mer normativa arbetstider och en tydligare inställning till konst som normativ yrkesutövning i betydelsen inkomstbringande då de hade försörjaransvar. Det kunde också innebära mindre tid till arbete och mer till brödjobb. Vissa respondenter gick emot narrativet om den försjunkna konstnären som offrar allt för sin konst genom att istället premiera sina familjer som viktigare än en konstnärskarriär. Dock önskade de flesta ha både en karriär som konstnär och en familj. Artikeln argumenterar för att förstå genusrelaterade normers och förväntningars betydelse för individuella beteenden vad gäller konstnärer, samt att ta i beaktning konstvärldens strukturella bestraffning av dem som inte kan eller vill agera i enlighet med normen av den försjunkna konstnären.

Slutsatser

Avhandlingens slutsats centreras kring hur dessa situationer, utbildning, arbetserfarenheter och familjeliv, flyter ihop för konstnären och att även om analysen av dem separat genererar något olika kategorier av subjektiviteter följer de alla en logik i sina uppbyggnader: i alla situationer studerade för att skapa förståelse för hur konstnärer skapar sig ett jag i relation till sin yrkesaktivitet brottas de med en konflikt kring konst som arbete och konst som icke-arbete. Förståelsen av konst som arbete relaterar till frågor om överlevnad och professionalitet, vilket bryter mot en starkt kvarvarande ideal kring värdet av konsten och konstnären som utmanare av vedertagna normer kring arbete och även familjeliv. Denna förståelse av konsten som icke-arbete uppmuntras av deras utbildning, tidigare av svensk kulturpolitik och av konstvärlden. Denna konflikt måste de hantera som studenter, som verkande konstnärer och som föräldrar/partners.

Genom de olika studierna i avhandlingen argumenterar jag för att konstnärsrollen har förändrats, men inom intakta ramar: den tidigare bohemiska identitetskonstruktionen (konstnären som driven av den inre vilja att uttrycka sig, ointresserad av karriär eller pengar) har tappat status till förmån för den bohemisk-entreprenöriella konstnären, som antar ett karriärsinriktat beteende. Detta beteende måste dock fortfarande vara riktat "inåt" mot framgång i konstvärlden, inte utåt mot en mer generaliserad publik. Detta relaterar till strukturella förändringar så som ökade svårigheter att arbeta och överleva som konstnär, samt en förändrad diskurs kring konstens och konstnärens roll i samhället.

Genom analyserna av avhandlingens teman framkom olika subjektiviteter; den självtillräckliga konstnären relaterades till utbildning, den bohemisk-entreprenöriella konstnären relaterades till erfarenheter av en arbetssituation med olika arbeten, den uthålliga konstnären relaterades till analysen av tillit och hopp i relation till den osäkra karriären, och den försjunkna konstnären relaterades till betydelsen av familjeliv för konstnären. Dessa subjektiviteter pekar på normer av individualism och eget ansvar för sin situation. Alla dessa kan även ses som ideala eller önskvärda sätt att vara konstnär som förhandlade av respondenterna i relation till erfarenheter och normer. Dessa ideal kan förstås som önskvärda egenskaper hos ett subjekt i ett arbetsliv karaktäriserat av eget ansvar och osäkerhet kring karriärvägar och framgångar eller motgångar, och i konstnärens specifika fall; av en konflikt mellan konsten som arbete eller icke-arbete. Dock hittade även analysen två andra

subjektivitetsformeringar som går emot individualistiska och arbetscentrerade normer: den beroende konstnären, som förlitar sig på stöd från andra, samt konstnären som skiljer på sig själv och sin yrkesidentitet. Dessa formeringar utesluts ofta från förståelser av konstnären pga. av att de inte får "rum" i normerande diskurser kring konst och konstnärligt arbete.

Analysen av de olika temana och den konflikt som de alla uppvisar visar också på en diskrepans: trots respondenternas vetskap om och förståelse av konstvärlden som ingen garanti för framgång, kvarstår ändå starka normer och förhoppningar kring karriärprogression och framgång som resultat av hårt arbete. I motsats till dessa förståelser av individens förmåga att genom ansträngning skapa sig en tillvaro i enlighet med sina önskningar, menar jag att respondenterna har begränsad makt över sina egna möjligheter att skapa sig ett önskvärt liv. Detta är bundet till frågor om bakgrund och kön, inte minst visat i hur konstvärlden straffar dem som temporärt kliver ur den, t.ex. vid sjukdom eller föräldraansvar. På så sätt menar jag att temana i denna avhandling kan ses som fallstudier över prekaritet, även om det är stor skillnad på människor som frivilligt väljer att gå in i en osäker arbetssituation och dem som finner sig inte ha andra möjligheter. Även om respondenterna individuellt kritiserar konstvärlden och dess villkor har de små möjligheter att förändra dess struktur.

Begreppet frihet återkommer i avhandlingens samtliga teman. Frihet har diskuterats framförallt som frihet från; frihet från kommersialism och marknadsanpassning, frihet från ett normativt arbetsliv och familjeliv, frihet från styrning av politiker och som ideal i relation till en själv tillräcklig subjektivitet. Det har också relaterats till frihet från ekonomisk stress och osäkerhet, eller frihet från avbrott – karriärmässigt men också i den omedelbara arbetssituationen. Frihet har relaterats till att självständigt skapa sig en karriär efter ens egna värderingar och visioner; frihet att vara sin egen. Frihet i sina olika definitioner och i sina olika användningar relaterar till konflikten mellan de två olika sätten att förstå arbete: genom dess koppling både till autonominormen inom konsten, och till konsten som arbete genom sin koppling till en önskan av frihet från osäkerhet och ekonomisk stress. Frihet spelar därför fortfarande en viktig roll i konstruktionen av en nutida konstnärssubjektivitet.

Avhandlingen argumenterar inte för någon förståelse av konstens värde som antingen utanför kapitalistisk marknadslogik eller som betydelsefullt i en "kulturaliserad ekonomi". Konst kan

fungera som båda och arbete och identitet hos enskilda konstnärer kan relatera till båda eller någon av dessa i deras försök att skapa meningsfulla och värdefulla liv. Det är troligt att konflikten mellan dessa två uppfattningar om värdet av konstnärligt arbete kommer att fortsätta att påverka identifieringen för dem som vill ägna sig åt konst och att själva konflikten i sig skapar den kategori arbetssubjekt som vi kallar konstnärer. Förhoppningsvis kommer effekterna av dessa frågor och konflikter för enskilda konstnärers "tillblivande" fortsätta att vara av betydelse för framtida forskning.

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Appendix. List of respondents.

	Respondent	Year of birth	Year of graduation	Residency	Date of interview
1.	“Katarina”	1967	2000	Stockholm	2011-12-05
2.	“Fredrik”	1970	1998	Stockholm	2011-12-06
3.	“Josef”	1965	1995	Stockholm	2011-12-15
4.	“Frida”	1973	2006	Stockholm	2011-12-20
5.	“Gustav”	1968	1995	Göteborg	2012-01-13
6.	“Kajsa”	1973	2002	Stockholm	2012-01-16
7.	“Lars”	1960	1996	Stockholm	2012-01-17
8.	“Lisa”	1964	1996	Stockholm	2012-01-24
9.	“Louise”	1979	2008	Stockholm	2012-04-04
10.	“Helena”	1980	2009	Stockholm	2012-04-04
11.	“Ulrika”	1972	2007	Stockholm	2012-05-08
12.	“Isabella”	1981	2010	Stockholm	2012-05-08 2013-03-28
13.	“Hannes”	1979	2009	Stockholm	2012-05-11
14.	“Peter”	1981	2008	Stockholm	2012-05-21
15.	“Vera”	1971	2001	Stockholm	2012-05-31
16.	“Maria”	1967	2007	Stockholm	2012-06-01
17.	“Per”	1969	2001	Stockholm	2013-01-29
18.	“Robert”	1975	1998	Mindre ort	2013-02-14
19.	“Markus”	1973	2003	Stockholm	2013-02-15
20.	Man, Vice Chancellor	-	-	-	2013-03-04
21.	Man, Professor	-	-	-	2013-03-18
22.	Woman, Professor	-	-	-	2013-05-14
23.	“Mira”, tutor, former student	1971	1998	Stockholm	2013-05-17

Tema Q-presentation

Vid Linköpings universitet finns en stark tradition att organisera forskning och forskarutbildning tvärvetenskapligt och fakultetsöverskridande. Inom den tematiskt organiserade forskningen vid filosofiska fakulteten bedrivs forskning inom breda problemområden, så kallade teman. Vid Tema Kultur och samhälle (Tema Q) är forskning och forskarutbildning tvärvetenskapligt organiserad. Kultur studeras som ett dynamiskt praktikfält och forskningen rör såväl kulturprodukterna i sig som hur de produceras, kommuniceras och brukas. Tema Q utgör en del av Institutionen för studier av samhällsutveckling och kultur (ISAK).

Linköping University has a strong tradition of interdisciplinary research and PhD education, with a range of thematically-defined problem areas. At the Department of Culture Studies (Tema kultur och samhälle, Tema Q), culture is studied as a dynamic field of practices, including agency as well as structure, and cultural products as well as the way they are produced, consumed, communicated and used. Tema Q is part of the larger Department of Studies in Social Change and Culture (ISAK).

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