

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS STOCKHOLMIENSIS
Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology N.S. 2



Illegal yet Licit

Justifying Informal Purchases of Work in Contemporary Sweden

Lotta Björklund Larsen

© Lotta Björklund Larsen and Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis 2010

ISBN 978-91-86071-32-5

Printed in Sweden by US-AB, Stockholm 2010

Distributor: eddy.se ab, Visby Sweden

Cover illustration: Svart eller vitt. Photo from Myntgatan, Stockholm
26.6.2007 by Kent Ahl.

In memory of Astrid

Contents

Contents	vii
Acknowledgements	xi
1. Introduction: Work purchased informally	1
Aim of this study	2
aim and outline of the chapter	3
‘Even in Sweden’: history, issues, research and reports about <i>svart arbete</i>	3
definitions of <i>svart arbete</i>	5
licit but illegal practices	6
the history of the concept	8
governmental reports on <i>svart arbete</i>	10
non-governmental studies	12
The informal economy and informal work	13
methodological concerns regarding the informal economy	15
growth and change in the informal economy	17
<i>Svart arbete</i> as economic practice	18
talking about <i>svart arbete</i>	19
Theoretical framework	21
exchanging as a necessity for social life?	21
purchasing work	23
a Swedish regime of living	24
the moral economy of purchasing <i>svart arbete</i>	27
justifying purchases of work	28
Structure of the book	29
2. Methodology: Looking for hidden exchanges	31
aim and outline of the chapter	32
Searching for a method and looking for a field	33
a fieldwork of homecoming	36
Limninge	38
working and living in the prime of life	40
Closing in on the field	44
ethical considerations	46
interviews as fieldwork	47
the focus group interview	49
Relations with and reflections on the field	51
remembering and reconnecting with informants	52

questions of trust _____	52
outsider – insider _____	53
Probing data: between actions and accounts _____	55
entertaining tales of purchasing <i>svart</i> _____	58
what did I get to know? _____	59
justifications for buying <i>svart</i> _____	60
taking talk seriously _____	61
Concluding remarks _____	64
3. Valuing work: Negotiating between buying a service and doing-it-yourself _____	67
aim and outline of the chapter _____	68
Aspects of work _____	69
valuing work _____	71
the good work _____	73
Worlds of work _____	76
working for money _____	77
working at home _____	78
working in the welfare society _____	79
... working everywhere? _____	81
‘On the side’: informally recompensed work _____	82
time: working after hours _____	84
fair work: negotiating time and cost _____	87
compromising between diverse worlds of work _____	89
Concluding remarks _____	92
4. <i>Pigdebatten</i> : the Swedish maid debate _____	95
aim and outline of the chapter _____	95
a history of paid Swedish cleaning _____	96
is cleaning (de)meaning work? _____	97
Cleaning Swedes _____	99
to buy or not to buy cleaning? _____	100
relations and trust _____	103
Concluding remarks _____	107
5. Buy or barter? The cheap, simple and hidden acquisition _____	109
aim and outline of the chapter _____	109
The cheap transaction _____	111
it’s got to be cheap _____	112
buying work informally as part of (economic) life _____	113
entangling social relations _____	113
Is barter <i>svart arbete</i> ? _____	115
justifiable bartering _____	117
organised bartering _____	119
bartering with money _____	122
The role of money _____	124
places to keep money _____	126
concealed payments _____	127

partly hidden exchanges _____	129
clean and dirty money _____	130
The smart deal: cheap and simple purchases of <i>smart arbete</i> _____	131
the smart restaurant meal _____	133
a car repair made simple and cheap _____	135
exchanging within a Swedish regime of living _____	138
Concluding remarks _____	139
6. Helping out: Reciprocity as relation building _____	141
aim and outline of the chapter _____	142
Reciprocity and exchanges _____	143
the implication of diverse reciprocal relationships _____	144
reciprocity in market transactions _____	146
reciprocity within exchanges of work _____	147
Helping out: from altruistic norms to building and maintaining relations _____	149
when help becomes <i>smart arbete</i> _____	150
justifying <i>smart</i> as ‘help’ _____	151
abusing a helping hand _____	154
proximity of social relations _____	157
The hard currency of finding help: knowledge and trust _____	158
can anybody ‘help’? _____	160
trust is a must _____	161
warranties, securities and quality work _____	166
Concluding remarks _____	168
7. Balancing: Reciprocal expressions with and within a modern welfare state _____	171
aim and outline of the chapter _____	172
Relationship between citizens and state in Sweden _____	173
who buys <i>smart</i> ? the problem of categorisations _____	174
<i>sambällsbärare</i> – pillars of society _____	176
Reciprocal relations with the state _____	177
Swedish moral economy _____	179
triadic reciprocity _____	180
reciprocity within triadic trade _____	181
triadic reciprocal relationships in society _____	181
The balancing act _____	183
cheating: strategies to maintain the balance _____	185
adapting and protesting against increasing state control _____	187
contributive balancing: paying too much tax _____	189
distributive balancing: the state’s unwise redistribution _____	190
when balancing does not work: the unjust society _____	194
double abuse of the tax system is wrong! _____	195
Concluding remarks _____	198
8. Conclusion: Moral dilemmas when purchasing work informally _____	201
purchases of <i>smart arbete</i> made acceptable _____	203
between helping out and believing in the welfare state _____	205

valuing work and the economisation of relations _____	207
the vicious circle of <i>svart arbete</i> _____	207
Appendix 1: Swedish expressions used _____	211
Notes _____	215
References _____	221
Index _____	233
Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology _____	237
Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology. New Series _____	240

Acknowledgements

This book is a stop in time on the long and so far personally very rewarding journey of trying to understand the societal economy. At each turn I have taken, the landscape has changed slightly and new contours have started to take shape in the horizon. Approaching some of them has made the view appear even more distinct and complete, whereas a few others have mercifully been passed, forgotten and disappeared in the fog. At other times a turn provided a completely new and exciting dimension of this land. My route has mostly been stimulating, but has also been interrupted by irritating theoretical detours and potholes, that have each in their way provided insights. At this resting place, I like the coherence of the landscape I see, but I am also very curious about what will show itself after the next bend.

This is thus a moment to stop and try to express the gratitude I feel towards colleagues, family and friends without whose comments and encouragement, this journey would not have taken the shape it has.

First of all, I am grateful to my former classmates turned informants. Without your generous contributions this book would not have materialised at all! You revealed private thoughts and sometimes embarrassing recollections to help me out. In addition, meeting you again made my fieldwork truly enjoyable.

I am also most indebted to my supervisor, Christina Garsten for her intellectual guidance which has transformed my understanding of these hidden exchanges of work into social anthropology. You have been my navigator, inspired and encouraged me to spell out and make explicit my thoughts and showed me where I was at instances of being lost. Christina, I am most grateful.

My three assistant supervisors have each provided invaluable insights. Claes-Fredrik Helgesson always gave wise intellectual as well as practical advice. Johan Lindquist provided a healthy combination of encouragement and pointing out possible waypoints to explore further (and others to forget). Ulf Hannerz saw early on where my route was aimed and gave inspiring comments to continue my journey. Thank you all.

Monica Lindh de Montoya, Kerstin Jacobsson and Renita Thedvall have read and commented on earlier versions of this manuscript. Adrienne Sörbom, Anette Nyqvist, Ebba Sjögren, Jan Tullberg, Jessica Lindvert, Hans Tunestad and Susann Ullberg have read and commented on chapters. Helena Wulff carefully read the final version. I truly appreciate your criticisms, advice and encouragement.

Discussions with and comments from Hans Hedlund, Henrik Horn and Lars Korsell have triggered my thoughts and views on economic issues and

their place in society. Håkan Malmer generously invited me to what at the time seemed the foe's den – Skatteverket. You might not agree with my conclusions, but I am grateful for discussions I have had with each of you.

During a stay at CARR, Centre for Analysis of Risk and Regulation at the London School of Economics, it was made evident to me how cautious one ought to be with translations of emic concepts into a foreign language. I am thankful for the opportunity of presenting my project there.

For good company writing this up, I am indebted to my colleague Cajsa Niemann in the aquarium and to Eveline Buchheim at whose house the essence of this study first presented itself.

Very important is the daily interactions with colleagues. It is not possible for me to address properly my gratitude for all the comments and hints that have enriched my journey. Instead, a collective thanks to all for challenging views, advice and ideas and for good company; at the department of Social Anthropology at the University of Stockholm where I spent the first three years and at Score, Stockholm Center for Organisational Studies, where I currently work. In particular, I want to thank Petra Pålsson, Ann Loftsjö, Annelore Ploum, and Gudrun Aquilonius who made, and make, working possible.

Researching and writing up this dissertation, I have taken part in two research projects. 'Fashioning markets: Accountability and transparency in the global marketplace' funded by the Swedish Research Council (VR) and 'Social Affairs – governance for a normative economy', funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (RJ), led by Christina Garsten. I have also received grants from Stockholm University, Rhodins donationstipendium, and the Helge Ax:son Johnsons Foundation. Finally I am grateful to STINT, the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education who provided funding, led by Linda Soneryd, which made the visit to CARR possible.

To my sister and father and to my friends who have encouraged me, not always understanding what I had in mind. Thanks for being there and being friends!

Last but not least, my thanks to my family who with their love and curiosity make life worth living. Johanne, Gustav and Frederikke have each in your way encouraged me and had to live with and also eagerly participated in discussions about economy and society. Thanks also Frederikke for your alert eye finding the cover photo. And Niels, my beloved husband and friend, I cannot imagine life without you!

1. Introduction: Work purchased informally

‘One of the most fascinating problems about human behaviour is why men violate the laws in which they believe’ (Morris Cohen, cited by Sykes & Matza 1957:666).

In reality, the formal economy is a desk product which humanity doesn't give a damn about. That's *svart arbete* in a nutshell; it doesn't fit in the formal Swedish economy. So you do not follow the rules. For society to function we have to have the formal one – and just take bits and pieces on the side instead.

Pontus took another sip of tea from the handmade ceramic cup and leaned back on his chair. We sat in his cosy bohemian kitchen, spacious but cluttered with things which bore traces of his work as a photographer, his wife's ceramic trade and their baby's endeavours. The rustic table between us tempted us with lovely homemade bread, a big wedge of cheese and a pot of tepid tea. It was chilly in there, but still much nicer than the dark December night that enveloped the old mansion.

Pontus' comment summarises what this book is about: illegal but widely accepted practices of economic value within a contemporary welfare state - practices that get work done simply and cheaply. To find out about these practices, we shall visit present-day Sweden where the views on and practices of *svart arbete* originate in habits but adapt to contemporary society.

Svart, black, and *arbete*, work, often translate into English as informal work, working off the record, moonlighting, etc. A straight translation as blackwork has the wrong connotations, implying historical reminiscences of Tudor ladies sitting doing delicate embroidery with black threads on white linen cloth. In present-day society, it may also imply racism. Contextualising the practice, the emic expression *svart arbete* will be used throughout this book and when discussing the issue in analytical terms, I shall do so in terms of work which is paid for informally, thus avoiding tax.

These exchanges of work ought to be subject to taxation. Nevertheless they are a phenomenon which is taken for granted. They highlight the inadequacies of the formal economy which are pragmatically resolved by the actors subject to it. As such, *svart arbete* is a subject for ethical considerations about exchanges of work. These are officially unseen, but make up a large part of the economy in contemporary society.

In addition to an official moralistic discourse on this topic, I have taken an interest in *svart arbete* for several other reasons. As Pontus noted above, there is a difference between how people in general talk about such exchanges and what they really do, which in turn contrasts with how politicians and officials bemoan this phenomenon. The media continually run stories about the occasional politician or VIP who has been heckled for having purchased *svart arbete*. Yet in my neighbourhood, at work and on social occasions, it seems to be a common practice that most claim to take part in occasionally. People's explanations are mainly based on two sets of reasoning: economic and habitual. 'Of course. It is cheaper' was one, but there are many things which are cheaper to do, but still we do not do them. Other comments such as 'it is such a small amount' or 'everybody else buys *svart*' point in other directions, to relativisation and social relations. A third one is 'it is a kind of tax refund' implying an economic relation with the state. Finally, expressions such as 'it's normal', 'it has always existed', and 'society would not function without it' entail a habitual and historical reasoning.

Social phenomena which are taken for granted are intriguing (cf. Herzfeld 2005:4) and as the explanations for the existence of *svart arbete* were often contradictory, I found the phenomenon even more captivating. Individuals' justifications for these exchanges were followed by their own insights into the negative consequences for society, often echoing the public complaints. These were mainly structured in two discourses, where a materialistic supported a more condemnatory moralistic one. The moralistic complaints concerned the breaking of rules, greed, economic abuse and the impact disobeying laws and regulations has on society. The economic reasoning was based on varieties such as lack of income due to the state's coffers, the skewed market competition it creates and finally that *svart arbete* is inefficient for the economy as a whole. Apprehending Pontus' initial reflection, it is an exchange of work which is often overlooked or set aside in models for economic analysis. It does not fit in, although it is an acceptable, commonplace, yet criminal practice.

Aim of this study

The aim of this book is to describe how purchases of *svart arbete*, informally bought work, are made acceptable. Analysing the illegal but acceptable exchanges of work aims to illuminate a multifaceted reasoning about economic exchanges as an interaction between purchases made and how people make sense of and find meaning in them in retrospect and in the larger context of society.

In a macro perspective, at a national level, *svart arbete* is an economic societal phenomenon, consisting of unmeasurable and hidden transactions. At the micro level, it is a commonplace practice, acknowledged as wrong, but in many instances acceptable. I found most interesting connecting actions at the micro level with the effects they were said to have at the macro level: for example, purchasing services for private use, under the table as it were, and being aware

of the sometimes negative implications these transactions have for society. These exchanges are thus seen as contradictory at different analytical levels.

This is an anthropology of inconspicuous exchanges of work, which start out in the dissonance between the loud voices of the public media discourse and the background of a humming anonymous chorus. This chorus is not fine-tuned, but points to some general aspects of how acceptable exchanges of work are defined within a modern state, still regarded as ‘the archetypal welfare state’ (e.g. Svallfors 1995). Amongst competing opinions in contemporary Swedish society, this book aims to cast light on the slightly neglected perspective on *svart arbete* – that of the buyers.

At the centre of attention is the rendering of accounts of how these illegal acquisitions are made acceptable amongst a group of Swedes. Through the logic of their accounts, I shall look closely at what is exchanged: work, the way the transaction is settled and the relationships established and maintained by the exchange.

aim and outline of the chapter

In this introductory chapter, I set the stage for the discussion to follow.

To start with, there will be a brief description of Sweden as a welfare state focusing on taxes and their avoidance. The economic consequence for the state is less revenue from tax, and the less tax paid is also viewed as the main reason for purchasing *svart arbete*. Following will come an overview of studies made regarding *svart arbete* in Sweden and similar phenomena in (mostly) comparable contexts. The latter consists of a short selection from the wealth of studies about the ‘informal economy’, discussing the insights as well as the methodological and analytical shortcomings of the concept and why I do not find this concept applicable to this analysis. Instead, I demonstrate how both formal and informal exchanges of work are at the centre of analysis, when addressing how purchases of *svart arbete* are made acceptable but also in the larger picture as practices that partly constitute an economy.

These discussions lay the groundwork for outlining the theories and the main analytical concepts used throughout this book. Methodologically, it involves analyses of accounts of (trans)actions of illegal and non-observable purchases. How are these seen as economic practices and how do I regard them as part of the societal economy? Finally, I shall present the outline of the book, which considers what aspects of social life these purchasers recognise when they deliberate on the informal acquisition of work.

‘Even in Sweden’: history, issues, research and reports about *svart arbete*

The Swedish welfare state has often been and still is considered a role model (e.g. Svallfors 1995), even if many other countries provide the same level of

welfare although in slightly different configurations. Sweden was poor and underdeveloped in the second part of the eighteenth century when many of its citizens emigrated in pursuit of a better life, but the country grew wealthy during the last century. Sweden has been unaffected by war for more than 150 years and during this time industrialisation, based mainly on rich resources of iron ore and forestry, developed without interruption. This growing wealth provided the source for a simultaneous development of the welfare state as industry and state cooperated and grew for the benefit of each (e.g. Allvin 2004, de Swaan 1988, Rothstein 1992).

No introduction can do justice to the many and various views on the origins and development of Swedish (welfare) society. My aim is rather to sketch a background to why purchases of *svart arbete* have contradictory meanings. The ambiguous views Swedes have of *svart arbete* can be one illustration of why they are seen as being comparatively trustful of the society in which they live and the state which governs them (Berggren and Trägårdh 2006, Möller 2007:18). Yet they often claim that the state meddles in private concerns (e.g. Ahrne et al. 2003:173).

Subject to debate is why the welfare state came to take the course it did in Sweden (cf. Bäck & Larsson 2006:295). Its development is credited to the Social Democratic Party which has governed Sweden almost exclusively since the 1930s (with short interruptions of right-wing coalitions during the last 30 years). One governing idea was *arbetslinjen*, the Work Approach. Getting all Swedes to work is argued to be one of the main and most successful parts in the building of the Swedish welfare society (cf. Esser 2006:14, Lindvert 2006:18).

Another idea was *Folkhemmet*, literally the People's Home, where all citizens would feel equal (Frykman & Hansen 2009:80) and where no one would be dependent on or abused by any other (Lewin 2008:30). This idea of equality might have earlier historical roots than twentieth-century social engineering (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006:52), but one of the consequences was an evening out of differences in income level (Bennich-Björkman 2008:47). This enhanced equalised standing between citizens simultaneously provided a foundation for the welfare policies through taxation on personal income from work. Swedish personal income taxes are constructed as marginal taxes (with an increased percentage level on the last *krona* earned) and at rates which by international comparisons are high (cf. KPMG 2009). High income earners thus have higher tax rates than the average Swede.

These taxes provide the foundation for Swedish welfare politics, which today basically consists of four different parts. First, there are the services produced publicly such as schools, health-care and provisions for the elderly and children. Secondly, there is a compulsory social insurance system based on income from work. General subsidies connected with citizenship are a third component, and finally there are contingency-tested subsidies when all other sources are inadequate (Rothstein 2002 [1994]:25).

It is not far-fetched to say that the Work Approach and the idea of equality are central cornerstones in the construction of the Swedish welfare society – in theory and in practice.

definitions of *svart arbete*

According to the Swedish Tax Agency (*Skatteverket*, which hereafter will be referred to as the Tax Agency), *svart arbete* is any work performed for remuneration which should be subject to Swedish tax but is not accounted for. This is regardless of whether the work is recompensed by way of payment in money, or in kind, or if sources of income come from salary, wage or self-employment (Skatteverket 2006:4:17, 2006:4B:20). The activities are usually legal in content, so that the illegality appears in the settlement; as a hidden income and a kind of tax evasion. *Svart arbete* is thus always the result of an exchange in which work is an ingredient.

In content, *svart arbete* covers a broad spectrum of exchanges of work, from the occasional exchange of services which might be regarded as *svart*, via common and daily practices, *vanligt svartande*¹, to the outright criminal and organised activities on a large scale. Paying the teenager next door for looking after the kids on a Friday evening or a colleague's friend who is a plumber 300 *krona* in cash for fixing a leaking faucet, are examples of *svart arbete* which are common and everyday practices. These transactions should in principle be reported as income. The organised tax fraud with wages in certain businesses is seen as more unlawful but is still viewed as *svart arbete*. At the extreme, *svart arbete* also includes mistreatment of immigrants without work permits who work for a pittance with no other choice of income – a relationship close to slavery. It can sometimes even encompass criminal activities such as smuggling, prostitution or the handling of stolen goods, although in principle illegal work is not subject to taxation (Skatteverket 2006:4:21). The illegality within *svart arbete* is mostly defined in the way it is recompensed, when and to whom, and not within the content of the tasks themselves.

The legal definition of *svart arbete* is in theory quite straightforward, but in reality it is not that easy to apply. For example, it has been stated that the border between accepted practices of *svart arbete* and straight-out criminal activities is crossed if *svart arbete* is organised and continuous, of big proportions and affects large numbers of people (Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:33). It thus becomes an economic crime (Lindgren 2001:12).² This book does not disagree with this view. What is of big proportions on the provider's part might, from the consumer's side, be seen as occasional and everyday. In fact, many small and everyday exchanges risk also being considered *svart*. As many of these activities cannot be subject to prosecution, it is one example of instances where 'the border between legal and not legal is neither explicit nor consistent' (Ingelstam 1995:82-83, my translation). In line with such a wide definition, the concept of *svart arbete* becomes problematic. If the minor, occasional purchase can be seen as *svart* as well as the organised, large-scale abusive practice, will not the entire concept of *svart arbete* as a criminal activity then be eroded?

Although the state authorities work with information and campaigns against *svart arbete*, there are also publicly stated concerns about applying legislation which half of the Swedish population considers inappropriate and does not

agree with (cf. Skatteverket 2006:4:29). *Svart arbete* are widespread practices which challenge laws, rules and norms.

licit but illegal practices

In general discourse, a common association is made between the licit and legal, on the one hand, and the illicit and illegal, on the other. However, there are many activities which in essence are illegal, but are still commonly practised. Willem van Schendel and Itty Abraham (2005) make the following distinction. Licit, and its contradiction illicit, exist in the views of people, where illicit refers to behaviour which is not according to common values and accepted norms. What is legal and illegal is negotiated within the state and/or political domains and refers to behaviour which adheres to, or breaks, formal laws (ibid.20). An important distinction to note is that illegal and illicit are often used as synonyms in the Swedish context (cf. the Swedish National Audit Office, *Riksrevisionsverkets*, the English summary of the reports on *Svart arbete*, is entitled 'Illicit Work in Sweden' 1998:61). In this book, the acceptable purchase of *svart arbete* is licit but is appraised as illegal.

The problematic distinction between legal and illegal in diverse aspects concerning purchases of *svart arbete* can be exemplified by a case that occurred in 2003 and 2004. Six women, living in a suburb of Gothenburg, were indicted for paying a Lithuanian woman without work permit to clean every other week for about two to three hours, at the charge of 200-250 *krona* (Björklund Larsen 2005)³. The woman cleaned in total the homes of almost 20 families. The buyers admitted having paid the woman in cash and as such this could be considered *svart*, as stated in stark headlines. However, the legal indictment was for using an immigrant without work papers, something the purchasers claimed not to be aware of. One facet of the case was whether the Lithuanian woman's relation to her 'customers' could be considered as one of being self-employed rather than employed. Another aspect was that the purchasing women were convicted in the first legal hearing and acquitted on appeal at the next level.

A third dimension was that the tasks the woman performed were lawful, but as she was a foreigner lacking a work permit they became doubly illegal since the remuneration was in cash without an invoice. The court told one of the accused women that there was no objection to a retired person 'helping out', but that it was different for a foreigner. Fourth, the cleaner's nationality was that of a potential European Union member country and if considered self-employed she could be working legally in Sweden for stints of three months. Fifth, the amount each family paid was not enough to make their purchases illegal and the woman's total income was not subject to Swedish taxation (it would have been in Lithuania, her home country). The government's attempt to suppress a type of *svart arbete* (cleaning without a work permit for payment in cash in hand) and thus setting an example for the future, collapsed and perhaps made a contested market of services by foreign providers even more licit (Björklund Larsen 2005:63).

As exemplified at the start, the lure of a cheap deal suggests economic deliberations. Although these transactions are carried out with diverse intentions, they are informed by what other people in society do and think. Therefore, a *svart* transaction can never be seen exclusively as a deal between purchaser and buyer, but must be set in relation to other people's trading practices. The exchanges undertaken for private use while cheating the state are relativised by a perceived knowledge about other people's exchanges: that they buy (more) *svart* or deceive the state in other ways. Surrounding these tensions between diverse connections is the idea of a habit – 'it has always existed' – proposing both traditional ways to exchange as well as continuous deceptions of authority. The existence of *svart arbete* can in this view be seen neither as changed exchange practices nor as practices that simplify economic exchanges, but as the result of an intensified governmental gaze.

When purchases of *svart arbete* are made acceptable, they become licit but remain illegal. Purchases of work can also be unknowingly informal. The buyer might never know that what looked straight was indeed *svart*. For example, receipts can be falsified or forgotten, as the intentions might not have been to do an informal deal at all. There are also occasions when an informant retrospectively comes to the insight that a given deal might actually be regarded as *svart*.

The acceptable purchases of *svart arbete* thus comprise a borderland where exchanges are 'legally banned but socially sanctioned and protected' (van Schendel & Abraham 2005:22). Borderlands are by definition contested areas, in this case 'as they are a site for the gap between people's understanding of what they are doing vs. the state's inconsistent notions of illegality' (ibid.25). An illegal activity which is socially legitimate has an ambiguous persistence (Smart 1999:104), usually tolerated but occasionally suppressed (cf. Björklund Larsen 2005). Needless to say, this borderland is fluid and to a certain extent individually diversified. In this book, I therefore attempt to define and discuss the social practices which construct and maintain the borders in a contemporary Swedish context.

Borders are interesting to study, not in themselves but for what they contain and what they exclude. The subject in this study is to identify the core of the processes which maintain the edge in order to understand what the border surrounds (cf. Barth 1994:119). Analysing how illegal yet licit purchases of work are justified might also cast light on respective sides of this borderland. On one side, there are the truly unacceptable, such as exchanges and practices which are considered abusive, illegal and illicit. On the other side, there are the inconspicuous exchanges and purchases of services which might indirectly illustrate problematic aspects of translucent and legal exchanges of work that are deemed illicit. One example could be why domestic cleaning can be seen as problematic to buy in contemporary Sweden (chapter four). If market transactions make people's wishes public, the hidden ones are as important as those on display. If you really want to know someone – or something like a market – you have to look beneath the surface (cf. Schlosser 2003:20-21).

Before looking at how the phenomenon of *svart arbete* is researched, a historic overview of the concept and its role in Swedish society will be presented.

the history of the concept

Formerly *svart arbete* meant hard and tiring work which made the worker dirty. The old proverb *svarta händer gör vita pengar*, literally ‘black hands make white money’, indicates that a good deed comes from hard physical work which soils the worker (Holm 1964). This stands in blatant contrast with the current public connotation of *svart arbete* as a shameful, subversive, and abusive practice. The label *svart* signifying economic activities in relation to justice came into Swedish usage after the First World War (SAOB 2006).⁴ *Svart* concerned illegal transactions, especially of rationed products, which took place on *svarta börsen*, the black market. *Svart arbete* as an expression was probably imported from German and Danish. It took its legal oppositional form, describing these activities as a result of extraordinary bureaucratic conscientiousness. *Svart arbetsmarknad*, ‘black labour market’, was used in Sweden for the first time in 1932 (SAOB 2006 referring to an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* 5.10.1932) describing the labour market conditions in Germany during the then severe economic depression. *Svart* in relation to work traces its roots to the Anglo-American term ‘blackfeet’, a name given to those breaking union blockades. The unsigned newspaper article describes the search for work by over six million officially unemployed Germans, and the existence of *svart arbete* in Germany in 1932 was described as a causal reaction to the rising unemployment. The article portrayed unemployed people who were willing to work for well below the regular hourly pay, sometimes even being recompensed in kind as when city dwellers worked on farms for a payment of food and shelter plus a large package of groceries for their families left behind in the cities.

Already then *svart arbete* was being performed in hidden ways, as the workers were simultaneously receiving unemployment compensation. The German black labour market was condemned both by firms and the government. The former saw this market as undermining competition. For the government, the problem was not receiving enough income taxes for social, retirement and unemployment benefits. The wages fell in the informal market and, due to mass-unemployment, became a sort of ‘going wage’ which supposedly threatened the entire central agreement system between employers and employees. Parallels were drawn with the rationing system and the black market during the First World War.

In contemporary welfare states like Denmark and Sweden, a *svart* economy is almost always described as problematic (cf. OECD 2004:225, Olwig 1986:7, Viby Mogensen 2003). If citizens are perceived to be buying services *svart* (thereby avoiding taxes, official regulations and union agreements), the ‘power’ of welfare institutions and solidarity with the community decrease (cf. Smith 1989). The impact on society and its institutions is seen to be detrimental, for example as swallowing part of a macroeconomic recovery (Carlberg 2005). *Svart arbete* is often seen as thriving and even growing in devious immoral circles of

exchanges. What has to be kept in mind is that this type of work cannot entirely be regarded as fraud, since much of it would never have taken place if performed formally, with invoices and thus *vitt* (literally white, cf. Skatteverket 2008:221). It would have been too expensive.

Throughout the 1990s, there have been recurring political discussions about how to reduce the amount of *svart arbete*. Practically no one is opposed to combating the large-scale, organised and abusive practices. However, it has been more difficult to come to a consensus about the private consumption of services. Different suggestions based on research and motions proposed in the Swedish parliament *Riksdagen* have been subject to heated public debate, in particular concerning subsidised cleaning, which was proposed in order to halt the practice of informally purchased cleaning. These subsidies, sometimes called RUTs, have been in focus in the tainted *pigdebatten*, ‘the maid debate’ which will be discussed further in chapter four. Compare this with the subsidised home repair services, ROT, which are recurring subsidies for work in private houses. The aim of ROT is to support the building industry in periods of slow economic growth, but also a way to lessen the propensity for *svart arbete*. ROT, compared with RUT, is almost unanimously supported by both politicians and the general public.

‘The maid debate’ aroused heated emotions in the Swedish discourse about *svart arbete*, mostly due to a perceived class division, i.e. high-earning consumers and working-class providers, as well as a gender imbalance in that women risk staying put in low qualified and badly paid jobs (cf. Platzner 2004:113). Tax deductions for acquiring services were thus seen to benefit those who were already well-off. In the Swedish election campaign during the autumn of 2006, the maid debate resurfaced as the right-wing alliance parties proposed tax deductions for domestic services which the leftist parties were against. Since July 2007, tax deduction is available for domestic services.

Another issue in the Swedish debate about *svart arbete* has been the arrival of craftsmen and other workers from countries with considerably lower wage levels, primarily Poland and the Baltic states, since the 1990s.⁵ Their services are considered cheaper for the consumer than hiring Swedish equivalents. Their income in Sweden is often higher than what is possible in their own countries, but if a middleman takes a large fee for his arrangement services, the workmen’s wage is often much lower than that advertised. With the enlargement of the European Union, this influx has increased and it is nowadays common to see cars with Baltic and Polish licence plates parked outside private homes where there are clear signs of work in action. Their work is performed at rates below the Swedish minimum wage and it can be legal or *svart*, just as the work of their Swedish colleagues/competitors can be.

These examples raise many legal, economic and moral questions that will not be dealt with explicitly here, except to provide a background for my informants’ deliberations about the acceptable purchase of work.

In order to make citizens comply with existing regulations, there have been diverse opinion-shaping campaigns. The Tax Agency not only collects taxes, but for example initiated one campaign with heavy moral undertones entitled

‘the White Knight’, *Vita riddaren*, which addressed young people in order to enhance their resistance to working *svart*.⁶ The unions, (mainly through *LO*, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation) have been other major campaigners aiming to get workers to avoid working *svart*, mostly emphasising workers’ rights and benefits.

Such a heavily debated phenomenon that has an unknown impact on the Swedish economy and shows contempt for Swedish law is an obvious subject for research. Next therefore comes an overview of research on *svart arbete* and related phenomena, first with reports from government institutions and then from other sources.

governmental reports on *svart arbete*

Swedish research and estimates of *svart arbete* have generally been carried out following governmental initiatives with the Tax Agency as the most active participant. For example, in its annual *Tax Statistical Yearbook of Sweden* a chapter is dedicated to tax errors and tax evasion. In a study concerning public views on the tax system, cheating and governmental audit⁷ (Skatteverket 2007:3), it is argued that there are two main reasons for tax evasion. First, the tax levels are regarded as too high. Secondly and an equally important reason, is that people in higher positions and with better paid jobs do not comply with societal norms and this lack of compliance results in low solidarity with society amongst the public in general (ibid.29). Two thirds of those asked consider fraud a serious problem for society (ibid.20). The connection between *svart arbete* and other types of fraud with government money, such as cheating with taxes and subsidies, is thus increasingly acknowledged.

The Tax Agency has dedicated a group to investigating *svart arbete* in Sweden and trying to ‘do the puzzle’ (Skatteverket 2006:4:15). So far two studies have been published, based on an ambitious research agenda applying several methodologies. Compared with previous studies which approached the phenomenon as an entity, it is noteworthy that for the first time they distinguish between purchasers and providers. One fifth of all Swedish households are estimated to have used *svart arbete*, spending 7,000 *krona* a year on average, but concern is noted about the difference compared with other estimates. The total amount is larger than estimates for the producing side, a discrepancy explained by work performed by the growing group of foreign providers. Another difference noted is between the National Accounts estimate of 151 billion *krona* of undeclared income and the Tax Agency’s 115-120 billion (Guibourg & Segendorf 2007). These approximations have diverse explanations; not all activities are reported, criminal activities are included in one but not another, not all activities are discovered and not everybody involved is aware of the distinction between *svart* and *vitt* (e.g. Skatteverket 2008:221). Their concluding argument is that *svart arbete* is really about trust in fellow citizens, the welfare society, its institutions and rules and regulations (Skatteverket 2006:4:12). However, supplementary research and knowledge is asked for.

The Swedish National Audit Office, *Riksrevisionsverket* or *Riksrevisionen*, received special government funding to research *svart arbete* and *svart* entrepreneurship. This resulted in a report in four parts, *Svart arbete 1-4* (1997:59, 1998:28, 1998:29 and 1998:36) plus a summary in English, entitled 'Illicit Work in Sweden – A report on a welfare state dilemma' (1998:61). It is an overview and analysis of mainly quantitative research, which concentrates on the production side in industrial spheres; note the translation 'Illicit Work' which treats illegal and illicit as synonyms. The Audit Office's definition excludes all criminal activities and defines *svart arbete* as employees' lawful activities which generate wages, salaries or other remuneration regardless of whether they are settled as a payment in cash or in kind, but which have not been declared to the Tax Agency (Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:28, my translation). For the self-employed entrepreneur, it can in addition be undeclared income from capital (ibid.30). The practice is described as widespread, involving all economic sectors and well integrated in the mainstream economy.

Yet another governmental investigation is one on taxes on services (*Tjänstebeskattningsutredningen*, the Public Investigation of Taxes on Services, my translation, SOU 1997:17). The background to this was the slow growth in Swedish private consumption, mainly concentrated on imported products. This investigation recommended tax deductions for services aimed at households: car repairs, house maintenance, restaurants and catering, personal transport, cleaning and other services. A perceived high consumption from the 'black sector' was argued to distort competition, but the structural change in work taking place within households was also noted. It was argued that households lack time since both men and women increasingly work full-time and share homechores more equally. This investigation was more or less slaughtered in the public debate which roughly centred on two arguments. First, the opposition was due to a strong reference to the tainted notion of 'maid', *piga*, which carries historical and emotional associations of class and gender inequality (cf. Öberg 1999:196). Secondly, it was a question of economic equality, where only those already well-off were thought to benefit from the proposed tax deductions (cf. Platzer 2004, see also chapter four).

A report compiled as a discussion of support for taxes for the Swedish Association of Municipalities, *Svenska Kommunförbundet*, is interesting, as it includes an explicit time dimension to people's negotiations between taxes, purchasing work and their own use of time (Sjöberg 2000). The report not only condemns these practices but also recognises the complexity in both understanding and proposing measures to combat *svart arbete* (ibid.50). Sjöberg recommends creating a knowledge database about *svart arbete* and asks for a methodological approach close to that of anthropology, emphasising field observations as the preferred method.

The Swedish Crime Prevention Council, *Brå*, ran a project on the larger subject of economic crimes around the turn of the century, with a few reports specifically addressing *svart arbete* (cf. Brå 2003, Wibe 2003). Due to instructions from the council, they mostly emphasised preventive legal proposals. One report advocated morals being strengthened, as more people were said to want

more resources for fighting *svart arbete* (Wibe 2003). A later analysis covered *svart arbete* and its connections with purely criminal activities in the construction sector (Brå 2007:27).

Recently, a macroeconomic study has emanated from Sweden's central bank, *Sveriges Riksbank*. It provides an estimate of the extent of *svart arbete* in Sweden, using a version of the cash-based model (Guibourg & Segendorf 2007). The basic assumption of the model is an estimate of the velocity rate for cash in an economy, argued to be difficult to establish as different assumed rates produce different results. Nevertheless, the unambiguous result shows an increase in what is here called the shadow economy⁸ during the time period from 1990 to 2004.

These studies share two common approaches. They divide the practices strictly into legal and illegal economic activities, and the starting point is that *svart arbete* is indisputably problematic for society. The governmental studies can be said to confirm each other and borrow results from quantitative 'guesstimates' (which most institutions are aware of, see further chapter two). The more recent studies from the Tax Agency have brought in new methods and thus resulted in more nuanced findings on the existence of *svart arbete* in Sweden (Skatteverket 2006:4, 2007:1).

non-governmental studies

There are thus quite a few stakeholders measuring and interpreting the issue of *svart arbete* from the government and its institutions.

Other views on *svart arbete* see it as part of broader economic issues. For example, Lars Ingelstam sees work as the economy (Ingelstam 1995). His standpoint is that any serious discussion of societal economy must also include legal and productive work that is not subject to remuneration. He overrides the monetary divide and describes the entire economy as divided into four sectors each identified by a colour. The official economy is represented by the blue and yellow Swedish flag. Yellow stands for gold and wheat, the colour of the private enterprise sphere. Blue is the weapon of the state, referring to all productive work not done for money. White encompasses work performed in households and through cooperation, *samverkan*, that is working together in civil society. Black symbolises criminal and other illegal economic activities. The interesting cases occur where the different sectors interlink. 'Help thyself work' takes place in a white-grey sector, and is seen as an easy and personal way to get help with everyday needs (ibid.102).

Isacson (1994) provides a historical description of households' pattern of work and survival strategies from smallholding agrarian Gagnef where a combination of formal and informal exchanges of tasks was normal.⁹ It is an interesting read on how the habits and traditions of people's exchanges transform in the light of society's development. Isacson emphasises the difficulty in distinguishing between formal and informal practices in small farming communities (ibid.237). Although not explicitly spelled out, some of these exchanges could

in contemporary society be considered as *svart arbete*, especially if they take place in households where income is salary-based.

Tax evasion is a subject that overlaps that of *svart arbete*. In a dissertation about reasons for and the extent of Swedish tax evasion, Laurin (1986) concludes that dissatisfaction with the tax system is widespread. He disagrees with the common notion that this dissatisfaction is due to views on politicians' (bad) behaviour, that the high-income earners show a propensity to cheat more or that the level of taxes affects tax-payers behaviour. The main conclusion is, rather, that people take the opportunities that present themselves. Their behaviour takes into account the possibility of being detected, the expectation of punishment for the offence and a perception of fellow citizens' tax payment and ethics. Another related subject with relevance for our understanding of *svart arbete* concerns Swedish white-collar economic crimes (Alalehto 2002). This study aims to point out personality traits which motivate actors, traits which are seen to reflect on the culture in which these actors live. The study concludes with a number of interesting follow-up questions regarding the impact of individuals' feelings of injustice (ibid.100) and the consequences of illegal and illicit economic practices for the moral climate of societies (ibid.102, cf. Sjöstrand et al 2005).

The Danish Rockwool Foundation Research Unit has produced many insightful studies about the informal or shadow economy, or black work as it has recently chosen to call it, and its consequences for welfare societies, in particular Denmark. Inspiration for Swedish studies often seems to stem from this research, as the Nordic countries provide similar settings, with comparable societies and economies. A few of its studies cover the Swedish economy (Brodersen 2003, Pedersen 1998, 2003, Viby Mogensen 2003). The foundation's research provides historical perspectives and is based on empirical data, primarily obtained from questionnaires and interviews, but also drawn from economic statistics. Noteworthy is its discussion on the methodological challenges the shadow economy poses, where it posits its stand as 'the least bad method' (e.g. Viby Mogensen 2003:61-64).

The informal economy and informal work

In an international perspective similar but also more encompassing, economic activities have been labelled as the informal economy.¹⁰ In this section, the origin, insights and shortcomings of this term will be discussed in order to set the stage for how I arrived at my analytical framework.

The 'informal economy' was coined in the early 1970s and defined as 'the mass of economic transactions that takes place beyond effective state regulation' (Hart 2001b:98). When Keith Hart did fieldwork amongst immigrants in Ghana's capital Accra, he observed that individuals were very busy living, working and surviving, although officially Ghana had an enormous unemployment rate (Hart 1973). What he described as the informal economy was made up of survival strategies by poor people living under corrupt regimes where the au-

thorities were deemed to be a threat. He emphasised the wish to avoid bureaucracy, especially regarding taxation, but also regulations and official records.

The term and its synonyms came quickly into use as a way of addressing all unmeasurable economic activities. This was especially the concern of poorer and underdeveloped countries. Recognising the informal economy together with the formal was seen as a vehicle for economic development (cf. Hart 2001a:845). The ILO (International Labour Organization) and the World Bank made widespread use of the concept. However, the excitement faded as the oppositional character of the phenomenon was emphasised – that it was used in resistance to governmental intrusion into everyday activities.

Studies of the boundaryless informal economy have to start out with the formal; to know what it is, we have to know what it is not. The formal is what has a certain form and can be reproduced in a likely pattern (Hart 2001a:845), a customary or correct method or procedure. At the outset, there has to be a formal economy defined by an authority which has widespread acceptance, often the state (Leonard 1998:152), but in reality this could be any type of authoritative control (cf. Adler Lomnitz 1988, Capecchi 1989:195, Leonard 1998, Mars 1982) or just economic activity governed by mainstream acceptance (Halperin & Sturdevant 1990:323).

The informal should thus be the opposite – the unpredictable, uncontrolled and even unacceptable activities, to a large extent informed by tradition and experience. This means, on the one hand, that exchanges made out of habit can, due to changing laws and rules, oppose the authorities. On the other hand, traditions of opposing these may transform regular exchanges into acts of resistance (cf. Mars 1982, Portes & Haller 2005:419, Scott 1990).

In relation to the formal economy, analysing and defining the informal economy is difficult as its aim is to resist exposure (Leonard 1998:13). This could be exemplified with the numerous analytical terms used, though with slight differences in content. There is anti, black, hidden, informal, irregular, second, shadow, subterranean, twilight, underground, unobserved, unreported economy or those escaping the economic chain and concentrating on unofficial circuits and the informal sector. Most of the analytical terms start out from the state's (normative) view and concentrate on illegality as a dividing line: tax evasion, benefit frauds, practices taking place outside statutory rules and regulations, etc.

Although the use of the dichotomy of formal and informal economy is widespread, much research also sees its limitations. The relationship between the formal and the informal is far more complex than a division, according to which one can substitute or complement the other (Williams & Windebank 1998:30). They do neither oppose each other (Fernández-Kelly & Garcia 1989:251), nor are they separable, as one is meaningless without the other (Castells & Portes 1989:30).

Instead, most of what is considered the illegal informal economy is situational, with actors switching between the informal and formal (Castells & Portes 1989:12, Sampson 1986:28). Participating in the informal economy is seldom the only activity or source of income for people responding to everyday

needs and opportunities. A picture of complex interactions emerges, creating a set of relationships between the economy and the state (Castells & Portes 1989:30). This is aptly formulated by Adler Lomnitz as ‘informality is an intrinsic element of formality as it is an answer to the deficiencies of formalisation. It is an adaptive mechanism that, simultaneously and in a vicious circle, reinforces the defects of the formal system’ (1988:42).

The above insights have influenced my theoretical framework concurring with methodological considerations.

methodological concerns regarding the informal economy

What Hart found in his original study of the informal economy was a flaw in the unemployment figures. Officially, there was high unemployment, but most people were busy making a living with odd jobs instead of hanging around as unemployed. Many researchers rest their definitions on what is measurable and what is not, as the informal economy eludes them in its unmeasurability (Portes & Haller 2005:418, see also chapter two). But what is not measurable does not necessarily have to be illegal. The informal economy is not only about economic crimes, but also includes work activities taking place without economic recompense and outside publicly organised economic life (Hart 2001a:845). Think of all the domestic work being done daily, even by the laziest of us – cooking, cleaning, washing dishes and clothes as well as maintaining all personal properties ranging from houses, bicycles and cars to mending clothes and toys. We might also enjoy growing vegetables and fruit, or work such as knitting, weaving, carpentry, painting, etc. These are all tasks which, at least theoretically, can be bought from and provided by different professionals in the marketplace.

They are all services which can be commercially produced for private consumption and thus measured – or bought *smart*, for that matter. In addition, there is the voluntary work in housing or neighbourhood organisations and clubs, for our children’s schools and day-care centres, in cooperatives, etc. These activities are deeply rooted in habits and/or basic needs for survival, which can be transformed into economic terms. The challenge then is to measure those performed five minutes here, ten minutes there and those that take place simultaneously (Baarts 2005:97, Gershuny 1988:585, Wadel 1979:367). The parent who stays at home, takes care of the children and at the same time puts on another machineful of laundry while bread is in the oven complicates the picture even more. The inclusion of legal and unmeasurable informal economic activities within the National Accounts, would beef up the GDP significantly (Ingelstam 2006:61 ff, Mars 1982:218). Even if estimates are the preferred method in these studies, other methodological approaches have also been tried. Examples are interviews (Laurin 1986:19), in-depth interviews (Alalehto 2002:100), actual participation to collect ethnographic data (Hart 1992:216, Henry 1978:15, Sassen-Koob 1989:62), secondary data analysis (Sassen-Koob 1989:62) or historical accounts as in diaries (Isacson 1994:31). Diverse as these definitions are, so are the ways of reaching them.

Laws divide economic practices into formal and informal (Leonard 1998:23), but people do not consider existing laws first and foremost, but rather norms pertaining to what they, the neighbours, family and friends do, regardless of reasons (e.g. Henry 1978, Mars 1982, Pardo 1996, Scott 1990). As definitions and methods researching the informal economy diverge, so do the norms which are also contextually diverse. The transformation of habits and practices over a longer period of time needs to be considered, as well as changes in regulatory arrangements.

Problematic to measure, to understand and for the government to contain and find remedies for, the informal economy seems to exist everywhere. There are many examples of how people depend on additional incomes from the informal economy both in developing countries (Elyachar 2003, Hart 1982) and transition countries (Böröcz 2000, Ledeneva 1998) and also in European countries with highly developed economies like Sweden (Frykman & Hansen 2009, Henry 1978, Isacson 1994, Laurin 1986, Mars 1982, Olwig & Sampson 1986, Pardo 1996). Seen as a global phenomenon, the informal economy is still locally defined and rests on a 'cocktail of explanatory factors' (Williams & Windebank 1998:39).

Within a given society, it is impossible to pin down informal economic activities to a specific group as the activities 'cut[s] across the whole social structure' (Castells & Portes 1989:12). The same informal activity per se, can have diverse motives and participants, and in terms of income it has been stated that it is not possible to make a distinction between income brackets (Laurin 1986:241, Sampson 1986:21). Apart from the small and occasional *svart* purchase, involvement in *svart arbete* could also be the result of a lifestyle choice where the difference between work and leisure is diminished (Isacson 1994) or the more or less conscious choice of an occupation and a way of living outside established society structures more or less consciously (cf. Olwig & Sampson 1986). Economic, social, institutional and environmental factors variously combine with the processes which produce local examples of the informal economy (Henry 1978:14, Portes et al. 1989, Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:279-284, Williams & Windebank 1998:177).

Most studies of the informal economy seem to concentrate on the marginalised, with the inevitable result that researchers find what they are looking for – that they are all heavily involved in the informal economy (Williams & Windebank 1998:83). For those without the need for a survival strategy, the reason for participating in the informal economy is often as much social as economic (ibid.53). Barter and services to friends and family are not only performed for economic reasons, but are equally a token of social relationships (Isacson 1994:80, Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:236) and for some the social aspect comes prior to the work itself (Lauridsen 1986:102). It can be the sign of friendship (Adler-Lomnitz 1988) so that a large involvement in the informal economy is a sign of social wealth (Sampson 1986:38). Many studies, which see benefits in the informal economy, show the importance of maintaining community relations even in modern and well-organised welfare states (Larsen 1986, Olwig 1986:8).

Thus, there is no template for studying the informal economy within local contexts as ‘every study seems to contradict the conclusion of others’ (Portes et al. 1989:298). Instead, the ‘importance to study the underground economy as an uneven and richly variegated spectrum’ is stressed (Fernández-Kelly & Garcia 1989:263). Most people take part occasionally in the informal economy, but for different reasons in different situations and depending on definition (Henry 1978:53). The informal economy is thus also ‘a commonsense notion whose moving social boundaries cannot be captured by a strict definition without closing the debate prematurely’ (Castells & Portes 1989:11).

growth and change in the informal economy

What is called the informal economy is thus seen as a set of diverse responses to the growth and establishment of the formal economy. The informal economy is not a historical remnant in new settings, but rather new practices established in changing institutional regulations and thus a response to economic restructuring within societies (Leonard 1998). It can be regarded as a symptom of advanced economies in crisis, both on a national and a global level (Castells & Portes 1989:27-29, Isacson 1994:38, Sassen 1993, Williams & Windebank 1998:29). The growth of informal economic activities sets society back to earlier days reviving ‘old methods of exploitation’ but also said to provide more room for personal relationships (Castells & Portes 1989:11). This view implicitly revives the idea of the ‘good old days’ (cf. Olwig & Sampson 1986).

It has been suggested that the informal economy diminishes with modernisation of the state and development of the welfare state (cf. Portes & Haller 2005:404). It has also been argued that the advancement of classical capitalism implies formalisation and thus thwarts informal work (Williams & Windebank 1998:27). With the regulation of economic life, which can be interpreted both as a help and as an intrusion in people’s lives, there is a further formalisation which might make citizens, intentionally or not, more prone to explore ways of opposing additional restrictions (Adler Lomnitz 1988:54, Hart 1992:216, Mars 1982:80). This is subject to contestation. Sweden has a developed welfare state offering a broad variety of policies, but is still perceived to contain a relatively large, lively and even growing sector of illegal informal work – *svart arbete* (Skatteverket 2006:4:41). A more encompassing welfare state has formalised much of what was previously informal, although actual tasks, activities and means of settlement in everyday life remain the same. In this light, the informal economy is seen neither as an expanding form of advanced capitalism, nor as a universal informalisation process within it (Williams & Windebank 1998:175), but as a new form of advanced capitalism (Leonard 1998:10).

Informal economic activities thus appear to be everywhere, existing for different reasons and driven by different urges. Their existence is definitely not the unambiguous sign of an underdeveloped economy, nor exclusively an abuse of the less fortunate, but a leftover of what the authorities are not able (or perhaps do not want) to control, formalise or measure. Thus informal economic activities are a challenge to the established traditions of economic research.

Svart arbete as economic practice

To sum up, there are many important and thoughtful insights made by studies about the informal economy and numerous bids to describe and define unmeasurable, hidden (intentionally or not) and sometimes even illegal exchanges of work. Although *svart arbete* could be said to be part of an informal economy, I found the latter inadequate as an analytic concept for a variety of reasons. The informal economy assembles within the same category unpaid and voluntary work, illicitly recompensed work and completely illegal and criminal activities, activities which are diverse in their intentions and practice. Dividing an economy into formal and informal also implies the existence of parallel and partial economies. Purchases of *svart arbete* move incessantly between formal and informal domains. For example, what for the buyer seems to be a perfectly legal purchase can from the provider's point of view be illegal, in neglecting to account for the income received. Vice versa, a provider can submit for tax the income paid for by money obtained *svart* or in other illegal ways. Therefore, exchanges may be informal in their entirety or in part (i.e. where a part of a service is paid for with an invoice, and thus *vitt*, and the rest is bartered or paid cash in hand, *svart*).

However, theories about the social aspects of the economy have since been further developed (e.g. Callon 1999, Granovetter 1985, Gudeman 2001, Maurer 2005, Miller 2002). I want to highlight in particular the increased emphasis on studying economic life through the individual, through actual practices and their social entanglement, rather than the more systemic approaches. Although highly diverse in theoretical approach, one view is that it is activities that create value (Graeber 2001, Ingelstam 2006). Other studies bring in more explicitly the study of tools and arrangements that constitute economic practices (e.g. Callon, Millo and Muniesa 2007, Garcia-Parpet 2007, Hasselström 2003), or demonstrate that institutional changes are explained as contextual interactions between actors, commodities and practices (Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006).

The emphasis on people's economic practices, the activities and roles that people have and take in society, I find more informative than the somewhat crude categories of an economy as divided into two parts: a formal and an informal. As analytical tools, the latter categories often support the state authority and do not take into account the actions, thoughts and lives of the people who perform these activities (Galemba 2008:22).

I shall therefore argue that even exchanges which are usually seen as set apart from the official, measured and regulated economy should be seen as economic practices. Taking this view resolves a number of issues with *svart arbete* as discussed above.

First of all, this book has a narrower aim – the buyer's justifications for *svart* purchases of work, which are part of everyday practices, but are singled out as licit although illegal. Secondly, I shall argue that, depending on how exchanges are recompensed we can speak of informal and formal exchanges of work, but not of two separate economies. *Svart arbete*, even in its most abusive forms, cannot be seen as set apart from the formal structures of the Swedish economy,

but as co-existing with it. Nor can licit but illegal exchanges be regarded as set apart from societal structures at large. These exchanges are solidly placed within a contested borderland, 'a grey zone'.

The view is that these practices are continued habits which adapt to changing norms, laws and regulations, although they do not always comply with society's formal structures. When made acceptable, the informal purchase of work is distinguished in terms of legality and licitness.

talking about *svart arbete*

Svart arbete as a concept is contested and has different definitions and meanings (cf. Maurer 2005:24-25). The term is used throughout the layers of society – in government institutions, the media and amongst people in general, with resulting diverse meanings. As an economic crime, there is no instance in Swedish society that understands it completely (Brå 2003:36), and a moral condemnation of the phenomenon in its entirety risks normalising the more organised and abusive versions of it (Björklund Larsen 2006:55).

Svart arbete thus has different meanings in different contexts, but compared with the notion of the informal economy, it narrows the field of analysis. It indicates that it is an illegal act in the view of the state, but from the purchaser's point of view it is sometimes licit, at other times illicit. Re-compense is thus hidden from the gaze of the authorities' and excludes legal or unremunerated work. Many studies have made further divisions of the informal economy (cf. Ingelstam 1995, Leonard 1998, Sampson 1986), and this book can only add to the chorus arguing for a more nuanced definition of concepts. Informally re-compensated work and *svart arbete* are both broad and rough concepts, but I argue that both are more adequate than the informal economy. Both point to local variations and contextualise informal and illegal exchanges of services. Nevertheless, they put all work re-compensated illegally in the same category.

So even if using this elusive concept implies a risk 'that we talk past each other, not least because the words we use to talk about it create the illusion that we are speaking about the same thing' (cf. Maurer 2005:38 on Islamic banking concepts), the issue here is to penetrate how *svart arbete* can be made acceptable. Noteworthy is my informants' own recognition of having purchased something in a way which they regard as illegal. The way they referred to *svart* indicates different connotations in content, settlement and connections with those involved. Analytically, the notion of informal purchases or acquisitions of work shall be used. Emicly I shall use the term *svart arbete*.¹¹

'*Kärt barn har många namn*' goes the Swedish saying, meaning that we find many names for those we love. While *svart arbete* is used as an emic metonym for all exchanges of services which could be considered illegal, people use metaphors to circumscribe this notion. A 'metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action', as Lakoff & Johnson (1980:1) put it. I shall argue that these exchanges are made more licit by paraphrasing, by playing on words and by cunning. To circumscribe the notion of

svart arbete both highlights its informal aspects and simultaneously transfers it to contexts where the exchange can be deemed (more) licit.

These different ways of talking about *svart arbete* are seen to illustrate its characteristics. Metaphors can conceal other aspects that conflict with the original concept (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:10), and the array of metaphors that do not agree with the current political and economic ideologies can also reveal hidden actions (ibid.235). I lean on James Scott who wrote that '[W]henever one encounters euphemism in language it is a nearly infallible sign that one has stumbled on a delicate subject. It is used to obscure something that is negatively valued or would prove to be an embarrassment if declared more forthrightly' (1990:53). In the case of *svart arbete*, the metaphors used are often in the form of witticisms. As Mary Douglas writes; 'the essence of the joke is that something formal is attacked by something informal, something organised and controlled, by something vital, energetic' (Douglas 1999:149). Perhaps 'attack' is too strong a word, but I see playing with metaphors and synonyms as a form of resistance to the mechanisms of control that steer people's lives. We shall come back to this below in the discussion about how regimes are applied in this book.

The metaphors used indicate different forms of illegality on a sliding scale. There is no doubt about the unlawfulness of the transaction when asking to buy VAT-exempt (*momsfritt*) or without a receipt (*utan kvitto*) or when the transaction is concealed as in *pengar under bordet* – money under the table or on the side (*vid sidan om*). A more careful expression, simply indicating a 'discount' is rounding down (*avrunda neråt*), creative financing (*kreativ finansiering*) or setting a jolly good price (*käckt pris*). To 'nounify' a colour, such as *vanligt svartande*, literally the common black practices, legitimises and informalises these actions even more, and these illegal purchases become as ordinary as the weekly groceries. Concepts like *vanligt svartande* highlight different aspects of the legitimisation, or rejection, of these exchanges and pose questions about distinctions. It will thus be argued that the licitness shows in the talk.

My initial interest in this subject was aroused by listening to a chorus of dissenting voices against official condemnations. In this sense my informants' accounts of legitimising their involvement in *svart arbete* are an example of cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 2005). By studying practices like *svart arbete* and its synonyms, we can see how the collective space of a national identity is construed, as a 'sore zone of cultural sensitivity' (ibid.x). We shall see here how occasional purchases of *svart arbete* lead to an uneasy and inconvenient co-existence between the formal operations of the nation-state and different types of cultural intimacies. The voices within this book reveal diverse justifications for the acquisitions of black services. Even if these differ, they point to ways, i.e. social practices, in which these informal purchases are made licit and acceptable through talk. The exchanges are undertaken for private use, but the purchasers recognise the potentially harmful effects for society and fellow citizens. Even if *svart arbete* are hidden exchanges, they are influenced by what other people appraise as right and wrong behaviour.

Theoretical framework

With the background of research sketched out, with methodological concerns and views on how hidden exchanges of work are seen as part of the societal economy, the time has now come to look forward and to present the theoretical framework to be used throughout this book.

I have argued for economic practices as an object of study – but what to make of them? Focusing on people’s activities, and their accounts of them, can reveal how they relate in a meaningful way to a larger social whole (Graeber 2001:49, 254). This book attempts to add insight into how an informal purchase of work is made acceptable, for the purchasers themselves but also for others.

Svart arbete is an illegal activity, but a widespread, continuous and maybe even growing phenomenon in Swedish society (OECD 2004:254). I neither condemn nor support these purchases, but am slightly astonished by the phenomenon, as stated in the aim of this study. My interest grew from contradictory meanings on three analytical levels. As an economic societal phenomenon, the difference between its almost general acceptance and the official moral discourse condemning it gave me food for thought. Between macro and micro, there was the question of exchanges made for private gain, yet recognised as harmful for society at large. Thirdly, on an individual level, people acknowledge that these purchases of services are wrong – and yet they still make them. This book is thus an attempt to diagnose the incoherence of contemporary ethics through exchanges of work (cf. Collier & Lakoff 2005:35).

The purchase of *svart arbete* is viewed within the context of a group of Swedes’ wider perspectives on their society. When they justify their actions, they show how they want to be seen as members of society. To buy *svart* in full knowledge of the consequences is perhaps one way to ‘rearticulate the private and the public through a clear understanding and portrayal of the consequences of each of these for the other’ (Carrier & Miller 1999:43). In the following I shall provide short introductions to the theoretical framework I have used to understand these exchanges. The framework will be more thoroughly explained in conjunction with the findings of the interviews throughout the rest of the book. As a start, how can exchanges be seen as constituting and maintaining society?

exchanging as a necessity for social life?

Wherever there is an opportunity, there seems to be someone who takes the chance of getting a service performed more cheaply, to save a few *krona* or to put in their own working time as payment. It has been said that modern society is increasingly governed by economic mores (e.g. Gudeman 2008) where almost everything tends to be valued in monetary terms (e.g. Ingelstam 2006:41). According to this view, people will increasingly undertake transactions for economic benefit. The most frequently heard argument for the existence of *svart arbete* is that it is ‘cheaper’, which could denote that we are dealing with transactions in exclusively economic terms. The view of society held here is that the

reason for wanting to buy cheap is not only that we are living in a more market-oriented society but also that our practices are deeply rooted in managing the household with few resources (e.g. Frykman & Hansen 2009, Isacson 1994). To discuss exchanges in terms of economic practices also sheds light on contemporary social life.

Exchange is one of the central themes in anthropology and covers a variety of practices. It is not only a transfer of objects, but can also include agreements, communications, services or other movements between separate units or beings (Befu 1977, Davis 1992, Offer 1997). What starts an exchange has been described by Marcel Mauss in terms of the gift, which he describes as a 'total social phenomenon' (Mauss 2002 [1990]:3). To offer something as a gift starts a reciprocal relationship between giver and recipient, which deepens but also complicates the relationship between the exchangers. If given a gift, the recipient feels compelled to respond, which starts a chain of other exchanges, dispersed by timely intervals. The content and context of these exchanges will govern future relationships and, due to norms, religion and laws, the resulting reciprocity will take different forms (Davis 1992).

Critiques have emphasised that the concept of reciprocity is too diffuse and devoid of the power dimension, and is thus meaningless as a comparative explanatory factor (Graeber 2001:217). There can be diverse interpretations, since there are at least two who interpret what is given and what is received and the values attached to this 'gift'. Another critique argues that pure generosity and thus reciprocity originating in a gift is logically impossible (Derrida 1997). This book takes as its starting point that to exchange and to create reciprocal relations is a human propensity and, as Mary Douglas emphasises in the foreword to *The Gift*, a necessity for human solidarity (Mauss 2002 [1990]:xiii). To exchange is an important aspect of what produces and maintains social relationships and as such is one of the cornerstones in the making of society (Davis 1992). As Stephen Gudeman writes; 'the relationship between people as mediated by things – whether in the market or in community or the base – is the stuff of economy' (2001:147).

The question of power relations between exchangers is certainly an aspect of purchasing *smart*, but looking at how purchases are made acceptable lays emphasis on the individual and her practices in relation to society at large. This book proposes that the power aspect regarding purchases of *smart arbete* reveals itself in opposition to the third party, the state. This is where the actors balance a reciprocal relationship by cheating with purchases of work.

Cheating here means abandoning the formal and official market; this is often seen theoretically as devoid of creating reciprocal relations. I agree with the view that exchanges in a modern market are not only about wheeling and dealing with the sole intention of maximising economic rewards for personal benefit (Barry & Slater 2002:183, Callon 1998, Carrier & Miller 1999:37, Davis 1992:44) and disregarding any social implications (i.e. the action of a *homo economicus* who is devoid of reciprocal relations). The view here is that 'in the course of the day, we enter into an immensely wide array of exchange relationships, with complex relations between them' (Slater 2002:237). At least some of

these result in or are governed by reciprocity, especially with regard to exchanges that are concealed from the authorities – with time lags between initial transfer and settlement. Sometimes reciprocity is negligible, at other times it lingers long and strong.

Depending on the context, the purchase of *svart arbete* will be described as an exchange or a transaction.¹² An ‘exchange’ is here broadly defined as to give something and receive something in return. What is exchanged does not have to be material, as the result can be to obtain a specific social standing (Offer 1997), neither does what is exchanged need to have specified value attributed to it (Befu 1977). A ‘transaction’, on the other hand, describes a more market-like behaviour and may not create reciprocal expectations to the same extent. A transaction is usually settled with money or something of specific value. The difference is not clear-cut, but the terms exchange and transaction will be used contextually throughout the book to denote specific attributes in each specific case.

The emerging picture when studying *svart arbete* is a complex interaction between exchanges and transactions that are mostly governed by reciprocity. I adhere to the view that ‘reciprocity represents the elegant combination of self-interested concerns with the requirements of social life’ (Komter 2007:103, see also Leonard 1998:110). Reciprocity may thus take different shapes – from bartering help with family and friends to the pure market transaction of acquiring professional services for monetary recompense.

purchasing work

Informal transactions of work in a modern welfare state indicate a market where buyer and seller are entangled in a complex social world. However, they do not necessarily see it as the same world (Slater 2002:240). Seller and buyer view the market of work differently, having diverse perspectives on what they want out of the transaction.

A further narrowing down is thus to look at informal acquisitions of work. This choice was made in consideration of a previous lack of research focus on the buyer’s perspective, but also taking the stand that we live in a society where consumption is a driving force for economic processes – formal as well as informal (Carrier & Miller 1999:37, Corrigan 1997:1, Laurin 1986:375, Narotzky 1997:103). A buyer’s decision is not only arrived at with reference to desires and price comparisons, but market imperfections and bottlenecks also inform the choice (Adler Lomnitz 1988, Hart 1992, Pardo 1996, Smith 1989). There are often time constraints in finding someone to perform the service, unavailability of family and/or local networks to help out, or scarcities of existing service suppliers (Narotzky 1997:147 ff.). In this study, examples of the latter are the shortage of public child care in the 1990s or the current lack of available electricians in Stockholm, all pushing consumers outside the formal and legal markets.

Within anthropological analysis, purchases have usually and almost exclusively been focused on objects, things and commodities and the meaningful use

people make of objects that are associated with them (see e.g. Kopytoff 1986). Consumption of things has been studied as related to identity-seeking (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2005:217), embodying human intentions (Graeber 2001:65) or in a broader sense of lifestyle (Douglas and Isherwood 1996). There have been attempts to redirect the anthropological study of consumption from questions regarding creation of identity and on maintenance of relationships, to broader issues such as the formation of a particular society (ibid.). The emphasis is still on the individual consumption of objects, and the consumption of services is seldom addressed (Carrier & Heyman 1997, Ingelstam 2006:44).

However, services make up an increasingly larger amount of total consumption in Sweden, now almost half of it (SOU 1999:69).¹³ Although many services result in a new material product, the majority of services are maintenance, repairs or restoration to order. Compared with the purchase of a finished product, the consumer has an expectation as to the result, but does not know exactly what it will be. A service cannot be bought from just anybody, but requires more knowledge about and trust in the provider. As we shall see, a purchase of services in a Swedish context has to include deliberations on getting something done, which often include the possibility of doing the job oneself. Services performed *svart* differ from formal ones as they are provided more or less outside the regulatory scope – definitely in terms of the state’s tax laws, maybe also beside work regulations and often outside the corporate scope. The terms of exchange provided are negotiated between buyer and seller directly, avoiding the regulatory state. To sum up, exchanges of services are governed by diverse habits and norms. In addition, most welfare societies impose laws, rules and regulations that make them formal. We can say that these purchases thus have restraints on them.

a Swedish regime of living

The big majority of purchases seem just to take place, to be pragmatically performed out of habit without further reflection. Most are perfectly legal and licit and take place in a formal market, which is, however, governed by its specific constraints. Then there are other purchases which break the law or regulations and are thus viewed as *svart arbete*. When my informants talked about their *svart* purchases, they seemed fairly aware of their illegal behaviour and its implications. Nevertheless, most of them undertake these buys but according to moral considerations.

In Sweden, any service exchanged or income earned is subject to taxation (Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:27). This means that all work done for recompense of any kind should be recognised and publicly accounted for. Through the Tax Agency, the state aspires to have insight into all exchanges of work and the economic value attached to them (which brings to mind Bentham (1995) and his Panopticon, designed in 1785). An informal purchase of work is an exchange concealed from the gaze of authorities’ and more or less from the surrounding community. Therefore it means avoiding this gaze, but still performing the purchase according to certain norms. We can thus say that both

formal and informal purchases take place in the context of structural constraints, often referred to as regimes in a Foucauldian perspective. A regime can constitute a ‘manner, method, or system of rule or government’ (Collier & Lakoff 2005:23).

One example of informal exchange regimes is the practice of *blat* in the former Soviet Union, necessitated by distributive bottlenecks of both goods and services within a command economy (Ledeneva 1998). Ledeneva identified three types of exchange regimes for *blat* – all governed by reciprocity: one of equivalence where both parties are seen to benefit, one of affection mainly based on friendship which implies exchanges and a final one of status where the relationship can be compared to a patron-client one (ibid.144-152).¹⁴

Although *blat* and *svart arbete* are performed in very different societies, there are parallels in the constraints society puts on the exchangers – through diverse norms, rules and laws, and in how these are avoided. Such regimes highlight the dyadic relation between the exchangers and are useful for reflecting on how social relations interplay with exchange modes. For example, these regimes can also restrict different types of exchanges to taking place between individuals having specific relations.

There is still the notion that ‘everybody is involved in *svart arbete*’. However, this does not necessarily imply that every Swede exchanges *svart* with everybody else, but just that the potential is there. An inspiration for understanding the constraints involved in exchanging was therefore the more encompassing ‘regime of living’ (Collier & Lakoff 2005, Lakoff & Collier 2004). The notion of the ‘regime of living’ provides food for thought about the conventions and constraints that define virtuous conduct in different contexts. Within a regime of living, and when faced with the opportunity of informal exchange, an ethical pondering arises, as a situated moral discussion (Collier & Lakoff 2005:23). A regime of living thus points to connections amongst ethical problems at different sites and in different situations. It is not an attempt to answer the question of ‘how one should live’, but rather what considerations govern this question (Lakoff & Collier 2004:420).

As Collier & Lakoff put it, referring to Roitman’s study of tax cheaters, people have an ‘elaborate understanding of legitimate work defined specifically in contrast to the illegitimacy of the institution of formal legality’ (2005:34). Janet Roitman writes about tax evasion as a type of economic practice between citizen and state in the Chad basin, Cameroon. These people define quite specifically their illegal activities and the illicit practices in which they act, as ‘being on the margins but within the norm’ (ibid.21). They do this by means of the concept of ‘tax-price’ which is the result of the way Cameroonians become consumers of colonial currency and simultaneously refer to that currency both as a means of exchange as well as a valuation rule. By introducing the colonial currency, the French created tax subjects, which became a source of European wealth (ibid.10). Roitman thus describes the tax evasion as people’s economic practices shaped by seeing the economy as a political terrain, the result of French colonisation.

Although Sweden provides a very different setting from Cameroon, certain comparisons can be made. Responding to the question of ‘how one should live’ with reference to informal purchases of work, means that exchanges take place with regard to the restrictions of what constitutes a formal economy. ‘How’ is here seen to include technical means to perform a *svart* purchase. The ‘how’ points to uncertain relationships with ethical principles, for example choosing the type of work, and the person to perform it or the kind of settlement for it. ‘Should’ refers to what could be called norms – the assemblage of diversified values throughout Swedish society. What type of illegal exchanges can be performed as licit in the view of other community members? Certain services are readily bought, whereas others are seen as more problematic. Although the notion of ‘one’ demands individual ethical reflection, it is the government, for example through the workings of the Tax Agency, which confers rules and norms onto the ‘one’. It is argued that when the informants make *svart* purchases licit in terms of ‘how one should live’, they present them as a response to inadequacies on the part of the government. This type of regime provides a framework for how people reflect on and live their lives ethically while performing their dealings in the hidden economy. A regime can be regarded as a political terrain, but one in which citizens strive to maintain a degree of autonomy and independence for themselves. People thus relate actively and strategically in regard to law and policy in a manner that creates a space for individual manoeuvring and the affirmation of individual agency. A Swedish regime of living can be said to allow for certain *svart* purchases, at the margins, so to speak.

These transactions seem to be of a type which although illegal, is sometimes tolerated by the authorities and is fairly generally accepted. Under what conditions these ‘ambiguous persisting’ exchanges (Smart 1999:104) are tolerated by a group of people can be further illuminated by a regime-of-living perspective. Allowing for combinations of restrictions (such as laws, rules, norms), when purchasing work informally, paints a more complete picture, especially since the actions within the regime do not need to follow an inner logic (Collier & Lakoff 2005:31).

A regime of living allows us to move beyond divisions of illegal and legal exchanges or concepts such as the formal and informal economy and to cast light on how people make ethical decisions well aware that the practice is illegal, but still aiming for a congruent perception of living their lives. This type of regime provides a methodological mode ‘to map a field of inquiry by grasping both empirical connections among sites and conceptual interconnections among problems’ (Lakoff & Collier 2004:430 referring to Weber, 1949).

What in one informant’s perspective is perfectly licit may in another’s be morally wrong, although in both instances the purchase is illegal from the view of the state. It is important to note therefore that the Swedish regime of living is not a set frame with a general description of contemporary Swedish ethics. Instead, this book provides an example of how a Swedish regime of living unfolds in the sense of constituting restraints on purchases of work.

the moral economy of purchasing *svart arbete*

A widespread opinion in the discussion about *svart arbete* is that the perceived increase is due to worsening morals amongst Swedes (Wibe 2003). Depending on who gets cheated, informal economic actions can be seen as greedy and stingy (Fink 1986:71) or immoral (Laurin 1986:325 ff., Pardo 1996:173). This seems an easy and reductive explanation, from the authorities' point of view, regarding those who do not obey rules, regulations and laws. In addition, 'politicians and governments are seldom more ridiculous than when preaching morality' as stated by Italo Pardo (2000:5). My informants' moral reasoning here is not related to normatively right or wrong behaviour, but rather to the types of processes that precede these purchases, 'configurations of reasons, techniques and institutions of collective life' (Collier & Lakoff 2005:29).

One pertinent example of exchanges in a complex society is Italo Pardo's study of the *popolino*, the so-called ordinary people without secondary education in Naples, who forge local networks which cross-cut domains and levels of urban life (Pardo 1996:18). The *popolino* negotiate and balance exchanges and transactions between right and wrong in a moral context aiming to survive and ameliorate their lives. The transactions are more or less licit and usually defined within the networks of families and friends. The *popolino's* navigation amongst diverse types of everyday exchanges displays a certain degree of creativity. One individual does not act like any other when pursuing his aims. However, the *popolino's* norms of conduct are strictly moral towards those regarded as part of their community, those they assist and help.

Being moral can, according to Pardo, be seen from three perspectives. First, it covers being concerned with what is right or wrong behaviour and how this relates to goodness or badness in the human character. Secondly, it means adhering to an acceptable code of behaviour. Finally, there is a third connection to the spiritual, as in moral support. Therefore, individuals' actions within the informal economy can be perfectly moral when expressed as a relationship with the other taking part in or benefitting from the exchange (Pardo 1996:159). Compared with the Swedes, the *popolino's* morality includes the church as well as the state.

Morality will be expressed here in the relations created by the purchase. For example, if the state is seen to spend money immorally, then tax fraud benefiting both consumer and supplier is increasingly seen as moral. *Svart arbete* can, borrowing from Pardo, be seen as an 'interaction between morality and action and different resource domains which drive people in their pursuit of a better life' (Pardo 1996:182). This book also touches on issues of morality, but rather as seen through the practices of making purchases of *svart* services acceptable – licit but illegal. The restraints in performing these exchanges make up the Swedish regime of living and provide a frame within which exchanges of work can take place without being taxed.

When they buy *svart arbete*, people can be said to create a moral economy within this regime in order to make sense of their purchases.

justifying purchases of work

The acquisitions of services dealt with here are sometimes within, but most often outside, the legal realm, but are always contained within a Swedish regime of living. Within this, people are caught up in what they regard as contradictory explanations. These illustrate the practical constraints of daily life, since we do not practise what we preach. In Herzfeld's words, 'cultural intimacy is, above all, familiarity with perceived social flaws that offer culturally persuasive explanations of apparent deviations from the public interest' (2005:9). Instead of asking for a rational and consistent view of thinking and reasoning when buying *svart arbete*, I have questioned the phenomenon with the intention of making the informants reflect on purchases of work in relation to society's values (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001:127).

The way *svart arbete* was talked about by my informants made it appear to exist here, there and everywhere in Sweden. If 'everybody' is involved, is it possible to categorise this? And for what purpose? In addition, how to take seriously accounts and narratives of illegal exchanges, stories which could be seen as mere excuses? Combining the seemingly arational ways of explaining purchases of *svart arbete* with the theory of justification as developed by Boltanski & Thévenot (2006) addressed a number of my methodological concerns.

A first issue was how to connect actions and the retrospective explanations thereof. Most research on Swedish *svart arbete* is based on statistical, quantitative material which takes this connection for granted. The theory of justification is interpretative and concerns actions as justified arguments, rather than their consequences (Wilkinson 1997:317). It thus connects the actions performed and the subsequent reasoning about these actions. In this way actions are made understandable and meaningful in relation to what people believe is worthy behaviour, given the circumstances under which they act. These can be worthy within their own and others' opinions. If actors can justify their informal purchases in this way, they can regard themselves as moral beings (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:27).

Second, virtually all research about *svart arbete* points to the problems of measuring hidden actions (see e.g. Skatteverket 2006:4, Tengblad 2002, Wibe 2003). Using the theory of justification will not solve this problem, but will illuminate it differently. Accounts of participating in or buying *svart arbete* are taken seriously so that people's values are expressed through these stories, rather than through guesstimates of their hidden actions. In addition, I adhere to the view that 'the social world is not a rational artefact; it is not always explicit or even calculable' (Wagner 1999:349). The theory of justification allows for appreciating and even supporting what my informants regard as irrational reasoning.

Third, I suggest that illegal yet licit practices, complying with van Schendel and Abraham's distinction (2005:22), can be viewed in a different light, using the theory of justification. Every society is complex, since the people inhabiting it have to navigate and confront situations 'stemming from different worlds' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:216). In many cases, my informants simultane-

ously refer one action to many of the worlds put forward in this theory, thus making compromises between them. 'In a compromise, the participants do not attempt to clarify the principle of their agreement; they are favourably disposed toward the notion of a common good without actively seeking one' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:277). In so doing people connect their actions with the idea of a good society, with shared morals.

Fourth, the theory allows for analysing situational and contextual reasoning. Any person is seen to have access to all 'worlds of worth' and in the course of the day can adhere to all of them, depending on the action which is being justified. Justifying has few synonyms: therefore my informants 'justify' their purchases of *svart arbete* throughout this book. When I assign their actions to the theory of justification, it will be explicitly referred to as such. The manner in which this perspective has been applied will be further explained in chapter two. Generally speaking, my informants cannot justify every purchase of *svart arbete*. Those accounted for are performed within the constraints of a Swedish regime of living; those which are illicit are disclosed as such, negated or kept hidden, since not every purchase is deemed acceptable.

Structure of the book

This book aims to provide an understanding of how Swedes legitimise informal purchases of work deemed illegal yet licit. How *svart arbete* is made acceptable when bought will be analysed by looking at metaphors, paraphrases and slang in longer narratives of explanation, together with the occasionally expressed example or opinion.

The view in this study is that these practices occur wherever possibilities arise. Before going into the thematic disposition, I want to point out where examples from different trades and industrial sectors can be found. In chapter two there are references to hairdressers and the publicly employed, in the third to craftsmanship and day-care and the whole of chapter four is about cleaning, especially domestic cleaning. In the fifth chapter, examples are provided from restaurants and car maintenance and in chapter six a few examples of how people with academic qualifications are involved are provided. In the seventh and last empirical chapter, there is a longer narrative about construction work taking place within the realms of the state.

In the second chapter, I outline how I arrived at my chosen methodology. I describe how the field was defined, chosen and lived in given the subject of hidden purchases of services. Emphasis is mainly placed on two aspects. First, how to establish trust in order to hear accounts of what rise in essence illegal and inconspicuous exchanges and, secondly, how stories of retrospective justifications can relate to actual purchases.

My informants could be said to talk about *svart arbete* roughly in three different ways. These have organised the more empirical chapters.

The third chapter aims to discuss the foundation for the exchange – work. Work is important for Swedes and I shall address how my informants value it

in different contexts. What constitutes ‘real’ work and what makes this different from other activities performed in life? Questions to be addressed are which type of work can be acquired and how, where and by whom? We shall see how the informants use notions of time and cost in diverse domains of life to justify their informal purchases. In the fourth chapter, these negotiations on work will be applied to an issue much discussed in contemporary Swedish society – the *pigdebatten*, the maid debate. We shall see how cleaning is defined as work and how it is valued in Sweden. This aims to point out certain aspects regarding why cleaning is found to be so controversial when paid for, and especially so when paid for *svart*.

Chapter five treats *svart arbete* as an economic exchange. First, I shall discuss how the settlement, either purchases or barter, in diverse ways informs the acceptability. Secondly, I shall show how these exchanges are justified in terms of being cheap, smart and hidden. Both arguments emphasise exchanging for the betterment of society. By focusing on the exchange itself, I shall also discuss how I see *svart arbete* as part of the societal economy.

The relational aspects of exchanges will be further developed in chapter six and seven, where reciprocity and the connections implied are scrutinised in contemporary society. In chapter six, the dyadic reciprocal relationship is in focus when exchanging services, but in the sense of benefitting society. This moves us from the economic aspects of the exchange to its more social dimensions. Using the notion of ‘helping out’, it will be shown both how exchanges in closer relations are transformed into a purchase of *svart arbete*, and in contrast, how in essence *svart* purchases are made more acceptable when referred to as help. In the seventh chapter, the reciprocal relations of the previous chapter will embrace the state in a triadic relationship, but with a tilt towards the other side of reciprocity – that of taking back. This is described as reciprocal balancing. The purchase of *svart arbete* is in this view made licit by notions of keeping a balance in relation to others’ contributions and/or receipts of common funds.

Finally in chapter eight I conclude by indicating some dilemmas with these acquisitions, both from the purchasers’ as well as from the legislators’ point of view. This will point to further questions which could be of interest to pursue, aiming for a more nuanced understanding of the existence of *svart arbete* in contemporary Sweden.

2. Methodology: Looking for hidden exchanges

Jakob: 'You will never learn the truth. Why would people tell you about all their tricks?'

Driving behind perpetually moving windscreen wipers as the rain poured down endlessly on a December morning, was downright depressing. The fields and forests passed by, hardly distinguishable one from the other and the landscape seemed endless. Sweden never seems to wake up on such mornings, but just continues to be enfolded in hazy, dark shades of grey. This morning the depressing mood matched the atmosphere of the interview I had just had in the cafeteria of a garish supermarket, decorated with bright, jolly Christmas gadgets. These surroundings contrasted abruptly with Johan's account of his life, his tales of *svart arbete* and his views on Swedish society, which were as dark as the December clouds surrounding me.

Very different was the search on a beautiful March day for a reputable golf club where I was to meet Peter for lunch. The sun shone brightly, promising endless gorgeous days from now to eternity. The ground was still frozen, powdered with snow and the entire neighbourhood passing by seemed very self-conscious. It was like a picture cut out of a lifestyle magazine, one beautiful house after another, all different with a personal touch, sort of promising the idea of a happy and glossy life without any apparent social problems.

Third impression: on a sunny June morning I climbed out of the car in a parking-lot in an industrial area where I was invited to morning coffee at 8 a.m. sharp in a speciality plumbing shop. Cars, pick-up trucks and other vehicles for professional use were parked in orderly rows in front of the chain of garages, repair shops and small workshops. An occasional flower pot was to be seen beside an entrance, but they seemed mostly out of place. The early hour might have been chosen to see if a schoolmate turned academic could muster being awake at this time of day. As a reward, Anders, the owner and sole worker, offered delicious fresh-baked Danish pastries from a common class-mate's bakery in the adjoining kitchenette.

Gathering data for this book took me to diverse places, offices and homes in Sweden, where at each stop I interviewed middle-aged people from many walks of Swedish life. Apart from providing data for this dissertation, it was also an enjoyable journey which brought back memories and happenings from the past

and reconnected my informants and me at different levels and with varying intensity.

aim and outline of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to describe the methodological concerns in planning for and finding data for this book. The purpose was to explore how these exchanges, which are contradictory in meaning, make up a part of people's everyday life in today's Sweden. Thus how purchases of *svart arbete* are made acceptable. Choosing a methodology (whereby I mean defining the field, the method of acquiring data and making sense of these data) was driven by three incongruities.

The first concerns the difference between, on the one hand, official explanations for *svart arbete* (mainly based on quantitative research) expressed by normative and political agendas, and, on the other hand, how people around me (neighbours, friends, those overheard at the children's soccer games, at school, literally part of the small talk everywhere) spoke about them. The second ambiguity concerned involvement. More or less everybody I spoke to seemed to be involved, at least to some extent, and they seemed to come from all walks of Swedish society, which contrasted with the usual social science categories pointed out in most public reports.¹⁵ I overheard buyers' concerns about finding (and sometimes pride at having found) a quick, reliable and inexpensive solution for irritating problems, fulfilling wishes about home improvements or more generally getting help at home occasionally interspersed by contempt for those who buy *svart*. Thirdly, what I was looking for was hidden transactions. Although I heard a lot of talk about these purchases in general terms, the details were not meant for a wider audience. Even if part of the everyday jargon, buying *svart arbete* is still an illegal transaction not generally accepted. Questioning people's involvement might very well have been interpreted as an accusation of immorality. Talking and inquiring about *svart arbete* in detail seemed a fairly private subject, discussed amongst those deemed trustworthy – a selection of neighbours, colleagues, friends and family. This reinforced my view that accessing hidden data depended on trust between informant and researcher (Fangen 2005:63-69, see also Björklund Larsen 2003:21).

This chapter thus accounts for how I decided on in-depth interviews and complementary focus group discussions as the corpus of my fieldwork data, and how a group of former school-mates in their 'prime of life' became my informants. Finally, I shall discuss how stories of these hidden purchases can be related to actual events within a social context. It is a methodological attempt to take people's justifications seriously, not as excuses for immoral behaviour but as descriptions of actual exchanges and the deliberations thereof. Collecting information about illegal transactions demands paying attention to the validity of data as well as ethical considerations regarding the identity of informants when presenting those data.

Searching for a method and looking for a field

Anthropology's preferred method to acquire data is participant observation, as it supposedly places both the people to be studied and the researching anthropologist in a natural, social environment (e.g. Gupta & Ferguson 1997). In retrospect, I did some accidental participant observation when my husband and I refurbished our own house, which coincided with the articulation of my research question. 'Managing' the project, I cooperated and worked closely with a group of carpenters and their associated craftsmen who passed through the house during the process (i.e. masons, plumbers, electricians, painters, etc.). I unintentionally learnt a lot about *svart arbete* from them as they mainly discussed two things while going about their work: soccer and work. The work tasks they talked about were those where recompense possibilities were extraordinary, which usually meant working *svart*.

As I overheard conversations around me, and in particular these craftsmen's discussions, it was clear from the beginning that much *svart arbete* looks like any other type of work performed. *Svart* or *vitt* depends mainly on how the recompense is made. The work can extend over months, but negotiations about payment and the actual recompense might take place in an instant, usually hidden from others. Reimbursement acquires different forms, not only monetary, but also as barter and different types of IOUs, I Owe You. 'Extended credits' can take the form of a social obligation to be 'cashed-in' at some time in the future. They can be jotted down in a notebook, recorded or kept in their memory or as part of a wider reciprocal net of colleagues. I concluded that to participate in *svart arbete*, e.g. as a cleaner or helper in a private refurbishing project, would be a waste of my time, as my focus was neither on the production of *svart arbete*, nor on the relationship between producer and consumer. I was interested in why people buy *svart* and more specifically how these purchases are made acceptable.

Understanding how people make purchases of *svart arbete* acceptable means talking to them, and letting them try to explain why they choose to buy work *svart* and why they do not. Inspired by A.F. Robertson's critique of corruption studies, another subject of concealed and illegal exchanges, an anthropologist ought to try to get to the heart of the issue and not become lost in metaphysical allegories of elusiveness and the like (Robertson 2006:10). I also chose interviews as a methodological approach, leaning on the results of earlier studies of *svart arbete* which have shown that in-depth interviews are the most revealing method for understanding the phenomenon (Renooy 1990).

With the three methodological concerns in mind and interviews chosen as my main data gathering method, whom should I decide to talk to and how should I define my field? I wanted a broad spectrum of Swedish society who would readily talk to me about illegal purchases of work – their views, their involvement and their experiences of what they regarded being *svart arbete*. It is, in comparison with most anthropological phenomena, inconspicuous: it takes place in the shadows. This meant that I had to rely on creating and maintaining relationships.

A project manager at a market research institute told me about the resistance to talking about *svart arbete*. In a projected study of this phenomenon amongst small businesses, the institute wanted to create reference groups with entrepreneurs discussing the subject. After 90 phone calls with negative replies it gave up and reformulated the request.¹⁶ This was but one input suggesting that I could not just contact anybody and expect a fruitful talk and informative data. I had to find another way into the field. Inspired by Sherry Ortner's class project – a genealogical study amongst her fellow high school graduate class of '58 of how the social concept of class is defined and shaped in the US (Ortner 2003) – I contacted the 134 persons I graduated with from compulsory school.

At the time I went to school, compulsory schooling lasted nine years in Sweden. Based on the home address, a pupil was allocated to a municipal school. Throughout Sweden, there were only a handful of private schools, located in the large cities and none in my home town. In Limninge¹⁷ where I grew up, there were two secondary schools; covering the three last years of compulsory education for those aged 13 to 15. Pupils in my school came from roughly half of Limninge, including the surrounding countryside. Each age group in the school was divided up into classes named A to E and consisted of about 25 pupils in each and a smaller so-called Special Class F for those pupils who needed extra attention. Most of the teaching was done within the same class, but approximately a quarter of the education time was spent in mixed groups with pupils from other classes, depending on interest and level of knowledge.

To select my former class-mates as a field was thus driven by methodological concerns about trust. However, the choice I made deserves some further elaboration. An ethnographic field can consist of people having something in common or with some kind of relationship (e.g. Hannerz 2001:20). Due to my original intentions reflecting on the difference between reports and the inquiries undertaken in research about the informal economy and how Swedes in general talk about the subject, it seemed inappropriate to define a field according to common sociological categories. Sherry Ortner does not refer to a 'field' in her book; instead her research is a genealogy passing through Weequahie High School, New Jersey as a point of reference. Through this genealogy, she looks at class journeys in the US as a historical and cultural change through time.

I define this fieldwork as a stop in time, meeting what are now middle-aged people at their place of residence here and there in Sweden. Our school in Limninge is a point of reference, not important as a locus as such, but as a place where relationships were made. These historical connections from our secondary school were a basis for trust. Finding data for the topic of this book, deliberations on purchases of *svart arbete* and the trust component were assumed to be of significance.

When attempting to define 'the field', there is always the norm. Malinowski set it, intentionally or not, being stranded on the Trobriand Islands because of the First World War. Even if many anthropologists nowadays work 'at home', performing multi-sited fieldwork or studying the 'tribes' of offices, institutions or organisations, Malinowski's fieldwork still stands as the historical icon. My field can be said to consist of 'many fields in one' (Hannerz 2001), a network of

fields. What I did was multi-local fieldwork or multi-sited ethnography, perhaps not following ‘a specific thing’ or ‘the metaphor’ on its way (e.g. Marcus 1998:92), but instead making a stop in contemporary Sweden, trying to elucidate the phenomenon called *svart arbete*. This field is a small slice of contemporary Swedish society where I listened to the explanations of people enmeshed in a contradictory moral economy (ibid.19-20).

Purchasing *svart arbete* is here considered a practice into which I made a dive attempting to understand the phenomenon (cf. Gupta & Ferguson 1997:37). Reappearing were also the public bemoaning of politicians and the media’s reporting of *svart arbete* as a societal problem. The interviews in this book are voices set against a background of events in contemporary Swedish society, which could be seen as an additional field site. The media thus provided a continuous debate about *svart arbete*, with new scandals popping up, causing discussions amongst politicians, opinion-makers and ordinary people which sometimes left me with the impression of ‘drowning’. Apart from doing interviews, I have collected news articles and reports and listened to numerous radio and TV debates.

During the years of my research, I closely followed the media debate around *svart arbete*. Searching amongst the major newspapers in Sweden produced more than 1520 articles for the period 1 January 2003 to 10 February 2006.¹⁸ The majority of these articles focused on the production of *svart arbete*, the contents covering everything from playing with words for do-it-yourself advice to the EU debate on freedom of movement for workers and undocumented immigrants’ search for mere survival, to name but a few. Political contributions covered a broad spectrum – advocating tax deductions for services acquired for private use, arguments that these types of reform would only favour the rich, the organised abuse of undocumented immigrants, discussions of how *svart arbete* impacts on national and international solidarity, the Tax Agency’s possibilities and difficulties in fighting *svart arbete*, international comparisons and attempts to address the issue, comparison with neighbouring Denmark’s and Finland’s deductions for home services, cleaning services in a gender perspective, the attitudes of young people, etc. The tabloid *Expressen* selected *svart* as one of the seven most important words during 2006, as ‘a code for a functioning services trade’.

Finally, *svart arbete* has also been part of my everyday life when meeting new people. There are two given reactions when I talk about my work. A very few keep completely quiet or say politely ‘how interesting’. The majority start talking like a faucet turned on with a load of stories and explanations. Even those who two minutes before were complete strangers start telling me about some aspect of their experiences, mostly emphasising a positive aspect which simultaneously defends their own actions. It was as if I was someone who could understand their actions and be an interpreter of their justifications for informal purchases, and thus of their critiques of existing rules and regulations.

This talk contradicts the reluctant answers I usually received when the question was directly posed – ‘do you buy *svart arbete*?’ I sometimes felt like a confidant – someone to whom they got rid of their ‘sins’ and who ought to under-

stand why they had bought *svart arbete*. There have also been instances of denunciation – that this type of purchase is something they definitely do not make. A former colleague misinterpreted my aim and exclaimed ‘Great. Go get those bastards.’ Most said something along the line of ‘it’s evident why people buy *svart arbete*. It is cheaper!’ Following these explanations, stories were told about the fantastic Latvian lady who helped them clean their house, the great Polish gardener who had become a friend, or many a smart bargain where both buyer and seller were said to benefit. Older friends and acquaintances ask about my progress, but generally keep quiet nowadays about their own involvement. The days of friends’ juicy examples are long gone.

The societal phenomenon I studied was one that I was, and still am, constantly exposed to and come into contact with in everyday life¹⁹ – through the media and people’s constant engagement with the question. The fieldwork was not over even if my interviews had ended. Taking the initial PhD courses, performing fieldwork, getting my thoughts and material together and writing it all up, issues of *svart arbete* continuously surrounded me. Recurring indignation in headlines would catch my attention and a never ending stream of examples of *svart arbete* in known and new guises was overheard – through hearing fragments of conversations at the supermarket, when watching the children’s soccer games and even when listening to discussions of how to keep within the legal framework at the Scout corps when the youngsters wanted to earn extra income for a trip to a Jamboree in England. There were even humorous advertisements about ‘buying *svart*’ in newspapers relating to stylish leather sofas, or the tip cup at a coffee-shop counter saying *svart pengar*, etc.²⁰ Even presenting my project at my department’s weekly research seminar caused participants to reflect on their own purchases, motives and the justifications for these, a few of them sniggering at the thought. It is intriguing how the combination of making a good exchange, saving money and at the same time cheating those in power makes people chuckle. If jokes affect the dominant structure of ideas (Douglas 1999:150), joking about illegal practices doubly affects those structures. Licit but illegal practices like *svart arbete* are clearly part of what makes up the ‘cultural intimacy’ of a given group of people (Herzfeld 2005:9).

Writing up this book, I keep on living the field with recurrent happenings in the media about *svart arbete*, provoking an array of responses as well as the continuous flow of personal examples when I mention what I am working on. Although this book’s main data are based on interviews, they also illustrate my almost intuitive knowledge²¹ of having lived and studied *svart arbete* in Sweden intensively for six years. Although designing the fieldwork as based on interviews and media articles, my engagement in *svart arbete* could be said to be, at last partly, an unintended ‘polymorphous engagement’ (Gusterson 1997:116).

a fieldwork of homecoming

Returning to my home town as the prime locality of my field and meeting former friends and acquaintances required some reflexivity. I had used the advantage of a past dense and intense social network (cf. Adler Lomnitz & Shein-

baum 2004) to find data on licit but illegal practices. In the encounter between informants and anthropologist, 'studies of others must also be studies of us in our relationships with those others' (Davies 1999:12). Meeting again can intensify one's relation to a field (Hannerz 2001:24); in this case it was returning to a once well-known environment, locality and people, but engaging with them in a new way. This was homecoming in the double sense to a field which was once home (e.g. Gupta & Ferguson 1997:13).

There are many hesitations about contemporary fieldwork at home (cf. Hasstrup 1993, Passaro 1997), not least because the notion of 'the field' is one of expansion (Gupta & Ferguson 1997). As an object of anthropological research, it is constantly rearticulated due to external structural changes or personal interests (cf. Hannerz 2006). The faraway field inhabited by exotic 'others' is long gone as the source of empirical data. George Marcus (2006) regrets the loss of the tales of these fields, as today's fieldwork 'at home' is not spoken about in the same conscious and communicative way amongst anthropologists. It is nowadays more difficult to get a collective knowledge and feel for a field. This is because of two main reasons, he argues: that contemporary research methods are more varied and that the object of study is more complex (ibid.115-116). People move, temporarily or permanently, and the sense of belonging becomes more fragmented and diversified. People can belong to several places where they have left, if not footprints, then memories and friendships which can slightly alter values and views of the world. This is not only applicable to my informants, but also to the researcher him- or herself. Performing my fieldwork, on the route to becoming an anthropologist, I would put forward an additional reason for the changed types of fieldwork – the anthropologist's fragmented belonging.

My informants and I once lived in the same town and went to the same school, in the country where I have lived for two-thirds of my life. My delineation of the field, as well as my chosen method of interviewing, relied on the sense of belonging we shared as old schoolmates. In much earlier anthropology, we were 'us', professional academics from the Western world studying 'them', the 'rest'. As an honour, we would sometimes become members of the tribe. For me it was the other way round – an original member of this field who came back as a researcher (cf. Borgström 1997, Edelman 1997, Ortner 2003). Marcus concludes his article by asking for additional studies of methodology in contemporary, complex society which could help to establish 'norms and forms' to lay the basis for the tales he misses. This fieldwork modestly attempts to add to this trope by ethnographically situated interviews, meetings and locations in contemporary Sweden.

Finally, the distance in location between home and field and the time passed since my informants and I were in contact, allowed for a certain professional distance. This had been much more difficult to obtain with people I currently know. The informants and I have geographical roots and a compulsory school background in common. It is a sort of 'imagined community', to speak with Benedict Anderson (1983), in the sense that it involves building on past associations, concentrated in and around Limninge. Today, many have moved away

from Limninge and have developed different interests due to a mix of experiences, further education, training and work creating various views on the community at large – just like any other given group of middle-aged people in Sweden. What we have in common are memories of the final three years of compulsory schooling in Limninge, thirty years back, sharing some roots and memories there. It was an important part of our lives, during which we became teenagers and started to shape our own values on life and work. This imagined historic commonality served its purpose and turned out to be a valuable asset.

This yo-yo movement between home and field gave time for reflections about the latter (cf. Wulff 2002:124). As the number of interviews grew and with them examples of and justifications for purchasing *svart arbete* piled up, it also dawned on me that this mixed bag of activities somehow mirror how my informants live with it – with more or less fragmented involvement (e.g. Amit 1999:16). There are other things in life than *svart arbete*, for them and for me. Returning to the town I grew up in gave time for reflection on events and happenings I experienced with these people who later became my informants. Articulations around the topic of *svart arbete*, this fieldwork of homecoming also consists of memories from our teenage years, interwoven with reflections about getting together as adults.

Limninge

Limninge is a charming town, located in the southern part of Sweden. Its history goes back several hundred years, as is evident from the old buildings which line the cobbled streets and in the towns lay-out. The mix of new and older buildings demands a close-up look in order to distinguish their date of origin, as throughout the 1980-90s there has been an aim to preserve the old-fashioned style.

A peaceful old canal divides the town centre where quaint wooden crossings mingle with asphalted bridges for cars, connecting the two parts. The town's chief gardener knows her craft; throughout the town centre, but most prominent along the canal, are pretty flower and plant arrangements that change according to the season. The old centre was originally square-shaped, but today it rather emerges in the form of an L. One end of the centre starts from the railway station, a transfer point for commuters. It is a classic railway station building, which today seems somewhat out of place. Tickets are sold from vending machines and the travel bureau which has replaced the former ticket office mainly sells charter flights abroad. A pizzeria, a boring café and a news-stand occupy the rest of the building. A visitor arriving by train would on the way to the centre pass *Stadsbotellet*, the town's hotel, an imposing building of former grandeur. *Stadsbotellet* has changed name during the years in continuous attachments to this or that hotel chain, but in people's minds the name has remained the same – *Stadsbotellet*. It is the place for the weekly meetings of local associations; it offers daily lunches and also sometimes live music and dances on Saturday nights. When I was a teenager, it was a place for grown-ups and the first time I visited it was for my graduation ball.

The main square mostly functions as a parking lot, but twice weekly the market tradition continues as merchants offer fresh vegetables, domestic ware, clothes, records, etc. Here, the centre takes a turn and continues with the main pedestrian shopping street. This street is filled with shops offering a large supply of all imaginable wares, even peculiar, inexpensive or luxury items. The main street has always been the meeting place for the locals. On Saturdays, teenagers dress up smartly just to check out what is going on, meet friends and acquaintances and have a *fika* at one of the many cafés. The picturesque impression the centre provides sometimes overwhelms me. Ugly buildings from the modernisation wave of the 1960s emerge almost gratefully here and there, as leftovers a bit out of place. The town centre leaves a spry, active and somewhat wealthy impression through its supply of shops and maintenance of infrastructure.

Limninge's seemingly endless traffic reconstructions continue to baffle me. Strange solutions are introduced which a few years later are once again remade into another odd variety. They indicate a large municipal planning budget. Another sign of the vibrancy of this town is the continuous construction of shops, houses and apartment buildings to make room for a larger population which is the municipality's officially stated aim.

Limninge was and is a lively market town. Apart from the large supply of stores, there are many smaller industries which seldom cater for the local market, but are part of diverse global business networks. The business sector is vital and growing, mainly consisting of smaller industries, a few of which I visited during my interviews. Even the local production industry sector is expanding, although diminishing in most other parts of Sweden, and the town has less unemployment than the region as a whole. Limninge's two largest industries ten years ago have moved: nevertheless, the number of jobs has increased. The current growth is mainly attributed to the service sector – financial and business, cultural, education and communication but also to the construction sector. Limninge is placed in the higher echelons of the most successful municipalities in Sweden by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprises, *Svensket Näringsliv*. The impression is of a lively and fairly well-off community, where trading has had a large impact throughout the centuries.

Although Limninge provided the main geographical location through which I have cycled and driven for my fieldwork, it was not the only location. I have taken the train or driven to many other places in the southern part of Sweden to wherever informants were to be found. I have searched for addresses, offices and houses with the yellow pages in my lap, trying to locate that left-hand turn 350m after the gas station, etc. I have been shown production processes, tried to understand the skeleton of a homemade robot and waited in the back room of a shop offering fine clothing for men. I have sat upright on hard chairs and deep down in overstuffed or worn-out sofas, in lounges and kitchens, private offices and conference rooms. I have been in many cafés and a few restaurants, in a gaudy Christmas-decorated coffee shop in a supermarket in southern Sweden and in several of Limninge's cafés, highlighted by visits to the cosy old-fashioned garden at the back of *Högström's Konditori*.²² I have been invited to

tasteless coffee served in office plastic cups, nice *caffè latte* at cafés, refreshing tea in beautiful ceramic pots and even old-fashioned boiled coffee in a newly renovated house.²³ Rustic bread in an old bohemian mansion on the plains was another diverging highlight. Other accompanying items have been lovely homemade cakes, factory-made cinnamon buns, an abundance of breads and cookies, or nothing at all to munch at. My fieldwork was not only an interviewing tour of southern Sweden, but also a *fika*²⁴ journey with stops and small glimpses into the life of middle-aged Swedes.

working and living in the prime of life

On the lists I acquired from the municipal office in Limninge, there were 136 'classmates', or rather 136 individuals who graduated with me. Updating the address list at the public computer at my local Tax Agency Office, I concluded that one former classmate was deceased and another one had a hidden identity. The remaining 134 persons were contacted by a letter, briefly describing my project and emphasising my desire to explore their views on their own and others' consumption of *svart arbete*. Attached as an appendix was additional information on the background of the research already done and my thoughts on how an anthropological view could illuminate the subject. 25 responded positively either by e-mail or telephone, no one refused. Interestingly enough, three-quarters of the voluntary respondents were men. Those who contacted me directly were a mixed group of formerly good friends and those who had no idea who I was; all of them were interested in participating in this type of inquiry. From those responding positively, I also understood that there were several others with whom they had discussed my letter, people who thought it was interesting but did not really feel that they had anything to add to the subject. 'What do I know?' was a common remark, to me as interesting as those well opinionated or who had many stories to tell. I called a further 36 people, randomly chosen from the list but mainly women due to their underrepresentation amongst the voluntary respondents. Of those contacted, 13 did not want to participate.

All in all, I have been in contact with 61 persons, 26 women and 35 men. I have formally interviewed 45 persons, who were fairly evenly distributed amongst the six classes with the exception of my own, which is somewhat over-represented with 13 participants. This is not surprising because of our previous closer relations. Half of those I talked to still live in Limninge and eight live in the surrounding countryside. Eleven persons have moved to larger cities and of the remaining five interviewed, one lives abroad.

Of the 45 persons I had formal interviews with, there were 17 women and 28 men, all middle-aged, well past 40 and representing an array of different occupations and professions. The following is a blend, according to their own description. Amongst the women's careers represented were: teachers, a midwife, executive directors of a local daily newspaper and an accessory chain store respectively, an assistant nurse, an artist with an array of work experiences, a secretary, a parish worker, a personal helper (who help handicapped people get

by in daily life), a biomedical analyst, former day-care and after-school teachers (both of whom have changed jobs to work as administrative assistants in smaller companies), a former policewoman who now works as a programmer and a saleswoman in the wholesale business. An interesting aspect, which cannot be pursued here, is that many of the women had had several different types of employment – they had had a change of vocation. Only a few had academic qualifications, but several had had occupational trainings.

The men occupied a similarly vast array of jobs, but had not changed careers and occupations to the same extent as the women. The men earned their living as a financial director, a sheet-metal worker, a sociologist and executive director, gardeners, a lawyer, several as engineers, a department manager at one of the local Tax Agency Office (in the section working with *smart arbete!*), a floor worker at Volvo, salesmen, a truck driver, a legal expert, a refuse collector, a fireman, a store man, an inventor (employed!), project leaders in construction and IT, self-employed entrepreneurs, a project leader for agricultural experiments, a damp control engineer, an IT consultant, and a director of a home for mentally handicapped but holding a PhD in anthropology(!). Two of the informants were early retired due to serious illnesses but both were trying to work as much as their sicknesses would permit. A few of the women and about ten of the men ran their own companies, either as their main occupation or as a way of pursuing a leisure-time interest and/or earning a secondary income.

The data thus display an array of occupations and employment situations. The jobs and professions mentioned above are the real ones; in the rest of the book they are replaced with other, but socio-economically similar, work categories. My informants' views gave a varied insight into Swedish working conditions, but also into how a 'regime of living' constitutes itself between the private and public spheres. The diverse occupations also showed how the availability of finding services to buy informally shifts with the type of networks formed at work and in private.

Many of my informants had been working for at least 20 years, most of them closer to 30, and had passed through different phases in life. Most of them had changed jobs several times, they had experienced the ups and downs in the economy and several had also been directly hit by unemployment, getting fired or closing down shops and having to change jobs and sometimes even careers. The tough readjustment the Swedish economy went through at the start of the 1990s was a period several of my informants referred to. Pelle and Anders were self-employed in the early 1990s, work they were forced to give up then. Monika had continued the family business together with her husband and a cousin until a few years ago when they were forced to close when illicit competition made their business unprofitable. Monika had helped out with the business since she was a child. Now re-training to be an assistant nurse, she said that changing career was the best thing she had done. What will happen after the collapse of the financial markets in the autumn of 2008, and the domino effects it has on industries, I can only speculate about at this point.

Work is for most of them quite important. Andreas, a co-owner of a production plant, reflects on how ideas of work and living change over the years:

Work is still a satisfaction; you mentioned the Lutheran ethics, working for one's living but also meeting people. [Work] is quite social, too. It would be very strange not to have a job, it is not strange that the unemployed seem to lose confidence. It must mean a lot. A couple of years ago, I said that I should never work beyond 55. Now being 45, I think 55 is a little too early, no, I am rather thinking of 60 instead. In some way I shift the limits – it must mean that it is rather important, no?

Several others also reflected on the 20 years left till retirement, 20 years which cannot simply be idly passed. Ideally, the content of work should actively relate to other interests in life, which often means demands for more leisure-time, not only structured by smaller children's needs. Most of my informants are DCPers²⁵ as Börje expressed it; we who 'Drive, Carry, Pay', jokingly referring to lots of leisure-time spent bringing up their children. The Limningers have been through the baby years with the strain it puts on life, juggling work and private life. All but seven of the informants have children, are or have been married, or alternatively co-habiting, which in Sweden has almost comparable legal status. Two men live with women who have a child from a previous relationship, whom they both regard as their own. Linnea and her husband have, in addition to their own child, also four in foster care. They have experienced sharing and shifting responsibilities within the family and have changed their priorities in life. At a point in life, Björn thought work was more important than leisure-time – 'I was dumb as a doorknob' he said. When asked what made him change his mind, he unambiguously replied 'the kids'. Many of the informants have seen their children grow up and in some instances leave home.

Having a field made up of middle-aged people proved to be a lucky hit. Their experiences provided a variety of perspectives on work in time and space, work taking place in the past, present and future and performed both in the private and the public sphere, and for the community. Niklas thought it was a good time in life to reflect on these issues. 'Somehow, you have to experience certain things. It would probably have been meaningless to ask these questions [you do] before turning 30.' Not only the ups and downs at work but also in private life add to these experiences; marrying and (for some) divorcing, moving house, refurbishing and becoming a parent. Their experiences, their capabilities and their reflections provided thoughtful insights into what they do themselves and what they pay others to do.

The majority of my informants seem to lead a fairly stable life and are not afraid of expressing their views on society and topical issues. Most of them do not have extraordinary incomes, but solid positions in society. Yet there were quite a few exceptions to this well-established and ordinary income-earning Swede, the tax-payer without apparent social problems, living a well-established life. Valter and Johan are on the outskirts of mainstream society. Valter leads a lonely life, he has no close friends and is mainly occupied with his hobby after working hours. After secondary school he had a trainee position as a van driver but was bypassed several times in the employment process. Thanks to his trade union, he got a proper job in his early twenties and has been a van driver ever

since. Johan has travelled the world, has worked as a musician and tried to earn a living in many other occupations. He is angry and bitter about society at large, mostly expressed through contempt for women. He is very articulate when he talks about his life since we graduated and tells me about a life full of lost dreams and defeats. 'In practice I almost demand a certain amount of lawlessness of myself. At this point in life I have extraordinarily little confidence with those in positions of authority'. Johan wants to have as little as possible to do with society at large. When I met him, he said he had taken a six-month break from society, neither listening to the radio nor reading newspapers and only trusting his daughter and animals. Life for him is a struggle and *svart arbete* is perfectly OK. Through these informal practices he cheats the state and society of money – or rather the politicians for whom he has nothing but contempt.

Ellen and Anita give the impression of leading quiet and quite ordinary lives. Like Johan and Valter, I did not know either of them socially at school, but they had also contacted me wanting to participate. Neither of them has a strong social position in society and they are not loudly opinionated, but they both have experiences and thoughtful concerns about *svart arbete* which they generously shared with me. Like most other informants, they will get a brief introduction when they are expressing their views on and experiences of *svart arbete* throughout this book.

It was mainly women who said they did not want to participate in my study. This seemed to confirm quantitative research in the area, claiming that it is mainly men who take part in *svart arbete* as well as having opinions on the subject (Skatteverket 2006:4:33). Sectors with the highest occurrence of *svart arbete* are fishery, farming and forestry, followed by restaurants, hairdressers and car transport and repairs (ibid.47). Most of these mainly employ men. Both on the phone and in interviews, the women claimed neither to have bought, nor to know much about *svart arbete*.

In the interviews many women initially continued to reason along these lines as well. However, the longer we talked about work and related issues, the more one example after another surfaced, and both the informant and I could see how practices deemed *svart arbete* also affect numerous of the traditionally perceived women's domains. Several of the women had run or used a small day-care centre at home. This unofficial day-care, *svart dagmamma*, literally black day-mother, is a kind of work often chosen in order to be able to stay at home with one's own children for longer than the stipulated maternity leave. Anita had chosen this for a few years as the city she lived in could not provide day-care. Mona had taken her babies to a *svart dagmamma*, as the only choice of minder offered by the municipal authorities was a smoker which Mona would not accept.

In 2001 hairdressers were selected as a cash-based sector to be researched by the government in order to gather knowledge of *svart arbete* (Ekobrottsmyndigheten 2002). About 80 percent of all hairdressers are women.²⁶ Here there dawns a picture of a sneaky hairdresser who at all possible instances fails to register the payment and instead puts it straight into her pocket – no different from any other occupation where cash is paid. Linnea thought of the hair-

dresser who cuts the hair of her parents who are retired and have a hard time getting around. To their delight, their hairdresser for many years now comes to their home to cut their hair. ‘This must surely be without a receipt’, Linnea mused. At the end of the interview with Anna, she came to think of the increasingly popular ‘girls’ night’, when someone invites some friends over for a theme evening. An expert arrives, demonstrating and doing make-ups, massages and similar feel-good activities. Anna does not refer to occasions where they sell products. ‘That’s more like a Tupperware party. Instead, this is like eight girls getting together for a spa night and such. They bring in someone who works for a few hours. This is of course *svart arbete*.’ She laughs and adds, ‘Maybe it is something I should get involved in?’

That women do not take part in *svart arbete* seems to be a chimera. Regarding the amounts of money spent, one can only speculate, but men perhaps make up the lion’s share in the consumption of these services as they are more willing to buy services *svart* (Skatteverket 2006:4:185). However, my interviews put forward a slightly different view. Many women unintentionally take part in informal transactions, but these exchanges and the context in which they take place are seldom taken into account in the public discussion about *svart arbete*. When female informants reflect on what purchases of *svart arbete* may consist of, they ‘discover’ one *svart* acquisition after another. Like Mona who said almost triumphantly at the end of our talk, ‘When we mention it, I got my hair cut *svart* and she laughed heartily. ‘I come to think of one thing after the other. Now, I really think that the work should be properly done, that’s what I think about. Well, how I came to think about the hairdresser was that she has been indicted.’

Closing in on the field

Although only about a fifth replied to my letter saying they wanted to participate, there proved to be many reasons for my informants to take part in my research. Peter, a salesman and an old acquaintance, was surprised that not more former classmates voluntarily offered to be interviewed. ‘I find it extremely strange that people do not want to participate – even if I had not known you’. Ruben replied to me in an e-mail that ‘it is so seldom anyone asks for my opinion’. I wondered if this was ironic, but no. He really thought that citizens should be able to express their views in other ways than through voting processes once every four years. Janne responded in an e-mail. ‘Hey! Would like to see you.’ Past acquaintances were really an asset, but not necessarily the prerequisite. Men like Valter, Johan and Tomas did not know me but wanted to express their opinions on the subject, views which were very diverse. Sofia replied, ‘I would very much like to be part of this research as it is you who ask, but I want to be completely honest –I find economic issues completely uninteresting.’ This negative reply I misunderstood in my optimistic view of my research and as a result she kindly volunteered anyway. I spoke with Katarina on the telephone several times. She very much wanted to meet me but asked if ‘we couldn’t talk about something else, *svart arbete* is such a dull subject’.

My letter provided people who knew each other previously with a topic to talk about. Kristina had been one of the guinea-pigs in setting up my fieldwork. I phoned her to set a date for the ‘real’ interview and she told me that she had met Göran in town. They had greeted each other as usual, but this time he stopped and asked her if she got ‘that’ letter as well. ‘That’ letter was from me and she asked him if he was going to participate. No, was the answer, he did not think he had anything to say. I, of course, called Göran. He became a good resource, had much to tell about others and readily agreed to participate in a focus group interview.

Most of the informants who were prepared to talk to me, declined to take part in a focus interview, of which I had planned several. I took this as a sign of really wanting to tell me why they act as they do but not wanting to share these experiences and thoughts with others. Anders explained it well, ‘You know, it is very common. People just shrug and do it, but when it comes to being paid, you just do not stand on any street corner taking money openly if you have any kind of morals.’

Amongst those who did not want to participate, the most common excuse was not having time. I sometimes regret not being more insistent. I thought about asking if I could tag along at their work or on other convenient occasions where they were going about their daily activities, whether work or leisure. But this would have seemed awkward unless I knew them well, and I did not want to interfere in their lives, just to ask their views on *svart arbete*. But many of the excuses are probably just that – excuses – as they do not want to talk about it. Olle, a really good friend back then, was one of those who claimed lack of time. Quite understandable, as he runs his own restaurant and has four children all involved in local sports clubs. I asked if I could just sit in a corner and talk, while he prepared today’s lunch, but he would not let me do it ‘as it is far too hot in there’. Is a Stockholm academic such a delicate species? But I remain convinced that his comment in relation to my research that ‘every day someone asks me how many meals I “waste”’ is closer to his real excuse.

For some, my research topic concerns too touchy a subject, especially if your livelihood depends on it. This view can be seen to reinforce earlier research about *svart arbete* as especially flourishing in smaller businesses or one-man shops (Skatteverket 2006:4:46). Sten referred to his previous job as a shop-keeper, saying ‘you know, everybody is doing it’.

The underrepresentation of women in my research, from what originally was a balanced gender ratio at school, is interesting. Common replies were that they were not interested or did not have any views on or knowledge of the sector as such. Although these replies were interesting in themselves and invited further exploration, this was a view that I had to accept. Jacob, on the other hand, did not want to participate as he claimed that his trust in Swedish society was very low due to firsthand experience. His refusal was in contrast to Lars and Johan who readily voiced a similar type of distrust, but for different reasons. Jacob has thought a lot about entrepreneurship in Sweden, launching and running several companies at a Swedish tourist resort. At some point he was accused of tax fraud and took the Tax Agency to court. He told me that the court judged him

to be right and the Tax Agency was therefore asked to reappraise their accusation, something which did not happen. As a result, his entrepreneurial efforts takes place abroad. 'Right or wrong, you will never get at the truth', he told me. 'People do not want to talk about all their fiddles.' I tried to persuade him to participate, but the incident with the Tax Agency was too painful for him, he said. He had talked enough about it and just wanted to get on with his life.

ethical considerations

Choosing a field where illegal transactions are discussed with easily identifiable people raises many ethical questions, not only on a societal and research level but also personally, since I knew the informants.

Since 1 January 2004 there has been a law on ethics which applies to any research involving individuals in Sweden.²⁷ As this project started before this date, it has not gone through this examination. However, setting up the project, performing the interviews and analysing them, I have followed the directives of this law as well as the ethical guidelines proposed by the Swedish Research Council, *Vetenskapsrådet*. These guidelines state four principles when gathering data from and about individuals: demands for information, consent, confidentiality and usage. Regarding information, I was straightforward about my purpose and the intended plan of this project (cf. Fangen 2005:71, Kvale 1997:105 ff, *Vetenskapsrådet* 2001:7). In the letter sent to my school-mates I talked about *svart arbete* as a research topic, well aware of the normative meanings the term implies, both in public and in private contexts. I tried to explain my interest in it honestly, neither condemning nor approving. I carefully chose which term to use, but I also wanted to be frank and earnest in presenting my objective. During the interviews I repeated this information: the purpose for which the research was being undertaken, and the methods chosen.

The request for consent (*Vetenskapsrådet* 2001:9-11) can only be applied to those taking part in the interviews. This included their right not to answer any question, the extent of their participation and the right to end their participation at any time. However, there could potentially be suspicions about a particular person participating in the study who in fact did not. If this is the case, it is truly accidental as I do not, of course, have the consent of the non-participants. To meet the request for confidentiality, all interviews are literally transcribed, but my informants' real names are never used. Writing up this book, information about surroundings, life stories, and family conditions (such as number of children) have been slightly altered in order not to reveal any possible connections between statements and specific informants. Occupations mentioned in the context of a citation have been changed as well, but to something with similar status in Swedish society as well as similar access to practices of *svart arbete*. This is a delicate question of authenticity as it is important for the scientific analysis of who does what, but as the data I collected were accounts of what were in essence criminal transactions it made the anonymisation of informants even more important (cf. Fangen 2005:212-213).

A special problem was posed by the manager of a local branch of the Tax Agency, who is the only one who, with his consent, has maintained his profession throughout the book. The PhD in anthropology is obviously easily recognisable and important to quote due to his specific experiences and his reflections on these. He is anonymized according to the same criteria as all other informants. Taking this precaution should meet the demands for confidentiality.

interviews as fieldwork

I chose to do interviews with people I already had or had had a relationship with, also called ethnographic interviewing (Davies 1999:95). Interviews are especially suitable if the purpose of the research is to understand how people give meaning to their own actions, beliefs and meaning (Kvale 1997:100). Even in qualitative studies of the informal economy, the 'best results' are seen to have been obtained in personal interviews with indirect and unspecific questions (Riksrevisionsverket 1998:28:21 quoting a Dutch study). My interviews were more or less formal, mainly taking place as friendly conversations (cf. Spradley 1979:58) with a casual and explorative tone (Fangen 2005, Kvale 1997:94, Wästerfors 2004:220). The topics were loosely structured as discussions around work in general and *svart arbete* in particular, starting out with questions about what the interviewees had done since graduation. Their responses resulted in many different narratives, from long and somewhat philosophical accounts of life and the choices they had made, to very concise lists of family, children and work. This gave a good background to the follow-up questions about work and *svart arbete* and provided a platform for spontaneity, reflection and deeper understanding of specific cases (cf. Ryen 2004:11).²⁸ It is important to note that the interviews were flexible, but relatively structured. I did not ask everybody the same questions, but I have covered the same issues.

Asking about illicit economic transactions can be perceived as an accusation of dishonesty, so I had to be careful. Exploring different ways of talking about the phenomenon proved useful (cf. Kvale 1997:101, Maurer 2005:25-26). Especially fruitful were questions asking for the worst stories they had heard about *svart arbete* or synonyms used.²⁹ Apart from laughter, they also created a more relaxed and permissive atmosphere, taking the tension away from speaking about illegalities. As the number of interviews grew, so did my experience and I was able to use a more intuitive knowledge as a base for follow-up questions (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001:21 citing Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, Kvale 1997:102). As Davies (1999:96) suggests, I tried to let the informants follow their own way of reasoning, but I also pursued being an active interviewer, trying to find new openings in the discussion (cf. Wästerfors 2004:19). I was sometimes provocative but I also tried to balance my remarks, alternating between the condemnatory and the more tolerant views. Not taking a normative stand, I instead tried to stimulate the discussions (ibid.20). More than one interviewee asked me if I had ever bought *svart arbete*, wanting to know my own moral standpoint. I am as bewildered as most of my informants about the issue. Situational and contex-

tual, *svart arbete* can, as will be shown in the following chapters, be considered both good and bad for society. In particular, it was difficult to pinpoint what could be regarded as purchases of *svart arbete* and what were seen as exchanges between friends. Just speaking about hidden and illegal transactions revealed in which contexts purchases of *svart arbete* are sensible (e.g. *ibid.*227).

The recorded interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two and a half hours. Most lasted around an hour; concentration and things to tell waned after some time and the same subjects reappeared in the discussions. *Svart arbete* was for most of my informants something they did not think much about. It was usually perceived as a few purchases amongst many others, sometimes with a bad conscience, but usually quickly justified. This everyday existence informed the way economic practices are described in this book; they are part of everyday living and so are those purchases which are defined as *svart*. One exception was Lars with whom I could have talked for days. For him, buying *svart* is partly an explicit action and I felt he could have continued talking at length around this topic. He had many stories to tell about *svart arbete* and connected them with a quite hostile view on Swedish society in general, a view he willingly shared. Sten, the former shop-owner, could have told me a lot more and so could Tomas and Anders, both craftsmen. None of the women was involved to the same extent even if several of them had strong opinions about purchasing *svart arbete*.

The interviews took place at a location proposed by the informant as I wanted them to feel at ease (cf. Davies 1999:111). Roughly one-third occurred at cafés or restaurants, another third at work sites and the remaining third in homes. The focus interview took place in my mother's kitchen in Limninge. Finally, one interview took place over the phone as this informant worked mainly abroad and we could not find an occasion to meet. After leaving each interviewee, I recorded my impression of the meeting and conversation. I tried to put into words what I had experienced with other senses than hearing: impressions of the conversation and of my informant, the meeting, smells and tastes, location – an attempt to add ethnography to the words of the interview as well as reflecting on the meeting in terms of social relations.

All except one interview were recorded on my MP3 player and it was only Hasse who initially was reluctant to be recorded. The only interview where the recording failed was with the journalist (typically!) and I had to try out the more usual way of doing participant observation taking notes afterwards. With this unexpected comparison of methods, I was glad that I had chosen to record and transcribe the interviews. They have provided me with deep and thick material, and made it possible for me to listen and re-listen to different accounts of buying *svart arbete*. Hearing the hesitations, reluctance, embarrassment and sometimes direct lies has been very helpful in analysing this material (cf. Davies 1999:114). It was also embarrassing to listen to my own misunderstandings and blatant errors. Sofia, a librarian who now lives on her own with her youngest teenager, told me about neighbours who had helped her repairing items broken in her apartment. She had asked if they wanted to be paid for the favour, but as they had declined she never thought about this help as *svart arbete*. I insisted and

asked if she did not recompense them in some other way. She laughed as if I had insinuated a more intimate or sexual compensation, something not evident in the transcripts but quite clear in the interview. I am glad she noticed my awkwardness. It is interesting to see in which directions thoughts linger when discussing exchanges of services.

Choosing interviews as the main way of collecting field data also put me more in the limelight. Fanny Ambjörnsson, amongst others, has written about participant observation as an ingratiating method (2004:43), which I argue would also include in-depth interviews. There is almost a double reflexivity taking place as insights are relived when listening to the recordings. I can hear myself humming concurringly, requesting additional reflections or chuckling at jokes which did not really deserve a laugh. Strangely enough, at the interview this behaviour felt natural, driven by an interest to really understand what the interviewees meant when responding to my questions. It was a quest for understanding what they meant while searching for a common ground (cf. Davies 1999:101).

the focus group interview

To make my presence in the interview less imposing and make my informants trigger the discussion, I had planned to pursue a couple of group discussions, so-called focus group interviews. In a one-to-one interview, the only participants are the informant and the interviewer and mutual trust can more easily be created. But there was also the downside. Aiming to drive the discussion further or probe the explanations given, I sometimes needed to exemplify, cajole, provoke, concur, etc., with the risk of steering the informant in my direction of thinking. There was the danger of restricting my informant's thoughts and neglecting aspects which other people might have raised. As an interviewer of focus groups, I intended to take the line of a moderator and keep the participants focused to 'strive to create an open and permissive atmosphere in which each person feels free to share her or his point of view' (Morgan & Krueger 1993:7). Thus, I hoped to move the focus away from my own views.

The group dynamic of a focus group creates a more polyphonic account (Frey & Fontana 1993:26, Morgan & Krueger 1993:17). But focus groups are not brain-storming sessions, which are too imprecise; instead, they can be said to be semi-structured interviews with a group of people simultaneously (Frey & Fontana 1993:21). What a person says, and does not say, is influenced by the other participants. The problem with social influence processes is that a participant might feel they have to express an opinion that is deemed socially acceptable (Albrecht et al 1993:54). Interpersonal attraction is another issue that might influence answers. Those who are articulate might take over the scene, express their own opinions and lead the discussion in such a way as to suppress diverging views. This might all lead to the formation of a group opinion (ibid.56), something I definitely wanted to avoid. Instead, if tensions arise between participants this can add to the depth of the discussion (Morgan & Krueger 1993:18). I felt the need to create an atmosphere where different views

were permitted, leaving room for a rich array of opinions (Albrecht et al 1993:52).

Ideally, participants in a focus group should be unfamiliar to each other but should share certain characteristics relevant to the study (Marshall & Rossman 1995:84). To facilitate the arrangement of focus groups, I asked only those living in and around Limninge if they wanted to see me alone or in a group. There was, of course, an issue with the familiarity of people in my intended focus groups, but my hopes were that this homogeneity could produce information in greater depth (cf. Knodel 1993:40). However, arranging a focus group proved harder than I had thought. Most of my informants preferred talking with me alone which confirmed that *svart arbete* is a touchy subject, not to be revealed to everybody. Limninge is a town where rumours travel fast. What they wanted to tell me could be somewhat embarrassing to disclose to other people.

In the end, only one focus group interview took place when four people turned up around my mother's kitchen table, as one of the participants called in sick at the last minute. Four constitutes at least more than a triad, in which there is a risk that one person takes over the role as a mediator (Wibeck 2000:50 citing Simmel 1964). The venue was chosen to facilitate the participants feeling at ease, but still not too intimate. They had all belonged to my class so we once used to know each other well, a precondition I thought made it easier to discuss this subject (along the same lines as with the interviews).

However, there turned out to be a lot of positioning going on between the participants. They seemed to be aiming for a stand in relation to what our roles had been way back then, reflected by their opinions on *svart arbete* and how they wanted to be seen today. The discussion centred on general examples of *svart arbete* instead of on the more personal experiences disclosed in the interview situations. Sven was the exception, blatantly talking about the wonderful lady who helped them at home. There was also a lot of catching up and jokingly gossiping about mutual acquaintances and a lot of laughs in an easy-going and unbiased atmosphere. Nevertheless, we constantly deviated from the subject of *svart arbete* and I had to encourage Maria to speak and cajole the others into expressing their views on this subject. There was some insightful reasoning and examples because of the participants' interactions (cf. Davies 1999:105), but also many hints at illicit practices which would not be recounted within this larger audience. I had a hard time focusing the participants' attention on my subject and away from their joy at returning to common memories.

At first I felt that the focus group interview was a failure, but repeated listening to the recording actually gave me a lot of insight into how these illegal purchases can be seen both as licit and illicit. The focus group participants framed the purchases they chose to talk about humorously, selecting stories about others to condemn what they saw as clearly illicit practices. There were also a number of hidden hints about others' informal dealings, those types which were not possible to make acceptable. Through this selection of stories of their own acceptable purchases and others' illicit ones, they were able to on the one hand to project the image of doing a smart deal and, on the other hand, present

themselves as members of a moral community who care about the society they live in.

Relations with and reflections on the field

The anthropologist can be both ‘stranger/foreigner and friend’ (Hannerz 2001:25 quoting Powdermaker 1966). For some of those I met the order in which these roles appeared was rather the reverse, once a friend, now an old acquaintance but also a potential bearer of news, which those who had moved away from Limninge in particular wanted me to be. This wish I was not able to fulfil as the interviews were anonymous. I had chosen from the start not to disclose anyone I interviewed to any other informant, unless they explicitly referred to our having talked previously. I was there posing questions, taking up their time, but in the name of reciprocity hoped they found the effort worthwhile.

The interviews have, apart from providing a well of views, examples and thoughts about *svart arbete*, offered many laughs and reflections on life and the society we live in. It has been a pleasure to meet people I shared part of my life with. Nina, one of my best friends at the *gymnasium*,³⁰ I had not seen for about ten years but she invited me for dinner. We giggled a lot together at school, as teenage girls do. The wonderful thing was that we still did, interrupted by moments of deep seriousness, and it seemed like it was only a few months since we had last been in touch.

Many of my informants are people with whom I had never exchanged a word, but most of us somehow recognised each other 30 years on. Tomas called me wanting to participate, but said on the phone that he had no idea who I was. He described the route to me, telling me that he lived in a former summer home outside Limninge, which could mean anything from an old cottage to a fantastic house. I had found him somewhat scary at school, and I would then probably have avoided him had I met him at night. Driving out to his place, through the woods on a November night, I almost regretted not having brought my dog with me. Silly me – what did I have to be afraid of? Here was the nicest refurbished summer home, a neat, tidy garden making me ashamed of our own comparative mess. In one corner of the garden was an outdoor wooden spa tub, in another a pretty shack for garden tools (see chapter five for the story of how this was constructed). When he opened the door I heard him burst out loudly ‘So it is you! Now I recognise you.’ It was a warm welcome, followed by an interesting interview accompanied with generous offerings of coffee and cakes.

Valter was another informant I did not know back then. He had a hard time at school. I had a memory of someone tagging after the others, never really part of the gang. We had agreed to meet at one of Limninge’s cafés. When I saw him, I immediately recognised him, not so much for his looks as for his general manner which was still cautious and timid. He was almost deferential, saying

that he was very grateful to be part of the research and because of this insisting on paying for my coffee and cake.

The interviews were diverse in content and in context. The mixture of private, professional and public meeting places provided many insights into encounters in a Swedish context. So did the relations with the interviewees. Regardless of our being former friends, acquaintances or total strangers, we all had a hazy idea of a shared past.

remembering and reconnecting with informants

Continuous luggage throughout this fieldwork have been my memories; clear and sharp about certain individuals mixed with a vague idea of others. Teenage time is filled with confusions, hormones and identity searches. Now we were middle-aged and more composed. Although most had more wrinkles, larger waistlines and less hair, there were also others who looked really well, in some ways better now than the idea I had of them from back then. Although I had a clear picture of Niklas as a teenager, I did not recognise him at all. The morning after the interview I woke up and could all of a sudden remember his gaze and eyes, finally connecting the boyish face I remembered from 30 years ago with the man I had met the day before. There were also certain gestures, ways of talking and moving about which had not changed. Åke and Maria especially come to mind. This was also evident in relationships. Janne and I were quite good friends at the time, hung out with the same group of youngsters and had always enjoyed discussing – initially. At some point we often seemed to lose the connection and our discussion continued on different wavelengths. It was as if we were discussing the same thing but our arguments did not meet. This occurred again during our interview. At first I felt confused, but then remembered how it had been way back then.

Blending the professional role, the anthropologist to be, with the personal relationship of former camaraderie, makes for a messy qualitative experience! (Marcus & Fischer 1986:22). However, I believe the trust on which our relationship was based outweighed the drawbacks.

questions of trust

A former relationship, imagined or not, was used as a way of getting the foot in the door for an interview and as a shortcut to establishing trust. Episodes from the teenage years came back as flashlights into the conversation and provided common memories which sometimes deepened the relationship between us. As the interview went on, the common memories waned and the focus moved to the issue for the interview (cf. Davies 1999:4-5). Then experiences of and knowledge about *svart arbete* could start to trickle through.

Even if our existing relationship was presumed to be an easier way of talking about what really are illegal transactions, there was our past history to consider. What does this ballast imply when it comes to talking about illegitimate acts, to

revealing things which one ought really not to do – but still does? Since the interview is an interaction between people, what role did their memories of me play and what did they think about someone coming back and wanting to inquire into private, economic issues?

Talking about *svart arbete* concerns revealing a part of daily ‘hidden’ life, purchases situated within everyday life but maybe not part of what is on ‘display’ for the surrounding community. How did this marry with the impression(s) they wanted to make on me, someone who had moved away? Did their positioning efforts impact on the answers I received? My impression is that these worries were, if at all, an initial problem and one of encounter. More than one informant asked what had become of me and seemed to compare what I told them with their idea of me as a teenager. The longer the interview went on, the less this type of thoughts mattered (cf. Ortner 2002:19). The mutual memory was a starting point, the foot in the door. As the interview continued, ideas of the past relationship faded and concentration centred on the subject of the interview – *svart arbete*.

To get the information I wanted was a question of trust: not only of receiving information about illegal purchases, but also of revealing less flattering experiences and/or failures which sometimes made purchases of *svart arbete* a necessity. Anders asked me at least 20 questions up front: for whom I was doing this book, for what purpose, why, who was providing the finance, etc. It is one thing to talk about small purchases of *svart arbete* made on a single occasion or once in a while and now forgotten in the great amount of items and services consumed. It is quite another if your livelihood – in Anders’ case his firm built up by hard long work – is at issue and can also be at risk, due to small and illegal transactions ‘that everybody else is doing’. I could feel his lingering question, ‘Imagine if the Tax Agency chooses to make an example out of me?’ Anders decided to trust me and gave me a good insight into his views on work and the environment and under which conditions he works, operating his one-man business. I asked Larry, like everybody else, at the end of the interview, if we had covered everything he thought important about *svart arbete*. He replied:

Well, I passed work on my way here and mentioned this. That I was going to meet an old classmate you know. [Their response was] God, how do you dare? Within seconds in the canteen at the [coast-guard] centre there is a discussion [on this subject] for five minutes.

All things considered, I have saved a large amount of time having informants with whom I share a past and I am most grateful for the trust given to me. The advantages of our historical relationship, sometimes imagined, richly compensated for the shortcomings.

outsider – insider

An anthropologist is still regarded as someone who, from many points of view, should study ‘the others’, implicitly or explicitly (Bowman 1997, Geertz 1973, Keesing 1989). I was a person from the past, a former classmate and a fellow-

citizen. I am also a wife and a mother, with a previous working career in business who, like them has been juggling informal and formal work between the private and public spheres of life. I came back as an outsider, who had not lived in Limninge for 25 years, 15 of them abroad. The 1990s which I had missed out on when I was abroad was a period of large structural changes in the Swedish welfare society, with an increasing privatisation of public services such as schools, day-care centres and parts of the health and care sectors. The former governmental TV and radio monopoly now has (many) private competitors and the food is much more exciting and spicy.

Working as an insider has been, and in certain environments still is, considered problematic in anthropology. In contrast, it has, in a sociological tradition even been seen as an advantage, if not a prerequisite, for understanding the values of certain groups (Merton 1972). Ethnicity or womanhood cannot be understood unless it is lived (Merton 1972:19). Acquired practices can also become a part of a person's *habitus* and thus perhaps not describable by someone who lacks the experience (Moeran 2005 (part I), Wulff 2000). What should not be forgotten is that belonging is not the only qualification for understanding; the contextual status a person has in different situations also matters (Holy & Stuchlik 1983:115, Merton 1972:22, Ortner 2002:13).

I regard my 'insiderness' mostly as an advantage. Understanding what the informants say is obviously not a problem (Keesing 1989:462), but it risks making me prone to overlooking certain phenomena and taking them for granted (Davies 1999:108, Hastrup 1992:21). The insiderness is an entry to a subject which is mostly discussed in confidence and based on trust between friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Anthropologists have often been accused of seeing 'the others' in too static terms (Bowman 1997:34), so that the testimony of informants appears to be written in stone. I was not studying sideways, neither up nor down (Hannerz 2006), but studying within – sometimes an insider, but also an outsider. With my acquired anthropological knowledge, I have, I hope, been able to see my informants in a new light, but blended with memories of them in the past (cf. Borgström 1997:9). I have neither supplied nor bought *svart arbete* in Limninge (at least not to my knowledge) and never previously spoken about *svart arbete* with my informants (at least, not that I remember). The knowledge of the Limninge community I carry is old and somewhat taken for granted, but the newly acquired knowledge about *svart arbete* amongst old classmates is new. I, who from my teenage years had always wanted to move away from the enclosed setting of Limninge, felt firmly and happily stuck with one foot in the town. I was both an insider and an outsider.

As an anthropologist, I still have this lingering idea of 'real' fieldwork; traveling far away, living and participatingly observing some aspect of the daily life of the 'others'. My fieldwork can instead be said to resemble what George Marcus has described as an anthropologist's second fieldwork. After the first more 'traditional' fieldwork, the anthropologist is 'moving beyond the settled community as site of fieldwork toward dispersed phenomena that defy the way that classic ethnography has been framed and persuades' (Marcus 1998:234). I wonder if this tendency of shifting towards an increasingly abstract field is not also

a result of the fact that ‘our’ society intrigues us as much as the exotic, the far away.

I considered by what term to refer to my former classmates – the ‘informants’ as anthropologists usually refer to their sources of information. ‘Informants’ was an awkward term, since we were classmates and I was part of that group. A collective grouping such as ‘informants’ also risks evening out the differences between each of them and the opinions they voiced. We are all classmates, but varied, and just as Wulff did, I found my ‘native experience from the past very useful’ (2000:153). I am native in a ‘local-historical’ sense, not when it comes to shared experiences of buying *svart arbete*. Even if I was not the only anthropologist of this class (as mentioned earlier, one had a doctoral degree), in this study I was the researcher and they were explaining their views to me. Our commonality was at one time having attended the same school in the town of Limninge. With these considerations and although only half of the informants still live in this town, I shall refer to them as informants or Limningers.

Probing data: between actions and accounts

Most research on *svart arbete* tries to measure formal and informal economic actions or make use of attitudinal studies. However, it has been argued that statistical studies can pinpoint the existence of informal economic activities, but will never be able to fully explain why they exist (e.g. Appelgren and Sjögren 2001).

One example of recognised incoherence between quantified informal activities and the mechanisms generating them is pointed out in an article about the black economy in a Governmental Public Investigation regarding the development and improvement of economic statistics (Tengblad 2002:118). The author argues for complementary methods to existing statistics in order to more accurately measure and depict the black economy in the National Accounts (ibid.270). The OECD argues that attempts to measure the hidden activities via monetary methods can result in statistics that in many cases are strongly misleading (e.g. 2002:190). And if the numbers are questioned (see also chapter one), so must the conclusions also be. Actions cannot be explained by statistics alone as they would leave them ‘either not intelligible at all or only imperfectly intelligible’ (Hollis 1994:183).

Another presumption about *svart arbete* in statistical inquiries is that public employees are assumed not to be involved in its production (Tengblad 2002:118:256). This assumption was readily contradicted in my fieldwork by Torsten’s acquaintance the policeman, who helped with various construction projects at Torsten’s house, or by Larry the coastguard’s activities in his free time. But the inconsistency did not end at the analytical level; it was also displayed in my informants’ frustration over their own inconsistent reasoning. It could be described as arational thinking. This does not mean that they consciously act contrary to what they view as rational thinking, which would rather

be called irrational. Instead, they emphasise other issues such as feelings and intuition, what Flyvbjerg describes as ‘context-independent rules’ (2001:22). To cheat the society they are part of, i.e. by buying work without paying taxes, can be done according to certain rationality. To be contradictory in their view of their own rational reasoning is worse in the view of my informants. Peter is here a representative voice; ‘this is damn difficult. I have my own moral ideas but to live up to them is bloody difficult.’ Tomas said ‘I told you that I do not accept it, *svart arbete* is not morally acceptable. Still, I bloody well do it’ and related it to when he, again, bought fireworks for New Year’s festivities but on the invoice it said ‘drill’.³¹

Accepting informal purchases does not mean that you practice these. Anna, like many of the Limningers, seems to agree that ‘everybody buys *svart*’. Nevertheless, she is one of those people who do not need to buy *svart* as her former husband helps her with repairs to her house and other craftsmen tasks:

I think that most people think it is quite OK, most of them. You know, that’s what I heard, about cleaning and such. That’s *svart*. And I can understand that if you ought to pay a proper wage for what you should be able to do in your free time, it probably won’t add up.

Anna and I sat on her covered veranda, listening to the almost deafening downpour of rain which made the green grass around us dazzle my eyes. When the rain eased off, her big cat on a long leash reluctantly ventured out followed by one of her daughters. The veranda was cosy but quite worn down, almost covered with flowers and plants in a variety of pots. She tells me how she looks forward to the coming refurbishment project for the verandas in her rental chain house:

I have never had to use it [*svart arbete*], I have not needed to. But... when I was married, my husband did almost everything and if something comes up, he’s still around and comes and helps me. Or I have painted it myself. I have not needed it [*svart arbete*] in any case.

And she laughs loudly. Anna works as a saleswoman within a wholesale business. She is concise, not talking around much and quite sure of her views on this topic – as well as on others. She continues:

However, I am not better-off than if you can get a bargain, sure. But as I have had a handy husband who still helps me if something comes up, I have never had to pay for it... If I were to get into that type of situation, I would probably do it. But if you live like I do, there is not much you have to buy. It is the small things, inventories and such, which you cannot buy *svart* anyway.

Whereas the focus is on how these purchases can be made acceptable, people’s views on their activities also reveal something about the meaning of their actions, especially if these actions are illegal, as David Wästerfors shows in his analysis of bribes and their meaning for Swedish businessmen (2004). Although the spoken cannot be isolated from the social any more than the social is iso-

lated from the spoken (ibid.), the relation between the entities of past practices and accounts of them afterwards is important. As Mona reflects on her explanations:

If there is one thing we are good at, it is defending our own little self – and our own actions. There, we show a fantastic ingenuity, and what happens? Look at all the insurance frauds. I mean, sometimes you can see the funny side of it, when people have explained their situation and such. But it is ghastly, awfully ingenious.

The relation between a personal and illegal gain, on the one hand, and a retrospective justification of it needs some discussion. As stated above, these purchases of *svart arbete* are partly hidden, but in most instances legally produced, so it was mostly the manner of settlement which made them illegal.

I chose to rely on accounts of past transactions. As my main interest was in why purchases are made *svart*, and especially *how* these purchases are made acceptable, participating in the actual work and settlement would not yield much information unless it was accompanied by an explanation. The second problem is that all accounts told would be recollections of how these transactions were performed. Interviews thus partly provide afterthoughts, reflections and justifications of past purchases. Finally, the transactions we talked about are performed in the shadows, away from the scrutinising gaze of government authorities and also hidden from most other people.

Many of the Limningers talked initially with confidence of their own moral distinction between *svart* and *vitt*: which types of purchases of services they think appropriate, and on the other hand, which are seen as illegal and illicit. However, as the discussion went on, the grey zone broadened and the borders took on a fuzzier appearance. Discussing the issue, sometimes the absurd fact dawned on us that helping each other could in principle also be regarded as *svart arbete* (if it is revealed, see chapter six).

Very few informants had never knowingly bought *svart arbete*; there were slightly more who were heavily involved in the practices, but most had bought or exchanged only the occasional service *svart*. Most of the Limningers did not question at all that they had purchased *svart arbete* at some point. The opportunity was there and purchasing the service *svart* meant money saved for something else. My informants' hesitation seemed more directed at how much of their *svartande* they should tell me about – what they thought could be justified and accepted. Most informants preferred to talk about *svart arbete* in terms of others' transactions, acceptable or not. However, for those accustomed to the practice, *svart arbete* was not problematic, either to talk about in terms of *svart*, or to present excuses for it. They saw it as part of life and there were no moral concerns about this behaviour.

While many of those I interviewed were quite content with their actions, not feeling ashamed of having cheated, in other interviews I seemed to hear that they were not telling me everything, things they did not really know whether they should tell or maybe felt a little ashamed about. Tomas, as well as some of the others who had been or are still involved in both buying and selling, did not

disclose everything, and instead hinted at different types of transactions. Jenny, who claimed that she had not bought anything, returned several times to plumbing services as an example of services bought. I could not help wondering if that was a complete ignorance of which type of services one buys *svart*² or maybe it was the only *svart arbete* they had ever bought. Svante was not very talkative, but I understood that he had many examples of which he only mentioned a few. Sten revealed a few examples from his time as a shopkeeper, but he chose not to expose himself, or his former colleagues, too much. I rest my case on the exchanges and transactions that my informants themselves find acceptable, where they do not regret their actions or feel ashamed of their purchase but still do not want it exposed to the public at large. This is one distinction I make between the licit and illicit (cf. van Schendel & Abraham 2005).

entertaining tales of purchasing *svart*

When justifying *svart* purchases, some of the Limningers were amusing. Larry, Pontus and Börje know well how to tell a good story and simultaneously weave in mocking reflections on their own behaviour. Larry sounded and expressed himself like the character *Roy* in the movie *Macken* (literally 'the gas station'). This slapstick movie is about two brothers who run a gas station in the countryside. It is a take-off on big city life, where *Roy* with his strong dialect is the outgoing and talkative one of the two. His old-fashioned fussiness makes the more worldly and modern people stopping at his gas station look silly. I had a hard time concentrating on my questions when I was enjoying Larry's reflections on his involvement in *svart arbete*.

The way Larry presented his involvement in purchases of *svart arbete* could be best described in terms of 'social poetics' (Herzfeld 2005:186). Larry sees the apparent contradictions in his life and has his own reasons for his occasionally large involvement. The way he expressed himself was as one who adapts to reality, doing what everybody else does, well knowing it is illegal. It is just his way of going about his business. It was neither something he wanted to encourage everybody else to do, nor an attempt to prove that his way was a better one. But he did not excuse himself either; he just does as he does even if he sees the contradictions in it. His way of talking could be taken as being fuzzy, but it was certainly neither bullying nor cocky with regard to others. Instead, he presented seriously his view of how the world works. Larry's tales expressed a regional way of speaking. In a folkloristic account of people from this region, the way they talk is described as being the means by which things are settled at the right level, getting the laughs on one's side, being quick in reply and also sometimes casting things in a new and sometimes astonishing light. There is a preference for having the last word. This is no regional chauvinism or meant as an insult, but the hidden meaning is that one person is as good as another (Korn 1989:8). It can be regarded as a kind of Swedish social poetics in which Larry talks about his everyday practices disguised as local humour.

Larry was not the only one speaking in this way. Börje also set out his stories in an idiom similar to my understanding of the particularities of this social poet-

ics. He told me that ‘he probably had hammered on one or two houses and sometimes he also billed a few things on his business (i.e. items were paid for by his firm but used for private consumption)... but, this little bonus’, as he expressed it, ‘is as wrong as these government blokes who earn so much and cannot decide anything. The only difference is that they pay taxes.’ Originally Börje was trained as a carpenter, but he has worked with many things, so he views himself as a bit of a jack of all trades. He is married and has a daughter and a son, both in their teens. Both are active in sports, so his time outside work is spent driving them to trainings as well as refurbishing his house – work which he enjoys very much. They bought it a few years ago and nothing had been done to it since 1959, he tells me. He is currently employed at the local office of one of the major global food suppliers. For him, this is a time of bitterness and surrender. At the time of the interview, the entire workforce was given notice, but still had to come to work, awaiting the transfer of services to the head office in Stockholm. What Börje has to say about Stockholmers is not to the latter’s advantage.

All in all, I have thoroughly enjoyed the eloquent anecdotes and the proficiency that some of my informants express in telling a good story, but I have also been aware of the risk of being intellectually seduced by a ‘thick’ (in a Geertzian sense) and amusing tale. It has been a joy listening to well-told accounts and narratives in my quest to understand how people justify their transactions of *svart arbete* and how they make them acceptable.

what did I get to know?

There are many possibilities to adjust accounts of actions, deliberate or not, and I wanted to avoid exaggerated accounts. Did the Limningers remember what they had actually done? Did the perceived intention for doing what they did change over time? Could what once seemed a rational decision appropriate then, with hindsight seem unethical? Actions of the past can be reinterpreted as if they were current transactions, explained and made acceptable within today’s norms. I did not validate the data with my informants afterwards. Their accounts were for my ears, so how they made them acceptable became apparent through the interview. They chose what to tell in order to present what they thought was acceptable and the reasons for this acceptance. However, my conclusions take their accounts one step further, putting them into a theoretical perspective based on the knowledge I acquired about *svart arbete* throughout the writing of this book, via previous studies and through talks with numerous other Swedes (cf. Fangen 2005:260).

So how much did I really get to know? To what extent did they tell me about their shady purchases (and productions), given that it was difficult for them to separate the purchases from their production? How did they justify their transactions and what role does the re-articulation of earlier deals play? Hardly anyone seeing or actually taking part in refurbishing projects, house cleaning, car repairs or hairdressing (work I have done at different stages of my life) can tell the difference between the job being *svart* or *vitt*. The interviews sometimes

became explorative on the topics of why and how *svart arbete* is bought. In most cases, the informant was clear about which exchanges would be seen as *svart*. But there were also many instances when the discussions led to insights of actions previously not deemed *svart* suddenly being transformed into it, similar to how payments transformed into bribes by being expressed as such in an interview (see also Wästerfors 2004:226). Accounts told could also be exaggerated in order to impress me (ibid.225). Wästerfors calls this the 'braggadocio factor', revealing rather than hiding morally scrupulous (trans)actions. Lars' numerous tales about smart deals and purchases where he was quite content about the outcome – to his economic benefit – could exemplify this factor. When purchases of *svart arbete* are seen as tax evasion, there was also the possibility of venting out discontentment and disapproval with the doings of the state. The explanations can take on a form of excuse covering up for a more egoistic reasoning. In addition, they can point to certain personal hang-ups and experiences. However seen, these explanations regarding the state are just another way of making the *svart* purchase acceptable. In this sense; excuses, justifications, explanations and contradictions are seen as having the same relevance.

Of central interest here is the idea of a mutual past as a platform of trust, allowing those involved in *svart arbete* to talk about their views and experiences. In a 'new' field, with formerly unknown informants this would have taken time, time to get to know one another and share experiences. Even so, I do not elude myself that I have heard all stories about their purchases of *svart arbete*. There are very probably actions and transactions which were more or less deliberately kept secret, but my supposition is that those are actions where the individual's own moral limit to the intolerable, maybe straightforwardly criminal transaction is transgressed, and that is not the subject of this book. The aim is to look for justifications of the *svart* purchases of work, those purchases that people find acceptable.

justifications for buying *svart*

My informants thus provided me with a plethora of accounts in the form of explanations and excuses. How was I to deal with these? How make sense out of stories of disparate and everyday behaviour, done by everyone? I found the theory of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006) appropriate for my endeavours as it addressed a number of methodological concerns.

The theory of justification attempts to explain people's behaviour in different circumstances, especially when there are diverse opinions about the outcome of the activity. The theory presumes people as individual actors with their own interests in mind, but also as social actors with an articulated opinion on the common good. It also undertakes to explain social links with social action, for example answering to why humans want to trade. A third aspect is that it is a theory which takes seriously the relation between actors' practices and their explanations for these actions (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:357).

The theory of justification initially grew out of an attempt to address features of labour, especially how different rules, norms and conventions were applied

when professional roles were qualified (Jagd 2004a:2). Categorisations of labour are not always clear-cut. Defining which restrictions should apply to specific professional roles is often done externally (by the research environment) and there can be doubt as to which category a certain feature belongs to. The theory instead uses the workers' own views and their judgements to qualify what they are subject to (Wagner 1999:346, Wilkinson 1997:317-8). Their practices are 'interpreted from within', from the way they construct valid arguments (ibid.319). The theory provides a foundation for both comparison and judgement. Importantly, it allows for the possibility of understanding compromises when people resolve disputes about where certain features belong (Wagner 1999:343).

While allowing for actors' disparate behaviour in different contexts, the theory of justification also aims to explain actors' means of changing the structure they act within.

taking talk seriously

The theory of justification thus attempts to connect people's actions with the explanations of their previous behaviour, narrowing the gap between their reflection and action (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:357). This type of justification differs from other types of excuses and legitimisations. It differs from Weber's legitimisation where deceit is confused with justifications as a relativism of values. Boltanski and Thévenot argue that people in general do not concoct false explanations in order to construct an alibi, i.e. lying about past actions. Instead, their actions should withstand the test of justification (ibid.37) both for themselves and also in the view of others. Justification of an action defines actors as moral beings. They want to make a rational (economic) argument but are circumscribed by certain constraints – morals (ibid.27).

The act of justifying actions afterwards has been described as a way of making an 'account of'. Usually such acts are made up in two ways (Scott & Lyman 1968). They can either be excuses based on external causes for which the individual is not responsible, such as accidents, victimisation, misunderstanding or a biological urge (ibid.47). Alternatively, an account is presented as taking responsibility for the action, argued to be just given the circumstances. The context neutralises the action. The theory of justification also differs from the theory of neutralisations which has been widely applied in criminology (Sykes and Matza 1957). Originally, the intention with the latter was to explain illegal behaviour amongst delinquent juveniles. These techniques are described as contextual, but where the normative system of a society is deemed flexible so that rules and laws cannot be all-encompassing (ibid.666). The delinquents define their actions as rational and valid within each given context.

Another widely applied 'theory of excuses' is that of the 'liberal moral', sometimes used by economists to define the contrast between benevolence and self-interested greed. The theory of justification has a wider meaning according to Adam Smith's term 'moral capacity'. Thus it also includes terms of sympathy with others as well as playing the role of an impartial spectator as he describes

in *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (in Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:28). The moral Smith describes is said to be a:

social bond that could connect persons to a common good. Such a bond is achieved through the arrangement of a marketplace in which individuals well disposed to one another but governed by their own personal interests enter into competition in order to acquire rare goods. Their wealth endows them with worth, since it is the expression of the unsatisfied desires of others (ibid.45-46).

In this view, the actor's worth is bestowed in the marketplace so that the wealthiest (the one who can get most out of the marketplace) is the worthiest, an aim all aspire to. Although being worthy is determined in a comparison with the other actors, it is not on behalf of others in society, but for its common good (ibid.).

Using the theory of justification thus helps us see how accounts which can be regarded as excuses for egoistic and greedy behaviour are legitimised as moral actions. The purchases of *svart arbete* which are justified can thus be regarded as licit for the buyer, for the seller and for the good of society although in the view of the state they are illegal. Important to remember is that not all informal purchases are revealed and thus all purchases of *svart arbete* cannot be justifiable.

People are not considered primarily as psychological, social, moral or judicial beings, but rather in their role as 'actants' (Bénatouil 1999:382, Boltanski 2002:278). They are defined as social beings through the categorisation of their actions and their explanations for these, instead of referring to their properties. The focus is on social coordination instead of social constructivism (Jagd 2004b:14). But different persons have, of course, different possibilities to act through the availability of and 'attachments' to, things and principles (Thévenot 2001:409). I understand 'attachment' as the possibility and the means people have to act in terms of knowledge, morals, positions and possessions. The qualification of non-persons as actants, having 'agency', is indebted to actor network theory, ANT (ibid.408). The theory of justification is said to differ in the way that there are other means than networks which can be seen to unify relations (Wagner 1999:348). This theory is therefore said to allow for a variety of relations which addresses an extended sociological complexity as it also addresses how these attachments are qualified (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:127 ff).

Weber makes a distinction between economic action, that is, how needs are articulated and how to fulfil them, and the techniques that are used to complete the need. What Weber calls techniques are those means that are used 'consciously and planned based on the users' experience and reflection' (Weber 1983:42, my translation). Therefore, the techniques used in different circumstances vary due to the needs of different actors and their respective counterparts. As stated 'every society is complex as people inhabiting it have to navigate and confront situations 'stemming from different worlds'' Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:216). Even so, people's economic behaviour is formed by what

they see as a common good in today's society. This means that even individual (trans)actions are seen as driven by desires and values shared by others. In this light individualistic actions of purchasing *svart* can be explained as worthy – in their own views, in the views of others and with a view of the common good.

In the theory of justification, different types of worth are traced to six diverse 'worlds' of reference, for which an action qualifies by talking about it. Each of these 'worlds' is represented by political philosophical works chosen for their respective emphasis on the common equality and humanity of the people each treats (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:67). These worlds can be recognised by certain code words, which yet again call attention to the view that data consists of talk – that actors' explanations of their actions are taken seriously. These 'worlds' represent principles to which comparisons and judgments of a given action are applied. Below is a brief overview aimed at giving a hint of what each of these worlds consists of.

The 'world of inspiration' looks inwards (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:159). Inspiration does not need the opinions of others and is thus an asocial world. Creativity, passion, and inventions constitute this world where uniqueness is a universal value.³³ In the inspirational world changes of state often occur and are a welcome feature. A second world is the 'domestic' which is not only referred to as immediate family, but also stresses fairness within personal relationships. It is based on a hierarchical order between its members. To be worthy derives from respect for others, in relation to rules and regulations. Code words here are manners, upbringing, etiquette, habits, duties and rights. For example, gifts within the domestic world are regarded as a bonding which maintains hierarchical relationships by the reciprocity it creates (ibid.164).

The 'world of fame' derives exclusively from others' opinion (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:178). 'Fame' has no memory and is a universal but standard measure which shows the relativist structure of the social world, but is likewise also a fragile form of worth. Influence, promotion, conviction, audience, image, visibility, fashion are important aspects here (ibid.182).³⁴ The fourth world is the 'civic', which can only develop in the context of a state (ibid.192). Persons are worthy here when they occupy a role defined by society, such as being an official, an elected representative or a citizen (ibid.187). Words identifying this world are those adhering to the public and governmental spheres such as the collective and unity, policies, law and order as well as organising concepts such as codes, decrees, participation and federation. The private person is in this world unworthy!³⁵

The fifth world is the 'market' as Adam Smith defined it (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:193). A market is characterised by the desires of the individuals there present who want to exchange. The exchange is negotiated between two of these individuals, one of which possesses the object, and the 'price has to be reasonable and must correspond to the real value' (ibid.202). Money is the universal measure of all things in the market and keywords are profit, wealth, winner, rivalry, sell and buy, success, deals, free but also insecurity, exploit, opportunity, competition. Boltanski and Thévenot emphasise the importance of distinguishing the market from the broader economic relations, which consists of

both market and industrial orders (1999:372). The sixth world of worth is the 'industrial', where 'the distinctive dignity of humanity is threatened by the treatment of people as things' (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:211). It is a world ruled by the functionality of people in their professional role. Code words are hierarchy, competence and responsibility, production, efficiency and expertise. Functionality, calculations, measurements, problems and solutions, achievement, work and correctness are other features on which worth is bestowed within this world (ibid.372).³⁶

That the worlds of worth are only six is not written in stone (Wagner 1999:350). Boltanski has, for example, suggested a seventh regime called 'connectionist' which is organised around the idea of flexible networks (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005) applied to an American environment, perhaps to counter the critique of ethno-Frenchism. Additional suggested worlds are 'green modes of coordination' or 'information' (Thévenot 2001:419).

In my analysis of how *svart arbete* is made acceptable I have not restricted myself to the theory of justification and its six worlds of worth. I mainly draw inspiration from the methodological aspect, taking people's stories and accounts seriously, and in the fact that it creates a bridge between actions performed and the explanations afterwards within a social context. When people tell about their *svart* purchases of services, who do they want to be seen to be in the view of society and community – and in my eyes, the researcher's?

In addition, I also find it a good companion theory when my informants reason around the multifaceted aspects of work. How compromises between different worlds of worth are arrived at will illuminate how certain combinations of logics make informal purchases of work more or less licit. This will be discussed in the following two chapters.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have explained the methodology for finding and treating data about purchases of *svart arbete*. The starting point was my interest in a widespread societal phenomenon consisting of illegal exchanges of work in contemporary Swedish society. 'Everybody' seemed to be involved and their accounts differed from official explanations as well as from the media's reporting of the phenomenon. I therefore considered the following issues when choosing the methodology.

Svart arbete is by definition illegal as it concerns exchanges of services by avoiding taxes. Although the reasons why these exchanges take place are diverse, there are always considerations about the Swedish society and state in the background. My original concern was about why Swedes are involved in these practices although most of them seem to believe in and are proud of the welfare society in which they live. I was interested in why they thought certain *svart* purchases acceptable and others not. For many reasons there were obviously many purchases that were not accounted for. Since I was looking for the purchases that can be made acceptable, this was not a problem.

Most work performed *svart* looks like any other. The issue thus mainly concerned how the recompense was decided upon and took place. The traditional anthropological method of participant observation would for this reason not provide the data I was looking for. Instead, I decided to undertake ethnographic interviews. Another aspect was that the exchanges I wanted to enquire about are illegal, they are concealed and not widely talked about in detail. Just posing the question could imply accusing someone of an unlawful act. An already established trust between the informant and myself was therefore deemed a necessary ingredient for the interviews to be successful. A third consideration was that I wanted a group of people who had something in common, yet lived and acted in different realms of society.

In consideration of the above issues, I decided to contact the group of people with whom I graduated from school. They proved to be a sociologically disparate group with different levels of education, jobs and incomes, and living in different types of relationships. About half the group had moved elsewhere. What they have in common is that they are today middle-aged and thus with long experience of work and life, and they share a memory of their teenage years going to the same school as I did. This shared memory provided a platform for trust.

The ethnographic interviews gave many accounts of and justifications for purchasing *svart arbete*, activities which can be seen as mere excuses. As I wanted to take these accounts seriously, and thus to understand why my informants bought *svart arbete* while still feeling responsible for the society they live in, Boltanski and Thévenot's theory of justification was used as my inspiration. The theory connects stories of past exchanges, which are subject to judgement, with how the informant wants to be seen as a member of society.

3. Valuing work: Negotiating between buying a service and doing-it-yourself

A good man manages on his own³⁷ (Swedish proverb).

Pelle is an engineer employed as a director at one of Limninge's larger factories. He showed me the plant's entire production process. After the tour, we sat down in his office, one of many lining the corridor connecting the reception with the production floor. He offered me coffee and we nibbled away at leaf-thin chocolates, leftovers from the morning's Santa Lucia celebrations. We talked about work and leisure:

What I do a lot is to work on the house, that's one type of work. If I had unlimited amounts of money, I probably would have bought many of the things I now do myself. I renovated the kitchen at home, did almost everything myself. So, it took a very long time. But I think it is a lot of fun, though. I mean, I sit here every day, turning over papers and working at the computer. Working with my hands, I really enjoy that.

Pelle had continued to technical university after high school where he met and later married a fellow student. Today they have two children and live on the outskirts of Limninge, in an old house which is continuously subject to refurbishing. The latest job was the instalment of a new kitchen. Pelle's account of the kitchen construction illustrates the negotiations between doing the work yourself and buying it *vitt* or *svart*. He reasons:

Look at it this way. If I, a private person, have a job which needs to be done on my house, for example a new panel, then I calculate, this amount of money is not enough to both buy the materials and the work. But if I can buy the materials and then the work *svart*, then the job can be done now. He [the craftsman] works full-time; in addition, he helps me on Saturday and Sunday. The wheels continue to turn; I buy the materials and keep the entire machinery going. I can see the positive effect [for society], compared with if he just loafs about the entire weekend and I do not buy any materials from the lumberyard. However, of course, what is *svart* and what is *vitt*? The materials are *vitt* and the work is *svart* or it can be both. It is not only bad, but on the other hand....

Not anything goes. Pelle insists on adding a difference regarding the acceptability when buying work informally:

I want to add one thing. I definitely do not like those who line their pockets, i.e. those cleaners in Askim,³⁸ those who have the benefit of language and know both Polish and Swedish and broker work. They might ask for 100 *krona* an hour from the Swede who pays for it and then take on people who might get 30 an hour and be happy with that. And then this person in between grabs 70. That's unfair, I strongly dislike that. Taking advantage of the situation, I do not like that. Of course, it is very difficult to get at.

Later on in the interview, we returned to the topic of buying house cleaning services and Pelle tells me about his family's reasoning when they had spoken to a provider:

I think the cost was 270 *krona* an hour, but I know you can buy it for 100 if you buy it *svart*. However, there is some sort of resistance, so we have chosen not to do it. But you buy it [*svart*] because it is cheaper, a lot cheaper.

In his explanations, Pelle highlights the negotiations people engage in when needing to have work done at home. As already stated, the licit purchase of *svart arbete* has to take place in private but is still subject to diverse negotiations. It is neither a simple economic decision between *vitt* or *svart*, nor a consumer choice between different suppliers aiming for fulfilling needs and obtaining the best quality or the most status. In this chapter, the licitness concerns what is the subject for exchange – work and how it is viewed and valued.

Pelle does many things that can be seen as work at home, tasks or services that it is also possible to buy. How does he decide which of these to purchase and which to do himself? Why does he prefer to buy certain types of work, for example the construction of a new panel, and why does he hesitate to buy others, such as cleaning? What is wrong with a go-between if they provide a service he wants to get? More specifically for this book, how do these considerations concern the purchase of work as *svart* or *vitt*?

aim and outline of the chapter

This chapter aims to discuss different values of work. Work is the foundation for the exchange in question and is an important and multifaceted issue in contemporary Swedish life. It is often difficult to distinguish what sets work apart from other activities in life, which I shall argue is an important distinction when making *svart arbete* licit.

To get work done at home is not only a matter of choosing between purchasing it *vitt* or *svart* but also includes negotiations about doing the job oneself. The focus is therefore broadened from a consideration of buying to include how work gets done. Aspects for negotiation include the extent of personal input; what quality of work do I demand, how much time will/can I spend

myself, how much am I able to do and do I have the skills to do it? Not least, do I want to do the work myself?

Work is thus a subject for valuation. I shall start this chapter by discussing some aspects of work, what it means to value work and how the concept will be applied here. Two examples will then be discussed, which aim to provide a Swedish context. The first concerns the value placed on work by the Swedish state, here exemplified by the public policy of *Arbetslinjen*, the Work Approach. The second example depicts views on work amongst Limningers in a more general sense and what they value as *ett gtt arbete*, ‘a good work’.

Having hinted at how work is seen as important for Swedes as well as how it is difficult to contain work within a specific realm of society, I shall use the theory of justification (Boltanski & Thvenot 2006). The aim is to further enlighten how work is subject to different evaluations. Using this theory, we shall see how the Limningers can be said to negotiate work in relation to diverse realms of life. Working at home, working ‘at work’ and working as a responsible citizen are all legitimate interpretations of what work is. When certain types of work simultaneously adhere to several of these realms, such as when purchasing a service, the issue becomes more delicate.

Moving on to *svart arbete*, purchases and performances of work can then be justified as being *vid sidan om*, ‘on the side’. It is not ‘real work’, but can still be found acceptable. We shall see how licit *svart arbete* can be found when certain aspects of these realms are combined, as compromises. Adversely, when compromises are not feasible, the work purchased informally is seen as illicit.

It has been stated that ‘a component of the work ethic is synonymous with money and action’ (Ciulla 2000:172). In the final part, I shall discuss how my informants invoke arguments of time and cost in their switching between realms through the concept of the ‘money-hour’. This is the result of negotiating between time worked and money earned, as seen from different perspectives. We shall see how certain set-ups of money-hours make compromises possible and thus informal purchases of work licit. In so doing, a Swedish ‘regime of living’ starts to take shape regarding acquisitions of work – and especially those considered illegal yet licit.

At the outset, what is work and what meaning does it have for human beings? And in what aspects has work been studied?

Aspects of work

Work is generally described as a vital and central aspect of human life. Already the old Greek philosophers said that work was the way to virtue and therefore synonymous with success and wellbeing in life (Schwimmer 1979:291). More contemporary philosophers like Hegel described work as the essence of human existence (Marx 1977:132) which thereby distinguishes us from animals (ibid.67). Marx is said to have developed the idea that ‘it is through labour that man defines himself’ (Ortiz 1979:210).

It has been argued that work is like Mauss' gift, a total social phenomenon (Zimmermann 2001:16564). Not only does it create products and services, but it is also a hub in the construction of society. As such, work can, in the spirit of both Marx and also Weber, be seen as an activity that creates a link between the performer and the society he/she lives and acts in. Human beings create change through their work, as it consists of practices that have an impact on people and society.

In contemporary Western societies, work is usually seen to have three meanings, (Zimmermann 2001:16561). The first meaning concerns how work is performed, as a cooperative action between humans and nature (surroundings). Secondly, work is distinguished as a commodified practice, ready for exchange in capitalistic markets. Finally, work can be an expression of status, which is seen as a relation to the structure of which the worker is part. The structure can be employment, slavery, hobby, voluntary work, etc. Work plays a major societal role 'as the mainspring of economic activity, [it] is also at the crux of the functioning of the political and social world' (ibid.).

People often have complex and contradictory attitudes to work (Sayers 1988:723). For the individual, work is at one and the same time obliging, compelling and constraining, but can also be exciting and an experience of progress. A tiny extract of ethnographic accounts of formal work in countries comparable to Sweden illustrates the diversity: mere survival on unqualified jobs in today's USA (Ehrenreich 2001), the impact of gender and class in the workplace on Japanese identity (Kondo 1990), how traditions and identity are constructed through work (Cohen 1979, Edelman 1997), cultural identity construction amongst IT professionals at diverse geographical locations (Garsten 1994), characteristics of modernity amongst young market professionals in Norway (Lien 1997), personhood amongst management consultants (Jimenez 2003), management of American office workers (Martin 1997) or the constrained flexibility of temporary workers (Garsten 2004, 2008). The great interest in work amongst anthropologists underscores the emphasis of the otherwise opposing political thinkers Karl Marx (1977) and Adam Smith (1990) on work as a central tenet of life and in the formation of collective and individual identity.

Similarly, there is a vast array of studies about what is seen as informal work: how workers are invisible and exploited (Leonard 1998), women working from home (Hakim 1988), the resurgence of demand for waged domestic labour in England (Gregson & Lowe 1994) or using formal work to acquire excesses and additional incomes when cheating at work (Henry 1978, Mars 1982).

Finally, those activities that are generally not considered as work are those unplanned and unorganised, or those which are commonplace in everyday life (Gamst 1995:6, cf. Wadel 1979:379). According to this view, work can be defined in relation to those activities which do not construct it – such as being unemployed, amateur, housewife, retired (Ronco & Peattie 1988:715). However, the tasks people in these roles carry out are in other contexts considered to be work. Work is thus multifaceted and difficult to contain within one definition. For example; what for one person is not work, for example the daily

dishes, can be work for another who is paid to do the task at home or earns his living as a dishwasher in a restaurant.

valuing work

When my informants talk about work, remuneration is often the first explanation provided. Work provides the means to live one's life. Nevertheless, this definition quickly expanded to a broader discussion of how work can be valued in different realms of life.

Understanding value in broader terms has been done in three strands of thought, according to David Graeber (2001). Firstly, as a sociological and maybe philosophical idea, it is a notion of what people find good and desirable in life. It is the ethical and moral in a societal and normative perspective. Secondly, value can be seen in the economic sense as based on exchange, most often defined in terms of objects. For example how the cheapest work is chosen in a competitive market. It is a maximising decision. Thirdly, we may understand value as valuing, a comparison in a linguistic and relational perspective. This strand of thought deals with how people make meaningful distinctions between things of value in life, irrespective of whether they are objects or desires (Graeber 2001:2-20, 2005:439).

However, Graeber argues that the three different strands of thought have excluded the individual actions and motivations from societal understanding. I found Graeber's approach appropriate, since my initial question concerned why Swedes acquire work informally, well knowing that this has a negative impact on society. In addition, it also aligns with my methodological approach, since he asks for explanations as to why people do different things, even if they live in the same society and belong to the same analytical group (i.e. class, ethnic group, tribe, nation, etc.).

Graeber's answer is to seek value in activities and how they transform human relations, that 'value is the way actions become meaningful to the actors by being placed in some larger social whole, real or imaginary' (Graeber 2001:49, 254). What in Graeber's view tends to be overlooked is that an individual's action is what reifies the structure and ultimately changes it, not only because individuals forget how their actions make these changes, but also because actions tend to make the structure 'that lie[s] behind it disappear' (ibid.259).

The broad issues of work and value are also central tenets of Karl Marx's communist manifesto as well of Adam Smith's work on the nation's wealth. Marx has been interpreted as viewing work as constituting human life (Firth 1979:179), since he said that 'to work is to be', namely, the essence of human existence as a social being. But Marx never discussed the transformation of work into value but instead seemed to see it as a given fact (ibid.180). He defined the value of a specific piece of work as a proportion of all work that goes into a given system (Graeber 2001:55). Marx's measure of work thus makes the value relative – of an individual's input compared with the entire labour input in an economy.

Adam Smith, on the other hand, saw value created between the costs of producing compared with what the same product could be sold for (Smith 1990). Work was the 'basis of a nation's wealth and the measure of value for all goods in a society' (Applebaum 1995:58). Not all work was seen to create wealth; concentrating on materials, Smith did not consider servants and other 'producers' of services productive at all, as their input did not create exchangeable items (Ortiz 1994:891). If one can at all compare Marx and Smith, they both saw work as creating economic value, although benefitting society in very different ways.

Looking further back in time, Aristotle defined value in terms of utility for humans, but made a difference between 'use-value' and 'exchange-value'. The difference between the two is exemplified by diamonds and water and what use each has for a human being (Gregory 1994:916). Water can seldom be used to exchange, but is crucial for human survival (if drinkable and in adequate amounts). Diamonds, on the other hand, can buy many things, but are not really a necessity in life (although sometimes described, in relational terms, as 'a girl's best friend'). However, no amount of diamonds can quell the thirst if there is no water to trade. Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx built upon this distinction between exchange and use; nevertheless, it became a distinction that is mostly lost in descriptions of contemporary markets (Gudeman 2001:17). I shall come back to the concept of use-value later on in this chapter as well as in chapter five.

Valuing work can be done in many ways. In the following, I shall lean on Graeber's view of seeking value in people's practices, especially how they relate them to different realms of society and how the practices transform human relations. To 'value' work in this way permits us to combine emic views, historical happenings and the impact of political programmes in Sweden.

One of the main and also most successful parts of Swedish labour market policy, viewed as 'one of the crown jewels' in the building of the Swedish welfare state (Lindvert 2006:18, my translation), is the Work Approach, *arbetslinjen* (cf. Esser 2006:14, Junestav 2004:30).³⁹ It is itself an illustration of how the idea of work permeates Swedish society.

There are different views on the origin of the Work Approach as well as diverging interpretations of how it should be applied (e.g. Junestav 2001, 2004). Three main ideas can be discerned: social conservative, liberal and Social Democratic. The commonality is found in that the individuals' means for living should come from work, but the ideas differ in their view of the connection between the state and its citizens (2001:22-23). Today, all political parties agree about the idea, but each party's interpretation of the policy mirrors its ideology and the different interpretations illustrate the state of the societal economy in specific periods (Junestav 2004, e.g. Lindvert 2006).

Junestav argues that the origin of *arbetslinjen* can be found in 1840 when questions of unemployment and social insurances were already closely connected. The main idea was that social benefits for the poor and unemployed would be transferred as work opportunities and only in emergencies as cash provisions (ibid.30). This was seen as a moral act as the unemployed thus gave

something back to society through work (ibid.20). In addition, the provision of social insurances through work was argued to increase societal economic efficiency as well as fulfilling a political aim of integrating marginalised groups of people (ibid.39). During the 1930s, the Social Democrats steered the Work Approach from a 'help for selfhelp' policy towards educating citizens to take part in a socially reformed society (ibid.42).

The practices of the Work Approach have differed under different political regimes as well as during diverse external course of events such as world wars, depressions, etc. Emphasising the importance of work as part of Swedish labour market policy, I want to underline that there is consensus on the fact that *arbetslinjen* involves both obligations and rights for the individual (Junestav 2001:48, Socialförsäkringsutredningen 2005:4). Obligations include the requirement to work to earn a living and simultaneously contribute to the welfare state through taxes. The rights include compensation and guidance during unemployment, which is seen as alienating and morally harmful (Socialförsäkringsutredningen 2005:4). The Work Approach is thus a central idea, not only in labour market policy but as a foundation in the construction of the Swedish welfare state.

The interpretation of the right to work has differed over the years but in broad terms it has been argued that supporting the Work Approach as a policy is as controversial as believing in peace (Socialförsäkringsutredningen 2005:9). As an overall idea, *arbetslinjen* emphasises the norms of working as having deep historic-political roots. To work is to provide for oneself as well as for the good of society and to contribute to the welfare society with income taxes. For those unable to work, the welfare society will not only provide compensation but aims instead to engage them in governmentally sponsored programmes. *Arbetslinjen* has taken on different emphases throughout its existence.

Seen as originally a disciplinary and reformatory policy, it has come to include the right to meaningful work (Esser 2006:14, Junestav 2001:48). Today the political as well as practical content of *arbetslinjen* is up for debate once more. 'The issue is every individual's propensity to provide for her living and where the ultimate responsibility for the provision of her social and economic welfare resides' (Junestav 2001:48, my translation).

the good work

The value placed on work can also be related to a long heritage of Protestant ethics (Applebaum 1995:54, Weber 1978:37 ff.) – working for work's sake (Ciulla 2000:50). With the rise of a Protestant ethic, work has been described 'as an ennobling, moral and religious duty in society' (Esser 2005:5). The notion of proper and good work grew strong in Sweden through the simultaneous rise of the labour movement, the temperance organisations and the Protestant free churches during the nineteenth century (Ambjörnsson 1998). Through their members, who often concurrently belonged to several of these movements, the organisations grew and developed in concert. Although a seeming contradiction between religious and socialist aims, a shared belief was the Protestant idea of

an inner faith according to which all people were equal (ibid.247). Ambjörnsson argues that Swedes were taught to work in a more orderly way through the combination of two forces: firstly, due to these three movements' simultaneous growth during industrialisation, a development that also changed work practices; secondly, that the aims of these organisations civilised and disciplined people. I would argue that Swedes are, if not adhering actively to the Protestant faith, born into a society still influenced by the belief that work is good.

Among my informants, mainly the men emphasised the process of working – the importance of knowing how to do and complete a job well, and the outcome of it. Pontus, a photographer, is very much against *svart arbete* in general but elaborated on performing *ett gott arbete*, 'the good work'. He defines work in two ways:

It is a type of process for which you get recompense. Some type of salary relation. Then it is reaching a goal in life, as we [he and his wife] work to fulfil a goal. To brush your teeth is not work. To renovate a mansion, to accomplish a finished product in professional life, to move to the south of Italy – that comes close to being work.

Pontus follows a moral reasoning. For him, one type of work is valued according to terms of employment, remuneration or the like – a commodified economic practice which also relates to the idea of the Work Approach. Then there is the process of a 'good work' – to aim for something, to accomplish it and see the result, to feel good about work well done, to work for one's own pleasure.

Niklas, a teacher, also engaged in 'the good work' argument several times. He talked about the satisfaction he felt doing a proper job, something that is of use to others. Working and doing things with other people, not just talking. In this way, work is enjoyment and he underlines the importance of teaching young people this. It is not vital what the tasks consist of or if they are difficult to do. The fundamental aspect is mastering your work and knowing that you do it well. Niklas would never buy *svart*, he says, he does not like it, as the person who is working *svart* is put in an insecure situation (not covered by laws, social security, etc.). When Niklas and Pontus talk about work, they also stress the cooperative aspect. The Swedish word for cooperation, *samarbete*, underlines the importance of work as it literally translates into working together.

Larry has a slightly different view on work. He is employed by the coast-guard and also stresses working for the sake of working. By being able to work, he is independent and does not have to rely on others in society. Preferably, the work performed for a living is so enjoyable that it is not regarded as work in the sense of toiling. He puts less emphasis on whether work is performed *vitt* or *svart*, so relating to external legal structures seems secondary to him. One should learn to work to provide a living for oneself and thus he emphasises work in relation to upbringing. Concerning his teenage children he argues:

I am just happy that they are able to nag themselves into getting a summer job. They get 50 *krona* an hour and it is *svart*. Maybe I, as a dad,

should tell them that this is criminal, that you are not raised to do this. But, no way, there are 200 others who want that summer job at the café. So what do you say?

When I ask him if he is more forgiving because of his own *svartande*, he adds that his daughter's mother, his former wife, who is typically more 'right-minded', does not object to these types of summer jobs either. Larry talks about the importance of work in relation to society:

One thing is to be a burden to society, as it is beautifully phrased, and not do a thing. But if you get something cooking and start working, then you are on the right track. I don't have great confidence in society. Who is the market, where does he live?

Although Larry recognises the impact of work on society, for him the act of working is more important than complying with the state's laws and regulations. Society as an entity, as well as the formal markets that are part of it, are somehow unreliable, he reasons. Larry cannot imagine his children living their lives on subsidies or handouts from the state. Being capable of work, his children can always manage, regardless of how society at large is doing and what type of security it can provide (cf. Zelizer 2005:246 ff). Larry wants his children to know that work is first and foremost a means of survival. Getting a job and learning to work is prioritised before the question of how formal the recompense is.

In the above reflections on work, these men emphasise working for working's sake. *Ett gótt arbete* as Pontus phrased it. These men's own knowledge and enjoyment in accomplishing the tasks are important aspects, which both regard as their professional and private work. Their need for work in private life is primarily met by themselves. When they need to acquire work, they see it as a set of tasks transformed into commodified economic practices and available on the market and thus simultaneously placed in a relation with wider domains of society. For them, work is always a practice and sometimes a product.

But we can also see the inherent tensions between different perspectives. Valuing work as a policy, as salaried activities or as emic practices hints at contradictions. The above examples can illustrate the importance of work in Sweden, but also how difficult it is to pinpoint work to specific realms of society. In Lars Ingelstam's words, 'You cannot say that the Swedish economy is doing well, if unemployment is still high' (2006:43, my translation), a statement that not only relates the economic to the political, but also stresses the normative importance of working. Work is really a 'total social phenomenon', a multifaceted and very important aspect of life that also plays a major role in the construction of the welfare state. As we shall see later, the difficult distinction between where specific work takes place and the government's intervention into work in diverse spheres makes the justifications for the licit *svart arbete* increasingly easy.

When exchanging work, the tensions of valuing work in just one realm become more obvious, and this is where opinions on the licit informal purchase

of work diverge more explicitly. For Niklas and Pontus buying *smart* is morally wrong. Larry and Pelle do not object to purchasing work informally per se, but still choose to do certain pieces of work themselves, just because the tasks are enjoyable.

In the following I shall underline these tensions by discussing the difficulty of even identifying boundaries between work in different realms.

It could be said that if the border between work and leisure ever was clear, it is becoming more blurred and difficult to define, as the diverse work activities that make up life can be performed anywhere and anytime. Increasingly work, at least of the so-called office or white-collar type, is losing its spatial roots and can more easily be performed anywhere, anyplace. Private and public spheres are easily blurred as technological possibilities (such as cell phones, wireless LANs, etc.) create an escalating availability that facilitates for many working anywhere, anytime (Ciulla 2000:188, Grey & Garsten 2001:238). Work also provides entertainment through conferences and social occasions, or fringe benefits such as equipment that can be used privately. The Swedish state has increasingly intervened, providing subsidised consumption opportunities for employees health-care, insurances and pension plans, partly sponsored home-PCs, etc. Some employers offer leased cars and services like paid domestic cleaning as part of employment contracts.

Beyond home and employment, almost every other Swede performs work within organised civil society (SCB 2003). These activities are voluntary, mostly unpaid and take various guises; they can be viewed as work but are often performed during leisure-time. Voluntary work has a long history in Sweden, and its positioning outside or inside the realms of the state has been debated (Amnå 2005, Berggren & Trägårdh 2006:34). Mostly organised outside the formal work domain, institutionalised in associations and supposedly independent from the state, it is still enmeshed with it through subsidies and other provisions.

In this 'post-industrial society', the distinction between work and leisure is often difficult to pinpoint and subject to change. What for one person is employment can for another be voluntary work and for a third person domestic chores. When the effort is paid for, the tension between different valuations of work becomes more pronounced.

The way the Limningers regard work in a broader perspective can be an illustration of the 'opening up to the plurality and diversity of configurations of actions', as suggested by Hannah Arendt (1958, see Zimmermann 2001:16564). This approach has inspired the diverse convention theories, of which the theory of justification is regarded as one (ibid., Boltanski & Thévenot 2006).

Worlds of work

As mentioned in chapter two, the theory of justification initially grew out of an attempt to address features of labour (i.e. Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:348-349) and took the workers' own views seriously when explaining their actions, especially regarding disputes at work (Wagner 1999:346, Wilkinson 1997:317-8).

Boltanski & Thévenot developed the theory of justification to be applicable to a broader context. Their theory is thus an attempt to explain people's behaviour in different circumstances, especially when there are diverse opinions about the outcome of a certain activity. These disagreements are moments when people's sense of justice is exposed and when they draw on their competence in their reasoning. In order to solve the disagreement, they refer to different 'worlds of worth' to justify their actions.

In this theory, 'worth' is chosen instead of 'value(s)', since the former is seen to be more closely related to a person's own idea of him/herself. Worth points towards internal properties, whereas value carries outward-looking and external characteristics. In addition, worth is more related to practices, so that a given action can be seen as 'good enough' (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006:37). To describe how the Limningers appreciate work in Swedish society, the concept of 'value' will still be used as it allows for a broader and more probing concept. But when explicitly referring to the theory of justification, 'worth' will be kept.

The theory presents six worlds of worth which means 'that the same persons have, on the same day and in the same social space, to use different devices for assessment, including the reference to different types of worth, when they shift from one situation to another' (Boltanski & Thévenot 1999:369). Resolving disagreements means finding a compromise between several worlds of worth, which is found when there is a consensus about a common good [for society] (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:277).

Regarding work and its place in society three worlds of worth are often deemed relevant for the purpose of finding compromises (e.g. Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:279): the industrial, the domestic and the civic. I shall use these in order to illuminate certain aspects of my informants opinions on what work is, how it can be valued in different realms of society and especially on how work as such constitutes the licit purchase of *svart arbete*.

working for money

When talking about work, most informants referred to a set of specific practices, performed in return for a salary. As Svante, a factory worker said, 'Work means only money for me. It is a way to survive and make it possible to work with my dogs.' Although Svante also earns money from his kennel, these are two different types of work. Most informants saw work as activities in relation to employment and remuneration and the demands they make on them, but they also emphasised that work takes place in other realms of life.

When I ask Anders, the specialist plumber, about what work means to him, he is quick to respond:

It is to get a task, solve it and get paid. That's how I live. The jobs I get are those where the customer asks me to solve a problem. That's what I try to live off, a small niche where I can get [well] paid. At the bottom of it all, the business has to add up. There are things to be paid for every month, the rent for example, so I try to do as many specials as possible. I

also do the simple pipes, but any guy from the street can do that. So I'd rather do the more advanced stuff.

Although Anders runs a one-man shop, the reference invoked when he reasons about work can be said to be the industrial world. It is a world ruled by the functionality of people in their occupational role. Worth is here based on performance and efficiency (Boltanski & Thévenot 1999:372). Anders talks about his expertise and how he earns his living from specialisation in certain products.

Work described in this way is formal and usually performed for monetary remuneration such as a salary or a wage and thus subject to taxation. Defining the industrial world is said to be where 'the distinctive dignity of humanity is threatened by the treatment of people as things' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:211). Anders, as well as Svante, can exemplify how one type of work practices is exempt from others, mainly those that are performed at home. 'That's homework', Anders says, laughing at the ambiguous meaning.

Work is thus more than an efficient task well performed for money. Virtually all Limningers started out talking about work in terms of tasks related to the industrial world, but quickly added insights from other worlds. This underlines that work is always subject to multifaceted valuations. Jenny can illustrate this mix:

This ground service we women often do [at home], that's really one type of work. If I did it at someone else's place, at a hotel or something, no one would question whether it was work. Or if I did it because it is fun. It is just because it's under my own roof.

The environment in which work takes place, whether it is paid for and the intentions involved, decide whether a task may take on other guises. Is it formal, salaried work as pertaining to the industrial world or can it be referred to other worlds of worth? We saw this in the introduction to this chapter – how Pelle reasoned about work done at work and at home.

working at home

Pelle can be said to situate work within several worlds of worth. Emphasising the domestic aspect, he talked a lot about teaching his children to work. He started involving his 14-year-old son in work at home and stresses that he lets his son do the fun things, unlike his father for whom Pelle was just an assistant:

You know, I really enjoy it [practical work at home]. But it takes a lot of time. But lately, I have started to involve my son, he began to show interest and the latest thing we've done is to fix his room. He is fourteen, has started to work and do things, he was the one who put up the ceiling. He did most of the job, got to hold the seam-sealing gun and I held the boards. I thought that I would not make the same mistake as my father who only did the fun things. I did the opposite, so that I took care of the boring stuff and he [my son] got to do the fun.

The notion of the domestic world refers here not only to the family, but also to actions stressing fairness within specific personal relationships. The domestic world can extend beyond the same household, and can be behaviour learned in a hierarchy of belonging (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:97). This hierarchy extends from a household to a community, and to Swedish society at large from which individuals inherit their values and norms. To be worthy with reference to the domestic world is to draw on one's own authority from a generational chain or from a hierarchy. Tradition, upbringing, etiquette, habits, duties and rights are important here. Other characteristics of this world are behaving respectfully in relation to others and knowing whom to trust.

Pelle teaches his son to work in private, the way he was taught by his father (cf. Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:164). However, as a child, Pelle got to do the menial and subordinate tasks, an example of a division of labour in a hierarchical family structure (cf. *ibid.*:171). The value Pelle bestows on himself teaching his son reflects a more contemporary Swedish form, where relations between father and son are more equal. This example can illustrate a generational transformation of family relations and perhaps points to a problematic application of the theory's use of outdated writings, in this case that of a Catholic priest which provided inspiration for Boltanski and Thévenot in outlining the contours of the domestic world (*ibid.*:90).

Although concepts like hierarchy seem an old-fashioned way of defining the domestic in contemporary Sweden, it is here seen as applicable to norms learnt when being brought up. Children are taught how activities are planned, started, performed and concluded at home and in other places where childhood is spent. An example could be how the work ethic is not only inherited and learnt by family and community but also through school where children learn to labour. Young working-class 'lads' in northern England thus come to work on the same tasks as their fathers and to emphasise the identity of belonging in their 'choice' (cf. Willis 1981).

Work referring to the domestic could be seen as an expression of the social norms we live and act by, based on habit. It is a work ethic shaped by practices we have seen performed and have participated in throughout life (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:164 ff, see also Isacson 1994). It is noteworthy that referring to the domestic as a hierarchical structure does not chime with contemporary Swedish society, where the domestic is governed by egalitarian family relations springing from ideas such as Lutheran ethics, the People's Home, *Folkhemmet*, and a society governed by equality (e.g. Berggren & Trägårdh 2006).

working in the welfare society

Paid work, that's what *arbete* is, said many. A way to survive. Usually it is employment as in Svante's case; it can also be self-employment as with Anders who runs his own business, and it may also mean freelancing and other types of temporary projects and assignments. Regardless of the type of work performed, paid work is regulated in contractual terms and the remuneration has to be

official and recorded. This makes the job 'real work' enmeshed with the state through income taxes, social security contributions and pension savings.

Many ideas of work are constructed in relation to the state which is thus an important contributor to people's means of living (cf. Leonard 1998). Described within the theory of justification, the state is portrayed as part of the civic world (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:192). The beings of the civic world 'are persons when they are capable of having rights and obligations, that is, when they have been created or authorised by an act in which the will of all is expressed' (ibid.187). The inspiration comes from *The Social Contract* (Rousseau 1996). Persons are thus worthy when they occupy a role defined by society, hence the private person in this world is unworthy in relation to the domestic (ibid.)! The worth of the civic person is defined by the national interest, regardless of context.

Although there are encompassing laws and regulations surrounding work (cf. Opp 2001:10715), the relationship between work and state is often described in monetary terms. As a friend and auditor says: 'the starting point for any income earned in Sweden is that it is subject to taxation' (e.g. Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:27). In this view, any type of paid work is solidly connected to the state. The social security, which comes with employment, is funded by income taxes and contributions; additional subsidies depend on the amount of income.

Tore, one of the Limningers, works as a manager at a local Tax Agency Office and can provide a view both from working within the civic world and also on how work in general connects with the state, in this case through tax legislation. As it happens, part of his responsibilities includes looking for those involved in *svart arbete*.

He is a neat man, dressed in suit and tie and makes an almost ascetic impression. We met at his work, located in a fairly large, modern and anonymous office building. There was not much light, and I got the impression of a quiet, almost sombre workplace. The corridors were long, but made sharp turns around the occasional meeting room. Tore showed me into the employees' kitchenette. A big coffee machine stood as the centrepiece in a room that was set out like a public cafeteria. Small tables and chairs furnished it in the usual Swedish office-style design, of good quality, made of light coloured wood, but dull and unmemorable. Every window was adorned with December's obligatory Christmas decoration, a seven-branched electric candle. After having selected one of the many varieties of coffee on offer, Tore pulled out a bakery bag with fresh *mazarins*, puff pastries with marzipan filling:

Work is a way to earn your living, but also to pay taxes so that the social welfare can be upheld.

Perhaps due to his responsibilities at work, he quickly moved on to elaborate on his view of the acceptable purchase of *svart arbete*:

The question is whether the work performed is for financing your life, that's where the border to the unacceptable should be, if I work *svart* in order to get an income for my daily survival. However, if I do it in order

to help my neighbour, because we are good at different things and we help each other, then it is of no concern. That's where I would draw the line. But then you have the proportions, you know building your entire house... then you have to think more carefully. But in general, helping each other is not interesting, not important.

Tore pays attention not only to the outcome but also to the purchaser's intention. It is noteworthy that he regards this as 'help' instead of working for an income (see chapter six for more of the relational aspect between exchangers). Exchanges of work referring to a domestic world are more licit. The relation between exchangers is paid attention to, although according to the law there should not be a difference. It is also noteworthy that the size of the exchange plays a role. Tore did not mention any amounts, but there is an idea of proportions.

Tore stressed that when he and his colleagues come across transactions which could be considered as *svart*, they counsel proper transacting. For example, when they go out to lunch they always make sure to get a receipt (see also the discussion about restaurants in chapter five). His views on informally re-compensated work reflected his professional role, but he talked about the phenomenon in the context of state expenditures. As he said, "This does not only concern *svart arbete*, but it is a combination of unemployment insurance or a mixture of disablement payments and working *svart*. Everything taken together, it amounts to a lot of money."

... working everywhere?

Although Tore refers work mainly to one 'world of worth', it needs to be emphasised that the concept of work lacks clear adherence to just one of these worlds. The theory of justification permits and even welcomes contextual observances from the same individual. For example, the industrial world is informed by working rules and regulations produced by political agendas in the civic world (on a national level, but certainly also due to global influx). The employer can be the state. The private employer follows government law and regulations, but has in addition his own internal rules and regulations. Work performed as a profession is not only regulated by laws and rules but also informed by habits and practices learnt through upbringing – at home and within the community. In general, it is said that people who adhere to one professional order, also take input from other worlds of worth, such as that of inspiration (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:216). Professional status often mirrors a person's position in society and thus refers to a world of fame (ibid.178). Finally, work is commodified and exists in relation to ideas of a market, for example consultants, craftsmen, health-care workers, cleaners and other professionals who market services through work (ibid.193).

The concept of work moves across different realms of life, as practices considered to be work are contextually and differently valued. The justifications invoked for informal purchases of work do not concern resolving a dispute

between two persons, but whether an exchanged piece of work is subject to taxation. Regardless of remuneration, work exchanged in contemporary Sweden has to be done in certain ways, otherwise it risks being *svart* and illicit. This means that virtually any exchange of work is subject to moral reflexivity – is it justifiable to avoid taxes on it? If so, how?

In the following we shall see how work considered as *svart arbete* is valued combining different realms of life. Certain set-ups make informal purchases acceptable – and others do not.

‘On the side’: informally recompensed work

Anita’s story can illustrate how bottlenecks, income possibilities and her own preferences turned her into a provider of *svart* services.

Anita is currently employed as a personal helper. Work is for her what it is for many Swedes, in addition to being an activity done for remuneration it is also part of what it means to be a citizen. Work is tasks performed within the realms of the state since as it takes place in accordance with laws, rules and regulations. For her, work connects with the welfare state through employment benefits, social insurances and pensions.

When Anita had her last two children, she ran a day-care at home, *svart*. Having recently moved, she could not get public day-care, instead she was advised by the municipality to get a *svart dagmamma*, an informal day-care provider for her children.⁴⁰ However, Anita also wanted to be at home with her children. As there were only 15 months between her third and fourth children, she decided to become a *dagmamma* herself. Anita answered advertisements in the paper and got in touch by word of mouth: in all she had in her care at the most six other children. When she asked the municipality if they could employ her to run a public day-care centre, she got the response that there was no additional need for such an institution in the area where she lived – despite the fact that she had neither been able to get care for her own children, nor for the other children she took care of as well. So Anita worked *svart*.

Anita imagined receiving a better wage if she had been employed by the municipality. She could not really think of asking for more money from the parents, as the service she provided was *vid sidan om*, literally ‘on the side’. It was temporary and unofficial work, yet clearly in demand by other parents. Regardless of the quality of work she provided, her net remuneration was thus less, just because she was not employed, she explained. ‘If you do work and get proper pay for it, then it is for real. But if you do the same type of work and get paid *svart*, then it is not [for real].’ During the week, Anita took care of her own and other people’s children and at weekends she worked as a staff nurse in the hospital. In this way she managed to connect with the civic ‘world’, although not through full-time employment.

The case Anita described above illustrates how a compromise was reached making her informally paid work licit, although *svart arbete* as a concept is problematical for her. Anita’s *svartande* was her informal way of solving the need for

childcare the state could not supply – a common explanation for the existence of what is referred to as informal work (cf. Gudeman 2001:12).

Her account also shows how working *svart* is not regarded as ‘real work’. She was a potential customer turned provider, but did not see her work as ‘real work’ although her services were much in demand and had the same content as the municipal variety offered. But there was no employment contract and no tax paid to the state; thus she can be said to lack relations with the civic and industrial worlds where formal employment belongs. The fact that her services were *svart* rubbed off on the level of remuneration.⁴¹ It also shows the contextual propensity to defend purchases of work in relation to diverse realms, and it contrasts with her later definition of *svart arbete* as money under the table. In the latter case, she justifies the exchange in terms of a hidden recompense (see chapter five).

Mona, a nurse anaesthetist, has a similar story of solving bottlenecks. Well into the interview, she suddenly thought of yet another informal purchase she had made. ‘Yeeees, I had a *svart dagmamma*’ she exclaimed almost triumphantly. ‘I actually had that and she was the best of all of them.’ When asked how that came about, she continues:

There was no place. Well, I got an offer [from the municipality] from a *dagmamma* but she was a smoker. That’s just not an option, I said. But I had received an offer and then the choice was mine. She doesn’t smoke when she is with the children they said. What does she do then I asked, does she go out and just leave them? The discussion with the social welfare officer turned quite rancorous.

Mona and Anita had essential needs which they resolved by supplying and buying work ‘on the side’. *Svart arbete* paid for ‘on the side’ can also be viewed as something extra, a type of work you do occasionally and which is not your main source of income.

A few of my informants reported that many see their purchases as a benefit for the provider. Lennart, a marketing manager, was of the opinion that ‘most do not do it for survival, but “on the side”, to save for something special’. Perhaps like Nina’s acquaintance from the health-club who cleaned her house now and then. ‘She thought it was fine getting some extra money, ‘on the side’’.

For Ruben, an attorney, informally paid work becomes acceptable when it is of lesser scope and for a small sum:

It is not the entire work that is *svart*, it is just certain pieces that are done *vid sidan om*. In business, you want an accounting ledger which looks correct. Therefore it is more common for private use. I need someone to repair my washing machine, then they say give me 650 *krona* and it’s fixed. But the big companies have control. It is easier with someone like me, 500 here and there – I would think. *Svart arbete* can be really *svart*, it could concern an awful lot of money or abusing people for one’s own benefit. That is horrible and I am strongly against that. Then there is the little, the small amount, like those who have a hard time getting a job or

wanting to do something *vid sidan om*, like giving piano lessons. There is a big difference between the two.

We have seen above that talking about informal purchases as ‘on the side’ shifts work away from solely referring to the civic and industrial worlds of worth. When it is possible to bring in the occasional reference to the domestic world, the *svart* exchange becomes more licit, as Anita, Mona and Ruben have done, each in their way. Justifying the reason for work acquired *svart* can involve referring to bottlenecks and immediate needs to be resolved.

Another reason to perform or to buy *svart arbete* is if the welfare society cannot provide the services deemed to be required; then it is viewed as acceptable to do it ‘on the side’. It evens out the bottlenecks in society and facilitates the welfare society functioning more smoothly. Anita had a definite need, childcare, which she addressed by offering those services herself. But her services were not sanctioned by the state; therefore in the Aristotelian sense the exchange-value for these services was less than the use-value they provided (Gregory 1994:916, cf. Gudeman 2001:17, Smith 1990:33). Her work was a response to a societal bottleneck and although set aside from ordinary employment, was in a way acceptable. However, it could not be considered a ‘real’ job, regardless of how significant it must have been for parents lacking childcare and despite how lovingly and well she took care of the children.

The improper employment rubs off on the level of remuneration. Payment is in cash, without taxes and social contributions included and thus has to be less than formally paid services. When societal bottlenecks are not possible to refer to, the justification for *svart* purchases of work relates to their scope. In terms of extent and recompense, the acceptable purchase of *svart arbete* is a small piece of work done at home, for private consumption.

time: working after hours

Another bottleneck referred to was time, which many Limningers elaborated on. Time, or rather their lack of it, was a way of justifying their *svart* purchases. Björn, the trucker, tells me how the different chores at home are divided between himself and his wife. ‘You know, when you are two at home, you always quarrel about who should be doing what. Then time is good to think about. Regardless of what you are doing, it is the time aspect.’ Björn’s reasoning brings in time as an important aspect when considering if and why to buy *svart*. Lack of time may encourage quick and easy solutions, such as getting work done ‘on the side’.

As time is important in many aspects of life, we shall see in this section how notions of time come into play when shifting the justification from one world to another.

Time can at first sight be divided between private (leisure-time and all other unpaid activities) and public (at work where time spent is exchanged for money). This division is constructed by the state via laws and regulations. Having worked full-time, fulfilling obligations to the employer, the rest is leisure-

time, to use according to one's will. The Limningers were generally of the opinion that if you have worked your share and provided income taxes accordingly, what you do in your rightly earned leisure-time is up to yourself. This is how Pelle justified the work he bought from the craftsman at the weekend – as a tasks performed in addition to his regular work. Pelle reasoned that this work was not only of benefit to him and the craftsman, but also of gain to society as a whole. Pelle defends his work ethic and *svart* dealings by setting them in relation to a society where money continues to circulate, generating more economic value – for the common good. The materials are bought *vitt* (taxes and other fees paid) and the craftsman earns extra money *svart*, an income that most probably will be spent consuming within the formal economy.

Allan had an adverse opinion about time. Claiming that he did not have time for an interview, I spoke with him briefly at a social occasion. He is an electrician and talked about *svart arbete* from his professional and private perspective. Allan said that he neither buys *svart* nor performs this type of work. When he started to work after secondary school, he had decided once and for all that *svart arbete* was not something he would get involved in. He could not imagine working after work, he reasoned, as he would not have any leisure-time. In addition, he also regards it as wrong – but his main argument was not to let work intrude on his free time. He justifies work with reference to the industrial world only, therefore he does not want to work *svart*. He might be an exception to Mona's opinion that 'you can always get an electrician to come at a weekend or evening or so. It is not always the money, but also the timing which is decisive [when buying *svart*].' Their views illustrate that time is not always money.

Other informants were of the opinion that what we do in our leisure-time should be our own business. This includes earning money but with one prerequisite, mentioned here by Monika, the assistant nurse:

I really think this concerns all people who work 100 percent. Supposing that you work full-time, you should have the right to keep what you get if you work more. But you are not allowed to. So I do think that everybody should work 100 percent before they work *svart*. If you have a full-time job and feel that you would like to put in a few extra hours in the evenings or weekends because you need it [the money] and already have paid your employment fees and taxes 100 percent. I am not stupid, I know there is heaps of *svart arbete*, and everybody knows that.

To accomplish your duty as a citizen to the state, 100 percent, as Monika puts it, you should pay your share and thus fulfil your obligations. In the words of Stephen Gudeman, you should contribute to the commons (2001:27 ff.). Having paid the taxes due and worked the stipulated full-time, any additional money earned can be argued to be your own. Work *vid sidan om*, 'on the side', is acceptable if provided by someone who does it after the 'real work', in leisure-time, as Monika sees it. Justifying informal purchases of work in this way relates simultaneously to the industrial and civic worlds as the obligations to both have been fulfilled. The rights and social security for the provider are already taken care of, through his professional employment. Although not entirely according

to the laws, this reasoning reflects the leniency of the Tax Agency in considering certain purchases of *svart arbete*, as Tore, the taxation manager, pointed out above.

Performing work outside normal working hours confirms the informality of the transaction and defers it to the domestic world. Buying *svart arbete* is then legitimised in relation to time through statements such as ‘everything beyond six o’clock’ or ‘that he comes after work or on Saturday’. Another casual way of putting it came from Niklas, ‘In Sweden you do not say that you work *svart*, but that you help someone at the weekend’. Susanne, who runs a PR bureau, can illustrate this. When she had her chimney swept a few years ago, they told her the chimney was damp but it could be fixed by adding some extra pipes. ‘OK, can you recommend someone’, she asked? ‘We can do it’, they said. ‘We can come on Saturday.’ ‘What about the material?’ ‘No problem, we can fix this as well’, they said. There was no explicit mention of this as *svart*, without an invoice or any other synonym. But that chimneysweeps employed by the municipality would come voluntarily on a Saturday and work formally is unheard of. Susanne thus took for granted that she had a *svart* proposal in hand.

Hasse, the gardener, detects *svart arbete* this way. ‘You see right away, if a house is getting drained and someone is digging there at the weekend, then it is not that hard to figure out.’ But also amongst professionals or in small stores, etc., there seems to be an abundance of informally paid work. Jenny, a cleaner at the hospital, tells about her friend who works in a small shop ‘you know, if you come in extra on a Saturday, I think it is *svart*.’ Lena, a municipal administrator, explained how she has heard people talking about services being *svart*. ‘It was someone I know who said that he knows someone, who could come and drill at the weekend’. Or ‘do you do it 8 to 5 [thus *vitt*] or at some other time?’ They all know it is illegal, but the licitness is expressed in that it is something that takes place after regular working hours.

The above justifications are based on the provider’s relationship to the state via tax contributions on income. The industrial and civic worlds can be said to merge here. Having contributed to society by putting in full-time work as well as paying taxes on this, you have fulfilled your part in relation to society, done your fair share and thereby supported the welfare state you believe in and live in. The rest is your free time, and what you do with it should be your own business. Varieties on this reasoning were common. Although time is not explicitly taken into account in the theory of justification, it is an important aspect to consider in making informal purchases of work acceptable. This is one reason why I have used the broader concept of realms of value to talk about how work is seen amongst Limningers.

In Björn’s blunt way, he sums up how purchasing *svart* becomes licit. ‘I think if you can do practical work. Work 7 to 4. What you do then in your free time, for example going and working for someone, is more legitimate than being on the dole and working *svart*. Then I get a bit pissed.’ This reinforces the findings by Skatteverket on unacceptable informal purchases (cf. Skatteverket 2006:4:31).

We can also see how time is introduced as a mediating factor between different worlds of worth in the justifications. If transactions of *svart arbete* are performed within regular working hours, they become a thorn in the flesh of all those who believe in the Swedish welfare state. But if all have contributed their fair share by working full-time, then the occasional *svart* purchase ‘on the side’, bought for private use only, is seen as licit. However, this reasoning applies to people who are part of the workforce. The little extra work, occasional and low-priced, provided by full-time students or retired people, seems exempt from the accusation of living off society through pensions and student grants or loans. Retired people have worked all their lives and have put in their share; students will eventually provide and contribute to the commons. This would also explain how unemployed beneficiaries of government support who simultaneously work *svart* are viewed as doubly immoral. They are not seen as contributors to the common good and the long-term social order of the welfare state. They threaten the very idea of the obligations of the Work Approach, of the long-term commitment of contributing to the common good and to the social order of the welfare state (see also chapter seven).

We have seen here how time has been used in justifications of informal purchases. It is used to show how work is subject to valuations adhering to different societal spheres. In the following, it will be seen how the Linningers more explicitly bring cost into the justification of these purchases.

fair work: negotiating time and cost

Many of the informants talked a great deal about the need for more time. Some work a lot of overtime, beyond the regular 40 hours a week, and feel they have neither the energy nor the knowledge to perform some of the tasks required at home. To save time, they want to buy services. Constructing a dividing wall in one’s home is a piece of cake for some, but a complete nightmare for those with the thumb placed solidly in the middle of the hand. Not knowing what to do and how to do it may result in enormous investments, or waste, of time. Lennart reflects on this:

I think house owners buy a lot [of *svart arbete*]. For example, to repaint the house. Many of those tasks are something you can do yourself, but there is the time factor, you might not have the time and you are not good at it. If you take something you cannot do yourself, for example carpentry where there is a specific skill involved, then you are buying a service to be performed in a certain way. Then [if you buy it *svart*] you are also conscious that you are buying it cheaper than what it would have cost. There are some services you have time to do and those you do not have time for, you can buy. To repaint this room, for example. Then you’ll see if you have time for it and how you value your time and compare it with what it would cost. Then there are certainly services that you can barter. For example, I am good at painting and my pal is good at electricity and so we exchange.

Buying a service *vitt* is expensive in Sweden. Like anywhere else, the cost of services should cover salary and expenses for the use of tools, transport, rent, work clothes, etc. and the provider should earn a profit. On top, there is a considerable amount in taxes and social contributions to be paid to the state. There are thus many other costs to cover than the pure salary. The gross salary earned by the craftsman is subject to taxation, which for most makes up a substantial part. The relation between the total wage costs and what the worker receives net is referred to as the tax wedge, *skattekil* (for estimates and further discussion about the Swedish tax wedge, cf. Henrekson 1998, SOU 2004:119:46). The price a private person pays is much dearer than what a similar service costs a commercial company. Paying in private as an end-consumer is done with money which has already been taxed, the tax wedge thus appraised. A company pays invoices as part of its turnover and thus untaxed, compared with personal incomes that are net. In addition, a company is entitled to VAT (value added tax) deductions. The economic rationale of work costs for a company translates into a more straight equation between time spent and money earned. The problematic translation appears when work is transferred from the public to the private sphere.⁴²

Thus, how can an acceptable acquisition of *svart arbete* be justified in terms of time as money? Björn earns his living from his truck and exemplifies the impact of the tax wedge in a straightforward way:

I think you should have it one-to-one. With what you earn for an hour of work, you should be able to pay someone else to do things you do not have time to do. But it is not like that today. You earn 100 *krona* and what's left is 50. With that you have to pay 200 for someone to come and do something for an hour. That's not fun. If you were to pay him *vitt*, you would have to pay yet another 100. It does not feel OK.

Björn looks rather mischievous as usual and I remember his mockingly told anecdotes about the construction of his house and how he continuously circumvented the rules in opposition to authorities. Always with a wink in the eye. When he argues for what he regards as a just exchange of work, he is serious. Björn's reasoning of a fair exchange in private is work converted into a relation of time to money.

In legal terms, many of the informants note the difference between work adhering to domestic and industrial polities respectively. However, as the reasoning goes above, there are many instances when the border between the two is increasingly blurred. Exchange ratios between time and money in different contexts can then appear exorbitant – between the amount of money paid for one's own work, the money received net, and the money paid for a service. The exchange ratio between money and time I shall, for the sake of simplicity, call 'money-hour'.⁴³

compromising between diverse worlds of work

Torsten's reasoning around buying a service or doing it himself can exemplify different set-ups of the money-hour. He has remained in Limninge and is a co-owner of an engineering consultancy firm, a workplace that demands much of him. Torsten is quite good at refurbishing at home, but feels he sometimes has no option but to buy *svart*:

There are certain periods at work when I cannot choose between going home [and work] after 4-5, or on the other hand working overtime. But when I work overtime, I cannot make up with time off later on, the firm here would not make it economically if everybody did that. Then you have to organise the maintenance and other things at home differently. With the current marginal tax on paid overtime, in some respects I feel like society has cheated on me and now it is my turn to cheat back.

To further illuminate the translation between money and time, we can view it as involving four specific cases (Ingelstam 2006:85-86). Firstly, from the state's perspective, a wage consists of the hourly remuneration plus taxes and social contributions. This money-hour amounts to the total cost for an employer. Secondly, for the individual, the wage earned is the net pay received, which is the hourly remuneration less income taxes. The net pay amounts to about a third of the money-hour in the first case. For the net pay Torsten receives, he ought to pay a firm *vitt*. This is money-hour in the third perspective, where net pay earned is compared with what an unpaid job should cost. The latter amount would thus be gross including VAT, overheads and profit. Translated into time, this compensation means that Torsten should work three to four hours to pay for one hour of work bought formally at home. Finally, Ingelstam put forward the fourth exchange relation as an economic societal calculation based on people's behaviour (ibid.86).

For this fourth relation, Ingelstam provides an example from the French transport sector where people negotiate between expensive but quick transportation in private cars, and the less expensive but slower public transport. Applied to Torsten's case, instead of working three to four hours to pay for one hour *vitt*, he chooses to pay for services *svart*. The difference between a money-hour earned and a money-hour paid is substantially narrowed. There is thus a problematic translation between diverse values of the money-hour in each of these perspectives. Torsten recognises all of these, but also argues that he has a valid reason for buying informally. This is a moral purchase for Torsten, given the circumstances. He has contributed to society with full-time and overtime work, he has paid income taxes on this work and he is paying for work he could do himself (but does not have time to perform).

To shed further light on Torsten's justifications using the concept of money-hour, he can be said to compromise between the virtues of diverse worlds of worth. When such compromises are possible, new principles of equivalence can be identified (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:216). It thus helps to explain new

ideas of ‘the common good’, and compare them with the reasoning of Monika and others above about licit work ‘on the side’.

Torsten enjoys his professional work very much, the comradeship and teamwork in aiming for specific goals. However, he cannot choose himself when to take time off and thus feels restrained by the demands of work: from his customers and from a deep loyalty to his colleagues and co-owners. Even if, according to the law, he were able to compensate for his overtime work, being one of the partners in a co-owned company restricts his activities in private. Torsten cannot compensate for the overtime at work with time off from (paid) work at another time so that he can do what is needed at home. Taking out the overtime as a salary would mean that his net pay from working three to four hours would suffice to pay for just one hour, he reasons. This does not make sense to him.

Torsten’s reasoning can illustrate the money-hour as a negotiation between the industrial, the civic and the domestic worlds of worth. Using different set-ups of the money-hour he can find compromises between these three worlds of worth. These illustrate a licit but illegal exchange relation between time and money. The exchange rate for working himself and paying for work done at home should, in Torsten’s view, be one-to-one. The set-ups of money-hour at work and at leisure ought, in Torsten’s perception, to be the same.

Torsten can be said to be in a ‘time bind’ (Hochschild 1997). He gets caught up at work and this interferes with family and leisure-time. He becomes both an architect and a prisoner of the ‘time-bind’ (ibid.249). Buying services *svart* takes some of the pressure off this ‘time-bind’.

Lennart is in a similar situation. He argues that he is in constant need of time. He and his wife buy cleaning services as well as compensating his mother for picking up their daughter once a week from the day-care centre she attends:

I think that everything [nowadays] goes so much faster. There are demands from your paid job, then you should be [a good] parent for small children and also have time for your interests, which all in all results in not much time left for doing other things. Then, you prioritise and decide what to do with your [free] time. Certain people love to repair their houses, fix the garden or make the flowerbeds and think this is relaxing. But there are also the demands, such as all the autumn leaves you ought to take care of. Can you find someone to do that?

For diverse reasons, others also thought about needing time. Larry has lots of it, as he is on duty several days consequently followed by three to four days off. Earlier, he used these days off to work *svart*. Now he thinks about the maintenance of his wood-panelled house:

I am really in two minds. The house needs to be painted, no question about it. But I do not have the time. There are those Polish guys who come around. I am not a painter; they are at least as good [as I am] if not better. Should I then use their services and do something else with that time? Take some of the money I have saved up and get it done? Then,

aged 45 and, in the best of worlds, with another 45 to live, I would be able to do something fun instead. I hate ...well, is it also a sort of *svart arbete* when I paint my own house?

Larry values his free time and justifies his informal purchases as purchases of time. He has fulfilled his share of work to society by working full-time, he feels.

Most of the men who are professional craftsmen fix things themselves. But Torsten, Pelle and Börje, who follow other vocations, also want to work at home. The considerations between getting things done and doing them themselves involve time and money. Torsten does not always have time for doing work at home, but, in addition to getting it cheaper when bought *svart*, he also has another view on the preference for buying work this way:

You get a fixed price on *vitt arbete*. If they do it *vitt*, they come on Thursday at this or that time and they want access to this or that. But maybe I want to make a threshold myself [at the entrance to the bathroom] in between their activities. Well, regardless of what I want to do, it [*vitt arbete*] has to be so fast and [rigorously] planned. *Svart arbete* is per hour and if the [freelance] craftsman is to do it, he will come Thursday night instead. That's one big reason why I like it [*svart*], you can run it [the process] yourself and take part in it.

Torsten performs the work he feels able to do, and the rest is bought. He values the flexibility and control he has when getting help from an acquaintance. Torsten gets a specific task performed when he wants it done. Buying the services informally, he chooses the time, does not pay much more than what he has earned net working himself and is also able to do certain things himself in between. The compromise between different set-ups of the money-hour into a value similar to his net earnings seems fair to him.

It has been argued that the acceptable informal purchase of work is not governed by a specific set of normative mores, but by how buyers esteem a combination of actions seen as work and in relation to what realms of life they are justified. Justifications in reference to more than one 'world' unveil how disagreements can be resolved and look into 'the possibility that people can reach justifiable agreements despite the availability of multiple principles of agreement' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:215).

We have thus seen that the Limningers not only look for a cheap deal when acquiring work. Their justifications also accentuate the importance of values beyond pure economic reasoning – in Graeber's rationale 'a moral, aesthetic and symbolic territory' (2005:452). Although Swedes say they buy *svart* because it is cheaper, for example by comparing money-hours in diverse contexts, their considerations are in relation not only to the monetary value but also to perceptions of what constitutes 'real work'. They also include negotiations between their own wishes and time to perform the work themselves.

These quite complex deliberations involved in making informal purchases of work acceptable can be said to take place within a Swedish regime of living. To get work done at home is thus not only a question of money. It also involves

reflecting and deciding on how to spend one's precious leisure-time – the time outside employment. The justifiable informal purchase of work can be said to constitute compromises between the domestic, the industrial and the civic worlds – but compromises under certain conditions. People who work *svart* should first have fulfilled their share of regulated, formal work as well as their civic duties. The providers ought to have contributed to the common base via their professional work (cf. Gudeman 2001, 2008). Although they do it in quite diverse ways, each and every individual justifies it in regard to his or her knowledge of the implications his or her actions will have and what they see as a just society.

Concluding remarks

Work is important for Swedes and this chapter has aimed to identify how 'work' is valued in relation to diverse realms of life when justifying purchases of *svart arbete*. Due to historical-political reasons, work makes up a salient part of living in Sweden. The Work Approach, *arbetslinjen* is not only a political tool but also a view on work, which trickles through much of Swedish society going back to the Protestant ethic and the construction of the Swedish welfare state. To enjoy performing a task and do it well is argued to be an important part of life, exemplified by the expression 'the good work', *ett gôtt arbete*.

Initially, most informants said that they see work primarily as a way to survive. Having said that, many emphasised that ideally it should be fun and enjoyable, in the professional context, at home and when performed in civil society. Although many Swedes can afford to get work done at home, they choose to do it themselves. This means that the accomplishment of work done at home, such as craftsmanship, gardening or various repair jobs, involves reflections on doing it oneself, purchasing the service *vitt* or *svart*, or just letting it be.

Work is thus much more than a means of survival. To value work more precisely according to specific realms of life in contemporary society is difficult, as it is often possible to work anytime, anywhere and for all sorts of reasons. To shed further light on how work is valued in different realms of life, three worlds of worth within the theory of justification have been brought into the discussion; the civic, the domestic and the industrial. Through the Limningers' justifications, we have thus seen how work is seldom referred to only one realm of life.

More specifically for this book, in order to make a *svart* purchase of work licit, a compromise between these worlds has to be made. This compromise is made up of complex and ambiguous negotiations involving time and money. For example, the expression 'on the side', *vid sidan om*, points to a few aspects where consensus about the licit *svart* purchase emerges. Work should then be of lesser scope, not the main occupation, and of minor monetary value.

An exception is when acquired work can be done by oneself, but for diverse reasons one is not able to do it. We have seen, through the concept of the money-hour, how translations between work performed and pay received for it

act as a justification for buying work informally. According to my informants, working one hour ought to generate the same amount of money as the service to be purchased costs. Under current tax legislation, this will mostly be done *svart*. There is one predicament: the work performed has to take place in leisure-time. The provider of the service has then contributed to society by working full-time and paid due taxes upon income earned. What then takes place beyond should be a private matter. Seen as a compromise between the worlds of worth, this work takes place within the domestic sphere when the duties regarding both the civic and the industrial worlds of worth have been fulfilled.

In contrast, buying work informally is illicit if the provider has not contributed her fair share of work to the Swedish welfare state. An exception could be when responding to structural bottlenecks as Anita and Mona did with their dealings in childcare. However important the work is, for Anita it still does not count as 'real work'. It is outside the social security provided by the state as well as contributions to it. The acceptable *svart arbete* is in terms of the task itself, performed according to laws and regulations but after an ordinary full-time occupation.

However, a lot of *svart arbete* is bought in other ways and is justified differently as well. Pelle, who made the introduction to this chapter, will also end it. As he said: 'certain services you have to buy *vitt* and then you accept that it is costly. You might grumble a bit, but you accept it. But when you can get away with it, then you do it when you need it.' Although Pelle is brought up with a certain acceptance of money earned informally (see also his father's reasoning about money in chapter five), he hesitates about buying cleaning this way. Cleaning is a prime example of the contestation between buying work *svart* or *vitt* or choosing to do it yourself, a debate which has continuously reappeared in the media for the last 15 years under the name of *pigdebatten*, the maid debate. How can we understand what constrains Pelle from buying cleaning services informally, whereas tiling is acceptable? Who cleans at home highlights more specifically values within Swedish society and is the subject of the next chapter.

4. *Pigdebatten*: the Swedish maid debate

Isn't it time for vacuum cleaning to be included in GNP?⁴⁴

Cleaning one's home is rarely recognised as 'real work'. It is unpaid and is still often seen as a woman's realm. It thus confirms the gender inequality in society and, if paid for, is sometimes considered a low wage trap for immigrants and less educated people, mainly women. Following the previous chapter's focus on valuing work, I shall attempt here to look beyond gender and class issues in order to explore why this issue has been so intensely debated in Sweden.⁴⁵

Mary Douglas wrote that 'reflection on dirt includes reflection on the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death' (Douglas 1997[1966]:5). Cleaning might not be a matter of life and death, but Douglas reflection on dirt encourages us to think seriously about it. I therefore argue that the *pigdebatten* makes explicit what is usually implicit and unspoken; namely, that work is contextually defined and valued. When it comes to acquiring work, services like cleaning stir emotions far beyond rational economic considerations. As Anita said, referring to her own stint of working as a cleaner at a school, 'The worst is not the work itself, but not being seen and recognised by others'.

Why is the removal, as well as the removers, of dirt overlooked in this way? Why are not the cleaners seen?

aim and outline of the chapter

In this chapter, I shall discuss values of work through the case of paid domestic cleaning. This has been the subject of a hotly contested public debate in Sweden called the *pigdebatten*, literally the maid debate, which reappeared during my fieldwork. Paid domestic cleaning was, and perhaps still is, an important issue in the Swedish discourse about *svart arbete*. This debate will highlight why paid domestic cleaning stands out from other types of work and in particular why it is problematic to buy in the Swedish context. The discussion aims to accentuate how a specific type of work is valued within a particular socio-cultural context, while making the point that different valuations of work underscore the peculiarities of society's history and the politics that shape the everyday practices in private life (Sayers 1988:736).

Throughout this chapter, it will be shown how informants resolve their domestic cleaning through negotiations between doing it themselves and acquiring the service in diverse ways.

I shall first provide an overview of the development of the *pigdebatten* and then continue with a discussion around why purchases of cleaning are seen as problematic by many Limningers. Recalling the discussion in the previous chapter, valuing paid cleaning entails making compromises between different worlds of worth. Inspired by the theory of justification, we shall see how diverse compromises between these worlds of worth make *svart* cleaning more licit. But the issue is broader. Cleaning as a practice takes its specific form in accordance with Swedish realms of value. The informants' deliberations are pragmatic and economic, but also informed by considerations of trust.

a history of paid Swedish cleaning

Throughout the twentieth century rights for Swedish workers improved through the construction of the welfare state, through the struggle of workers and through unionisation. Excluded from this development have been paid domestic labourers and maids who lack unions and have exceptionally weak juridical protection compared with other occupations (Öberg 1999:198). Öberg explains this as a historical phenomenon, part of the institutionalisation of the Swedish welfare society. It was a problematic issue. As Social Democratic women fought for workers' rights throughout the last century, many depended on domestic servants taking care of their children and homes (ibid.164). They were a thorn in the flesh for the idea of sisterhood solidarity, but utterly necessary due to the lack of public childcare for those involved in building the welfare state. As the welfare state's institutions grew, domestic servants became increasingly redundant as a category; as a result they were the last occupational group in Sweden to obtain the right to a 40-hour working week, in 1971. Although the service is increasingly used, paying for cleaning can still be a contested issue unless provided by the state as can be the case for the handicapped or the elderly. As the saying goes, 'You should take care of your own dirt', *man skall ta hand om sin egen skit*.

In 1993 the issue of paid domestic cleaning placed itself heavily on the political agenda, as economist Anne-Marie Pålsson suggested that societal economic gains could be made through tax deductions for paid domestic work. Union economist Villy Bergström reacted strongly in opposition to this proposal, evoking the historical notion of the *piga*, maid, thus re-awakening a picture of former Swedish class society, an upstairs-downstairs setting (Öberg 1999:191). The *pigdebatten*, the maid debate, was born. A government investigation regarding taxes on services⁴⁶ led by Dan Andersson, former chief economist at LO (the Swedish Trade Union Confederation), recommended deduction in tax for services aimed at households, amongst them cleaning services. The debate has continued ever since. In public, it has been deeply divided along political lines (Platzer 2004), although it was quite easy to find politicians on the left arguing for subsidies as well. On the one hand, there were arguments about

equal rights expressed in terms of gender, class and immigration; on the other hand, there were discussions in economic terms of increased growth and employment providing equal career opportunities and general equality. Tax deductions or subsidies have been introduced in neighbouring Denmark and Finland, and during the work on this book in Sweden as well – but not without long deliberations and a change of government.

In the Swedish election campaign during early autumn 2006, the issue continued to be hotly debated. The alliance parties proposed tax deductions for *bushällsnära tjänster*, domestic services, yet another example of paraphrasing a contested subject and disassociating the work from the producer. The leftist parties countered by invoking strong references to the formerly derogatory term *piga* (Öberg 1999:196) which carries historical and emotional connotations of a past class society Sweden should have left behind. The issue was also debated as a question of economic equality, where only those already well-off were expected to benefit from the proposed tax deductions. A third reason which made this debate delicate, is that it carried heavy gender aspects as cleaners usually are women who by the legitimisation of these tasks as proper jobs would risk being stuck in low-paid occupations (Platzer 2004).

The impact this debate has had can be illustrated by inputs even from the top political level. During the election campaign, Fredrik Reinfeldt, the leader of the alliance and then incumbent Prime Minister, claimed he liked cleaning himself, although his family employed an au-pair.⁴⁷ Göran Persson, the Social Democratic leader and former Prime Minister, stated that everybody should be able to clean their own house, omitting to mention that a cleaner put in five hours of work every week in his own residence.⁴⁸ The debate continued vigorously after the change of government in the autumn of 2006 since two newly appointed ministers had to resign shortly after the transition, due to previously having employed au-pair girls informally (cf. Jacobsson & Löfmarck 2008). From 1 July 2007, buying services to perform domestic services, *bushällsnära tjänster*, are subsidised with 50 percent.⁴⁹ As this is being written in 2009, the debate has abated and subsidised services seem increasingly to be accepted. The discussion below is thus somewhat dated, but underscores the idea that changes in government policies change citizens' perceptions – especially if the changes imply economic gain, at least for some.

is cleaning (de)meaning work?

Cleaning is an indispensable activity, yet also a type of work that most people are not particularly fond of doing. Most individuals appreciate a clean space, but many would rather see someone else doing the work (e.g. Ernsjö Rappe & Strannegård 2004).

To define cleaning as work challenges central aspects of what work is. For example, cleaning is usually seen as part of hidden or informal work when it is not paid for and is thus unrecognised as 'real work' (cf. Wadel 1979). Cleaning does not produce anything visible, but is a return to the status quo, the material result, if any, is a bag of dust and other unwanted disposables (e.g. Mackintosh

1988:393). It is a removal of something alien, ‘a matter out of place’ (Douglas 1997[1966]:44). The dirt is amassed and thrown away, in the bin or through the sewers. Still, cleaning is utterly essential for human survival. We get sick from dirt.

The cooperative aspects are often lacking as home cleaning is primarily done alone. Paid domestic cleaning is often done by one person without colleagues, a solitary and often repetitive task. In addition, if done *svart*, there is no professional structure to relate to; it seldom relies on vocational training, is not recognised through an examination or a diploma and there is no union to voice one’s interests.

Cleaning as an occupation has undergone many name changes in Sweden, reflecting societal transformation as well as efforts to better its status. This historical evolution illustrates the development of the workers status from that of a domestic servant to an independent professional, even an entrepreneur. There has been a terminological transformation from maid, *piga*, housemaid, *husa*, house-cleaner, *städerska*, to caretaker of office or premises, *kontors- and lokalsvårdare*, sanitary technician, *hygientekniker* and to provider of business services, *att ge företagservice*. This movement can illustrate a change from dependency and hierarchy towards more equal and professional relations between principal and provider. From exclusively referring to a hierarchical domestic world, the terminology nowadays alludes to the industrial world. Cleaning is ‘real work’ informed by a professional relationship between provider and purchaser, although the activity itself has remained the same.

Anita can depict this reasoning. She said she had thought quite a bit about this before I came to see her:

I thought about cleaning, it is often very... It feels like it is demeaning somehow for the one who does the work. I worked as a cleaner at a school for half a year. I thought it was the worst. Not the work itself even if it was hard, but rather because you are not seen. I can imagine that as a cleaner in someone’s home and paid *svart*, you are even more invisible. Even if the person you clean for is content.

I inquired more about being perceived differently depending on work tasks, but instead she talks about the relations between provider and recipient:

I am always there for someone, if someone comes and asks for help, you know if I could come and help with cleaning when removing or helping to take care of the kids and then I get something for it. Then it does not feel like work, it is rather a service. It is a help for someone and I’d get something for it, even if it was not decided beforehand.

So, on one the hand, the occasional cleaning for friends feels acceptable, regardless of whether it is paid, but cleaning repetitiously as employment is worse. Anita’s account of working as a school cleaner can mirror the invisibility and often disgusting tasks writer Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) describes when working as a cleaner in Maine. When I ask Anita if she has the same feeling for the floor fitter who laid the new floor in her house, she does not agree. ‘They are

craftsmen; it probably has to do with gender issues. What men do is visible, it is “real work” somehow. Cleaning is invisible, it is just done.’ Although she speaks about the problematic issue with cleaning as a gender issue, she also returns to content – what is produced, which amounts to nothing. It is also a Sisyphus task, it has to be done over and over again, in the sense that it is never finished.

To sum up, if looking at each and every item which defines work, cleaning is not that different from many other services. Taken all together, cleaning challenges the idea of work in many aspects. It does not produce anything but a pile of dust and dirt to throw away and is seldom a cooperative action. Paid cleaning at home has not much to do with the industrial world where people work professionally; it is seldom standardised and does not require any formal training. ‘Anyone can clean’. It is an intermittent service, which provides an increased propensity to build a (closer) relationship between supplier and provider. Seeing each other on a continuous basis where one performs a service that is hardly recognised as ‘real work’ and historically seen as demeaning, makes it problematic.

Cleaning Swedes

In the Swedish context, cleaning one’s own home is fine, but having someone do the job for you is a more delicate matter. Acquiring domestic cleaning has undergone a transformation during the completion of this book. Before, it was seen as appropriate only as a passing occurrence, but not acceptable as a constant help irrespective of whether it was performed by a butler, nanny, housekeeper, cook or cleaning-woman (cf. Ernsjö Rappe & Strannegård 2004). Privately, the opposite expressions could be heard; to have someone clean one’s house was almost a status symbol. In the public debate, paying for cleaning services is, on the one hand, considered a class phenomenon (cf. Platzer 2004) and, on the other, a means of establishing more equal career opportunities for women (Björklund Larsen 2006:46, Ernsjö Rappe & Strannegård 2004). Many Swedish women work full-time but retain the responsibility for having the home cleaned. To buy these domestic services is argued as being a way for women to obtain the same career possibilities as Swedish men have.⁵⁰ In the latter perspective, purchasing cleaning is argued to be a service like any other. With the introduction of subsidies for paid domestic cleaning, more compromises relating to the industrial and the civic worlds are possible. Perhaps this is one reason for the issue being less intensely debated nowadays in the public?

Another reason for the uneasiness Swedes feel about informal purchases of cleaning, can perhaps be found in the way they view themselves in relation to others. Historians Berggren and Trägårdh (2006) argue that the equality within contemporary Sweden is not only a result of social engineering during the last century. Equality has deeper roots, coming from the relative independence of every Swede in relation to the authorities, views on love and relations with others. The Swedes are said to have a direct relation to the state according to both

rights and responsibilities in a type of social contract influenced by Rousseau's ideas (ibid.53). These ideas are also the source from which the civic world in the theory of justification takes its inspiration (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:187, see chapter two). Rousseau's contract between citizen and the state demands that the individual subject himself to a common will, an idea argued to be incorporated in the welfare state (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006:50). Individuals would thus be emancipated but also alienated from hierarchical relations, and the welfare state would protect them so that no one should have to depend on family or others in order to survive (ibid.49), situations in which an individual can easily be taken advantage of. For example, to provide cleaning services for those deemed unable to take care of such matters themselves is often regarded as the responsibility of the welfare state. Berggren and Trägårdh paint a picture of a society of people with equal rights, no one worth more than any other. They also argue that Swedes have this, in comparable national terms, quite unique feature of citizens who, on the one hand, are 'most individualised' but simultaneously have great trust in the state and believe in the egalitarian society and in democratic ideals.

This view of equal individuals can perhaps enhance our understanding of why it appears strange to have employees helping out with private matters in Sweden. Bo can compare Swedish views on services with another context. He has a managerial position in a large British company and spends much of his working time in England. 'There, it is a class society. Services are cheaper. If you are well paid, you have to consult professionals. Otherwise you are regarded as poor. It probably differs between countries.' What he suggests is that there are different ways of looking at professional services performed domestically. In the Swedish public discourse, having a maid, *piga*, at home is often regarded as demeaning to this person, and not as providing a job opportunity. Buying cleaning is not helping someone else with a job, especially if purchased *smart*, but instead is regarded as a form of abuse (Björklund Larsen 2006:52). Paying *smart* implies employing someone for less money than the open market would offer, regardless of whether this job could be provided formally or not.

We shall next examine how different justifications are invoked, in order to accept or reject informal purchases of cleaning.

to buy or not to buy cleaning?

Among the Limningers, hardly anyone agreed with the incumbent Prime Minister's liking for cleaning. Monika was one of the few exceptions and she could not imagine buying help with the task. 'Even if it is boring, it is something I can do myself. But it is not dull all days. Sometimes it can feel really good to clean, you know, to really get going with loud music' and she laughs. 'It is all about attitude. I think that you should be able to manage yourself.' And she adds with a loud chuckle, 'but when I come to my son's apartment, I really think he should have one [a cleaner].'

Monika sees cleaning as '*ett gótt arbete*'. Like her, many of the female Limningers could not picture themselves getting help with cleaning. The few men

who spoke about the task first-hand are those who have the main responsibility for cleaning at home. Lars lives by himself and gladly skips the cleaning. It is the worst of all chores, he says, adding that he would rather do the ironing. Pontus had suggested to his wife that they should buy cleaning, but her reply was ‘over her dead body’. He tells me this with a smirk, maybe knowing beforehand that his proposal would be outrageous to his wife.

Kristina, a study advisor, relates home cleaning to lifestyle:

Somehow I can understand that there are people who work an awful lot. But I do not think you have to work so much that you need cleaning help. You put yourself in that situation, [wanting] to achieve a certain standard in life and [so] you end up working a lot. I do not think a person should work to the extent that one needs a *smart* cleaning help, you should be able to do it [yourself]. But somehow it is also where you set the target in your home. If you both work full-time and you want to have kids and get away with it all – fine. It might sound a bit old-fashioned, but if there is some dirt and dust and so on; it does not need to be perfect, it is about where you set the target. No, I am somewhat against it, I don’t like it.

Kristina has in several ways taken issue with the ‘time bind’ (Hochschild 1997), without stepping outside professional life. When her children were small, she ran a formal day-care at her home on behalf of the municipality. She wants her family to take care of their home and as her husband is quite dexterous, he basically does all the repairs and amendments they need. She has not always worked full-time and she reasons that the threshold for a nice home does not necessarily include a spotless appearance.

There are, however, times when time and strength are just not there and getting help with cleaning seems an easy solution, freeing a few hours every week. Kristina had a time in her life when she was really low and exhausted. A neighbour was concerned and recommended someone to ease her life. Kristina tells me:

I felt awfully bad about it, very uncomfortable with the entire situation, I did not know what to talk to her about. As it happens, she was from Poland or somewhere similar, I think she was a highly educated engineer. And I felt, she is in my home cleaning up my dirt. I could not keep her. But then I got a bad conscience – imagine if this was her only income? Coming to Sweden and into my dirt, cleaning it up. She was here only once, but we never had it so nice and clean.

Kristina laughs, somehow with relief, as her attempt to buy cleaning was the opposite of her view of what is acceptable, something she rectified by never buying it again. Having her house cleaned by someone from outside the family did not feel good, she explained. It was an intrusion into her own private sphere, a space she takes care of. Of more importance was the feeling of inequality in relation to another person, as well as the intrusion into her private sphere. ‘I really thought it was terrible’.

Sofia, a librarian, also had cleaning help during a period in her previous marriage – ‘during a period when it was at its worst. Maybe my husband bought himself free from doing such household work by paying a girl who came to us and cleaned. It was only for a few months, but I did not like it.’ Her husband worked hard, they had five children in the household, but her resistance was not only due to her dislike of having anybody working for them. ‘It is also because I do not want a person to glean at my things. I want to tend to my things myself.’

For these Limningers, cleaning belongs to the domestic sphere, an issue to be dealt with by those who belong there. The dirt is created and dispersed by them, therefore they should also clean it up.

Mona, who has had recurrent stints of serious sickness, felt that her need for help came prior to any other considerations. ‘I longed so much when I was sick, I longed terribly to get help with the cleaning at home. If there is something I want to pay for, it is that.’ Ruben is one of the men who say that they clean in their households. Working in the judiciary, he would not take the risk of buying *svart*. Instead, he hopes for subsidies. ‘If there is a change in the law that says that the first 10,500 *krona* will be [deducted] on cleaning. As for the ROT deduction,⁵¹ if it will be on cleaning – ouf!’ and he gets almost dreamy-eyed at the thought of not having to clean. Clearly, he also finds it too expensive to buy. But then he reconsiders. ‘I would not have chosen cleaning [services] but rather someone who would come and do the cooking so that dinner would be ready when you come home. So you don’t have to stand there, directly after work.’ And he continues:

this maid debate, the *pigdebatten*, I have no opinions on it, but I share the view with whatever political party thinks that it should have the same worth, regardless of which type of service it subsidises. I don’t give a damn if the work concerns childcare or washing or building houses or plumbing. If one is to be subsidised, they all should be.

All paid work should have the same value, he argues, and thus be subject to the same type of state subsidies – if it is for private consumption.

Nina has solved her needs differently. The last couple of years, it is mainly her children who have cleaned the house and thus she keeps her cleaning within the family realm:

Jerry [her son] cleaned for more than a year and of course got paid for it. Then it was my daughter’s turn. They are really good at it. Of course, I sometimes take the vacuum cleaner and do a turn. But they dust, vacuum, wash the floors, the basins – everything.

She has also had cleaning which can be viewed as *svart*:

I had a girl here who cleaned without an invoice, so to say. How I found her? At the gym. When Jerry did not want to continue cleaning, she thought it was grand. I just told her that he used to clean at home and

now he didn't want to continue. She thought it sounded fine, she could do it if I did not want to.

Nina laughs, somehow with relief, as she has a good explanation along the lines of her moral conviction of right and wrong in society. When the children clean, she sees it as part of their upbringing – teaching them to work and to earn some money. When they cannot do so, she solves the issue pragmatically by bringing in someone who does not mind, but someone with whom she has a private relationship. So she can be said to retain cleaning within her domestic sphere, buying it from within the family or from acquaintances.

Lena has made use of *svart* cleaning services in periods when she has not had time to do it herself. Cleaning is a type of work that people generally are capable of doing themselves. Advocating a fair 'exchange rate' for buying cleaning means comparing your own net pay with the amount that buying cleaning would cost. Lena bought cleaning in busy periods, 'The thought of paying as much as for cleaning *vitt* would never occur to me. I need 750 *krona* to get the house cleaned. I would never do that', she says, referring to the high income taxes in Sweden as a justification for her purchase. She found help by asking someone who does the cleaning at her workplace:

So I asked her if she knew someone who could clean our home...it was at the weekends, so I was at home. Actually, there were two men who cleaned alternately. They are still here, not with us but at the neighbour's. One of them comes and is really nice and would never do anything... he would lose all these contacts if he abused it. He has built up personal relationships.

In addition to earlier deliberations about time and money, my informants talk about trust as the main consideration when finding someone to clean their house. It is a private matter where everything in a house can be seen and touched – and cleaned. Somehow, getting cleaning done at home also means revealing some secrets, what is usually hidden. To justify informally paid cleaning, references to the domestic world are increasingly invoked, away from the fragile compromises with the industrial and civic domains. The latter are referred to adversely, when rejecting *svart* cleaning.

relations and trust

One aspect often touched on when talking about cleaning was the quality of the relations with the provider (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:164 ff.). This puts more emphasis on the relationship with the one who performs the work and reinforces the justification with reference to a more domestic realm. Sven was very happy telling me about the cleaner his family had had for some time. 'It was so perfect', he said, beaming. This woman worked as cleaner for a company and came to their home in the afternoons. When he talked about her, she appeared almost as a member of their family. He told me that she seemed grateful to them as well, bringing them fresh eggs from the farm where she lived. Getting

his house cleaned by someone who appreciated them so much that she gave them gifts, showed a relationship between them which is beyond buying and selling. Having someone 'employed', albeit in the informal sense, can also provide status, worth, in the eyes of others (Ernsjö Rappe & Strannegård 2004).

The character of the relationship with the person who cleans plays an important role when deciding if it is acceptable or not. Bo, the engineer working abroad, is really against *svart arbete*, but talks about the grey sector in terms of relations and reoccurrence:

A cleaner and neighbour. Someone who does it for a short period, that's less culpable. She might have been a housewife all her life. Or someone who used to work, who is now retired and cleans to pass the time. It helps some other people a bit. It is not primarily for the money, but to have something to do.

A closer relationship with someone who is cleaning 'on the side' is acceptable for Bo. This closer relationship also means that there is trust between buyer and seller. Trust is sometimes defined as predictability (Grey & Garsten 2001:232). Here, the predictability is the return to the status quo, and the trust asked for here diminishes the risk of losing something (except unwanted disposables).

Trust can be provided by employment – the cleaner has the status of being part of an organisation. This trust can be argued as referring to the civic world. Compare this with the trust granted by a cleaner being herself, a private person. This trust would then be entirely defined within the domestic world (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:280). Bo could be said to advocate trust in this way – either entirely in the industrial domain as a professional relation or as a purely domestic relationship between people with closer relations. There is no middle way for Bo.

For those who pay for cleaning, trust is an important concern, although it is formulated in diverse ways. Through the examples below it can be seen how the issue is deliberated on and, in the case of Viktoria, how it also hinders the purchase.

I met Ylva for lunch at an outdoor restaurant. Although it was in June and sunny, the wind was chilly and our pizzas turned cold almost immediately. Ylva now works as a programmer and looked stunning and almost glowing; perhaps the reason was that she had recently fallen in love. She had had domestic cleaning both with and without an invoice. When her former husband worked in India, she was alone with their three children and worked full-time. He finally managed to negotiate domestic cleaning paid for by his employer every other week. 'I had *svart* cleaning, for three months. Then I had a cleaning firm via my husband's work. But that was because he was working abroad and I had to manage on my own.' When I start asking about the difference, she interrupts me and says convincingly:

It felt much more secure. It was the same type of person. Because it was via his work and a cleaning company, she was checked, they knew who she was, there was someone behind her. It felt more secure, I did not

really want the other, but I could not afford to pay 200-300 an hour... You know, it felt like taking a risk, to have *svart* cleaning. It did not feel [like a] smart [idea].

The difference between the two, she explains, was the trust provided by the formal employment and the money it cost, not the content of the work itself. In this way she can be said to have found a compromise between the civic and industrial polities (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:285 ff.).

For Viktoria cleaning at home is all about trust. She is a confident, well-preserved woman, with three children and a husband, who leads a busy life running her own enterprise. They have a happy tail-wagging dog that she brings to the office. She tells me about her career and her leisure life, and how difficult it was a couple of years ago to get everything worked out, when she was on the brink of being burnt out. She can afford the service and negotiates buying cleaning in terms of trust and warranty:

This is something I really have tried to get hold of, someone good because I do not want to let anybody into my home. I've got to feel it is someone who comes and who I can trust, so that our things will still be there. I continuously talk with people I meet asking if they know someone, I look at websites, I've considered contacting an agency, '*Hemfrid*⁵² or some alternative. I also thought about a *svart* cleaner. For me it is important to find someone I feel secure with, regardless of whether I pay *svart* or not. But I'd rather find someone whom I do not pay *svart*. It is this thing with responsibility, things can be stolen.

Viktoria can afford to have her cleaning done *vitt*. For Ylva it was too high a cost. Both emphasise the importance of trusting cleaners when letting them into their private space. This trust is provided by referring to the industrial and civic worlds. An employed cleaner adheres both to laws, the civic world, and to employer regulations, thus the industrial world. But this is not enough for Viktoria. She feels that, in addition, there needs to be a personal trust between the cleaner and herself, which brings in the domestic aspect. She has a hard time deciding on it, she says. She can exemplify how mixing references to the civic, industrial and domestic worlds when thinking about buying cleaning, can make for a messy relationship (cf. Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:251 ff.).

Peter and his cohabiter had a woman who cleaned their house. She came from one of the former Soviet republics and had applied for asylum in Sweden and was awaiting a residence permit. They got in contact with her by word of mouth, but just prior to our interview, she had called to say that she could no longer come as she and her family had been denied a residence permit. Since then, they are staying in Sweden illegally. Peter finds justification for his purchase of cleaning in her need of a job, telling me that it is a respectable family and not involved in any 'real' criminal activities. Her husband has worked *vitt* in the building industry, a job which he probably has had to abandon, and the woman has not been able to find proper employment. 'I would never do it if the money went to really criminal activities. Narcotics, prostitution – absolutely

not', Peter says. In that respect, he feels that they are lending their cleaning woman a hand and at the same time making a good deal for themselves compared with what cleaning services from an agency would cost. The cleaning woman did not have access to the Swedish welfare state. Therefore Peter justifies his purchase purely in terms of a domestic relationship, instead of justifying it in terms of fulfilling his civic duties. He thus helps someone he ought to care about (for further discussions on reciprocal help, see chapter six).

The *pigdebatten* has mainly been concerned with immigrants and women, as those who perform cleaning services. Amongst the Limningers, there were very few who said they had paid for home-cleaning. I heard no one speak of having a maid, *piga*, at home, as the image of a subordinate scrubbing floors on her bare knees with a bucket by her side is too intimidating. Instead, some mentioned knowing a *polska*, a woman from Poland. This has become more or less synonymous with using the services of a cleaning lady. The image is one of a hard-working woman who cleans efficiently and well. The use of the word *polska* reinforces the historic notion of the Swedish *piga*, but in ethnic disguise, which makes this feminine national denotation demeaning and reinforces stereotypical national hierarchies. Poland has on and off over the past centuries provided Sweden (and also Denmark) with workers, mainly performing menial tasks (Norberg 2008:4). The expression also connotes a low price as the remuneration is often cash-in-hand. A buyer of cleaning services from a *polska* is perceived to make a good deal, getting great value for money.

In the maid debate, the prevalence of Polish or other foreign women in the informal cleaning business has largely been overlooked. As hardly anyone fought for Swedish maids as a professional corps during the twentieth century (Ernsjö Rappe & Strannegård 2004, Öberg 1999), no one takes up the struggle today for foreign cleaners like the *polskor*. Even if working legally, they complicate the debate about domestic cleaning. If self-employed, as many are, they do not have to adhere to Swedish labour laws (Björklund Larsen 2006).

We have thus seen how an ethical, but inconsistent, rationale (cf. Collier & Lakoff 2005:33) becomes more explicit within the wider discourse of this maid debate, the *pigdebatten*. Buying or not buying cleaning, as well as purchasing the service with or without an invoice, can illustrate the aspect of a regime of living as 'processes of reflection and action in situations in which living has been rendered problematic' (ibid.22). The contours of the social practices that define how acceptable but informal purchases of work are made licit start to take shape in a Swedish regime of living.

A regime of living is made up of technical, normative and political aspects – 'how one should live'. In the original meaning, the 'how' is seen as the technical aspect and concerns people's uncertain ethical relation to new inventions in contemporary life. 'How' is here seen as the work itself – cleaning. What does it mean to purchase a specific type of work such as cleaning? Cleaning implies a restoration of a setting, not producing anything, and consists of simple tasks such as vacuum-cleaning, dusting and scrubbing floors. The 'should' concerns the normative aspect and is obviously what is viewed as appropriate behaviour. In this book I apply the 'should' to the types of services which are deemed

acceptable to buy within society. It invokes a historical reasoning about relations with domestic employees. For the majority it is more or less unheard of in contemporary Sweden. Finally, the 'one' is the political view and concerns how these norms are shaped – through individuals' practices, the media's reporting and how governmental changes in laws and regulations are perceived. The latter can consist of offering subsidies for domestic services or additional resources for the Tax Agency to pursue purchasers of *svart arbete*. The introduction of subsidies for domestic cleaning and how the debate has abated since, can perhaps illustrate how the political intrudes on the normative and the technical, making it easier and more acceptable for Swedes to acquire domestic cleaning.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided an example of how work and paying for it become problematic in the case of domestic cleaning. To understand why this is so, the historical meanings of different work practices have to be included, especially when they have been taken up in political reasoning. The *pigdebatten* is an example, as it invokes ideas about hierarchical relationships in private. This contrasts with the idea of equality that is part of the normative make-up of a Swedish 'regime'. What it teaches us is that it can be difficult to commodify all types of work according to the same pattern, i.e. in economic terms making one piece of work classified like any other. Work is very multifaceted and different practices are differently valued. In order to elaborate on how cleaning can be more or less contested, the theory of justification and its worlds of worth have been invoked (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006).

The practice of cleaning contradicts the idea of work in many ways. For example, cleaning does not produce anything; it deals with matter out of place – dirt. It is often done in solitude, and when performed at home it takes place in a truly private sphere. One by one, these aspects of work can compare with other practices, but taken together they can give information on why paid cleaning can be seen as problematic in contemporary Sweden.

Most Swedes clean their homes themselves in line with an almost normative view – that 'you should take care of your own dirt'. Cleaning is then something private. It is an issue that belongs to members of the household and paying for such a service to someone on the outside refers directly to the market world of worth. It illustrates that mixing justifications of the market and the domestic worlds makes for cluttered relations (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:244).

The Limningers who justify paid cleaning see the task in a larger context than just getting a job done, with the resulting neat home. For those who decide, or would like, to pay for it, a formal purchase is for most unobtainable in economic terms. A few like to regard the task as being like any other job. It is commodified in the sense that it is seen as a professional relationship, where the work taking place is justified with reference to the industrial and civic worlds. However, if it is bought, notions of trust are important ingredients in the relationship with the cleaner.

If bought informally, the purchasers justify their acquired services by referring to the domestic world of closer relations. They may get help from their children, as a part of their up-bringing, or by paying someone they know. Then it involves a transaction that can be argued to be taking place within the domestic world. For those who do not have any problem with acquiring cleaning *svart* from someone outside the household, domestic relations are still invoked. The cleaning is then argued to be done by someone they have a closer relation with, someone they know, trust or need to help by offering them a job. It is work that is justified as taking place outside the industrial and civic worlds, although it is paid for.

5. Buy or barter? The cheap, simple and hidden acquisition

Tomas: 'If I asked a friend who is an electrician to do some work at home and then asked him to send an invoice for his work, he would think I am an idiot'.

KUMRIF AB is a company in Gothenburg which leases party equipment. Its activities have nothing to do with the name KUMRIF, (*Kontant Utan Moms Rakt I Fickan*, literally translated as 'cash without VAT straight into the pocket'), which is a fairly common abbreviation for *svart arbete*. The man who established the firm was a real tease, the current owner tells me. He says he has kept the name of the company, because having once heard it you will not forget it. When he drives around delivering chairs, tents and dinner wares he often sees people pointing at his car laughing. However, he also adds that with that name you have to be extremely stupid to try any accounting tricks; he had the Tax Agency over his shoulder for the first two or three years of ownership.⁵³

KUMRIF is just one of many abbreviations illustrating what *svart arbete* is about; it is cash, the deal is simple and straightforward and the money passes instantly from buyer to provider. The service is also less expensive, as paying the state its due share of VAT and income taxes is ignored. KUMRIF puts the transaction in the limelight and emphasises its ingenuity and creativity. It transforms an illegal transaction and the common and dull concept of *svart arbete* into an act to smile at, a little bit more human and laughable as well as acceptable, drawing on the world of inspiration, in the words of Boltanski & Thévenot (2006:159 ff.). The abbreviation also brings to mind what seems to be an important driving force behind buying *svart* – to make a smart deal.

aim and outline of the chapter

With KUMRIF in mind, the aim in this chapter is to scrutinise how *svart arbete* is made acceptable as an exchange and in particular what the settlement form itself means for the licitness. Focusing on the exchange, I also intend to discuss how I see *svart arbete* as part of (economic) life in society.

When asking why people buy *svart*, the explanation I most often encountered was, 'it is cheaper, that's why'. This chapter starts with what ideas of cheapness look like in contemporary Sweden. Living one's life is not only about managing

resources within the household, but also about making bargains. The statement, ‘it is cheaper, that’s why’, can illustrate a special form of economic rationality.

In the following, the term house-holding will be used when I mean managing the household. Here I want to emphasise the pro-active and extensive activity involved in managing the household in its widest sense: that is, the complex negotiations with regard to managing the resources available within a household and also the possibility of doing the tasks oneself or working extra to pay for them. In addition, house-holding underscores the relation to the origins of ‘economy’, coming from the Greek *oekonomia*, as activities taking place in a household, described in early treatises on economy. For example Aristotle viewed the economy as an ideological, idealised management of the household. He opposed purchases as unnatural and wealth had a greater meaning than purely economic as it also included the quality of life, expressed as moral towards other household members but also towards the community (Swedberg 2008:61).

One aspect of making the exchange more acceptable is through its means of payment. Bartering or buying (with cash) are usually seen as two distinct ways of settling an exchange, creating very different types of relations. Barter has often been depicted as old-fashioned and primitive, a less sophisticated form of payment than cash. Here it will be seen how barter is preferred when it simplifies and makes an exchange cheaper. In addition, we shall also see how talking about exchanging as bartering, *byta*, makes it a more licit variety of *svart arbete* – although the deal is settled with money. Adversely, one may also ask if certain barterers which are not regarded as illegal or illicit can be considered *svart arbete* given specific (right or wrong) circumstances.

Paying with cash, will on the other hand, illustrate a transaction’s increased linkage with a formal market and with government authorities. Using a wealth of synonyms for cash increasingly informalises these in essence illegal deals and verbally conceals them from the formal market.

Finally, the distinction between barter and buying abates when cheapness and simplicity are used as justifications for buying *svart*. The occasion for saving some money is acted upon, while referring to social aspects and calculative rationalities. These constellations of justifications make the exchanges more licit, although still illegal, and make up what will be referred to as ‘the smart deal’. A few examples will illustrate the delicate balance between purchasing *svart* as an economic and uncomplicated deal and, on the other hand, turning it into one informed by greed.

The notion of a smart deal can illustrate how *svart arbete* is seen as part of societal economic issues. My aim is to avoid what Barry and Slater call the ‘two pitfalls of economic sociology’: either trying to enrich *homo economicus* (the rational economic decision-maker) by giving him more soul, humanness, culture, etc., or assuming that calculation in trading is asocial and amoral (2002:183). The view pursued here is that informal but acceptable purchases are neither embedded in, nor apart from, social relations but actually of vital importance for them. I see these buys as economic practices; they are everyday and learnt behaviour, and when people exchange, they also create social relations. Ex-

changes are thus both part of and constitutive of social life (Maurer 2005:41). Buying *svart* is an economic aspect of life in the sense that calculation in terms of money and time is part of the reflections (see chapter three), but making the smart deal also involves creating and maintaining social relations (see also the next chapter). People have always exchanged – in many ways and not always according to norms and laws.

I shall therefore argue that the Limningers make their exchanges of *svart arbete* more acceptable when positioning them as smart deals, simple and cheap. This is done in diverse ways by entangling them in a more private and domestic sphere, away from the idea of a market organised by diverse rules, commitments and regulations.

The cheap transaction

When people say ‘of course Swedes buy *svart*, it is the cheapest’, an economic rationality is assumed. That it should be cheap is almost taken for granted in everyday house-holding, making do with available and sometimes strained resources (Ehrenreich 2001, Isacson 1994). But there is also a tendency in contemporary modern society to maximise consumption, choosing from an immense array of goods and services (Douglas & Isherwood 1996, Freeman 2000, Söderberg 2002) and ‘smart deals’, and avoiding governmental structures (Ledeneva 1998, Pardo 1996). What does it indicate that something has to be inexpensive? In the following, we shall discuss how a preference for the cheap, like getting the most for one’s money, influences the decision to pay informally.

A rationality of cheapness is only one of many behind purchases of *svart arbete*. However, being economical is the most common explanation offered for why one would purchase *svart*. With very few exceptions none of the Limningers explicitly expressed a desire to buy a service *svart*, given a choice between *vitt* and *svart*, all other things being equal. It is the cheapness that entices.

Analytically, to get ‘the most for one’s money’ is an assumption lying at the heart of the neo-classical microeconomic notion of *homo economicus*. This ideal type is seen to act with complete knowledge and rationality in every economic decision he/she makes (Swedberg 2003:3) and is, as a social being, abstract and lonely. This HE-man only socialises when trading, is devoid of values and morals, although his actions are supposed to take place within society’s laws and regulations. He is driven by self-interest and an urge to maximise profits (Gudeman 2001:41-2), and has been criticised by economic anthropologists and economic sociologists alike for his limited human capacity as well as for imposing an ahuman reasoning on economic practices. In reality he does not exist, although in the interpretation of how economic decisions are made, he is alive and kicking (Callon 1999:192). In these critiques, social and cultural aspects instead provide the basis for analysing exchanges.

Homo economicus is brought into this discussion for several reasons. One reason for his participation is not because the Limningers behave exactly like him but that he is used as an underlying assumption for estimates of why people

buy *smart* (see chapter one for an overview of Swedish studies on the subject). Another reason is that I agree with the view of Callon that the HE-man exists, but that he takes many different shapes (1998:51, 1999). Buying the least expensive is still very much part of everyday life for most people, but in applying the calculations of *homo economicus*, we have to acknowledge that they are varied and take in diverse considerations. There are certainly many who even in a comparatively wealthy nation like Sweden cannot afford to buy services *vitt* – if they can afford them at all – but there are also many who always look for the least expensive, regardless of how much money they have. As Ruben said in a discussion of the mechanisms driving us when buying; ‘if you have two commodities in the shop and one has a red price tag, well you often take the one with the red tag. Period.’

it’s got to be cheap

In a country deeply influenced by the Protestant ethic, Benjamin Franklin’s saying, ‘a penny saved is a penny earned’, is as pertinent as in the US. There has long been the norm of saving instead of spending frivolously. An example of this can be seen in last century’s female role-model *Spara*, Save, and her contrasting friend *Slösa*, Lavish. These two girls figure in the magazine *Lyckoslanten*, ‘The Lucky Coin’, distributed by the Swedish savings banks through schools to all 9-12-year-olds in Sweden since 1926. *Spara* is neat and cute, her hair nicely done with a big red bow. She works and waits to spend her savings on something she has yearned for and pondered wisely upon. *Slösa*, on the other hand, is sloppy and wastes her money thoughtlessly on amusement and consumption. These girls seem very outdated in today’s consumption society, but the moral of their activities still lives on in the ways consumption choices are made in contemporary Sweden. At the very least, the girls and their character traits provide something of a moral lesson and a normative message for older generations of children as well as contemporary ones.

To satisfy a need, purchases are often made on impulse, by habit, without knowledge of alternatives and sometimes with no interest in choosing at all. The need to consume can arise out of competitive urges, in order to ameliorate one’s life or as the result of manipulative marketing (Söderberg 2002:207). Sometimes there is no explicit, urgent utilitarian need, but just the alluring notion of a bargain. However, with increasing possibilities of consumption, this desire for cheapness can spill over, resulting in buying for the sake of buying (shopaholism). The crammed parking lots outside outlets and mega-stores, such as *Galne Gunnar*, Crazy Gunnar (my translation), are not a phenomenon peculiar to Sweden, but pinpoint the propensity people have to make pilgrimages to these temples of ‘good bargains’. The driving force to make a smart deal is not only explicit need. It begs the question why people want goods (Douglas & Isherwood 1996:3), or, as in this case, services (see also chapter three and four).

buying work informally as part of (economic) life

Buying *svart arbete* in Sweden can be seen as a continuation of an unbroken line of local economic practices. It is another description of so-called alternative market practices taking place within existing structures.⁵⁴ Granovetter argued that to understand economic actions, they had to be seen as ‘embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations’ (1985:487). He maintained the view that diverse economic actions could be seen as rational in a Weberian sense, given the specific circumstances in which they took place (ibid.505). Compare this with the conventional view of a disembedded economy that relies on the fact that social structures are left out of the analysis (ibid.506). So Granovetter saw it as crucial to use social structures for his analysis.

However, almost everybody is taking part in the practice of buying *svart*. The view taken here is that a specific set-up of economic practices, such as these informal purchases of work in Sweden, is contextual (cf. Kjellberg & Helgesson 2006). The practices will therefore be looked at more closely. Secondly, it is argued that *svart arbete* in Sweden is not seen as an informal market of services, contained in or apart from a larger structure of formal economic life. Rather, it is part of daily life, which means that the embeddedness argument will not be used here. Börje, the laid-off IT technician, can illustrate this with his views on the existence of *svart arbete*. ‘It is nothing strange, it is just the way it is’.

As society changes, so do norms, practices and modes of doing things amongst economic actors. This in turn impacts on the state’s decisions of formalising the informal through new rules and regulations (for example with subsidies for domestic cleaning). Changes like these make *svart arbete* adapt and comply with new structural realities. The intention is not always to transact informally, but exchanges can be defined as such due to an incongruity between an encompassing tax legislation and fuzzy practices amongst the public at large (cf. Skatteverket 2006:4:29). Purchases of *svart arbete* have evolved as part of changing structures within society and continue to take on different guises with each further alteration.

Nevertheless, the intention with these barter is most often to get them inexpensively. It is also a continued habit and the tasks are often of a kind that can be done by oneself (see also chapter three).

entangling social relations

When my informants justify their actions, they do it according to their knowledge of legal realities, recognising that they ought to pay taxes on their exchanges. To cast light on the processes which make exchanges considered *svart arbete* more acceptable, I shall instead of embeddedness theory make use of the concepts of entangling and disentangling as developed in Actor Network Theory when applied to the study of markets (Callon 1998, see also Hasselström 2003). Following Callon, disentanglement is the act of taking entities out of their social relations and transforming them into objectified and calculable objects of exchange able to circulate and change ownership in a market (Callon

1999, Slater 2002:237). The disentangling creates and maintains a division between, on the one hand, these objectified things and, on the other hand, the actors who produce, exchange and consume them in a specific setting.

‘To entangle or disentangle are two opposite movements which explain how we move away from or closer to the market regime’ (Callon 1999:190). The use of these concepts has mainly concentrated on the construction of markets and thus on the practices of disentanglement from social relations. Here the opposite will be explored. To make the exchanges more acceptable, the movement is one away from an idea of the market, as subject in diverse ways to laws and legislation. By (re)entangling these exchanges in a social context of values, people make the *svart* transaction more acceptable. As will be seen, what can be regarded as a market trade is transformed into an exchange between friends and acquaintances. It is the reverse of the movement of a disentangled object which is made tradable in a market. Yet, the service exchanged is still disentangled in some aspects, to make it calculable and to set some form of price.

We can thus see here how the idea of cheapness is invoked both in the market and in social realms. Börje said that to exchange is an innate behaviour, something which people have always done and still do. Everywhere. Exchanging is done in order to obtain something but can be done in social realms as well as in what we consider modern markets. So, on the one hand, the Limningers view certain exchanges as taking place in markets, subject to existing laws and regulations and also to taxation. In Callon’s terms, such a service is disentangled from social realms and takes place in a market informed by competition, laws and legislation. The consumer can compare and choose, sometimes invoking the rationality of *homo economicus* in order to get the best and most for the money. Then there are other transactions that take place outside the formal market, although they ought to take place there. These exchanges are untaxed and some of them are considered *svart* and thus illegal. In order to make the latter more acceptable they are entangled into a social sphere – the workings of a HE-man gone astray. The logic is to invoke the rationality of cheapness while moving the exchange away from the formal market into the more licit social sphere (which the HE-man supposedly does not know).

The Limningers can be said to partially entangle their acceptable purchases of *svart arbete* within the realm of private life, but still invoking an economic reasoning. The acceptable purchase of *svart arbete* is thus private and hidden but set against a public reference to what constitutes economic activities. Talking about informal purchases in this way could be defined as framing, done in certain ways in order to make the exchange more licit and acceptable. If done in this manner, it aligns itself with a contemporary Swedish regime of living (Collier & Lakoff 2005). It is within this regime that people fix, transact and juggle needs in their private lives. How the entanglement of these informal purchases is done impacts on their acceptability and is thus part of a Swedish regime of living.

Before moving on to how a purchase of *svart arbete* as an exchange is made acceptable in its entirety, I shall look at how compensation as a practice is used

in the entanglement process and more specifically at how it impacts on the acceptability.

Is barter *svart arbete*?

'Bartering services' says Börje, 'is about you fix this and I fix that. But I do not see that as working *svart*.' When asked if he has ever bartered, he laughs and adds, 'Ask me what I have not bartered.' and continues:

It is within the grey zone, if one should be frank. I think it is something we are born with, this market trading. For that's what it is [amongst people]. It is a continuous bartering, either you exchange services or you exchange money. Regardless of whether it concerns services or products. Has always existed, will always exist. You can never outlaw it and make it illegal (sic!) in society.

Börje does not consider exchanges of services, i.e. bartering, as illegal, since it is something which has always taken place. 'Bartering' will here refer to its theoretical meaning, as an exchange of services or commodities. We shall also see how bartering slips into a more encompassing meaning, implying either time as a calculating device or money as remuneration. There is a sliding tendency of talking about bartering, *byta*, instead of transacting as a way of making these exchanges more acceptable.

According to the Tax Agency, barterers are in fact illegal⁵⁵ as all exchanges of services that have value between and to private people are subject to taxation. In reality, the Tax Agency does not pursue barter to the same degree as cash-settled exchanges, as Tore, the taxation manager, pointed out.

Bartering has been seen as a forerunner of modern and monetarised markets (cf. Bohannan 1959). Bartering occurs not only where there is lack of cash as in the practice of *blat* in the former Soviet Union (Ledeneva 1998), in non-monetarised societies (Sahlins 1972) and when people prefer not to use money (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992:4). Bartering also takes place when the aim is to avoid contact with the authorities as described amongst the *popolino* in a section of Naples (Pardo 1996) and to evade taxes and fees in general (Hart 2001b:267). In anthropological studies, the concept of bartering has adopted an unconstructive meaning following Sahlins' definition of barter as 'negative reciprocity' (Gregory 1994). It was seen as an exchange between strangers in non-monetarised and primitive markets, performed on the same moral level as theft. Described as such, it involves minimal trust between exchangers and has little bearing on social relations (Zelizer 2005:41). In such a context, it is an immediate settlement of a transaction, not trusting the counterpart to settle the outstanding obligation at a later date.

Theoretical views on bartering display contradictions at different levels in society and community respectively. Portes et al. (1989:11) describe bartering on a macro level as a crucial feature of international exchange in the 1980s, when shortages of tradable currency were a major factor. This bilateral trading

between states contradicts the cash economy expanding on an individual level. The growth of these informal economic activities is seen to set society back to earlier days reviving 'old methods of exploitation', but also to provide more room for personal relationships (ibid.). This invokes an idea of the 'good old days' which simultaneously lessens the state's control of its citizens, not being able to levy taxes on them (Hart 2001b:267). Bartering work places the exchange more solidly within the idea of community and makes what can be considered illegal *svart arbete* more acceptable. As such, bartering is not a precedent to a monetary economy, but instead a means to get services more simply and economically within a complicated welfare economy. Bartering seems to rest on traditions, dwell in the present and will thrive in the future as people respond to changes in society's formal structures.

To understand bartering, the entire value system in which the barter takes place has to be appraised (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1992:15). Two examples from contemporary Sweden can illuminate how barter is used as a means of cheap exchanges. *Att byta ihop sig*, literally to barter together, is a practice described as a mutual help between and within two small villages in Dalarna (a region in mid-Sweden) during the last century. It provided stability in difficult times, made one's tasks easier and also taught people new ways of doing things. Those outside these 'exchange communities' could not muster life in the long run (Isacson 1994:80). *Att byta ihop sig* is now considered a thing of the past, probably extinct since small farming wound up in the 1950s (ibid.139). However, unregistered economic activities may still be extensive, regardless of whether households depend on salaries or on their own work (ibid.163). Isacson states that the borderline between *svart* and *vitt* is difficult to draw in the workings of small farms and traditional barter transforms into *svart arbete* when people experience increasing problems in affording services (ibid.237).

Another example of contemporary bartering in a Swedish urban setting is provided by a study of single mothers in a suburb of Gothenburg. These women cannot rely on welfare society alone, so crucial to their survival is having private networks in order to barter, lend and help each other (Gardberg Morner 2003). Bartering work can thus be an example of how an economic practice takes new shapes in response to a changing environment (cf. Kjellberg & Helgesson 2007).

Kristina, the study advisor, mirrors the above views. She is convinced that there is a lot of bartering going on in today's Sweden and pinpoints what many Limningers expressed. 'Maybe it has always been like that? You know you hear that people barter things. I think there is a lot of it, also privately you help each other. It all evens out.' Lena, an administrator, thinks learning to barter is part of upbringing but she is well aware that such exchanges are unlawful. For her bartering is a fact of life, a way to survive in society:

You should talk about it with your children, I guess it depends on their age, but with our two oldest [teenagers] we talk about it openly. If someone comes and does something. Dad helps him with medical services in return. This is a very good barter – they need to learn how society works

today. I would never say to them that it is *vitt*. Then I would paint a better picture of myself than who I really am. It is a bit strange, though. But, you have to tell them about your actions and their consequences.

Lena talks about a good barter as a way of making a bargain and she is quite explicit about teaching her children this. This contrasts with Kristina who has children of the same age. She would never tell her children if she and her husband do something dubious like buying services *svart* – which they hardly ever do. She does not want to teach her children to do something which in reality is breaking the law. Their justifications for bartering or not point in two directions. Lena's children should know how society functions. She could be said to compromise her informal purchases in regard to both the domestic and market worlds and does not oppose the mixture of both (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:312). Her family obtains a service for private use in exchange for the services her husband, the physician, can provide. Those services ought each to have been exchanged on the market and can exemplify the complicated relationship between the family and the economy (e.g. Robertson 2001:153). Kristina could be said to go along with the idea that market deals corrupt the domestic sphere. She also includes the civic world in her role of being a citizen – behaving unselfishly towards others and obeying laws and regulations (cf. *ibid.*:260).

justifiable bartering

Barter of services on a smaller scale is acceptable to most, a help to self-help. But not everybody has something valuable, of use-value, to offer. 'Often it is not the well-paid white-collar workers who work *svart*. It is the labourers. Those with good skills on offer', says Börje. Torsten, the civil engineer with a more theoretical education, agrees that barter is what craftsmen can do. He says wistfully 'if only I could barter services with someone like that'. Although he draws on the same type of relations as are involved in bartering, he has nothing to offer in return. So he settles the compensation directly, cash in hand, making it more distinctly a purchase of *svart arbete*.

Settling a deal by bartering can be more complicated than paying cash, as the worth of the services and/or products has to be estimated by other means than in cash. The objects exchanged are often different. The propensity to barter is there and it is of no great concern if one of the providers gets a bit 'more' than the other. The comparison is made in relation to what the services would have cost on the official market – *vitt*, with invoices, taxes and fees included. If a painter can exchange work (for private use⁵⁶) with an electrician, maybe the former puts in slightly more time than the latter whose work is certified in a different way. Both are happy with the end result, as having to buy the services would have cost three to four times what the work effort was worth net. For those with skills to offer, bartering is much more economical than buying.

We can compare this economic thinking with how the resulting relations of barterers have been described. Humphrey and Hugh-Jones discuss bartering 'as

creating social relations in its own mode' (1992:8). These are described as four types of relations. First, barter can consist of mutual payments, which require no further contact between exchangers. Secondly, the same type of barter can occur between exchangers, but ones who know each other and have a certain relationship of trust which makes further exchanges possible. Thirdly, bartering can occur by way of exchanged objects that have different values. Finally, there is the situation where a 'lack of precise balance in a barter is essential as the inequality sustains the social relationship and therefore the barterers need to continue' (ibid.8-9). Examples of all these have been provided above, but barterers are seldom applicable to only one of these ways; instead, they are seen to overlap.

These arguments can be illustrated by Tomas' case where he uses his professional relations to acquire materials for private use. Through his craftsman's work he visits many building and construction sites, meets many people and seems to have an extensive network to draw on. When we talk about his involvement in *svart arbete*, he hesitates a bit and then continues telling me about the construction of his *friggebod*,⁵⁷ small cottage or shed situated in one corner of his ground:

There is a *friggebod* up there. Now I am being really honest, it hasn't cost me many *krona*. I have exchanged services for materials. I've been at one building enterprise here and another there. 'Well, there is a stack of bricks behind there, are you going to use it?' 'No, it is a leftover from the construction of those 40 apartments.' 'It is just about what I need for the *friggebod* I am about to build. If I just charge half for that control report I did, can I take those bricks?' 'Yes, you just take them. They will be got rid of anyway.' There are those types of examples.

Tomas used his professional knowledge to acquire materials for private use, basically for free through customer relations. Not only are the objects dissimilar, he also barterers a service for a commodity. The relation between Tomas and the site manager is based on a professional relation. They have strengthened their relations by having made a smart deal with a reduced invoice exchanged for a stack of bricks. In addition, this hidden barter is concealed in order to avoid taxation. It is probably an unequal exchange converted into a strict monetary value, but those bricks have a different use-value for the construction company from that they have for Tomas. For the construction company they are probably a cost, as they have to be taken away as rubbish. For Tomas, those bricks have the same market value as if he had bought them from a store. This value is compared with what he earns net. So his bartering for the *friggebod* reproduces all four types of social relationships, as suggested by Humphrey and Hugh-Jones. The driving force is the monetary value of the transaction involved. It is much cheaper compared with what the alternative of paying cash, from his net income, would have been.

The informants talked about bartering as a good thing, both for getting by in everyday life and also creating and maintaining social relationships. Nevertheless it is not a practice supported by the authorities through the workings of the

Tax Agency. Tomas mixed his professional role with his aims for private use and was hesitant to tell me about this. He knew it is bordering on the illegal and perhaps also the illicit. However, Tomas barter as part of the formal deal and thus leaves a trace of the work he performed. He charges for some of the work provided and the acquirer gets a receipt, although for less than the amount he 'should have paid'. The deal looks straight and transparent, but there is a 'rebate' involved. This rebate consists of 'tax-free' commodities used for private means.

Bartering often means using your professional knowledge for private purposes (see also chapter three). The Limningers' tales about barter support Humphrey and Hugh-Jones' view, that it is a way of increasing social cohesion. Yet in the legal sense, bartering in Sweden is close to being *svart arbete*. A barter of services is in a welfare society a means of getting a service at reduced cost, which results in the state losing out economically. Barter of work must be very common, says Viktoria, the entrepreneur, especially among those with lower incomes. They try to exchange both products and services, since, as she says, who can afford to contract a carpenter for 325 *krona* an hour plus VAT? Bartering *svart arbete* in Sweden is thus done with an idea of its positive economic value. But, as Tomas' example clearly illustrates, the bartering is done in terms of an estimated *vitt* price, what the price of the service would have been on the official market.

It makes both economic and social sense for the Limningers to barter services, even if, for some, it borders on their conception of *svart arbete* as illegal.

organised bartering

During the focus interview, Göran and Sven come to think about bartering rings, as they tell me that there is at least one of these in Limninge. Throughout Sweden there are many organised barter rings with different, but often ideological, objectives; strengthening local economies as a response to 'globalisation', as part of the cooperative movement, supporting environmental concerns about transport, etc. Often quoted examples of these types of rings are the LETS system in the UK and the HOURS system in Ithaca, in the state of New York (Maurer 2005). HOURS is a currency system of its own, legal since it only consists of printed bills and no minted coins, but subject to US taxation like any other income (ibid.63). The conversion is one hour of input exchanged for another hour of work.⁵⁸ Bartering rings such as LETS and HOURS can be considered a clever and moral way of exchanging, harking back to the 'good old days' when people helped each other directly in a sort of moral economy. At the same time, it is also a resistance against formal structures, since 'the tax code and efforts to resist it occupies an important place in people's consciousness of HOURS' (ibid.45). There are thus diverse views on the morality of systems like LETS and HOURS, which create a fuzzy border between a 'moral economy' and a formal one. Göran and Sven snigger about this smart and licit way of cheating the state, and fill in on each other's examples of comparable

bartering possibilities in Limninge. They almost seem resentful at not being part of the local barter ring.

Organised social relations, for example at a workplace, can function as a type of informal barter ring, or rather it provides the relationships possible to exchange work. Especially if the colleagues have the skills needed, like a group of deft coast-guards have (see chapter three). Larry remembers when he started:

I have bartered a lot of work in my time. In the past, when someone [at work] was building a house, then the entire team put in time and helped out. There were electricians, platers, painters, carpenters – the lot. Then you knew that next year, it was time for somebody else and you had to put in a couple of weeks there as well. It just organised itself without anyone saying anything.

Svante barter in a similar way with his neighbours, although he does not want to be very explicit about it. He lives in a forested area in the southeast of Sweden where he has built a house next door to his grandparents' farm. He uses the attached stables to breed and train whippet dogs, his big interest. His regular income is from factory work, half an hour's drive away. He tells me: 'I have an excavator; I can dig for my neighbour. I would not declare that as an income.' When I ask if he gets money for it, he replies 'sometimes. Most often he does something for me instead.' And he adds, 'It is not legal, you know'. These are practices close to those Isacson (1994:116) describes for the region of Dalarna, simply performed under different wordings and probably concealed as most people know that today they are verging on illegality. Talking about it as barter is a way of reinforcing relations. In essence, it is not always barter, but it is talked about as such.

Staffan can provide another example. He has moved away from Limninge to the very south of Sweden. His newly refurbished white painted house is situated amongst a few others surrounded by larger farms in an open landscape. The small village where he lives lacks shops and has only a bus stop on the narrow main road close to his house.

Staffan talks about the necessity of establishing social relations via barter. 'Help thy neighbour' is something he refers to when we talk about exchanging work:

If you are friends with someone, you like them, you do it for free. I do not need to get paid for that [service], because of the neighbour relationship or just because you like them. Maybe it also just works out in the way that if you are able to barter you do it.

Staffan distinguishes further between barter and monetary settlements:

Today, if you speak with farmers, they claim that there is no point in using *svart* labour. It doesn't work out in today's systems with accounting for everything. You know, my brothers-in-law are farmers. But I think there is a lot of service bartering. If both parties regard the services exchanged as having [sort of] equal value, they do not necessarily send in-

voices to settle the accounts. You drive ten hours with your harvester and then I do ten hours for you. Or I get the straw from 50 hectares and you borrow that machine you do not have in return.

The above may be said to be a type of informal HOURS system. Irrespective of recompense, Staffan, Svante and Larry argue that in close relationships exchanges of work should not be considered as *svart arbete* although they could be seen as such in legal terms. Most informants found this an intrusion into everyday life. Pelle, an engineer, adds:

I want to make a distinction [between *svart arbete*] and bartering services. If a friend of mine is excellent at doing one thing and I, on the other hand, at doing something else, if we exchange time with each other. For example, I am good at tiling and he helps me nail. That's definitely not *svart arbete*, whereas it is when you exchange your working time for money.

A monetarily settled service makes for increasingly illicit types of *svart arbete*. Sometimes it can be considered licit, which I shall get back to. Pure bartering, on the other hand, is an expression of a closer social relationship. Pelle continues telling me about his uncle who gathered close family and other relatives during a weekend for a painting party round his newly built house. 'Should that be seen as illegal? There are probably a few who would insist that it is *svart arbete*. I would never agree with that.' All the relatives helped to paint, and when it was finished, they were all invited to a good meal. The uncle used family relations to get work done while simultaneously saving money and strengthening social relations between them as well as making a fun event out of tedious painting. To help kin and friends is a universal trait, but in the Swedish context, it is mostly seen as a practice existing outside the big cities (Isacson 1994).

The relational base for establishing barterers does not need to be only that of family, workplace or established organisations. Barterers can also be found within looser networks as exemplified by Tomas telling me about the construction of his small cottage. 'I have many friends in the building business; I do not need to buy any [services]. We just barter. So it is very, very little [I buy *svart*].' For Tomas these practices are part of working life. He does not have colleagues in the strict sense, as he runs his own firm, so he barterers with people he has met through work and thus established relations with. For him bartering is part of everyday practices and is thus acceptable.

Bo does not have the same inclination to engage in these relations. He was trained as an engineer and works a lot abroad in high-tech development research. Returning home to his wife and three children, he relaxes (!) by working on their summer home. He definitely does not like *svart arbete*.

The planned, systematic [barter] is not OK: It can happen, that someone helps someone else a lot. Then it can be recognised as a gift, not of money, but consisting of something else. For a friend you do something once, if unplanned when you do it for someone else – it is not *svart*. When it is systematised, by a craftsman who does something for many

people and on top of this expects something in return, then you have crossed the border in my view.

Sten believes that most small merchants follow systemised bartering practices:

Not to any hysterical amount. There is no-one who only barter, it would be criminal then. It is done in small proportions, bartering products with each other. For example, there is this shoe merchant, I get a pair of shoes from him and he gets a chair in return.

Sten pointed to this relationship in bartering with his then fellow shop keepers. Sten needs a pair of shoes. The value of these is jotted down by his acquaintance who sells shoes. At a later date, he in return finds a chair to his liking, the price of which Sten in his turn notes somewhere. If the values of shoes and chair are fairly equivalent the deal is closed, even if the relationship with the counterpart is not (cf. Graeber 2001:220). If any difference has not been settled for some time, they resolve the outstanding debt with a more practical cash payment. An exchange that is beneficial for both thus reproduces acquaintances and friendships but is still concealed from the rest of society. Settling with money makes the deal more illicit in diverse ways (see below). Bo and Pelle emphasise closer relations and the occasional barter as the main justification. Sten, on the other hand, takes barter for granted between relationships established through work. What they all agree on is that the approximate value of the barter cannot be too high.

Jenny, the hospital cleaner, summarises the above views and justifications when she says: 'There is a fine line between *svart arbete* and bartering services for something in return. Which I really think is a good idea. You know, if I am good at something and you at something else, can't we barter services? And not an *öre*⁵⁹ is exchanged.' She gets really excited at the thought, but also raises a warning. 'You cannot do this as you like, not for big amounts of money. The value cannot be too high.'

In the above we have seen that money as recompense makes an exchange less licit. In the following we shall see how distinguishing the acceptable from the intolerable is more complicated than the analytical distinction between barter and buys would suggest, although, according to Tore, that is where the Tax Agency seems to draw the line in practice. This means that a calculation of sorts also takes place while bartering, converting bartering into a monetary equivalent.

bartering with money

Tomas draws the line for the unacceptable in relation to what the income of *svart arbete* is intended for:

There is a bartering of services, like if I as a private person paint for my neighbour and he in return refurbishes my stairs. That definitely exists. It is neither the right thing to consider here, nor something I am concerned about. I ask my buddies to help me when I have to do something at

home. The question is if it concerns financing my life. That's where I would draw the line. If I do it to survive, to get an income and live on it, or if I do it to help my neighbour. You know, if we are good at different things and help each other, then it doesn't bother me. That's where I draw the boundary. But then you also have to think about the scope, if it is reconstructing the entire house or something similar... it is the money [which makes it *svart*]. People have always bartered services, you have always done that, I mean before there were means of payment – you help me and I help you, heigh ho.

This reasoning does not apply to all. Lars, working with project management in the building industry, has been heavily involved in both providing and buying *svart*. He does not regard money as the transformer of *svart arbete* into the unacceptable. 'Maybe the guys barter with each other, but I do not think it is that common. They would rather pay each other and that's a done deal.' What is called bartering is in fact the result of a network of people who exchange services. These are paid for in cash after each done deal, so they do not have to keep track of amounts outstanding. The prerequisite is a network of strong and weak ties consisting of friends, acquaintances, colleagues and friends of friends where money is simply a means of settlement. Money is the most practical way and here is just considered as a tool (e.g. Graeber 2001:66). These people also know that they can count on each other the next time around to continue to 'barter', although it is still settled in cash.

The intention behind the tax regulations is, 'in principle', to make all exchanges subject to audit, but as we heard from Tore, the legislation is somewhat unclear about the extent of the exchanges. There were many informants who argued that exchanges have the same meaning, when done between acquaintances and in closer relations – regardless if whether the settlement is monetary or a reciprocal outstanding obligation. By referring to informal exchanges as bartering instead of as purchases, they become less problematic although many of the Limningers said that money is what distinguishes illicit purchases from licit barter. Settling in cash is easier as you do not have to keep accounts of who owes whom a service. A cash settlement is paid, done and over with. Money makes an intentional 'bartering' simple.

Andreas, the factory co-owner, said that he also bartered, although he paid for it. 'When I and my family lived in a terraced house, back then it was more bartering, paying someone who was close. I have a relative who also was my neighbour. He is a bit more dexterous than I am. So I worked an hour extra and paid him.' This is still bartering in Andreas' world, although money intervenes. He works extra and with that extra money he pays his relative for work done at home. So a cash payment makes the deal really *svart*, yet it is framed as a barter of work to enhance a closer social relationship and hence licitness.

We can see a drift in licitness between talking about bartering and the practice of settling exchanges with money. The intention can be to barter in its real sense, as Sten explained. In his case, the deal could not be settled that way as he had no chair to the liking of the shoe-merchant to offer. But even 'real' barter-

ing, not involving cash, cannot be too organised, as both Sten and Tomas agree on. Amongst the Limningers, paying with money makes the exchange more illicit but the degree of organisation also has an impact. If done occasionally and without planned arrangements for settling an outstanding obligation, it becomes more acceptable.

To sum up, many Limningers are taught to barter and there is still a large general acceptance of this type of service exchange in today's Sweden. According to the law, bartering work is always *svart arbete*, but it becomes increasingly illicit when done with an idea of monetary value. An estimated *vitt* price is appraised. Doing a deal *svart* is by definition less expensive than the white and formal alternative (see chapter three for further discussion). When performed in private it is a practice that the Tax Agency does not worry about, Tore says, especially between people who are in close relations. The problem arises when it concerns knowledge of value acquired professionally but provided for private purpose and gains.

Swedish research on informal work recognises that bartering or doing a good turn to friends and family is not only performed for economic reasons, but is equally a token of social relationships (Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:236), which are important for a well-functioning society. So Swedes view barter, small fringe benefits and certain pieces of work as acceptable (Sjöberg 2000:34, Skatteverket 2006:4:26, 29) and for some, the social aspect has priority over the work itself (cf. Kring Lauridsen 1986:102, see also chapter six).

In strictly legal terms they are nonetheless regarded as *svart*. This was a fact that almost all Limningers were aware of. Especially if exchanges are organised, of larger scope, or are done using professional knowledge. Even if money is not involved, there is a certain hesitation. When the provider's livelihood depends on income from informally recompensed work, it is more illicit and thus clearly *svart*.

Talking about exchanges as taking place within the social relations of kin, friends and neighbours disentangles them from the market and thus from the state as well. The problematic question for the state is when barter refers to practices which in reality are cash-settled exchanges of work. It is one thing if friends and people in very close relations settle an exchange with money, but what about more loosely structured networks? When exchanges are justified as barter but do not build on existing relations or are newly established ones? Sten's and Andreas' pragmatic usage of money as a 'barter' tool brings the discussion to the meaning of money when settling an exchange.

The role of money

When we discuss the role that settlement practices have for *svart* dealings, Nina says about money:

Well should you be really correct, then it is [*svart*]. If you buy a service *vitt*, you pay for it plus all related fees. These extras you need not worry

about when you barter. In that respect, it is *svart*, definitely. However, I do not know if I think about it as *svart*, as truly *svart*. I cannot motivate it in any other way than with my feelings. Do you understand?

This ‘feeling’ makes the role of money as problematic to define for these Swedes as it is for social scientists. There is an array of views on what impact money has on the recompense and settlement of a transaction.

Money is most often described as an intermediary when trading products and services, facilitating exchanges of commodities (Hart 2001b:262). Sometimes money is described as just a tool, depicted as a means to effect one specific ritual, a payment, from one person (the payer) to the receiver (payee) (Graeber 2001:66). But money also transforms the relation between payer and payee (Crump 1981:94) as well as their role in society. Money is problematic as a means of exchange, since it ‘is indifferent to morality’ (Hart 2001b:213). Perhaps it is the amount paid which makes the difference, as to have or not to have money ‘can be identified with the holder’s generic, hidden capacities for action’ (Graeber 2001:94).

Paying with money is often held in contrast to bartering and depicted as evolutionarily superior to ‘primitive’ bartering economies (cf. Hart 2005:161-163). Money has been seen as undermining so-called traditional cultures, for example erasing spheres of exchange amongst the Tiv in Nigeria (Bohannan 1959). Bloch and Parry disagree with the view of money as the evil of modernity, arguing that it is just one aspect of a general symbolic world of transactions. They argue that, for each transaction, the temporal context has to be explored. Transactions are of either long- or short-term order, which constitute society in different ways (Bloch & Parry 1989:28-29). The short-term order consists of day-to-day trades, performed by individuals for daily subsistence exchanges. Transactions in the long-term strive more widely to maintain and reproduce the social order (ibid.24) and to preserve the social fabric. The long- and short-term cycles are described as interdependent, but are seldom directly so. Bloch and Parry suggest that by understanding the relationships connecting the cycles, we can understand the impact of money in a culture.

Another argument sees not money itself as making exchanges problematic, but rather the context in which they take place (cf. Zelizer 2005:39). In a study of US households, a context in some respects similar to Swedish society, Viviana Zelizer (1997) shows how money was earmarked, pinpointed and used a century ago. According to her study, the meaning of money is contextual and money as recompense does not necessarily mean a deterioration of relations between people. The latter condition was what George Simmel (1978 [1907]: 484-485) warned about; that money as recompense would create a distance between people and make the relation between individual and society more superficial.

Money can be seen to provide a connection with society in different ways, and it is also a symbol for something intangible (Hart 2001b:235). In this view, money is a bearer of collective memory which is inscribed in the root of its name *moneta* (the meaning being derived from the Latin ‘to remind’, ‘to tell’)

(ibid.256). For the Romans, it was a memento of the past and a sign of the future. The role of modern money can also be seen as a meaningful link between persons and communities. This link is symbolised in the coin by the issuer, as in 'heads' (head of state) and 'tails' symbolising value. Money is in this perspective a powerful tool and symbol for the state and its subordination of people as consumers and taxpayers (ibid.267) and also as a colonising power (Roitman 2005:11).

Money will not be regarded here primarily as a token of value, but rather through the implications and meanings it has compared with other means when exchanging and settling transactions. Compared with barter, money does not necessarily change the relations between exchangers, but does so in their relation to the Swedish state, regarding its role as both issuer of monetary species and as a collector of taxes. Coming next, it will be seen in closer detail how my informants discuss the way settling exchanges with money, rather than barter, changes the acceptability. This will be highlighted via synonyms for money as a form of settlement when buying *svart arbete*.

places to keep money

Money as a payment makes an informal exchange more illicit in the Limningers' perception. Hasse, the gardener, defines *svart arbete* as taking place when the wallet is taken out. Bartering when helping each other is licit, it is only when the wallet is opened that the work becomes *svart*. But Hasse does not object to either buying or working *svart*, as long as it concerns smaller amounts.

What is in my wallet decides what I can afford. When Anita and Linnea, a teacher, need to buy a service, they look in their wallets and based on the contents, the choice is made between *vitt* and *svart*. For them, *svart arbete* is not about cheating the state; those thoughts are more pertinent when they read about other people's *svart arbete*. A wallet indicates small-scale and private house-holding, whereas money in a briefcase is *svart arbete* on a professional scale. Anders, the plumber, recalled the payment he received for a job done at some refurbished pizzerias. In his view it is not the money itself that makes it *svart* or not, but the amount and the context, which is here illustrated by how it is carried around. A wallet belongs to an individual and there is not a lot of space in it. A briefcase, on the other hand, points to a more public environment. The briefcase can contain much more than the wallet and is usually carried around in professional settings. Larger amounts from informal transactions turn the operation into a business, a main activity that provides a livelihood. Anders did not say if the work he did for the pizzerias was with or without an invoice, just that he was paid in cash. Working too much *svart* professionally is not acceptable to him. As Anders explained, then you have to have a *svart låda*, literally a black box, somewhere in the firm. 'A black box' makes for an economy apart where informal incomes and informal expenses are kept. In these instances there can be talk of an informal economy within a firm, which is separated from the bookkeeping and audits. This was something Anders did not want.

Pocket money, *fickpengar*, is fine in his view. It is an even smaller amount than what a wallet can contain and is basically what children are given as a weekly allowance – not enough to be saved in the piggybank or even enough to put in the wallet. It is money for immediate consumption. Anders views the cash recompense he gets for the small jobs he does now and then as pocket money, ‘for snuff’, as he says. Talking about pocket money places the recompense in the private realm, regardless of how it is earned. This can be contrasted with the expression of ‘having the office in the pocket’, *kontoret på fickan*, which is perceived to be the business of small crooks. To have the office in the pocket is an unethical practice, there is no bookkeeping but the money goes in and out of the pocket unrecorded. Talking about ‘office’ turns it into something of a professional job, and carrying out business this way can be suspicious.

When paying someone ‘into the pocket’, you do not know exactly how much it really costs. There are no receipts, no record, just estimates. *Pengarna rätt ner i fickan*, money straight into the pocket, is an instant cash transaction where money changes hands and quickly disappears into the recipient’s pocket. Once in the pocket the origin of the money is lost. In the pocket it is close to the body – timeless, private and hidden from the surrounding world. Timeless, as there is no dated receipt on the transaction. Private as you do not check anybody else’s pocket which is an intimate place with its contents well concealed.

Receiving money, the seller is transformed into a potential buyer (Crump 1981:94), with the means to acquire something else. The transaction is covered, so that no one, apart from the transactors, knows about this change of roles. This is somewhat contrary to the notion of money as a means of making the transaction more public (Hart 2001b). Anders’ ‘snuff money’ literally lies in his pocket and is a small and negligible amount and thus acceptable to him – although earned *svart*.

concealed payments

‘*Svart arbete* can also be when you leave money under the table, *pengar under bordet*, to get a service or job done’ says Åke. The settlement money is concealed, not to be seen by anybody other than the transactors involved.

Åke’s professional background is a long career with big IT firms. He has slowed down and now he runs a small-scale IT entrepreneurship with his second wife as his companion. Where he lives there is a shortage of carpenters, ‘It is really a question of supply and demand. There are certain jobs where they say, I’ll do it in two years or we come on Saturday if you pay me under the table.’ According to Åke, the provider only wants to supply the service if the transaction can be hidden, not only from the authorities but also from competitors. The amount paid will be concealed from everybody except the purchaser and the provider, and so will the work itself. To work *vitt* in public and during normal working hours means bypassing other customers waiting for the service. The combination of getting work done outside regular hours and paying for it

informally provides an opportunity to bypass bottlenecks. In this case it is the supplier who can set the terms of the remuneration.

Paying the money *under bordet*, says Pelle, ‘is when someone who is more knowledgeable than me demands a payment without stating taxes and fees and I as an employer do not reveal the information [to the Tax Agency as everyone ought to]’. The concealment with ‘money under the table’ is done not only with the Tax Agency in mind, but also for competitors and others who think they have an interest in exposing a transaction. It is clearly a transaction as money changes hands, which Andreas confirms as he tells me that *pengar under bordet* is also used as an expression for bribes. He says it is a common practice when doing business in the Baltic states, adding that his firm never settles deals in this way as some of its competitors are said to do.

Money earned as payments for *svart* deals is hidden from the authorities. In this sense, the transaction is clearly informal, but not necessarily in an economy of its own. The origin of the money does not need to be illegal and this income is often consumed on the official market – *vitt*. In this sense money as payment transforms the seller into a (potential) buyer who can choose how to spend the money earned. It is a sequential process where both the transactors and the money act within one economy, most often the exchange is formal and accounted for, at other times paid in cash without an invoice.

Anita works as personal helper,⁶⁰ a job she loves even if it is badly paid. She has had several jobs, all related to caring for people; for children (see chapter three), for the sick and now for the handicapped. She is *särbo*, which means she has a steady relationship with a man she does not live with. She owns an old house which she shares with her two youngest daughters, a cute stray dog and cats. Anita has reflected a lot on *svart* purchases, she says, and finds them problematic. She tells me about last summer when the windows had to be painted, a job she had done *vitt*. It was awfully expensive, she says, and also awkward as the firm kept the windows for eight weeks. If she were to do it again, it would be done *svart*, thus less expensive and the windows could stay in place as a painter would come and do them at her home.

Another purchase Anita worries about is the new laminated floor for her living room which was bought with an employee rebate. A friend of hers works for such a firm, so it was not really *svart*, she adds. However, when they bought the wood-burning stove last year, a necessity for her badly insulated and insufficiently heated house, her boyfriend asked if they could ‘take it that way’, *ta det så*. He is self-employed and bought the stove through his firm. However, Anita is not very comfortable with this purchase. She explains ‘but it is really a purely economic matter for me. It really is. That’s what is negative about my work, the pay is really bad.’ When I ask if she thinks *svart arbete* is wrong, she is quite concise:

I really think so. It is somewhat sensitive and scary. You know that, especially with the stove which was bought on the firm. There may be... reprisals. You don’t know if something will happen... If there were an

audit in the firm there would be problems. I am not afraid for myself, though.

She wants these transactions to stay hidden. Framing the informal transaction in terms of *ta det så*, take it that way, is triggered by a perceived need. She cannot afford to buy the desired item *vitt*. Although money is involved, 'take it that way' as a settlement informalises the transaction even further. In addition, the fact that her boyfriend uses his professional firm to acquire products for her private use makes a problematic mix for her. She wants to keep the public and private spheres apart.

It is not often easy to live up to self-proclaimed ethics. Pontus, the photographer, does not like *svart arbete*. He defines himself as a moralist or at least he tries to be one, he says. The only time he has bought *svart* was for a part of the experimental camera he is trying to construct. 'I asked if he [the provider] could fix this. Rightio. So what does it cost, should we take it on the side? 4,000! Super, let's be in contact.' One-third of the camera is *svart*, he says, and when I ask why, he explains: 'I could not afford it. Well, I could, but it would cost too much. It has been *vitt*, almost all of it. But now the money is starting to run out. Only this part remained. So it became *svart*.' He adds, 'Someone asked, "should we *ta det vid sidan om*, take it by the side"? You feel it, it is how you pose the question. However, if you ask for a tender for getting your cottage painted, then there is no doubt that it should be *vitt*.'

Buying smaller and not too expensive things for private use can thus be licit when it is an occasional purchase, happening once in a while and not on an organised scale. Pontus, the self-declared moralist, just could not afford the last item needed for the camera within the budget he had. This project is semi-public as he has had funding for constructing this camera. The remaining parts are bought with receipts so it was easy to give in for a proposed 'rebate'. As he said self-consciously, 'One has morals as flexible as foam rubber. They can be pushed through a shutter and reappear on the other side.' Morals do not take account of specific practices but of the context. Buying *svart* and licit, the context means somewhat apart from the ordinary – private, occasional, hidden and of lesser value.

partly hidden exchanges

A justified exchange considered *svart arbete* is seldom informal in its entirety. A common request for work to be performed with the aim for both producer and consumer of making an untaxed cash profit on the transaction is 'if the remaining amount can be black', *kan resten vara svart?* It could be the work itself, as when Andreas wanted a paved terrace outside his new house. As previously seen, he is quite pragmatic about his occasional informal purchases. Andreas tells me about his new relation and his life in the newly constructed house. Formerly an active sportsman, his current workout is in his garden, he says. Afterwards he enjoys relaxing on the terrace with coffee or a few glasses of wine if at the weekend. The terrace is now finished, but the previous summer

relatives from the south visited and helped him pave the first part around his new house. The men worked hard all week whereas ‘the girls visited all the bloody stores of Limninge’. His recompense to his relatives was good food and wine.

This year he chose to buy the remaining paving work, but did it *svart*. One can speculate as to whether there was some strain on family relations due to the hard work the previous summer, where generous hospitality could not really compensate for spending a week of vacation working. Andreas did not buy the entire terrace *svart* from the start. He tried with the help from the family, but, although they often help each other out, this effort was probably too much. The remaining work was done partly *svart* instead. He bought the stones *vitt* from a firm with a receipt and they were able to provide him with workers. That was no problem whatsoever, the stones were delivered and the work was performed by professionals. But the invoice did not specify the work, which instead was settled in cash.

Although a part of the transaction was informal, most of it was invoiced which made the transaction seem legal, with the rest of it considered as a rebate. So what looked *vitt*, formal and invoiced, is just one part of the seemingly transparent transaction. When the work can be hidden, no one knows if it is done by family or by professionals or how it is paid for. In Andreas’ case, the first summer services for his terrace construction were barter, clearly taking place within the framework of social relationships. The next summer the work was *svart*. The denotation *svart* indicates that it was wrong, but for him it was morally acceptable since the state had already got a fair part (as VAT on the materials). This is a common practice and justification, used by many people.

clean and dirty money

The Limningers often played with connotations of the origin of money. Susanne, the PR manager, told me about the four different types of money people talk about. There is the regular cash, official, formal and clean. However, there are also three other kinds; that with wooden chips (coming from the building industry); the shaggy kind (originating at hairdressers) and finally, the olive-oily one (straight from the pizza parlour). These tarnished moneys stand in contrast to what Pelle referred to as his father’s description of ‘fresh money’, money unstained by taxes and fees. Fresh money comes from work, good hard work, and has not been in the hands of representatives of the state. In this view, bureaucrats do not work productively and generate money. They just take part of it, thereby dirtying themselves as Pelle’s father sees it.

The views about what clean money consists of do not say much about money itself, but rather about what generates money – or rather the value it represents. Furthermore, they do not tell the story of the origin of money, but rather where the value of a specific stash of money last came from, in whose hands the money had previously been. This inventive way of talking of the origin of money comes close to Hart’s definition of money as a reminder of what creates it – work. The flaky-hairy-oily money from the economic sectors

accused of being most infected with *svart* dealings (cf. Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:287) is generated in work, so although it is soiled it is still the result of production. The fresh money Pelle's father talks about should in this perspective, be dirty as well, but his way of referring to it instead directs the value of work towards so-called productive sectors, and to people who produce a materially visible change. Fresh money is clearly separated from public institutions as the latter are seen as taking, using and redistributing the money collected. On its way to being redistributed, a lot of it is 'wasted' on internal costs and wages, sometimes deemed excessive. Hasse has a similar view on the origin of value in society. He cannot understand how it all adds up, he says. In his view, it is only the exporting companies and those working within them who create value for Sweden. In principle, he seems to agree with the view of Pelle's father. The status of the informally earned money not only tells stories about whence it came, but also where it goes (cf. Galbraith 1975).

It has been shown how money, rather than barter, makes the informal exchanges of services more *svart*, more illegal and illicit. The 'feeling' of increased severity Nina talks about earlier can be understood in various ways. Maybe it is the flexibility of money which worries her and others? Is the 'feeling' an attempt to reject and to resist contributing to making *svart arbete* more common?

Although there are formal and informal economic activities, they are intertwined by the same money which keeps circulating in society. Acceptable informal transactions of work cannot exist in an economy of their own but have to be seen as part of the economy at large. However, the tolerable monetary purchase of *svart arbete* is sometimes articulated in spatial terms, evident in the ways of justifying the *informal* purchase. The transfer of money is then talked about as *under the table* or *taken on the side*, apart. The money is there but hidden from most people, and especially the state as tax collector. Finally, for the transaction to be considered licit, it can only involve smaller amounts of money. Anders confirms this when he says that a rule of thumb is that up to 10-15 percent of the business can be *svart*, otherwise the Tax Agency can find out about the dealings.

Money as settlement and the amount of it can thus be said to classify the severity of the act in the view of most informants. Money paid in larger amounts, which fit into a briefcase instead of the more private wallet, indicates an increasingly professional deal and is thus less acceptable. In certain environments, people are used to purchasing work informally but still talk about it as barter. This demands a more humble, but also more probable explanation – that the meaning of money resides in the personal connection, the meaning that each of us makes of it (Hart 2001b:263, Zelizer 1997:200).

The smart deal: cheap and simple purchases of *svart arbete*

Having seen the differences expressed between monetary transactions and barter and the way this informs the 'how' in a Swedish regime of living, the turn has now come for how this connects with 'should' (Collier & Lakoff 2005:24) –

the norms and values associated with getting work done *svart* and licit in terms of cheapness and simplicity. There are thus different articulations of how a supposedly *svart* trade is acquired through cash payment or by barter. Importantly, the aim is to make a ‘smart transaction’. Following suit, we shall see how it can be done, how the Linningers get value for money and how they talk about it. This obviously does not only concern the price paid but also how the trade is obtained. The smart transaction is thought of as ‘cheap’ and ‘simple’, logics not always distinguishable one from another.

In the beginning of this chapter, I tried to show why cheapness is important. Anders elaborates further. He looked at me over the coffee table at the back of his workshop with a tired expression when I asked about why *svart arbete* exists. ‘Just look at yourself. You want to do something. You live in a house, right? [Of course] you want to buy at the lowest cost possible!’ He tells me about people who come to him and ask for special plumbing devices for their boats. ‘Then he asks how he is going to pay for them. I know that, if it is for private consumption, most often he has to pay with taxed money and then he wants it at a cutrate. He has no use for the receipt, he cannot deduct it anywhere.’ Anders says that his colleagues reason the same way. Everybody wants to make a bargain when it is for private use. The choice can be simple with strained economic resources, because, as Tomas said, ‘it is a third of the price, you know’, comparing the price between deals made *vitt* and *svart*. The habit of buying inexpensively exists throughout society’s strata, which also means that it can be easy to choose for some purchases to be *svart*.

‘It is a habit, that it should be inexpensive’, says Hasse referring to his retired neighbours with no mortgages, with neat, well-kept houses and living off good pensions saved up through long working lives. It is not about being able to afford or not. It ought to be the cheapest. Annika, a book keeper, can complement his view:

Those who do not have enough money do it in order to survive; those who have money do it for the good transaction. They have economic minds as well. I do not think it is a difference between people. Those who can afford it, use *svart arbete* as well.

It seems almost taken for granted amongst these Swedes, innate in Anders’ question to me and in Annika’s words about economic minds. There are certainly many people who cannot afford to buy services formally – if they can afford them at all. But there are also many who always look for a good bargain. Lena explained the feeling to me, comparing a *svart* purchase with everyday house-holding practices. ‘[*Svart*] is like having made a really good purchase, it is like having bought something in a sale. You know, having seen this thing I thought about buying and now all of a sudden you got it with a big deduction. You really feel content’, she explained. ‘It is the same basic feeling, I think’.

Is this greed, the aim to get ‘value for money’? To always look for a discount when you are perceived as resourceful is not seen as good behaviour. Larry, the coastguard, has given this some thought in relation to dealing and discussing with people who buy his services. One of his anecdotes concerns a news clip

on television a couple of years ago. It was about a bank's executive director who had received a lot of money in a dubious way, and so-called ordinary people were interviewed about the event. Larry recalls:

Here come these two old ladies pulling shopping trolleys.⁶¹ This was in Stockholm. One of the ladies had pondered on this for a long time; she had really prepared and pulled the sleeve of the reporter. She said 'a lot wants more, the devil will never get enough and hell will never fill up'. She had thought about this for a long time and she left relieved and content.

What is a greedy purchase in the eyes of some people is economical behaviour for others. Kristina has neighbours who are awfully 'economical'. They always look for the cheapest or try to haggle. She does not understand how they have the energy to do this and she could not imagine using her time like they do. 'It is stinginess that drives them, that's it', Kristina continues, 'They want to get it as cheap as possible, don't think it is worth more. That's why they want it *svart*. Money rules.'

Greediness and the negative allure it carries are obviously not acceptable, whereas certain economisations are justifiable. Kristina told me later about her family's two-year old TV that had broken down. The shop where they bought it wanted an outrageous amount of money for the repair work, 1,700 *krona*. So she got really cross, and took the TV instead to an old man who repaired it for 200. 'I really wondered about the difference, how could this be, but that was *svart*, he works *svart* ...I really felt good about it [this deal] you know, I saved 1,500. I went to his house and this old man fixed it just like that. He has done this since '69.' The combination of fairly new stock breaking down and the salesman's demand for an excessively expensive repair was just too much when the opportunity came to fix it cheaper. For Kristina, this was not stinginess, but a moral transaction mediated by a too costly demand for an object which should have operated longer. Although she does not like *svart arbete*, the main reason for her decision was that it was less expensive, a lot less, than having the shop repair the TV. She also felt she could trust the old man because of his reputation. He had done this for more than 30 years.

the smart restaurant meal

During the focus interview, there was a long discussion about being clever, not only in general, but participants also wanted to make an impression in the eyes of each other (see also chapter two). One way was to astound each other with stories about being smart, gaining or saving money. At the focus group discussion, Björn, the trucker, is adamant that he does not want to be made a fool of by someone who pretends to be selling *vitt* and by omitting to issue receipts makes the deal *svart*. 'Chinese [restaurants] are a typical example. You call and demand some Chinese food and then you come for the take-away. 'So you don't get a receipt?' Maria, the office assistant, inquired. Björn continues:

Check it next time. You really have ‘a golden edge opportunity’, *guldkant läge*, then. I just take out an even amount of money [less than what it costs] and offer that and say, so we are even then? They haven’t registered it in their machine, it is *svart*. They intentionally do every other one [meal] ‘black as coal’, *kolsvart*. I am convinced, I’m not dumb. Then it is outside the boundary [of the acceptable]. I refuse to do them a favour.

For Björn, the acceptable informal transaction has to be perceived as one in which both transactors have gained. When Björn says it is black as coal, this restaurant purchase is not only illegal and *svart*, but also illicit as the intention included cheating the purchaser – not only the state. Although a small amount, this behaviour is not acceptable unless Björn is part of the transaction and is able to benefit himself. He does not want to be defrauded for the benefit of someone else. If they cheat the state, he wants to be part of it.

Bo and Tore, on the other hand, refuse to be cheated or to cheat the state. They told similar stories about the involvement of restaurants in *svart arbete*. Tore knows it first-hand through his work. When he goes out for lunch, he always makes sure that he gets a receipt and that his meal is properly registered in the restaurant’s cash machine. He does not take the golden opportunity Björn talked about at the restaurant. Tore checks that he gets what he pays for, both for the meal and the contingent VAT. No one should gain at his expense and he wants to do things correctly. In contrast to Tore and Bo, who verify that their meals are registered, Björn makes sure that, if the provider cheats, it is not on account of him. Tore and Bo remain in the formal market forcing a potential cheater to give them receipts. Björn talks about his deal informally as a ‘golden edge opportunity’, *guldkant läge*, and takes advantage of the situation. The restaurant owner took the initiative and this is the occasion that Björn acts upon. Saving some money by chance, getting a golden edge in daily life, feels good.

The (thin) golden edge can have several meanings. It has been described as the consumption possibilities that are available beyond the everyday survival, those goods made possible to acquire due to increased supplies of luxury food-stuffs and goods (Söderberg 2002:194). In Björn’s case, it is the unexpected possibility of earning or saving that little bit extra, that makes a good deal – some money saved for something else, for a ‘rainy day’ or a special occasion. It is an opportunity taken which makes the smile appear.

A third way of putting it was ‘spicing up the bland mashed potatoes’ or adding ‘cream to the mash’, *krydda* or *grädda på moset*. This is more intentional, adding a little luxury to the ordinary life of mashed potatoes, getting money for something else when no extras are otherwise possible. This kind of talk was used when providing, selling, a service *svart*. The income received in this way can be used for a vacation or some luxury item, something the ordinary income does not allow for. ‘You know, I think it is often this little, the little extra they want. I mean, it is rarely the well paid civil servants who work *svart*.’ Hasse says that he completely understand those in their thirties who work a lot extra *svart*, who have a family with small children, a newly bought house and a lot of ex-

penses. It is natural that they want to earn some extra money, ‘to spice up’, *krydda*, the everyday.

Diverse ways have been discussed of entangling a market transaction in a more private realm, while simultaneously making what is considered a good and ethical deal. Purchasing work informally as a way of being smart does not mean benefitting at the expense of the counterpart. It is about doing a deal that should be fair for both exchangers (although, if not knowing so, at least suspecting that it is at the expense of the state). Björn pays less than the marked price for his Chinese meal. As Björn claims that the meal is not officially accounted for, he is not going to be overcharged and cheated. He did not take the initiative in this deal, but acts upon the opportunity to save a few *krona*. The fact that in the end it is the state that loses out is not his problem (see chapter seven for a more thorough discussion on this). Tore says he makes sure that his lunches at restaurants are always registered, as he knows that the restaurant business is one of the most heavily affected by *svart arbete*. He stays in the official market.

Kristina points out the possibility of making a smarter deal. She entangles this transaction in more private realms, in practices performed by an old retired man in his home, who does things simply and inexpensively. If she had had her TV repaired expensively at the store when it was still quite new, and thus in her mind should have been subject to warranties, she would have felt cheated. Instead, she felt smart about this deal once it was done. This is not continuous greed such as her neighbours exhibit and which in her view is narrow-minded and a bad personal trait. However, when there is too blatant a difference in price, there is the feeling of being cheated and the ease of getting something fixed. Then it is stupid not to make the smart deal.

These few examples show how conceptions of the cheap and the smart intervene and reinforce each other in an almost tautological manner. Buying a service cheap is smart, it is money saved for something else. To be smart in the context of buying services means neither letting an opportunity to buy something cheap pass by, nor being fooled by others. However, it has to be done with certain flair, without showing too much intention. The entanglement in a private sphere is done with reference to norms such as habits, smaller amounts and the occasional purchase that makes life simpler and less expensive. Even if the smart deal is informal, common to all of them is the combination of circumstances which make the deals acceptable. Buying or bartering exceeding these limits increase the illicitness.

Below is an example of a commonly quoted situation of having work done *svart*, which more explicitly puts simplicity as well as trust into the picture of the smart deal – car maintenance. Doing a smart deal means framing the entire exchange in terms of cheapness, simplicity and trust.

a car repair made simple and cheap

Many of the informants referred to car repairs as a sector prone to be settled *svart*. Visiting a garage can be a cumbersome venture today. There is something

minor to repair on your car and you ring up your local authorised garage for an appointment. First they want to check out the problem, to estimate the repair time, which parts are needed and when they can be acquired. All these items considered, you get another appointment for the actual repair. On both occasions you might have to arrange for transport from the garage or alternatively rent a car. For older cars it is even worse as they are not prioritised in the authorised dealer's workshop. Some parts or tools needed for older models might not even be available.

Börje was furious last time he turned his old Volvo in for maintenance at the authorised Volvo garage. He went several days before his father turned in his new Volvo, but still Börje was not able to fetch his car before his father got his back. Börje argues that these authorised repair shops do not care about older cars; they only want to maintain the newer models with their speciality tools. To Börje, it is very much simpler to take his car to a neighbour or to drive over to a friend or an acquaintance on a Sunday afternoon and have it fixed while you have a talk. And the price is a lot less, of course.

Linnea's husband could be the kind of acquaintance who helps people repair their cars. Sometimes she moans when yet another car stops outside their house, 'not another one'. But she laughs and seems proud of him when adding that her husband is lucky to have such a nice wife who just asks for his companionship at Sunday dinner.

Maybe Janne has a friend like Linnea's husband? Janne readily pays something extra if he knows someone who is good at fixing things:

I have a friend who fixes my car. I have great confidence in him, I feel it will be done well. I'd rather give him some extra money than go to a big shop where I do not know the people. I get quality and if something happens he will fix it. That's one reason for me to use *svart arbete*. I know someone who is good at something.

For Janne, the seemingly informal car repair is more transparent than a formal one. Janne knows his limits when it comes to car repairs; that is, he does not know what is wrong with the car and he cannot repair it himself. But he does not trust big authorised garage establishments where he could be cheated. He does not know what they do to his car, whether they provide the best or the least expensive solution. Did they actually repair it and did they change the part they claimed to have changed? Did they add any unnecessary items or redundant work to the bill?

Janne combines his incompetence in car repairs with trust and social networking in order to get his car repaired cheaply and simply. These are the deliberations of a Swedish version of Callon's *homo economicus* who uses social relations very explicitly to make a rational choice. Finding a pragmatic solution to an everyday problem might involve an informal purchase just to do it simply. Car repairs are only one example of this. The transactions are doubly rationalised in terms of market behaviour as it becomes both less expensive and simpler to fix the car this way.

Janne talks about the garage mechanic as a friend. He thus entangles this market transaction in a more private exchange between people who have closer social relations. Janne says he is ready to pay extra for this trust. So he justifies his *svart* purchase by emphasising trust and friendship, transferring the transaction to his private realm. It can be viewed as making a compromise between the domestic world defined by friendship and trust and the market world. It is a 'personalised relation' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:313).

Lennart, the marketing manager, regrets not knowing someone who can maintain his car for these minor faults. To get it fixed simply and cheaply:

I had the car in [at a garage] for a check-up as I thought something was triggering the servo steering. There was some kind of cracking sound in the front. They checked it at a dealer's garage, found two minor problems and the car was there for half a day. Just to look at it cost 1,100, to repair anything would have cost 10,000. At least for the first part, it would be great if I knew someone or, if I was smarter myself, I could have known myself, and gone to the scrap yard and bought it second-hand. It would have cost a pittance and everything could have been fixed fairly *vitt*. But with authorised dealers' garages, you are at their mercy with your lack of knowledge.

Simplicity does not only apply to car repairs. Lena tells me about arrangements for her family's summer home:

You know, there are many things to fix in the summer home, plumbing and such. My mother-in-law has many contacts, retired people who come and fix things cheaply. It is great. I just call one of those people and say 'it is me.' Darn easy and flexible. They come when they have time to help. We hide the keys somewhere and trust them completely. You know, thinking one step beyond, in the way we use *svart arbete* the personal contact is very important. We know them and it is simple. If not, you need to call a firm not knowing who will come, and next time around someone else will come.

Lena seems almost triumphant when she tells me of the simplicity of getting things repaired like this. It is a beneficial transaction for both parties, creating good relations. Although the transaction is finished once it is paid for, the trust builds up with each job done and settled. So it is neither an open-ended barter nor an outstanding settlement between the parties, but trust established by recurring exchanges in this simple manner. It is an extra income for the retired person, performing a job when it suits him. For Lena and her family, there is a person who can take care of unexpected problems which cost them little and without their having to drive out to their summer home. They want to keep the relationship going, just in case. This person acts like an insurance, someone who can be called upon in case of an emergency.

exchanging within a Swedish regime of living

Simplicity, trust and price are negotiated, together with knowledge and control. Several informants talked about active participation in processes around the house. There are certain things you want to do yourself, which is not necessarily a rational choice in terms of money and time used, but instead triggered by a desire to have it done in a specific way – making it simple.

Torsten is an engineer and partner in a consultancy firm he started some years ago with a few former colleagues. He lives with wife and two daughters in Limninge, works hard but also finds time to train their soccer team. Torsten is quite good at craftsmanship. When they moved into their house, he said he did most of the bathroom himself, but had a plumber to help him with certain things. When I ask why he used *svart arbete*, he does not hesitate:

Why? Simplicity. The first job we had to do at home, I think it was the bathroom. We got an official estimate of what the cost would be. Then I did most of it myself. Took that plumber for the small things. The result was good and I saved a lot, really a lot. *Svart arbete* is something in between. It is not only money which decides when you buy *svart*, it is also simplicity. I am the type of person who thinks that a personal relation is worth much more than a piece of paper with ‘We hereby guarantee... bla bla.’ Our kids play together, I know him. He lives here. If there is something wrong he will come and fix it. That knowledge is worth at least as much as the paper with a warranty.

This is a pragmatic and rational (in Weber’s terms) way of getting something done, but informed by economic negotiations. Torsten starts the process by obtaining a tender. He has a price to which he can relate his further negotiations. The prerequisite for informal purchasing is cheapness; he knows what it would cost with an invoice (as was shown in chapter three). Where and when his knowledge dries up, he very pragmatically gets help from an acquaintance. As it is *svart*, the plumber does not leave a receipt and if a leak or similar appears, there is nothing to show an insurance company. The personal contact and the trust established by it is a prerequisite for an informal service transaction. This feeling plays on the relationship between transactors; they are neighbours and their children play together and thus belong to the same community. They share trust within this specific transaction but do not need to share other views on life – except agreeing on not to disclose the transaction to the state (cf. Slater 2002:240).

Torsten continues explaining the simplicity of using *svart arbete* this way:

You know, if someone comes to do it *vitt*, then they’ll come on Thursday at such and such time and they need this and that and... But if I want to do a threshold in between the work they do. Everything should be so quick and well planned. A *svart* job is by the hour and if I do it I come Thursday evening instead and... that’s a big reason why I like it, you control it [the process] yourself and can be part of it yourself.

As we have seen, many justified their informal buys with reference to simplicity and ease. How these purchases are talked about can illustrate the ‘configurations of ethical elements – forms of practice, norms, modes of reasoning – that recur in diverse situations’ (Lakoff & Collier 2004:427). It is not only a monetary transaction made at a reduced price with cash straight in the pocket. To make the cheap purchase acceptable also includes easiness, time saved arranging and making the work happen. It takes place without awkward paperwork, thus there are no written receipts, warranties or other documents to be concerned about. From the purchaser’s viewpoint, there is transparency in the practice and knowledge of what the work done actually consisted of. The earlier mentioned dexterity of being able, or unable, to do the job oneself is supplemented with knowledge about the process. In this way the deal is simpler and more transparent for the buyer but at the same time hidden from the authorities.

Concluding remarks

Exchanges, transactions and barter of *svart arbete* between the Limningers display a verbal creativity. These more or less acceptable transactions, concealed not only from the state but also from other people in society, are justified and made licit in a number of different ways. Creating synonyms demonstrates fantasy and creativity. These representations are a play on words, often told with a smile as the transactions also endow the purchaser with ingenuity. By playing on words and referring to these purchases by nicknames, they are framed in the realms of private life and social connections. In the process, the transactions are disentangled from the formal market.

Talking about *svart arbete* is not only done in a joking manner and reveals the act of cheating, but the talk shows that, as an exchange, it is a part of life. ‘Exchanges have always existed’, it has been noted, regardless of whether the causes are pure survival, not having enough money or attempting to get a service performed as cheaply as possible. But, in order to make a purchase licit, it has to be justified in certain ways.

Getting by in everyday life involves for many the occasional purchase or barter of work which can be considered *svart arbete*. It can even be that buying or bartering *svart* is the only way to get help for private use as the alternative of buying the service *vitt* is just too expensive.

One of the main explanations for informal purchases of work is their cheapness. Noting that the cheapness should not be at the expense of the counterpart, to make the deal licit both parties should be able to gain from it. But it is a habit to try to make smart deals in the sense of cheap and simple deals and the transactors pragmatically use social relations to obtain them as such.

We have seen how money is a means of settling exchanges more easily but also makes the connection with the state more pertinent. It is the government which issues money and which collects taxes as money. When the Limningers talk about cash payments for informal purchases, it is the small and almost

negligible amounts, which are acceptable. Settling the exchange with money makes the links to the worlds of market and state more pertinent and the *svart* deal becomes more explicitly an act of cheating. Therefore exchanges are often referred to as barter, even if in essence they were a buy.

Barter is viewed here as an old practice in new clothing. Bartering can be done with trustworthy people, but is informed by notions of cheapness and simplicity. Talked about as barter, the informal purchase is moved closer to the realm of social exchange. There is a reverse disentanglement, away from the formal market, exemplified by referring to cash-settled deals as barter. When money alone is used for compensation, a quite clear division between the licit and the illicit buy is drawn. Another aspect of illicitness is the size of the deal and thus of the recompense or the repetition of the exchange.

Cheap and simple make up part of the 'should' in the Swedish regime of living, i.e. a deal should be cheap and simple to qualify as a licit *svart* deal. We have seen throughout this chapter that the licit purchase also has to be the occasional and small deal, where the difference in price between *vitt* and *svart* is significant.

The purchases of acceptable amounts of *svart arbete* take place here, there and everywhere. No sectors are exempt, but they seem to take place wherever there is a possibility of concealing the transactions. Buying *svart* is often about seising the moment, taking an opportunity when a need occurs or a possibility offers itself. In so doing, issues of settlement, amount and timing inform the acceptable purchases.

Although the focus has been on the exchange, there have been diverse references to the social relations it creates. Next, the gaze will be lifted from the cheap deal to the Limningers' interpretations of the relationship between transactors (chapter six) and their relation to the contemporary Swedish state (pursued further in chapter seven).

6. Helping out: Reciprocity as relation building

‘Reciprocity represents the elegant combination of self-interested concerns with the requirements of social life’ (Komter 2007:103).

Most often we barter or we help each other, all people do, don’t they? It is a type of service. These normal everyday exchanges make up a big grey zone. Maybe you are good at cutting hair and maybe I am a plumber? Or? Where is the border [between *svart* and *vitt*]? It is really, really difficult.

Andreas introduces the topic for this chapter. Everybody exchanges and helps each other, but this universal human propensity is also in some circumstances illegal. As has previously been noted, the Swedish legislation considers all services having economic value as subject to taxation. This also implies that exchanges within close family relations are legally regarded as purchases of *svart arbete* – if disclosed as such.

Although hardly anyone declares their petty earnings, expenses or barterers in their yearly income statement, a former expert at the Tax Agency, J. Svensson, wanted to test the rules. His account underscores the fact that exchanging strictly according to the law is not always easy. It also supports Andreas’ ponderings on how purchases of *svart arbete* can be truly paradoxical for the individual aiming to live according to norms, laws and regulations. J. Svensson’s tale illustrates how the Swedish regime of living is politically constructed.

J. Svensson’s daughter asked him to help babysit for his grandchild and as compensation he asked her to invite him for dinner. The value of the dinner he estimated at 250 *krona*, a sum taken up as income in the obligatory income-tax return submitted annually. Subsequently he was taxed on this amount, a result he appealed against stating two objections. First, that the social relationship between the exchangers was very close, as he received compensation from his daughter. In addition, that the sum received was less than 1,000 *krona*, an amount which is less than what needs to be declared. This appeal was turned down on both counts in a three-page letter. The sum received could not be regarded as any other type of taxable income and was instead added to his professional salary (however no social contributions needed to be paid as the amount was less than 1,000 *krona*). Secondly, the fact that the relationship between the exchangers was between child and parent did not change the decision.

For a citizen aiming to be at once law-abiding and morally consistent in one's practices, this presents a dilemma. Especially if one wants to be a helpful grandfather, friend or neighbour. Although the Tax Agency has never been known to chase kin and friends helping each other in this way, the definition of *svart arbete* makes it clear that exchanges having economic value should be subject to taxation – if reported as income. If these rules are tested, as J. Svensson did, they are enforced, and most activities we do to help to make life easier for each other thus risk being illegal – if we include the counter prestations.

Creating and maintaining reciprocal relations for the mutual benefit of both parties, can thus be considered *svart arbete*. Old ways and more organised habits of helping which are still in existence today are often opposed to the tax legislation, for example the local Swedish custom of 'bartering together', *att byta ihop sig*, between neighbours and relatives (see previous chapter). This was described as a tradition still in existence into the 1950s (Isacson 1994:141) and, according to many comments heard, it is still a very active practice, especially in rural Sweden. The expression also emphasises the social aspect, as in *ihop*, meaning 'together' – that people who barter act on their social relations. A modern urban variety of this type of exchange seems to be the carpenters in my neighbourhood who 'help each other', well knowing that it is a sort of *svart arbete*, since this 'help' represents economic values hidden from the gaze of the authorities.

It is within this spectrum of diverse reciprocal relations that the acceptable purchase of *svart arbete* will be analysed here. This chapter and the next one aim to discuss purchases of *svart arbete* in terms of reciprocal relationships and what this means for the society in which exchanges take place. In this chapter reciprocity focuses on the relationship between buyer and seller, not only in a dyadic sense, but as part of the larger community to which they feel they belong. In the next chapter, the state will be brought directly into the deal. This broadens the view on reciprocity to include three parties – a triadic relation.

These two chapters can also be seen as oppositional in character. In this chapter, the focus is on giving in order to sustain and reinforce relations. In the next, the emphasis is on taking back – as a balancing act in order to settle outstanding accounts.

aim and outline of the chapter

In this chapter, the focus is set on the dyadic relations between exchangers of *svart arbete*, outside the realms of a formal market and thus also of the state. The emphasis is on the purchaser of *svart arbete* as a social being, wishing to create reciprocal relations in a world of mutual obligations (cf. Davis 1992, Mauss 2002 [1990], Narotzky & Moreno 2002:285). The justification for purchasing *svart arbete* in contemporary Sweden is here closely tied to initiating, developing and maintaining social relations through exchanges in different configurations.

Initially, a selection of theories of reciprocity and the implications they are said to have for individuals' relations will be presented. With these theories in mind, we can better understand how the Limningers justify *svart* transactions of

services in terms of ‘help’, *hjälp*. Help is an explicit act of doing something for somebody else, not completely altruistic as the help most often creates an expectation of a return. Nevertheless, it is far from the idea of a competitive market exchange which is concluded, finished and mostly forgotten in terms of whom one is dealing with. Help raises reciprocal feelings similar to those invoked by a gift in the world of commodities.

The chosen examples aim to illustrate an increasing scale of illegality; from the innocent, unplanned and occasional help, to helping out between people with closer relations stretching to the other end of deliberate purchases of *svart arbete*. Like talking about getting help when in fact it is buying *svart*. We shall see how an illicit acquisition is made more licit by referring to it as ‘help’.

When making purchases of *svart arbete* acceptable, the provider has to possess certain qualities and so does the relation between the exchangers. In the final part, we shall discuss how knowledge and trust inform reciprocal feelings in various situations. These reciprocal relations can then act as replacements for warranties enforced by governmental laws and regulations. These clearly informal and illegal purchases, still often referred to as help, contrast with the more licit deals of ‘help’ where the aim is to strengthen social relations.

Reciprocity and exchanges

Exchanges in informal settings or in so-called primitive non-market economies have often been explained in terms of reciprocity. The standpoint taken here is that the notion of reciprocity is useful for understanding informal but licit purchases of *svart arbete*, not as an all-explanatory concept but as a way of addressing the relationships individuals aim to produce and reproduce while exchanging. Not only is reciprocity ‘the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit,⁶² but an important ingredient in theories of human solidarity and of the making of community and society.

Marcel Mauss is usually credited with having set the reference point for a theory of reciprocity in his book *The Gift*. He describes the impact of a one-way transfer of a good, a service, or an act of recognition and how it creates relations between the giver and the recipient. A gift is thus much more than just a material thing or something of value which changes hands. It is a ‘system of total services’ through which social relations are produced and reproduced within a community (Mauss 2002 [1990]:7). How things are exchanged describes the quality of these social relations. According to Mauss, the norms of the gift are three: to give, to receive and to reciprocate i.e. to give again but with diverse but appropriate time lags in between, depending on what the gift consists of in each instance (ibid.45).

What and how much is given is of great contextual importance. Receiving without being able to reciprocate degrades the recipient. For example, almsgiving, supposedly given without expecting something in return, results in a display of status, that one is higher in rank than the other (Mauss 2002 [1990]:95). The opposite, not accepting or returning a gift, is described as a snub and an act of

hostility (ibid.17). Through examples from so-called primitive societies, Mauss sketched some implications of giving and reciprocating in his contemporary society in order for it to be fair, equal and peaceful (ibid.106). This ideal society would be based on generosity and reciprocity through exchanges, since exchanges are 'total social services'. In this utopia, members should contribute to it through work and they should be able to rely on themselves and not on others. This would result in peaceful societies built upon individuals who exchange – between each other, in groups or as larger entities, i.e. nations. The idea on which the European Union was constructed comes to mind.

So Mauss saw the gift in broader terms than as a relation between giver and recipient, since he stated that the aim with a gift could also be to appease the gods or create peace amongst people (Mauss 2002 [1990]:21). Exchangers have diverse strategies with their exchange, so a broader context needs to be identified than one wherein two exchangers transact.

One of the ethnographic accounts Mauss used was provided by Bronislaw Malinowski. His functionalistic interpretation of the *kula* in the Trobriand Islands – ceremonial exchanges consisting of necklaces and bracelets in intricate exchange relationships – argued that the established relations were a foundation for trading the necessities for survival and living. Thus, he showed the importance of building and maintaining social relations through gift-giving. Malinowski's description of the *kula* exchange has been subject to other interpretations such a prestige competition (Strathern & Stewart 2005:233) or 'the complement to and fulfilment of the division of labour' (Gouldner 1960:169). These interpretations always come back to the reasons for exchange, that through the *kula* peaceful relations were established which made it possible to exchange the more utilitarian goods. Important to note was that the exchanges of different types of goods existed in different spheres, i.e. a valuable within the *kula* circuit could not be exchanged for ordinary food stuff. Malinowski thus established that exchanges were made in different ways and with different purposes, but that it was 'impossible to draw a fixed line between trade on the one hand, and the exchange of gifts on the other' (Komter 2007:95). However, attempts to define fissures between diverse types of exchanges continued, where each type was seen to inform a specific type of social relation.

the implication of diverse reciprocal relationships

In an overview of so called stone-age economies (1972) Marshall Sahlins defined three types of reciprocal relationships which have had a large influence on how exchanges are viewed within anthropology. Generalised reciprocity is giving without expecting something in return, occurring between family, kin or close subjects who have many other social relations besides those based on exchanges. Within a community the reciprocity is balanced or symmetrical, more like transactions although not settled immediately, but where both parties are believed to benefit. The exchange is based on a fair amount of trust due to closer social relations. The third and final type of reciprocity is the negative type, such as theft and barter. One transactor earns at the expense of the coun-

terpart and the relationship established is one between enemies or strangers. These three categories were not described as distinct, but rather occurring on a continuous scale (1972:193), similar to Malinowski's earlier attempt of grading all exchanges in the Trobriand Islands, from pure gift to barter (Mauss 2002 [1990]:93). The difference was that according to the latter, barter was seen as void of creating reciprocity between exchangers. Sahlins' distinctions have been criticised for not paying enough attention to the dealings between exchangers (Lebra 1975:551), for keeping the reciprocal modes too distinct (Gregory 1994:924) and within modes of generalised reciprocity as 'there is probably more balancing than meets the eye' (cf. Befu 1977:264, see also Zelizer 2005). In addition, equalising theft with barter has given the latter a negative allure.

Most theories about exchanges have emphasised the dyadic relation between exchangers (Befu 1977:261). Harumi Befu instead argues that exchanges provide a frame wherein individuals' strategies are analyzed in order to understand how they want to obtain something – both on an individual and at a collective level (ibid.276). This 'something' does not necessarily need to be reciprocated in content, the aim might instead be to obtain status in the recognition of others. Focus should be on what is given and how the recipient (re)acts, which articulate norms and rules within the society in which the exchange is performed. This approach could also address why someone bothers to do something about something that is not of his or her concern directly. Exchange is thus not seen as the sole originator of society, but as one brick holding society together as it creates personal relationships between actors (ibid.255). I shall return to Befu's model below.

Another perspective emphasising how exchanges are part of all aspects of modern life is the 'economy of regard'. Avner Offer argues that societies cannot be said to be built upon reciprocity recognised within official and formal exchanges, since people in modern societies spend a vast amount of their time outside the market (1997:459). An 'economy of regard' can be said to operate when the outcome of an exchange is closer social relations. Offer states that 'exchange is not only an economic transaction, it is also a good in itself, a process benefit, usually in the form of a personal relationship' (ibid.451). In this view, exchanges are performed in various forms of social interaction; in markets and also within the family or in domestic work.

Offer thus argues for an interconnected approach to studying exchanges, namely restricted to neither the private nor the public sphere (where the market could be seen to exist). For example, the business lunch is used to create personal bonds, but exchanges then also risk turning corrupt. 'A strong gift economy can crowd out the market if exchange depends entirely on reciprocal inclusion' (Offer 1997:469). The economy of regard is at work wherever incentives are affected by personal relations. The core of the economy of regard is the household, but it also exists in small groups or in face-to-face negotiations. Reciprocity thus intrudes in the market due to the fact that it is people who exchange. For example, Offer argues that the most successful businesspeople are those who best understand the gift economy – when, where and what to offer as a gift in relation to trade prospects (ibid.468).

According to these views, reciprocity is a result of exchanges within all aspects of modern life, distributed however in different doses depending on the context and the previous relation between exchangers. Reciprocity as a concept can thus extend beyond barter to also include market transactions.

reciprocity in market transactions

The alternative to purchases of *svart arbete* is acquiring the service *vitt* and formally, an exchange that takes place in a market where a provider sells a service to one of many buyers. Offer regarded all exchanges as being affected by reciprocity, but how can a market transaction create any feelings of future expectations? Sahlins, and many following him, excluded market transactions from his analysis, arguing for diverse economies of reciprocity and markets respectively. Exchanging something for something else was barter and on the same level as theft (Sahlins 1972:195). Mauss was more unclear, but as I understand him, he saw the gift as a universal trait for establishing relations that could be maintained both by counter gifts and also by trading (Mauss 2002 [1990]:105).

A market transaction has in economic theory been understood as exempt from creating reciprocal relations as it is supposed to be a spot exchange performed by profit-maximising, isolated and unsocial actors (Swedberg 2003:19). Market exchanges are often seen to rely on objective quantitative relationships, and thus devoid of reciprocity, while a gift relation is informed by personal and qualitative relations (Gregory 1982:41). A different view is that a market exchange is really a type of balanced reciprocity, or, as David Graeber prefers it, 'closed reciprocity' (2001:220), since there are no further demands on the proponent when the exchange is settled and the accounts balanced. Important to note is that there is still a relation which can easily be invoked by referring to former deals.

The reciprocal relations established through exchanges are thus argued to be a matter of degree, on one the hand, closed and, on the other, open where no accounts are kept. As noted earlier, other studies have shown that market transactions often result in reciprocal relations (Befu 1977, Davis 1992, Offer 1997, etc.). This is the standpoint taken here as well, enforced by the fact that what are exchanged are services.

The modern market transaction is settled with money or increasingly with other means such as cheques and credit cards. The price paid is usually predefined and non-negotiable. The producer does not (in many cases) have any contact with the consumer who instead buys from an intermediary salesperson in a shop or similar. Buying a litre of milk in contemporary Sweden is done from any kiosk, service station, grocery or supermarket and hardly ever bought or bartered from a person owning a cow. A sweater is purchased based on appearance, quality and fit and a book is perhaps bought based on its cover, expected content and the author's reputation. If the product does not live up to expectations, the response to the consumer complaint will most likely govern the next purchase. If the milk is sour it is poured away, if the sweater shrinks or the book has missing pages or is a bad read, these objects do not respond to the

buyer's expectations. One does not get the value expected for the money paid. In a functioning market economy, the object bought can under certain conditions be exchanged for a new one, backed up by receipts and warranties and the entire legal structure behind these simple pieces of paper.

In all instances the shop's sales personnel often change from one occasion to another and the consumer identifies the product with the store or the brand. The salesperson is thus an intermediary who can be negotiated with and most often is not the direct target of blame (unless the owner of the store). The next similar type of purchase will probably be made somewhere else, from somebody else. However, the opposite feelings can also be sensed. If the object bought is found to be more expensive in another shop, good value is felt. The same feeling is created if the object exceeds expectations of taste, desirability, usage, etc. and the propensity to acquire something from the same store is enhanced at the next time of purchase. Diverse reciprocal feelings could be said to linger with the product.

reciprocity within exchanges of work

Although Mauss considered all exchanges as creating reciprocal relations, the content of exchanges was usually materialistic (as in the section 'The Spirit of the Thing Given (Maori)', 2002 [1990]:13 ff. and almost all other studies done regarding reciprocity and quoted here). *Kula* exchanges consisted of necklaces and bracelets, the lavish gift-giving at the *potlatch* involved copper and blankets, etc. The meaning a specific gift has is underscored in John Davis' example of English Christmas gifts in early twentieth-century class society (Davis 1992). The giver and the recipient (mis)interpret the intention of the gift and instead of building closer relations it produces social distances and alienates people.

When exchanging services, there is no object transferred, but a piece of work with some sort of noticeable or felt result. Following this line of thought, could the reciprocity of a service transaction dwell within the resulting work, more explicitly with the provider than with a material product acquired from any shop? Perhaps this can illustrate Graeber's notion of a closed reciprocal relation (Graeber 2001:220)? The resulting work purchased is paid for and the exchange itself is seen as balanced. If the craftsman or other service provider has done a good job, he or she will most likely be contacted the next time something similar occurs. There is an increased possibility for future exchanges to take place, reinforced by exchanges already carried out.

Reciprocal exchange relationships take on different shapes in different contexts (cf. Befu 1977, Davis 1992). One analytical distinction between different types of exchanges and the relations each creates is the formal and the informal (see also chapter one). There is an abundance of dissimilar types of informal transactions, all based on reciprocity but differently embedded socially. Adler Lomnitz (1988) argues that these practices grow within and as part of the formal economy but in circles where social relations are based on trust, loyalty and solidarity.

An example of this are the informal exchanges, *blat*, in the former Soviet Union's command economy. *Blat* is described as a practice which was necessitated by distributive bottlenecks in goods and services, 'rationed by the state but redistributed by *blat*' (Ledeneva 1998:206). Commodities and services were bartered through networks and reciprocated with different time lags, creating complicated reciprocal relationships. When the command economy dissolved together with the Soviet Union, only *blat* for income prevailed and became a synonym for the well-paid jobs, a type of nepotism. The prerequisite for *blat* pre-perestroika was an existing social relationship, direct or as relations of relations, but never entirely based on a person-to-person relationship (ibid.141-142). These diverse exchange practices are identified by Elena Ledeneva as taking place within three types of reciprocal regimes, each depending on type of transaction, situation and relationship between transactors (see also Komter 2007 for a similar division of relationships). Although the contemporary Swedish market of *svart arbete* provides a very different setting, two of these regimes seem to adequately articulate the different type of reciprocal relationships played out here. Both Soviet *blat* exchangers and Swedish purchasers of *svart arbete* can be said to perform their exchanges within a 'regime', although the bottlenecks and/or desires they respond to have diverse origins.

The 'regime of equivalence' concerns 'expectation of the potential utility', where both parties are seen to benefit in the long run (Ledeneva 1998:144-146). Providing a service through *blat* can be regarded as a type of future investment, doing things for people to create a reciprocal demand which might prove useful when a service in return is needed. Relations within this regime are built to provide trust – trust that the work will be performed according to the agreement and that the other party will keep quiet in relation to the state. The 'regime of affection' on the other hand, is based on friendly relationships that imply exchanges (ibid.147-150). The relation precedes the intention, so that the utility of the exchange is not the driving force of these relationships and favours are not directly measured, one against another. But reciprocity surfaces and *blat* means that one has to take turns even amongst friends and families. These two regimes are inspired by Boltanski & Thévenot's 'regimes of affection' and 'regimes of justification' respectively, a preceding conceptualisation of the theory of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot 1999:362).

The final regime Ledeneva identifies is one of 'status'. It is a kind of patron-client relationship, where *blat* seems to take shape as a type of altruistic gift, given to enhance one's reputation within the community (Ledeneva 1998:150-152). It can be compared with the economy of regard as it emphasises the power relationship (Offer 1997). The regime of status seems inapplicable to the Limningers' licit but informal purchases of work.⁶³ Although justifying *svart* purchases as a help, the initial idea is to satisfy a buyer's need (see Peter's story below or Sven's cleaning help in chapter four). The regime of status is not the result of philanthropic help, but rather status on display, in the recognition of others (cf. Befu 1977:258).

This exposé of a selected few works on reciprocity aims to illustrate various aspects of how the informal acquisition of work is made acceptable as a relation

between exchangers. Reciprocity is thus both an analytical concept and an assumption regarding how individuals establish relations and thus ultimately make society possible.

Mauss' point was that it is a human moral principle to exchange (Graeber 2001:161) or, as Mary Douglas pointed out in her foreword to *The Gift* that it is a collective interest of all to cooperate and exchange services and gifts with others (Komter 2007:101, Mauss 2002 [1990]). The act of giving and receiving, exchanging, is not only a total social service but also a universal human trait (Mauss 2002 [1990]:100). Exchanging is a way for people to create, nurture and maintain relations with each other in diverse contexts. It is part of social life. In the following it will be seen how in making purchases of *svart arbete* acceptable, 'help' is talked about as creating reciprocal feelings and expectations.

Helping out: from altruistic norms to building and maintaining relations

Getting help can mean receiving an occasional and unexpected service. Usually Swedes refer to 'help' as a justification for their informal purchases in two ways. The closer the relation is between exchangers, the more acceptable the exchange of services becomes, although, as seen in this chapter's introduction, one is in legal content as *svart* as the other. An exchange can, on the one hand, take place amongst friends and acquaintances, where reciprocating a helping hand by paying for it transforms it into being considered more *svart* in legal terms. Anita can exemplify this with her accounts of help with her car. 'It has been friends. I have not regarded it as *svart*, but that I have received help and then I have paid for it. You know, it is really double-sided.' On the other hand, it could be a specific purchase of services from professionals, where 'help' is used as a substitute for 'engage', 'take on' or 'appoint'. Referring to this acquisition as help makes it more acceptable.

Att hjälpa, to help, seems to be one of the really good words in society. It is a word filled with virtue and selflessness; to help is to give up part of oneself for someone else's benefit, putting egoistic concerns aside and reaching out. Helping is assisting, maybe not performing the entire task and taking charge, but doing what the person being helped cannot do. It is a remedy for the recipient. In contrast, needing help suggests that one is, in one way or another, incapable, not able to perform either out of distress or out of ineptness. At first sight, help is not within the realms of reciprocity, it is altruistic in the sense that one willingly gives more than is expected in return. To help with a service invokes the same reciprocal feelings as the equivalent of the gift in the world of objects although a helping hand performs a service. However, the customary 'thank you' is often followed with the statement of recognition – 'I owe you one'. This recognition moves the feeling towards the reciprocal regime of equivalence (Ledeneva 1998:144).

when help becomes *svart arbete*

Helping out is thus a good social trait. Most of the Limningers did not want to regard helping as *svart*, but still referred to it when talking about *svart arbete*. They almost assumed that it was illegal within the Swedish legal structure to help each other on a grander scale, but thought that, as a good human attribute maintaining social relations, it should be allowed. Many informants recognised help as being in some sort of grey zone; they thought and talked about these exchanges as tentatively illegal, but suggested they should be licit, as confirmed by J. Svensson's story in the introduction. Tore, in his role as a taxation officer responsible for the section chasing participants in *svart arbete*, says: 'Generally, if you help each other it is not interesting [from the authorities' point of view, my addition]. However, if a payment is involved if it is, something you do to earn a living, it is one thing, but if you help your buddy or neighbour, it is something else [not of interest].'

As a way of justifying the acceptable part of *svart arbete*, there were references to an entire array of helping out, even though the resulting reciprocal relationships were settled with a payment. From giving a neighbour a hand, grandmother helping out by taking care of the children, to the accidental breakdown of a car. Helping out in this way is something you just do, which also gets you entangled in reciprocal relationships. Sometimes you are instantly recompensed for it, sometimes not. In any case, the helping hand is always recognised with the expected 'thank you' and a future recognition of returning the help. Whether it is settled or not, the gratitude lingers and perhaps extends to giving a helping hand to someone else in need another time. It is part of the idea of a good community.

Bo, the IT-engineer who does not like *svart arbete*, told me about the only instance he considers that he bought *svart*. When out driving, he had some problem with his car and stopped at a gas station which was closed. However, next door there was a garage providing space and tools for 'do-it-yourself'. And there was a man, mending something on his car. 'He looked at it [my car], took it for a drive and then he found something, a missing screw or something which he tightened. Then I handed him 200 as thanks for his help. He probably put in 20 minutes.' Why the man 'helped out' we can only speculate about, but he probably just followed the norms of society to reach out to a person in need (cf. Befu 1977:258) and most probably did not expect any recompense. But Bo did not want to have an outstanding obligation, so he felt a need to compensate – to reciprocate in order to balance the relationship.

Just the fact of giving someone else a monetary payment for some sort of help, makes Bo associate his transaction with *svart arbete*. The compensation can be valued against the capacity and the time this helping hand put into the effort. Bo could not fix it himself. An hour *vitt* at a garage costs at least 1,000 *krona*. As this was money which would not be taxed, 200 can appear to be a decent recompense, way above taxed hourly income, but much less than what a garage would charge. Bo is on principle against *svart arbete* and condemns it, but he recognises this 'help' as a *svart* purchase. This incident highlights how help can

easily resolve a complicated situation, but when remunerated, the help risks being converted to an informal purchase of work. It was a one-off occasion, not possible to reciprocate later as it was help between strangers. Settling this outstanding obligation immediately closed an unequal relationship, but is still considered an exchange taking place in a good community where people help each other.

Help was referred to both when receiving and providing services. It justified the transaction of *svart arbete* and illustrated the licitness of the deal. 'When I help you with this, then it is not *svart*' said Göran, employed by the municipality. He continued to explain the difference between help and 'proper' work. 'It is a task, but it is not *work* as I perceive it. You help, or if you drive over to someone, help them paint or hang wallpaper or similar.' Anita is more eloquent:

You are there, you know if someone comes and asks for help with cleaning when moving or to take care of their kids and then you get something in return. It doesn't really feel like work, it is more like giving a service. You help someone and then you get something for it, even if you haven't agreed on it beforehand.

When you help someone, you do not count on any recompense, at least not instantly. 'Helping out' does not include the expectation from the start of receiving something in return, but somehow you build up a relationship, expecting to be paid back or receive help later on. From the person you helped or someone else in society. Barter as help is for Anita not negative reciprocity as Sahlins (1972) would have it, but a way of strengthening relations. She does not mind getting something for her help. Instead, she feels it is a way of recognising that her help really was worth something.

If one were to attempt to characterise Swedes, they are described as not wanting to be dependent on each other and thus desiring for symmetrical relations (cf. Berggren & Trägårdh 2006, Daun 2005). However, this individualism does not contradict the collectivist norm, but rather means that most exchanges are settled more or less immediately, which could perhaps be a wider definition of 'closed reciprocity'. Even in closer relationships, such as between family and friends, there is a wish to resolve an outstanding obligation, not in order to finish the relationship but to put it on equal terms – especially if there is a service that is not easily reciprocated because of different knowledge or capabilities. Just the fact of having asked someone else for help, although immediately recompensed, makes the relation tainted with reciprocity. The helper can ask in return, at another time, for another service of equal importance.

justifying *svart* as 'help'

How receiving a helping hand refers to *svart arbete* can be further illuminated by the concept of 'social exchanges' (Befu 1977). Exchangers have diverse strategies and therefore a broader context needs to be identified in which an exchange can be better understood. According to Befu, we can look at it by way of four different concepts (ibid.259-261). The first concerns the socio-cultural

‘context’ which sets the stage for how exchanges are conducted. In this context, the second concept, the ‘norms’ of an exchange, can be recognised, e.g. to what extent something given needs to be returned. The third concept concerns the ‘rules’ of exchange: what has to be reciprocated and in what way. The fourth and final concept concerns the individual’s ‘strategy’ for performing the exchange: how the return can be maximised within the above rules and norms. To apply these concepts can help us understand how a licit *svart* purchase is separated from an illicit one, as illustrated by Sofia’s tale.

In Sofia’s second marriage, she and her husband lived in a large wood-panelled house with their five children. Swedish wood-panelled houses are almost always painted, the preferred colour being *faluröd*, a deep dark red,⁶⁴ but they can also be yellow or white, with the occasional modern exception of bright blue or soft green. The coloured houses often have window frames in contrasting shades, most often painted white. However pleasant it looks, painting the house is for many a recurrent nuisance, not a yearly task but frequent enough to occupy part of many people’s summer vacation. Sofia and her husband needed help with the repainting, also in view of their ordinary work and having all the children at home:

I felt like I was a rich lady who wanted my house repainted. I did not want that feeling as I didn’t feel it was like that. But we actually had someone who helped us repaint it. We tried with good intentions to do it ourselves, and managed to scrape and paint the garden shack⁶⁵ ourselves. But then we felt we couldn’t cope, it was really too much.

Sofia is talking here about needing help. The work of repainting the house was something they wanted to do themselves, but there was just not time or energy for it. Buying this repainting *svart* has two implications here. On the one hand, it was needed. The house was seen to deteriorate, if it was not done. Most Swedish wood-panelled houses are neat and well-kept, but the paint not only serves an aesthetic purpose, it also protects the wood from rotting and drying out. Their house might not have been in such poor condition, but a peeling house mirrors the state of the inside as well. Paying someone to help them repaint felt like employing someone, almost like having a servant. Sofia had mixed feelings about getting the house painted. Somehow it was all right getting help with a task they had tried to do, but could not cope with; but, on the other hand, buying the service *svart* was a defeat, as they did not feel they could afford it *vitt*.

Using the services of a Polish man, who helped them paint, put Sofia in an uncomfortable situation. ‘It was someone my husband knew who had contacts, so this guy could come and fix it. So he arrived and stayed in the basement, it sounds awful, but we had a furnished room there. But I absolutely felt it was wrong.’ We talk about his stay and she exemplifies her uncomfortable feelings:

I went down with dinner to him in the evenings as he did not want to bother us. But I felt sorry for him in some way. I know my husband said ‘can you imagine how much money he will return home with. It is fan-

tastic [for him], he could almost buy a castle for it.' Well, it was a lot of money for him. I was such a coward not refusing, but I did not want to paint the house myself and we couldn't afford a firm to do it for us. You can imagine the cost of engaging a firm, can't you?

Applying Befu's four diverse concepts to this purchase, Sofia's discomfort appears clearer. Having a previously unknown foreign worker (without a work permit at the time, as Poland was not then a member of the European Union) living in their house provided the context. It is not usual to have someone you do not know staying in your private house, unless it is a lodger which is more of an equal and long-term exchange relation. In this case, the Pole was working for them which made the context closer to that of an old-fashioned master-servant relation which does not fit in contemporary Sweden where ideas of equality prevail (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006). How the remuneration is made, consisting of partly board and lodging and partly wages, makes the context conflict with norms and rules. Remuneration for work should be paid on an invoice *vitt* or bartered in diverse ways as within closer relations (see chapter five). The rules concern how this remuneration takes place, which here is outside the realms of taxation laws and omits taxes and social contributions. In addition to the remuneration being *svart*, it was also paid to a man working in Sweden without a permit to do so. Finally, the goal was to get their house painted at low cost. Befu's first three concepts of reciprocity as a result of social exchanges are broken in one way or another, compared with what Sofia thinks one ought to do, as can be seen in her story. This breaks with her view of 'how one should live' (Lakoff & Collier 2004). The only aspect which keeps within the realm of a Swedish social exchange is their aim to acquire this service inexpensively, as the painting could not be done by themselves. Using Befu's concepts provides an example of how exchanges informed by reciprocity within a Swedish regime of living are understood as licit – in accordance with 'how one should live'. In addition it allows space for the individual strategy, providing a place for agency within a constraining regime. Sofia did not like buying the work informally, but by putting it as receiving 'help', she can somewhat mitigate her lack of protest.

Helping does not always involve a reciprocal relation. 'Help!' might as well be a cry from the needy, as with Bo and his malfunctioning car, where he had no immediate offer of recompense in mind. Helping someone in need may lead to the helper getting the upper hand in a power relationship. For the helper it is an agreeable feeling, to have helped someone, some sort of status recognition. Still, Bo wanted to recompense the man immediately, balancing the exchange. To help in this way is beyond being a market transaction, it is creating reciprocity without a specified economic value, and thus entangled with social relations.

David Graeber criticises the analytical concept of reciprocity as useless when the relation between exchangers is disparate in power – as he considers most transactions to be. In his book about value, his definition of reciprocity is 'one in which two parties act, or are disposed to act, toward one another in equivalent ways' (Graeber 2001:225). Yet, even if purchaser and provider talk about

reciprocity ('I owe you something', 'you have to pay', 'what can I do for you in return?'), the meaning of the transaction is not the same for both parties (Slater 2002:240).

This is a standpoint adhered to throughout this book. As the meaning of a transaction can differ between buyer and seller, so also can the view on the power relations. We have seen that, from the standpoint of the purchaser, a smart, simple and cheap transaction has been carried out when one has bought *svart*. How the provider sees it is not the subject of this book, but we have heard examples of easily earned money through the accounts of Larry, Hasse and Lars.

To make the informal transaction acceptable, it has to be deemed good for both parties. A purchaser of *svart arbete* does not only buy help, but can in diverse reciprocal regimes also offer to help out in return. Peter, who works as a salesman, justifies his *svart* cleaning this way. He cannot afford to buy cleaning help *vitt*, but he reasons that cleaning is just something which needs to be done weekly. Either they, he and his wife, clean their house themselves, using a seventh of the [leisure] time they have, or, as he puts it 'it [buying cleaning] is a way of earning money. No, it is a way of earning time' (see chapter four and also Björklund Larsen 2006:47).

Responding to the question of why he could not buy cleaning *vitt*, he explains:

You really cannot afford it. Both yes and no, because there is another aspect as well. Maybe you help these people, those who cannot get work anywhere else? Simply to fill [the contents of] their coffers. [He laughs and adds] It is not only I who benefit.

Help in this sense implies a social exchange equilibrium in the purchaser's perspective. Peter describes being helped by an unemployed woman. As the cleaning woman does not have a work permit, she cannot get economic assistance from the state which citizens are entitled to. Admittedly Peter pays her *svart*, at a lower rate than what *vitt* would cost, but he gives her a possibility to earn some money, he reasons; thus he could be said to have exchanged within a regime of equivalence (Ledeneva 1998:144). In his eyes it is not an abuse. He manages to buy *svart* with a good conscience, as he argues that he is also helping someone who cannot earn money in other ways. Although he pays her immediately, he knows that she needs the income and that the relationship will continue. He combines fulfilling a private need cheaply with the norms of helping others (cf. Komter 2007:103), but he also recognises that it is outside the law. In the following story, the inclination to help can turn into being abused. Simultaneously we can see how an exchange taking place within a reciprocal regime of affection moves to one of equivalence.

abusing a helping hand

Ellen lives alone with two cats, way out in the countryside where she rents half a house. It was pitch dark when I drove out to see her, a thin layer of snow

covering fields and roads when I slowly drove down a gravel road following the directions I had jotted down. The road twisted and turned upwards, between old wooden houses where warm lights glowed from the windows, exposing contemporary furniture in many colours. The nearby stables and sheds were only shadows, worn and unused. My headlights exposed the traces of children; bikes, a baby-carriage, swings and toys but also new cars. Former farmers' houses, to my mind they seemed converted to modern family living in the countryside. This type of living does not come off the land, but probably from working and commuting to the nearby city.

At the end of the road, I finally located Ellen's house. In daylight the view from it must have been extraordinary, reaching far in the distance with a large lake nearby extending the view. Out in the countryside, far from city lights and with the moon covered by clouds, the December night held nothing but a great darkness and a silence too seldom experienced by city-dwellers like myself. Ellen welcomed me into her large apartment. Her living room was furnished in a mix of styles and an entire room was reserved for her large treadle-loom, loaded with an almost completed tablecloth. She offered me coffee and home baked Christmas bread and I settled deep down in her well-worn sofa as we tried to remember each other from way back then.

In the last couple of years, she had experienced an inner journey, searching for peace with herself and her faith. She had previously worked very hard. On the verge of being burnt out, she had taken leave from her job as a parish worker and instead volunteered at an ecumenical retreat close by. She liked the work there, so, after a year as a volunteer, she became part-time employed. Her tasks were mainly allocated to the kitchen, but she also helped out with devotional hours and prayers. Not being able to live on the income from the retreat, she took on smaller jobs within the municipal home services, catering for the elderly. However, the work at the retreat demanded much more than the part-time agreed upon. She tells me about this when we discuss purchasing work *smart*. 'Well, I have been abused myself. It was when I worked at the retreat. I was paid for half time and they paid the social contributions and such. But they thought that I should work more.' I ask her what would have happened if she had not agreed. 'Then they would not have been able to break even. But I got food for free. I ate at work.' When asked how much more she worked she continued, 'It is difficult to say, it was periodic. If you count the hours, maybe it was 75 percent up to full-time.' When I was somewhat bewildered as to why she was not paid, she explained. 'No, you were supposed to really give it a go. Maybe my working day ended at 4 (p.m.), but we had things to do till 9-10 in the evening. Sometimes.' Were her reasons for accepting this moral or economic or...?:

Well, at the end then. About the same time I got 50 percent disability compensation. And they [at the retreat] said, 'Great, then you can work even more, jolly good'. So at the end, I had to talk to my contact at *Försäkringskassan* [the Swedish Social Insurance]. I increasingly felt that

what they were doing was *svart arbete* and that they were abusing me and all other volunteers. In the end we were involuntary volunteers.

She explains to me, who still cannot believe my ears:

Their aim was such. If you do not think about the abuse side of it, it has to do with the entire purpose of the retreat environment, to be there and help out. It is a Christian environment and you believe in them. But now, in the aftermath, I can see that I was abused, also within my Christian conviction.

Ellen's voluntary work turned into part time-employment, supplemented by a disability pension. This compensation is paid to people who are diagnosed as unable to work full-time. But her pension provided a possibility for the retreat to acquire additional voluntary work. From their perspective, the work tasks were the same but paid for differently. The tasks can be seen partly as employment and the rest as an extension of her previous altruism, with the difference that she now had a pension. What from the retreat's perspective was voluntary work became in Ellen's perspective morally enforced labour. Her voluntariness (private) turned into formal employment (public) but her former role persisted in relation to the retreat. Initially, she felt she had to do it but the only compensation she got was meals. There were neither wages, nor taxes and social fees paid on the extra work she provided – thus it can be regarded as *svart arbete*.

What formerly was work performed within a type of affectionate regime, perhaps not between friends but as a relationship defined by being there and getting insights and peace of mind through the provision of voluntary work, turns into a supposedly formal work relationship – a market regime. This change of regime makes what in essence are the same tasks problematic for Ellen. She was squeezed between her personal belief and devotion to good works and, on the other hand, the aspirations of the retreat. Both had the aim of doing good to people in need, but the retreat abused her input for the benefit of others.

Ellen is quite relaxed in her view on purchasing *svart arbete*. Helping each other, regardless of how it is recompensed, is licit. It is the voluntary aspects she sets in focus in her acceptance. However, if one of the participants feels abused or if someone makes a living from providing work *svart*, then the help becomes illicit. To consent on help between purchaser and provider based on voluntary agreement should be nobody else's business. She acknowledges her inconsistent reasoning in relation to Swedish laws, but somehow feels the law is badly constructed. People should be able to help each other cheaply. Her resistance seems a quiet protest against contemporary modern society, with its increasingly expensive and complicated transactions. She does not express it as an ideological protest against the intrusion of the state or the market; it is just a wish to make the everyday interactions between ordinary people simpler. Still, it is contradiction of her previous situation as abused, which could be a prime example of involuntary voluntaries (see also Ahrne et al 2004).

proximity of social relations

To sum up, amid colleagues and other professional connections, fulfilling a self-interest is stated as an instance of ‘innocent’ help rather than talking about work *on the side* or as *svart*. Redefining buying *svart arbete* as needing help lessens the severity of what legally is a clear-cut informal transaction. It transfers the service to a regime of affection, where people of closer relations help each other without thinking too much about recompense. The accidental and occasional need in a situation where the job cannot be coped with, like for Bo, is licit regardless of how it is recompensed. Purchasing what in a strict legal sense is *svart arbete*, is within a regime of affection more acceptable than the same service acquired through a regime of equivalence.

Peter’s definition of getting and giving help also pinpoints the differences between intention, action and justification of the purchase afterwards. He wanted to have his home cleaned cheaply, a service which in this case could be provided by an immigrant. He can be said to obtain this service with reference to a regime of equivalence. But by stating that he is also ‘helping’ her, he is moving the relation more into an affectionate regime saying that he is looking after her. When justifying his purchase to me, his reasoning could even take place in the regime of status. He is doing a good deed, he thinks. By including the normative and political considerations as defined within the regime of living and recalling the discussion about cleaning in chapter four, we can more clearly understand how this exchange is problematic in the Swedish context. Is he helping this woman without a work permit to earn a little extra, or is he abusing her when getting his home cleaned cheaply (compared with what the service would have cost in the formal market)?

It has been shown in different ways how needed help turns into an informal purchase. The economic constraints, the accidental need or inability to carry out a task turn the incapacity to complete it into a purchase of help. In all instances it is the monetary compensation which converts the informants’ receipt of help into an informal purchase of work. By phrasing it as help, these transactions are framed in terms of a closer relationship or in a situation where other choices are not possible. Exchangers are thus treading a thin line between helping each other out and engaging in obvious *svart arbete*. To state that they get help is a way of legitimising the act of buying *svart*.

The resulting reciprocal relation between exchangers is also argued to extend to others in the community. Exchanging in this way is justified in terms of wanting to live in a community where helping each other is possible – even though one balances the exchange straightaway by a recompense of sorts. This is especially pertinent if there is no prior relation between those having exchanged.

However, when looking for help, a certain need has to be fulfilled and a specific service performed. If the service cannot be found within the closer relations, people look beyond, aiming to obtain ‘value for money’. *Svart arbete* in content cannot be provided by anyone. You have to know whom to ask, someone who is knowledgeable and can be trusted to perform the job well, since it

takes place outside the realms of laws and regulations. To ‘get help’ is to purchase vocational knowledge and skills as *svart arbete* enacted in a more private relation. The next section will emphasise different configurations of trust while getting help, as obtained by ‘knowing the knowledgeable’, always under the supposition of acquiring services inexpensively.

The hard currency of finding help: knowledge and trust

Having professional or vocational knowledge which can be used in private is a type of ‘hard currency’. It can be compared with the practice of *blat* in the former Soviet Union. The essence of *blat* is to have certain knowledge about other people – possible counterparts who can help at a certain moment in an economy subject to shortages and bottlenecks (Ledeneva 1998). Services in contemporary Sweden are seldom unobtainable in the formal market, although in Stockholm there is the occasional shortage of electricians or plumbers (interestingly enough, those craftsmen who are seldom in demand for the *svart* purchases, mainly due to insurance coverage). Soviet-style *blat* or Swedish purchases of *svart arbete* have different origins in their incomparable economic systems. Regardless, the need is basically the same for the individual and the service is hard to obtain. In the following we shall see how knowledge about people’s competence and trust in this are negotiated within different types of informal exchanges.

A ‘regime of affection’ could be exemplified by Annika when we discussed her involvement and views on *svart arbete* over lunch at Limninge’s largest café. She talks about her car repairs in terms of needing help. She lives by herself with her almost grown-up son and struggles to make ends meet on a general office salary working as a book-keeper. When we talk about *svart arbete*, she says she gets help once in a while from male friends, especially with her car, or they help her get in touch with someone they know who can assist her. The man who last helped her works in a garage, but fixed her car at his home, in his private garage. Annika tells me:

I have, you might say, used a firm before. If you want to keep your car and you have a bad financial situation, you look for the low-cost alternatives. Sometimes there are pals who help you and do not charge. Like doing a good turn. By being friendly, of course you try, just because it is cheaper.

Although Annika explains paying informally for her own car-repairs in terms of a strained personal economy, her view is not that everybody agrees with her reasoning. Annika seems to plan her needs carefully when asking for help with her car, from a male friend or from a friend of a friend. ‘I don’t think you talk about it [*svart arbete*] very much. You ask your friends or contacts and others you know, if they know someone who knows someone.’ She puts herself in the situation of being needy, playing on the socio-cultural context (cf. Befu 1977:259) of women not knowing much about cars and expecting help from

men (who supposedly know more). She does not 'drive over' to a friend who has a garage like Börje and Janne in the previous chapter; she asks them for help and is 'friendly' in return.

At places like work, exchange regimes of equivalence are more prevalent. Colleagues know about each other's capabilities and help each other, either doing the work or passing on knowledge about who might be available. Valter hears this type of reasoning at the storehouse where he works. 'They most often do it at their own home. They drive over to this guy at his house and then they get some help.' Amongst craftsmen, especially highly qualified artisans, in the building industry, it is very common to help out (see also Larry in the previous chapter). Hasse, who works as a gardener, has a lot of insight, also through his own experiences:

Especially amongst the builders, gardeners, painters – what have you. There is probably a lot of it. But, I don't know if it is *svart*, helping each other. In any case, it is very common. A carpenter helps a gardener or a painter, I think that's very common. If it is allowed, I don't know. It is probably not *svart* until you pay out of your own wallet.

Help in this way is institutionalised amongst those who have knowledge to offer in return. Like Tomas does. He knows so many people in the building industry that he never needs to buy *svart arbete*. 'We just exchange', and he says that he can always offer his help in return. 'They often know what type of work I can provide. Quite a lot of people owe me a service, maybe I helped someone a few years ago and now they can help me. It is like that.' Although they 'help' each other, it is spoken about in reciprocal terms as an exchange and it is even settled with money. Tomas tells me about his dealings with other craftsmen and recalls one conversation:

I called a craftsman when I had my own shop and wanted a piece of work done. I don't know him well, but anyway. When he had done the job and wanted to be paid, I asked if he was going to send me an invoice – or? Well, he said 'either you are crazy – or somehow stupid.' Like they say in Skåne [southern Sweden], are you stupid or are you really stupid? Anyway [he said], 'What are you talking about, are you crazy so you want a receipt or an invoice?' I just wonder [Tomas replied]. 'Stop it, just hand me a few thousand.' So it was me being stupid then?

Tomas' account resembles those of the fishermen in Gloucester (Smith 1989). They do not want to look stupid, and so they do like everybody else and put some of the catch aside from the quotas defined by the authorities. If a fisherman neglects to do so, he is regarded as a bit of a fool (ibid.299) even if he is simultaneously afraid of being caught. We can thus see how helping each other emphasises the reciprocal relation while at the same time it means making a smart deal (see previous chapter).

While we continue talking about these exchanges, Tomas suddenly interrupts himself and says 'you know, it feels sort of touchy to talk about this. It is not legal either. You know, I can sit here and say without a problem that I

drove 160 [km/h] on the way home. It is also illegal, but this feels more illegal, this feels worse.’ It becomes ‘a crime without a victim’ (Schur 1965), easier to justify than cheating someone, even if it is not another person directly but a bureaucracy. The exchange is licit since the cheater feel she is doing what everybody else does, although it is truly illegal in the view of the state (Roitman 2005:21, see also the section about cheating in chapter seven of this book).

can anybody ‘help’?

Torsten illustrates more distinctly how he finds knowledgeable people, pointing out the difference between the more licit helping out and buying *svart* – which he also admits doing:

You have this personal contact, who readily works *svart*. It is an extra source of income for the craftsmen. It is also simple; it is often dealing with people, maybe not friends, but people you have met in other circumstances who are craftsmen. For example in a sports association or so, you know they are plumbers, electricians or in similar [occupations]. It is simple to ask if they can come over some evening and do this or that. You know them enough to be sure they do a good job. That’s how I think [it works].

Torsten has appeared in the text before, both emphasising the work he can do himself as well as valuing time vs. money when buying *svart*. Being an electrical engineer, he is sometimes asked to help out. ‘No, I have never been paid for a job I’ve done. But if a neighbour comes and asks if I can help him with the outdoor lighting, then I do it, although I never ask for payment. But there is a demand, that’s for sure.’

So when he helps out, without recompense, it is help and a kind of social exchange. When he pays his neighbour, the policeman, it is *svart*, since it is settled with money. He sees a lot of this in his neighbourhood, people who help each other. ‘It is common amongst the craftsmen who know each other well. Where I live [a specific part of Limninge] they visit each other and help out. It is really like *svart* [like any other type of exchange], even if there is no money in between, there are no cash-flows between them.’ He rightly recognises this ‘help’ as *svart*, since it is done for private use. It can be an example of how ‘strong equilibrating relationships are embedded in a thick fabric of meaning and reciprocity’ (Plattner 1983:849). It is a strong generalised trust in people who have a relationship which is beyond an impersonal commercial behaviour. However, these exchanges are made with reference to market exchanges since they compare the value of each exchange (see also chapter three).

Neighbours ‘help’ each other in a number of ways and it is not only craftsmen who perform services that can be viewed as *svart arbete*. Those with academic qualifications are also involved. Pelle, an engineer, tells me about his former neighbour:

I have another example – when you visit the doctor. I once had a doctor as a neighbour. He helped me with prescriptions now and then. Sometimes he did it for free, sometimes he got a hundred [bill] for it. I know if I had to go... it was a lot easier, as it took you ten minutes from the moment you knocked on his door to get a prescription. If I had gone to the doctor [at a consultation], I would have waited for two hours just to get in.

If the chance occurs to get help cheap and simple, the opportunity is rarely missed. Help in this way cannot be obtained from just anyone. The prerequisite is some sort of connection, a social relation regardless of whether it is a colleague, a neighbour, a friend or an acquaintance.

The acceptance of helping each other contrasts with other informal purchases of services that characterise closer relations; between family, friends and often also colleagues. Carl-Johan has helped friends and acquaintances with his accounting knowledge when there have been demands for it. When he himself needed help, he underlines the difference in another way than Torsten did – between getting help and buying *svart*:

I have a neighbour [who had construction workers in his house]. God knows if they were from Poland or what, but it was some East-European country. They were drilling in the [neighbour's] basement so I turned to them. It wasn't long ago. It was when we were renovating the kitchen; I moved the [old] kitchen down to the basement. I needed to splice a three-phase current cord to get the kitchen in the basement working. Well, I couldn't do that myself. So I went over to my neighbour, to ask him if he could help me. He wasn't at home and instead there were these men appearing from the basement. One of them fixed this. And he got a 100. All of a sudden the stove was working with the extension cord and everything was jolly good.

Carl-Johan seemed to have had the intention of asking the Polish craftsmen from the start, probably well aware that the neighbour had workers in the basement. It was obvious how he changed his vocabulary between expecting his neighbour to 'help' him, but when he was not there these unfamiliar workers 'fixed it for him'. Which he paid for. Acquiring work informally and cheaply from unknown people is less acceptable, as it then does not concern building or maintaining reciprocal relations, but only finding a cheaper alternative (see also chapter five on how purchases are made more acceptable as barter). However, the help Carl-Johan got was the fixing of an occasional and temporary problem of minor extent, from people he did not know.

trust is a must

To exchange services informally requires a relation, here talked about as trust. How is trust considered when making *svart* purchases licit, especially if bought from someone unknown?

Trust comes from the knowledge of a previous relation with someone. When buying from someone previously unknown, this is not building or maintaining a dyadic relation with the provider. Trust has to be found within broader realms of a community. The trust needed when purchasing *svart* from someone unknown, contrasts with the above ‘help’ between people already having closer social relations (as discussed above).

Recall Sofia’s story about the Polish painter she formerly hosted in her basement and the discussion in chapter four about the ‘Polish cleaning woman’. During the past 15 years, Sweden, together with many other European countries, has seen an increasing influx of craftsmen and other manual workers from Eastern European countries. In the case of Sweden, they come especially from neighbouring Poland and the Baltic states (cf. Norberg 2008).⁶⁶ If there is a reluctance to hire people from another city, it would be an even bigger step to hire someone from another country, with fewer language skills. How is this justified?

Viktoria, the entrepreneur, lives in a large city where she found two Polish craftsmen in this way. She and her husband had had a new house built, *vitt* she emphasises, but when it was finished there was still the garden to fix:

I got the contact through a neighbour who had hired a few Polish guys. There was one who came and painted and one who did the pavement. I paid very little compared with what the [Swedish] craftsmen got. They [the Poles] were good; they had done a good job at the neighbour’s [house]. It felt like we got a lot of work done for the money spent.

I ask if that was something she had planned:

No, it was more spontaneous. The construction of our house was finished, we had done this with craftsmen the regular way and had the whole construction made – everything with receipts. But I had partly been irritated that it was so expensive and that they worked so inefficiently, talked on their mobile phones all day [she laughs]. This has nothing to do with the taxes. It was probably a combination of these men being so good and capable and that they asked for payment on the side.

She emphasises, ‘they were not Swedes, they were from Poland’. I asked how she made the agreement and she explains ‘they don’t speak a lot of Swedish. We asked when they were at the neighbour’s. They came over and we made an agreement. So, well, that was the only occasion. But I do think I would consider hiring like that again.’ Viktoria put a lot of emphasis on trust when she was looking for a cleaner (see also chapter four). Here the service was performed outdoors, thus her personal things were not on display in the same manner as inside the house. The trust she needed was found in the work the Polish workers had previously performed. They had done a good job cheaply for someone she knows.

This can be an example of ‘the strength of weak ties’ in Granovetter’s sense (1973, 1983). Finding an inexpensive and reliable transaction does not have to depend on direct and strong social ties between exchangers per se, since the

skills they have are similar in nature (Granovetter 1983:204). The more indirect contacts one has beyond close friends, the less restricted one will be about how the world works (Granovetter 1973:1371). So, instead, transactors need to be found within a social context where a purchaser can get knowledge about a provider and vice versa, in order to transact *svart*. For those without practical professional knowledge, finding someone to do a job *svart* often goes via direct ties with someone who has previously acquired help *svart*. And as we have seen, the weaker the ties, the less licit the informal purchase of work becomes.

Sten can elaborate on whom he trusts to do a *svart* job. He has remained in Limninge where he previously was active in the local business community and so knows a lot of people. Very explicitly, he said that he would never use craftsmen from the nearby big city. Sten does not trust them as he does not know them – and does not know anyone who knows them either. You have to know people to dare to ask them to provide *svart arbete*, but second-best could be that somebody who you know knows them (as in the case of Victoria's neighbours who knew the Polish craftsmen). As part of a community there is the internal pressure of doing a responsible job, a social obligation of keeping up to the promises instead of relying on the warranties the receipt for a job provides. And Sten adds, 'I know a lot of people and they would never cheat me'.

A comparative example of trust is *confianza*, initiated and maintained by exchanges within informal circles amongst the Chilean middle-class (Adler Lomnitz 1988). *Confianza* originates in close family and kin relations, but spreads easily to networks consisting of up to hundreds of people through requests for favours and services. *Confianza* is close to the Swedish *tillit* (trust) that exists in networks of a slightly different quality. Dependence on family relations is not as important in Sweden as in many other places (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006), although many acquire work this way (i.e. Pelle, the engineer in chapter three). So trust in informal exchanges has to be established otherwise.

Informal purchases of work do not only concern trusting the provider through belonging to a common network. Trust is also created by a common strategy – for both exchangers. As seen in previous chapters, a common reason for purchasing services informally is a large difference in price, although it is not always justified in this way. The simple knowledge about possibilities for both parties to earn extra on a deal done *svart* creates trust. It is a bargain for both, but simultaneously it becomes increasingly unacceptable.

The Polish workers Viktoria hired do not belong to the Swedish community. They are in Sweden providing discounted services but getting better wages than would be possible at home. The work they offer, *vitt* or *svart*, is cheap for the Swedish buyer compared with the cost of an average Swedish craftsman. Relations with unknown workers, in this case Poles, are not governed by reciprocity in the sense of future expectations or, according to Ledeneva, within a regime of equivalence creating direct 'potential utility' (Ledeneva 1998:144). Instead, Viktoria justifies her choice in comparative terms: knowledge, better workers and cheaper. She had no intention of building reciprocal relations with the Polish men who helped her. However, trust was needed. She could not buy this

service from anybody. There was trust between the neighbour and the Polish workers based on a previous job done well. Although the trust has different origins, Viktoria trusts her neighbour, which makes it possible to transfer her trust to the Polish craftsmen. The Polish craftsmen have supposedly been recompensed, but there is still a continuing relation. It is yet another example of a closed reciprocal relation. These informal market transactions are thus made possible by trust of a second degree, for a good job previously done for someone else (cf. Gudeman 2008:99-100).

The trust between the Swedish exchangers of services considered *svart* is not only a prerequisite for the other to do a good job and to provide what was initially agreed upon. The amount of trust needed is highly contextual and is defined through the type of tasks the job concerns. Viktoria, for example, voluntarily hired a worker for the garden, but cannot find anyone to trust in cleaning her house.

Åke can point to an obvious example of transactions based on trust:

It is references from people you know. I ask if someone knows someone who would like to do this, to get a feeling of how much it would cost, and if she does a good job. You do not go out and look for someone or put an ad in the paper. It is the same with baby-sitting; I don't want to leave my kids with anybody. It [has to be] someone whom I know or who has known my kids for some time.

Here the strength of weak ties does not apply in the same way. The occasional minder of the children has to be well known, but the job involves a lot of trust for little money paid. Professional knowledge is not important, it is the loving and caring from someone you know which is most important. Knowing them well means invoking trust in many ways. These exchanges could be said to take place within a regime of equivalence but one which is based on affection. Who can provide this trust better than a grandmother? Lennart's mother picks up her grandchild from school once a week, something he wants to compensate her for. She should feel she gets a little bit extra for bothering, he reasons. Besides, if it was someone else he would have to pay anyway, and so it might as well be to his mother. To pay her also makes the recompense seem more licit, than if he paid someone outside the immediate family. Nevertheless, it is *svart* in the legal sense, as we saw in the introduction to this chapter. Lennart tells me about the occasional and different types of help he gets. The people who help him are relatives, children of friends and others in his social proximity. For a time he had cleaners who performed a service which he clearly considers *svart*, but he said it felt too organised. His contact was someone who organised the work for a group of cleaners. This person earned money as a go-between, on someone else's work (see also chapter four).

When choosing to purchase *svart arbete* or not, we can see how trust is negotiated with knowledge about the provider but also in terms of proximity or distance in the relationship between them. It is another example of how weak ties are used, but phrased in a language of social proximity.

Janne, who works as a career coach, can provide an example of how he mixes regimes of affection and equivalence, while simultaneously striving for his idea of a good society based on trust, and while still making cheap deals. His way of talking is very persuasive and I can understand his professional success in motivating young people, getting them to believe in themselves when searching for work. Janne is convinced about people's ability to influence their lives. In the previous chapter we saw how he justified having his car repaired *svart* as a simple and cheap deal, finding it more transparent than if it had been done by a large garage. This car repair is also mentioned in one of his many references to the need for trust between people – trust as the putty of society:

If you know someone who is good at something, you readily give them some money to fix something. I have a pal who fixes my car. I have a lot of confidence in him; I know the result will be good. I'd rather pay him extra than go to a big garage where I do not know the people. I get something of quality and if there is an incident, he'll fix it. That's a reason for my using *svart arbete*. I know someone who is good at something. It is like that. If he had a garage, I would have turned to him instead. It is that word trust again. We [in Janne's firm] work with those small enterprises and try to establish a personal relationship with them. As an alternative to the enormous companies, we can exchange, and create a personal contact with them. Instead of having to deal with these gigantic corporations who treat you in a very strange way. I mean, I would never shop at IKEA for instance.

Janne thus defines trust both as a prerequisite for and an outcome of reciprocity, even within purely market transactions. His car is fixed by a 'friend', and that feels more secure. It is noteworthy that it is *svart*, and a lot less costly of course. This desire for personal trust in relations also includes his professional dealings. The outcome is not only about maximising economic value. Trust is a must for Janne, when transacting *vitt* as well as *svart*. Having a personal relationship with the representative of the firm when purchasing a service, Janne can ensure that reciprocity is at play between the transactors. His purchase is not just an impersonal commercial transaction governed by laws and regulations. 'Giving business to' is a gift in the selectiveness of the choice of provider ensuring further transactions. Transacting based on trust is opposed to the Marxist notion of trading based on mutual distrust (Marx 1977:155, Sahlin 1972).

Trust is a feeling Janne honours and he transfers this from his private to his business life, merging his private beliefs into his way of doing business professionally. Reciprocal regimes of affection and equivalence both overlap and diverge, depending on what type of service is acquired and, as with Janne, what type of relation he wants to nurture. He is an example of 'the fact that people load their exchanges with meaning, and that exchanges are symbols; they have consequences not only for life itself, but for the meaning of life as well' (Davis 1992:75). Janne wants to have affectionate and egalitarian relations with people and shuns the larger and impersonal markets as much as possible. If reciprocal relationships are the glue for community and society, the propensity to help

each other can never be considered anything other than a sign of the good society, in his view. We saw in chapter five how Torsten sees *svart arbete* in a similar way, but in addition also advocates the simplicity with the exchange.

Trust in the provider is created and maintained by the idea of belonging to the same community but also by the person's ability and/or professional skills. You rely on the fact that the person helping you is, if not a professional, at least someone with comparable skills. When purchasing the acceptable *svart* service, this has to be with a certain *fingerspietzgefuhl*. Trust builds up between people who exchange, not only as a dualistic notion of agreement between provider and purchaser. The provider also maintains his worth in relation to the community (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:164) so that if you cannot trust the provider, the word will get out in the community, thwarting further market transactions. Trust is played out against the background of other community members. If it is broken, the reciprocal feeling turns into distrust preventing further deals, *vitt* as well as *svart*.

Anna is one exception to using trust in this way. She wants her back covered in case something happens, and does not want to risk friendships. 'It would not be fun if a friend has done something and then a fire starts, you know, if they installed the electricity incorrectly or something like that. I would not like to have taken the initiative in such an event.' In the formal economy, trust between transactors is (partly) substituted by a warranty and supported by the state's institutions and laws.

warranties, securities and quality work

Helping, knowing someone, and trust go hand in hand and are prerequisites when buying *svart arbete*. Buying *svart* is not only less expensive, but avoids warranties and receipts, possibly also laws and regulations. This especially concerns the long-term investment in services, as in the building industry or in the maintenance of technical equipment. Can the buyer trust that the work will be finished? And of good quality? Can the provider be sure that the recipient will pay when the job is done? The modern welfare state has enshrined the trust needed between supplier and purchaser with laws and regulations protecting both customer and supplier. 'In fact, the whole history of consumer rights, for example, is about writing some longer obligation and hence relationship into the transaction; internalising what is otherwise external, stretching the moment of exchange across a longer temporal statute of limitations' (Slater 2002:238).

A formal market transaction leaves a trace with the written receipt, entangling it with modern societal institutions such as the Swedish Consumer Agency, *Konsumentverket*, headed by the Consumer Ombudsman. Electrical gadgets have a one-year warranty, builders leave a two-year finishing guarantee and a ten-year insurance on roofs, etc. The validity of such a piece of paper has several qualitative and temporal meanings: that the job will be finished, of the intended quality and be durable for a number of years. A receipt also ensures that any damage to the property inflicted from external sources, and accidents and failures covered by insurances, can be compensated. The reciprocal relation

between purchaser and provider gets a 'stamp' and the promised relationship will be enforced by a public institution if the reciprocal relation fails. Warranties and receipts seem to point to a lack of trust between transactors. The welfare state and its institutions are not only the short-term recipient of taxes, but also the guarantor of durability of a service or of work performed. A proper job does not only take place here and now. Trust in the future is needed – that the result of the job will be lasting and that it will fit into the context in which it is performed.

As has already been mentioned, electricity and plumbing are two types of services generally shunned when buying *svart*. The combination of expertise and authorisation involved makes them too risky. A badly constructed bathroom can affect the entire house, causing leakages and mould. Susanne, the PR manager, had acquaintances, who had their bathroom renovated *svart*, but it was neither done properly, nor according to building standards. The bathroom floor had the wrong slope and there were cracks in the putty between the clinkers. Eighteen months later, they found water more or less everywhere in the house. They obviously called their insurance company, which just referred them back to the plumbers. They did not take any responsibility at all for the job. There was no proof available, as the job was paid for *svart*, so the family just had to start all over again, drying out the entire house and re-renovating the bathroom.

When purchasing work informally, the lack of warranties is balanced by trust: trusting the supplier, knowing him or her to be doing a good job and also to be willing to fix things if something goes wrong in the future. Not only formal markets project trust from prior experiences of mutuality (Gudeman 2008:100). H elene illustrates with an account of their refurbishing:

Well, you want to renovate a house [laughing] and you do not have a lot of money and cannot do everything yourself. Then you have the choice between not renovating and living in a dull ugly apartment or terraced house. Or you employ a good friend. We have done the latter and do not have any bad conscience about it at all. The only thing I was worried about was that he would not do the job thoroughly. And what could happen then? It once rained in, just poured in. It was windy and it poured down really hard. But I called him and he got here quite fast. It is a bit like that. If it is *vitt* (work) it feels more secure, especially regarding the house. We did not have any choice, though. If there was an economic possibility, I would have done it otherwise. So I think that necessity knows no law, really I do.

Carl-Johan did otherwise and can also exemplify how trust and reciprocity are negotiated as belonging to diverse domains. I met him at the office where he works. It was at lunchtime in the centre of the large city, people in suits were talking and laughing, microwaving lunch in the kitchenette or putting on overcoats to defy the disgusting weather and visit a nearby restaurant. I was ushered into a quiet conference room.

Carl-Johan tells me about the extension of his house. When I ask if that was *svart*, he is very sure when responding:

No. In addition, I engaged a company which I work with here. They are property owners as well. I know what they stand for and I think that is important, then I know what product I shall get. And the quality they provide, I assumed would be applied to my property as well. And this was correct. But, of course, it was a lot more expensive.

As previously seen, Carl-Johan is not in principle against buying *svart*. But a reciprocal relationship built on trust is not enough for him when the transaction is substantial. By choosing someone he knows as well as making the deal *vitt*, it is more expensive but also more secure. As an insurance against future accidents, he has receipts and warranties. These are not substitutes for trust, but reinforce the possibilities for the job to be done properly and that the providers are accountable for it now and in the future.

Trust is a bet on the future and time is constitutive of trust. Therefore trust has little impact on spot market transactions. For more complicated products, such as long-lasting and well-functioning results of a service, trust is a prerequisite. Getting the stove 'fixed' for Carl-Johan's temporary kitchen in the basement could be recompensed informally to craftsmen he did not know, whereas he would not take any risks with the refurbishment of his new house even though he knows the construction company well.

These are different examples of choices made and justified when having larger jobs done and the possible consequences thereof, although many other ways and combinations can be imagined. They exemplify the negotiations that take place between issues of price, knowledge and trust – and also the diverse outcomes if something goes wrong. Susanne's friends took the cheap alternative and were cheated as they did not know the plumbers. When problems arose, her friends had no way of enforcing repairs. H elene's friend had refurbished her family's terraced house cheaply and *svart*. When an accident happened, the craftsman who was considered to be a friend took the consequences and helped them when in need. Finally Carl-Johan could afford to refurbish *vitt*. Although he knew the provider and he is not in principle against purchasing work informally, he wanted the warranties that came with the job.

Concluding remarks

Following Mauss (2002) and others, I have argued in the previous two chapters that to exchange is a basic human propensity. In this chapter, the emphasis has been on the inclination to establish relations between and amongst people, and that this also applies to informal purchases of work – *svart arbete*.

The fact that purchases of *svart arbete* are often talked about as help gives them a more altruistic attraction, although the intention is to fulfil a need. This pinpoints the tension between giving and taking and what type of exchanges inform reciprocal relations. In this aspect the Limningers take part in the 'should' of a Swedish regime of living. They are engaged in a moral reasoning

of doing good and helping someone in need which all people should do, even though these practices simultaneously mean cheating the state.

Deliberating on acquiring services as ‘help’ is framed in terms of closer relations between transactors, of giving and taking without profit in reciprocal regimes of affection and equivalence. The informal purchase is here made acceptable in terms of the reciprocity it creates and nurtures in society. Justified help can be an act of building, maintaining and strengthening social relations while simultaneously acquiring a service. These relations are built upon reciprocity between transactors, ‘feelings of mutual obligation’, but for the good of society.

Helping out as a reciprocal relation amongst family and close friends can be understood with reference to a ‘regime of affection’ where it is not particularly necessary to settle the deal straightaway. For people one does not know, it is a norm in a good society. A helping hand is stretched out towards anyone who needs it, as next time round the helper might be the one needing it. In this sense it is more than a dyadic reciprocal relation; it is almost general. Help is in the world of services what the gift is in the material world.

However, expectations of a payback are there, either as help at some future date, or settled with money or something else of value. If money is used as payment, this help is alluded to as an instance of *svart arbete*, as we also saw in the previous chapter. On the other hand, if it is a wish coming true, it can still be framed as help, sometimes justified as getting help while helping in a truly dyadic reciprocal relation, as Peter did with the woman who helped him clean his house. Justifications of *svart arbete* are in such cases moved closer to the reciprocal relation of a ‘regime of equivalence’. The more proximate the social ties, the more licit the informal purchase becomes. Therefore, many use their weak ties to find reliable and trustworthy providers of help – but talk about them as being socially closer than is the case.

The intentional helping hand can basically be acquired in two interrelated ways: via knowledge about and trust in the counterpart. Knowledge concerns where to find a provider who can help, in different types of social networks. Exchanging knowledge is also having something to offer in return for the help. Help exchanged in this way is institutionalised amongst those who have knowledge to offer in informal exchanges. ‘They help each other’. Not having any skills to put forward in return easily transforms the received help into a transaction settled with money (see also chapter five).

Finally, trust in the counterpart is an essential ingredient in *svart* purchases, as there is no official recognition of informal deals. Trust is based on knowledge regarding the expertise of the provider in the view of common relations. In this perspective, trust replaces the lack of receipts and warranties which in formal deals provide legal security. Any informal purchase also means considering what warranties are omitted, compared with the same type of purchase made *vitt*. Finally, trust in the counterpart also means not disseminating any information to government authorities about these illegal deals.

Focusing specifically on the purchasers’ relation to these authorities is the subject of the next chapter.

7. Balancing: Reciprocal expressions with and within a modern welfare state

I tell you why I buy *svart arbete*. This family has paid far too much to the state already (a former neighbour, Autumn 2004).

Surrounded by old fruit trees in full bloom, Larry and I balanced on the old chairs in the lovely garden café of Högström's. It was difficult to find equilibrium on the uneven of cobble-stoned surface through which grass fought its way up. It was early summer, a sunny day and a type of postcard setting for the nostalgic. What we were talking about was not very picturesque. Larry, who is employed with the coastguard, has many opinions on *svart arbete*:

In certain cases I think [*svart arbete*] can be a sort of revenge... against the government. One can see that there is cheating at higher levels, everywhere from politicians at state level who take time off, you know within this system of parental leave and work amongst political party administrators. [Amounts of] money one can never imagine [are wasted]. So why shouldn't I do this if someone else can? I think these considerations stand for a large part [of why people buy *svart*]. Then it is the revenge bit, which is not anybody else's concern. This money, which comes straight in, well it feels a bit more fun for me to do something enjoyable with it. That [type of] money paid for my vacation for many years.

Larry is somewhat incoherent when he reasons about why he cheats. His previously relaxed and jovial tone disappeared and he became rather agitated when in one go he justified his purchasing and working *svart* as an opposition to the doings of the state.

What do Larry's tales and reaction have to say about relations within modern-day welfare society? In the previous chapters, the Limningers have articulated their justifications for informal buys in diverse ways. Pelle, an engineer, deliberated about enjoying performing certain tasks and purchasing others – *vitt* or *svart*. For Andreas, his occasional informal purchases had nothing to do with the state, but depended on how much he had available in his wallet. Anita, a personal helper, talked about the importance of helping friends. Börje, jack of all trades, joked that his purse was not made of onionskin, since he would then get tears in his eyes every time he looked into it.

Although Börje is involved in quite a lot of exchanges which could be seen as *svart*, he also minds about the welfare state he lives in. Like many other informants, he bases his justification on notions of fairness in his dealings with the state. *Svart arbete* is justified as licit in certain contextual set-ups (i.e. type of work, ways of recompense, amount and extent, relationship between buyer and seller, etc.). With regard to the state, the impact is always cheating it [with taxes]. This chapter thus aims to explore what the cheating means in regard to the Limningers' view of and relation to the state.

Although most Limningers support the idea of the Swedish welfare state and thus of paying taxes, there was always one way or another in which cheating could be justified in terms of a relation to the state: a little less in taxes paid, inadequate welfare services or benefits or the unwise usage and distribution of taxes paid. The Limningers quoted here might sound disappointed and disillusioned with the current state of affairs. We should keep in mind that this is but one aspect of the justifications – although an important one.

aim and outline of the chapter

Throughout this book it has been shown how Limningers occasionally buy and barter *svart arbete* and justify this as diverse ways of meeting needs in private life. These justifications will be discussed in this chapter in terms of a long and ongoing relationship with the Swedish state. I shall contextualise this relationship with the notions of statist individualism and *sambällsbärare*, 'pillars of society', which emphasise the importance of equality.

Purchasing *svart arbete* as a way of dealing with the state hints at the ambiguity expressed in the introduction to this book. This ambiguity concerns an individual discord between performing exchanges for private use and simultaneously acknowledging the (often perceived as negative) implications for society at large. This contradiction will be further developed here.

Justifying these purchases thus involves a negotiation between abiding by laws and regulations as a responsible citizen, and sometimes cheating with taxes – a balancing act. This balancing concerns taking back in order to settle what are considered to be outstanding debts. It is an illustration of the occasional avoidance of acting as a responsible citizen, which entails a critique of the civic world (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:185 ff.). Keeping this balance is what makes purchases of *svart arbete* licit in the view of the Limningers.

Following Mauss' concluding remarks in *The Gift*, the transfers between individual and state create, even in a modern welfare and market society, reciprocal relationships (Hart 2007, Jacobsson 2006). The relation between statehood and citizenship can be described in diverse terms, but it is in the everyday jargon also an economic relation. As reciprocal feelings play a part in what could be considered market transactions (chapter six), here it is argued that, in the citizen's view, reciprocal feelings make an impact in all three relations of such a transaction: between buyer and seller; between buyer and state and between seller and state. A market transaction in a modern welfare state can thus be seen to have three participants; the provider, the consumer and the state (as a collec-

tive actor). The latter is a recipient of taxes and fees but simultaneously also a provider of warranties and assurances and an enforcer of working rights.

For example, as all services bought *vitt* are subject to VAT, the state has a pertinent but passive role in these transactions. When buying *svart*, this reciprocity is justified as an exclusion of the state from the transaction. This brings us to the other side of the so-called balanced reciprocity. It is neither helping out while being generous (the more altruistic justification for buying services *svart*), nor the needy feeling of asking for help. Instead it illustrates the reverse side of reciprocal relationships: retracting bits and pieces in order to maintain an imagined balance of transfers (with the state).

It will thus be argued that a resident who lives, works and pays taxes in a state can to a certain extent define her bond to it as reciprocal. It is a relationship defined by what the state compensates me and my kin with in relation to our contributions, but also compared with what other members of the state, the other inhabitants, are perceived to contribute and receive respectively.

With Swedes striving for equality, this also means that it is important for them to keep this relationship in balance, even if this results in the occasional deception of the state in which they believe. In some cases, it may even result in their seeing themselves as 'being in the black', as it were.

Relationship between citizens and state in Sweden

The propensity of Swedes to purchase *svart arbete* is quite high by international comparisons (Skatteverket 2006:4:217), and simultaneously Swedes have a large esteem for the state they live in (Inglehart & Welzel 2005). In the view of historians Berggren & Trägårdh (2006), Swedes are considered highly individualistic but at the same time have a lot of trust in the orderly and rationally organised Swedish state.⁶⁷

This seeming paradox is defined as 'statist individualism'. Statist individualism comes out of a deeply rooted and popular democratic view within society, based on the 'the Jante Law' rather than originating in people's natural rights of universal equality (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006:43). This 'law' originates in a book about Danish (and more broadly, Scandinavian) culture written by Aksel Sandemose in 1933, *A Fugitive Crosses his Tracks* (English translation in 1936) and consists of Ten Commandments, all determined by jealousy, habits and ways of living in a small town where contacts with the larger world were restricted and social change slow. In common parlance, the Jante Law is unwritten but carries the message that 'thou should not regard thyself as better than any other'. The historical origin of statist individualism is thus argued to go further back than to the social engineering of the Social Democratic welfare state during the nineteenth century (ibid.49 ff). It has its background in the history of a country which was never feudal and where common men have been relatively free in a comparative perspective.

So although Swedes put much trust in the state, there is also an individualistic component. 'The striving for individual freedom and autonomy, rather than

the more socially acceptable embrace, constitutes the fundamental drive that underpins the state-individualistic social contract' (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006:54, my translation). It is argued that the Swedish model, and the welfare state, emerges from these forces. In this welfare state, the individual has a direct relation to the state, regarding both rights and responsibilities, namely through the social security net (ibid.52).

Swedes are thus seen as a people of individuals, no one worth more than any other, and a people that can depend on the state when in need, before having to turn to family and kin (see also Daun 1998, 2005). This view of equality is helpful in deepening our understanding of why the Limningers buy *svart*, even though they trust and like the institutions of the state.

Amongst these Swedes, who are seen to participate more actively in *svart arbete*? We shall see next how they think about this issue on which there were many opinions.

who buys *svart*? the problem of categorisations

As has been seen throughout this book, almost everybody I spoke to seemed to be involved in buying *svart*. Research has also shown that *svart arbete* is exchanged amongst people of all social categories, ages and political opinions (e.g. Svallfors 1995). Whatever the questions asked in research about *svart arbete*, the results all seem to confirm the point that you will find what you are looking for (e.g. Portes et al. 1989:298, Williams & Windebank 1998:83). Amongst the Limningers, some buy a lot *svart*, most seem to take the occasional opportunity to do so and a few refrain from it as much as possible.

Recall the core idea of the theory of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006). The theory presumes people as individual actors with their own interests in mind, but also as social actors with an expressed opinion on the common good. One of the reasons for its development was a series of methodological concerns in research about the categorisation of individuals. What social aspects are considered when categorising individuals? Who decides to what group a given individual belongs? Instead of looking at people's characteristics and, based on these, categorising their actions, the focus is (directly) on their actions and their explanations of them (Boltanski 2002:278).

Börje's statement below was but one that illustrates the problem of categorisation:

There are the services craftsmen provide. Then you have all the office workers who depend on them. Of course, there is not one thief here, we are two. And they [the office workers] want help at home, to make it cheaper and then it is often at weekends. The entire society is involved.

Distinguishing those who are most likely to buy *svart* was an issue which was quite extensively engaged in in the interviews and the opinions on who is most prone diverged in all directions. Attempting to categorise the Limningers according to their view of and connection with the state, in the sense of what

their political values mean for the propensity to buy *svart*, produces the same result. It is not possible. Below are a few examples of how the reasoning went.

The Limningers hold an array of political affiliations, either outspoken or revealed in the questionnaire circulated among my informants.⁶⁸ Only about half of those interviewed responded, but, all in all, political sympathies seemed to have nothing to do with their own involvement. The informants' views on the propensities of 'others' to buy *svart* were equally diverse. Mona, the nurse anaesthetist, says she has thought a lot about the connection as she occasionally purchases *svart arbete*. She still lives in Limninge, and is a Social Democrat and a practising Christian:

I can imagine that even if you have a lot of money, you do not pay everything *vitt*. The thought of getting value for money is too evident. In that sense it is probably more common amongst the well-off, but it is probably the amount, you have more money to spend and more things to maintain. That's my conviction. Politically, you should probably lean more towards the non-socialists or belong to the bourgeoisie. Maybe it is a majority [in that category], but I don't think the Social Democrats are innocent, there is *svart* cleaning and such like. I think we are all tarred with the same brush.

Staffan, who lives in the countryside in the south and votes for the conservatives, *moderaterna*, partly agrees:

No, actually not. I think that there are people who in different circumstances declare their dislike of *svart arbete*. Everybody seems to take part, regardless of political affiliation. In the private sphere, it is quite different [compared with the public, in the media]. There your views are [really] on display.

Hasse, the gardener, thinks it is more of a generational distinction. When asked who he believes buys *svart*, he says:

Well... amongst common working people, those who do not buy *svart* are those organised Social Democrats. The real ones, you know. Those who walk in May Day parades with banners and such, who are union representatives. Sometimes I believe they really are tax lovers. Real *gråsar*, old-fashioned, hard-core Social Democrats. They don't pay a lot of *svart*. They like our tax system, think it is fantastic. That's 'security Sweden' for you. That's who I think [are not taking part in *svart arbete*].

Torsten, the engineer, is convinced about a somewhat opposite view, having worked at many different factories and plants as a consulting engineer. He bases his explanations on the habits, but also on the political construction of the welfare state:

Within the social democracy, you do not see *svart arbete* in terms of ethics and morals. Everybody has always done it this way, and Dad did it this

way and you don't think about it. It is awful. I have this feeling when I am at workplaces, when I talk and have coffee, *fika*, with people.

These few voices can only point to the fact that the connection between political party affiliation and buying *svart* is complicated and difficult to generalise about. As a comparison, neighbouring Denmark had a saying during the 1980s, – '*spis grönt, stem rödt, arbejd sort*', literally eat green, vote red, work black (Sampson 1986:21). The Danish participants in the alternative economy could have been described as rebels with a cause, since the explicit choice to participate was based on political contempt for all authorities. It can be a protest against government when the individual experiences a discrepancy between society's moral norms and the authorities' laws and regulations (Björklund Larsen 2003:31, Hart 2001b:146, Pardo 1996:165, Skatteverket 2006:4:36) or is opposed to a centralised economy with increased state control (Gudeman 2001:12, Leonard 1998:1).

Elaborations on this theme will be further explored in this chapter, although, as seen in previous chapters, taxes are far from the only explanatory reason. Most Limningers reasoned like Annika, the single mother who works as a book keeper. When I ask her if she thinks there is a certain type of person who buys *svart*, she almost interrupts me. 'Well, I don't think political opinions have anything to do with it, nor whether or not you have a lot of money'.

But there are those who cheat persistently and then there are the majority, who take the occasional opportunity. We shall see how to distinguish them by their views on their relation to the state.

sambällsbärare – pillars of society

It is important to remember that most Limningers actually like and are proud of the welfare state they live in and contribute to. Hasse, the gardener, can exemplify this when he says that he and his wife must be considered model inhabitants, *sambällsbärare*, pillars of society. He pictures himself as a victim who carries the load of others, but somewhat unwillingly. Notions of the Greek god Atlas being punished come to mind. The carrier of society does not, like Atlas, carry the weight of heaven and earth himself, but shares the burden with a few others who provide more welfare than they receive within society. Situationally the *sambällsbärare* can even bring to mind the task of Sisyphus, in the sense that he never seems to benefit from his input to the welfare society. He works and pays his taxes, is hardly ever sick and does not use many of the services provided by the welfare state.

Hasse said that he could probably count the sick days of his entire working life on his fingers. He thus implied that he is a net contributor to the welfare society with his taxes and work, in contrast to others who are net recipients, for example by receiving sickness benefits. The little Hasse works and buys *svart* is just a small compensation for all he has previously contributed to society at large.

*Sambällsbärare*⁶⁹ is a category also used by the Tax Agency in their report published in 2006, as a concept for those who do not buy *svart*. According to this description, it is a group of people who cannot afford to buy *svart* and who have fewer consumption needs as, for example, they do not own their housing (Skatteverket 2006:4:33). This is an interesting argument, since all services exchanged and appraised as having value are *svart* if they are not taxed. What is assumed here to be *svart* only refers to private purchases of services from professionals. In this context, the notion of *sambällsbärare* takes on a moralistic tone of strictly law-abiding citizens. This is different from Hasse, who thinks he is fulfilling his commitment to a good, but slightly unjust, society. He regards his small involvement in *svart arbete* as compensation for his surplus contributions. Hasse is quite content with life, but he wishes there were more people like him. It is important for him to perceive himself as a net contributor. The emphasis on providing more than taking is the fundamental trait of the *sambällsbärare* here.

Bo, who is an engineer, can also be regarded as a *sambällsbärare*. 'I definitely do not like *svartjobb*', he says. 'I think you have to show solidarity with the state. I am definitely not a Social Democrat... I earn a lot of money and pay an awful lot in taxes, but I really feel it is my duty to do so.' Bo also referred to Mona Sahlin, current leader of the Social Democratic Party, who once stated that it ought to be cool to pay taxes.⁷⁰ She is not alone in advocating pride in contributing by way of taxes. Yet, to pay more than one receives in return has been described as an expression of a reciprocal regime of status (Ledeneva 1998:150). In Mauss' terms, it is to be 'magister', a person with authority whom others look up to (Mauss 2002 [1990]:95). Having paid the most gives one the upper hand in relation to the other, in which the one obtaining too much lowers his status (ibid.11). Getting too much degrades the recipient in relation to the provider as to not being able to give/pay back creates a feeling of inferiority.

So what happens when a citizen articulates a reciprocal relation with the state? And especially if she perceives she has the upper hand, having given more than she has received?

Reciprocal relations with the state

In the previous chapter, reciprocity through exchange was viewed as a way of building relations between people. 'Give as much as you take, all shall be very well', ran the Maori proverb Mauss quoted by (2002 [1990]:91). As purchaser and provider in an exchange can view the transaction differently (Slater 2002:240), so can their views on the balance of the relations differ. I shall argue that the same type of expectations that exist between exchangers, reside within the relationship that citizens as taxpayers have towards the state. Although exchanges between inhabitants and state are vast even in a daily perspective, impossible to quantify or account for, and immensely complicated in a welfare society, there is a residing sense of a reciprocal relationship. From a resident's

perspective, expectations of reciprocity indeed have an impact on the expectations of what society should provide.

At the end of *The Gift*, Mauss moved the analysis from historical accounts and 'archaic' societies and indicated implications about what the gift would mean for the then contemporary society (about 100 years ago), when discussions and political initiatives had started to shape at least the contours of a welfare state. His concerns were about what economic exchanges do to men's morale, and maybe shared morals as put forward by Hart (2007:481), and thus how society is politically shaped. Kerstin Jacobsson writes that the 'welfare state implies a moral regulation of dependencies in a system of rights and responsibilities' (Jacobsson 2006:21, my translation). Reciprocal exchanges provide the normative foundation on which the welfare state is based (ibid.20).

Not only *sambällsbärare* but virtually all citizens provide resources to the state. Transfers occur in the forms of income tax, VAT, pension contributions, employers' social contributions and taxes on gains from capital, inheritance, house sales, etc. The state redistributes this revenue mainly as general infrastructure and discounted services, but also directly to households as child allowances, pensions, education benefits, housing subsidies, etc. There is giving and receiving so that paid taxes seem to create reciprocal sentiments as do benefits received. The latter concern taken-for-granted everyday welfare amenities of health, education and social security (de Swaan 1988) as well as receiving means to uphold an adequate standard of living even if a citizen falls into dire straits, like being sick or losing one's job, etc. (Svallfors 1996:32).

One view of the contemporary welfare state is as a product of collectivisation and of corporatist efforts (Rothstein 1992). Rothstein argues that the reiterative endeavour of building institutions to include most of a population has created a sense of the collective. This effort has resulted in a modern life shaped in its most intimate aspects by this process (ibid.11). He shows that, regardless of alternating political regimes in Scandinavia, social expenditure continued to rise during the last century, continuously reinforcing the welfare state and at the same time creating 'a strategic environment in which people operate as calculating entrepreneurs' (ibid.229). This is argued to include both experts who get their income from providing services and claimants of these services. Giving and taking is in this view a practice informed by self-interest although simultaneously contributing to the construction of the welfare state.

A different view of the construction of a moral welfare state is depicted by Abram de Swaan (1988). He argues that the welfare institutions (not specifically in Sweden but also in comparable countries⁷¹) were not created out of concern for the poorest and least well-off in society, but instead built on a collective effort out of fear for the destitute and despairing who threatened societal structures. With industrialisation, society became richer and provided increased possibilities to discipline both people who were considered threat, as well as potential workers for industry.

Although somewhat differing views on the constructions of modern welfare states, these views indicate that expectations and obligations are part of a citizen's relations with her state and thus also subject to reciprocal sentiments.

Getting back to the Limningers' views of their economic relation to the state and how they justify their *svart* purchases, I shall use the idea of a moral economy.

Swedish moral economy

Living in a welfare society governed by ideas of equality affects views on individuals' economic relations to the state. These views especially concern how citizens' rights and responsibilities are pronounced, but also include distribution and fairness regarding other residents – a moral economy (Svallfors 1996:18). The concept of moral economy was originally used regarding workers' perceptions of governmental legitimacy in nineteenth-century England during the bread riots (Thompson 1971, Svallfors 1996:17). It pointed out how 'values, policies and practices of localism and self-sufficiency were part of a moral economy' (Carrier & Miller 1999:28). The moral economy as a concept has in later studies taken on diverse meanings (cf. Roitman 2005:190). For example, in Mars' study of cheating workers it is argued that depending on circumstances, the moral economy is sometimes, but not always, in opposition to market transactions (Mars 1982:76). The cheaters Mars described can justify economic irregularities to their own benefit, due to the rigidity of the system in which they operate. Described as acting within a type of informal economy, they set different and quite individual rules for exchanges of economic value. Another example described as a moral economy was articulated during the transition of the Hungarian command economy into a capitalist one. Lack of properly defined market rules and regulations necessitated a 'moral economy of favours' based on personal relation-building in the sense that it was a prerequisite for market economic transactions (Böröcz 2000:365).

Moral economy will in this context be defined closer to the original meaning since it relates individuals' perceptions to ideas of the welfare state through their purchases of *svart arbete*. A person does not just act as a rational *homo economicus*. So, agreeing with Svallfors, I see people transacting and making a moral economy which 'is an arena filled with conflicts about diverse norms and perceptions opposing each other' (1996:20, my translation).

Previously, the Limningers have been said to act within a particular regime of living (Collier & Lakoff 2005, Lakoff & Collier 2004). The regime of living provides a framework for an ethical reasoning of what is possible to acquire in the legal sense *svart* but still licit (Collier & Lakoff 2005:23). How an acceptable purchase of *svart arbete* is then justified is seen here to make up a moral economy.

I see this moral economy as part of a regime of living in Sweden. It is exchanging within the limits of 'how one should live' (Collier & Lakoff 2005:24) – but also stretching those limits. It here concerns the practice of informal purchases, which highlights the ethical contemplations the Limningers refer to. Although a moral economy refers to considerations about citizens' rights in society, the regime of living more explicitly pinpoints the constraints to action. In Roitman's words 'conflicts over regulation and redistribution mean taking

issue with the very rules that organise and govern economic life, such strife can only be understood by examining the very conventions that give rise to the concepts and objects of an economy' (2005:21). In this view the individual's informal purchases make up part of a moral economy, in opposition to the envisioned misdoings of the state. For example when 'helping' each other, although it can be seen as *smart*. The state in its turn has, through the construction of the welfare state, created a regime which can be seen as 'a social contract whereby the government guarantees economic and social well-being in return for economic discipline and social conformity on the part of the population' (Ong 1999:58).

Regimes point to structures which constrain individual action. Economy concerns house-holding, and invokes active choices being made. As informal exchanges of work are partly concealed, the individual has more room for moral house-holding. Both concepts can illustrate how market transactions are perceived to relate with the state in various ways – the regime constructing the framework within which individuals (trans)act and the moral economy being the outcome of having (trans)acted within these constraints.

triadic reciprocity

The Swedish state, like any, set[s] constraints and provides possibilities for its citizens. As in most modern welfare societies, it participates in virtually all monetary transactions individuals undertake. The state is not only a tax recipient, but it also enmeshes citizens via a number of social insurance transactions, as provider of a material and virtual infrastructure and as an (in)direct counterpart in all transfers between its inhabitants through compliance with VAT. A formal transaction carries official payments and receipts which ensure that working rights can be enforced, security and warranties provided through the Consumers' Ombudsman and certifications made of skilled craftsmen such as authorised plumbers, etc. (see also chapter six). Although citizens can see that the state provides a number of services, these are not perceived as evenly distributed (cf. Svallfors 1996:56, 60).

Paying tax creates expectations on welfare received. It is a reciprocal feeling, however one-sided, as only humans and not the state as such can experience this emotion. In addition, any citizen can compare their contribution with what fellow citizens pay – and receive. This expectation, I would argue, provides an excuse to balance the reciprocal relation. It is not a constant feeling, but emerges as a justifying component now and then, for example when the need to acquire a service appears. As Pelle said; 'you might moan and groan a little but you accept the taxes. However, if you have a chance to get away with it [getting a service cheaper], then you do it, when you need something.'

In an alternative approach to reciprocity, which is also the title of her study, Takie Sugiyama Lebra proposes to look at reciprocity beyond dyadic relations and to take more complex social systems into account (1975:559). She sketches seven types of triadic reciprocal relationships. Looking at reciprocity in this way

'may bind the actor more effectively, than does a dyadic bond, to obligatory norms which are either particularistic or universalistic' (ibid.562).

Before continuing with how purchases of *svart arbete* are justified as pertaining to a relation to the state, two kinds of triadic reciprocal relationships involving the state will be put forward. The first is the triadic trade, which concerns reciprocal relations from the state's taking part in formal exchanges between buyer and seller. This is typically exemplified by VAT. The other is triadic societal reciprocity, which concerns how a person regards herself in relation to other citizens and their exchanges with the state. This is a more redistributive relation, but is still informed by sentiments of reciprocity.

reciprocity within triadic trade

The Swedish tax system considers all monetary transactions of new commodities (those apart from flea markets, garage sales, etc.) and all services (above a certain minimum level which is easily overridden) in principle subject to VAT. A market transaction in Sweden thus has three participants; the provider, the consumer and the state. Exceptions are numerous, but generally speaking it is the end consumer who pays VAT.⁷²

It is argued here that reciprocity plays a part in all three relations; between buyer and seller; between buyer and state and between seller and state. This is an oversimplified model, since many more can directly participate in a market exchange such as an insurance company or as secondary recipients, for example landlords, lawyers, accountants, etc. To highlight *svart arbete* in relation to the welfare state, though, this model serves its aim. Thus, we may understand how the Limningers can also perceive a market transaction as triadic: the triadic trade is a transaction in which not only exchangers but also the state is involved. Reciprocity can also be felt towards the state. It is a perceived world of rights and obligations carried out in everyday transactions.

It is important to note that the reciprocal relation with the state is seldom experienced as such within each specific transaction, unless something goes terribly wrong between seller and buyer and the state intervenes as a negotiator, judge and enforcer of laws, rules and regulations. The reciprocal relation emerging from a given transaction, or from a series of transactions, most often rests between buyer and seller. The reciprocal feeling towards the state is cumulative and built up over time. It also interacts with the other type of triadic reciprocity which in a broader sense is concerned with relationships in society.

triadic reciprocal relationships in society

The justification of the other triadic relationship is relative, not only to the state, but in comparison with the exchanges of other individuals or groups within a community or society. These justifications are based in a sense of accumulated inequality, having been cheated or taken advantage of. This could be

especially pertinent in Sweden where people consider themselves of equal worth.

To buy informally can be a reaction against those who are more powerful and/or those who are perceived to benefit from the common coffer, especially if these acts run counter to the idea of an equal society. When the Limningers speak about the state, ideally it should provide an organisational form in which people perceive a sense of equal treatment. This type of nation was exemplified by Mauss with King Arthur's round-table where all participants had an equal seat regardless of status, or in the quotation of the Maori proverb, giving and taking in equal amounts (Mauss 2002 [1990]:106). There are a number of these types of balancing acts, as will be shown, but the basic argument is that the relation between the individual, other society members and the state should be equalised or considered equivalent in analytical terms. The reciprocity described here is a lingering feeling of past transactions with the state – of one's own exchanges and ideas of those of others.

A way to extend the reciprocal relation to society is through 'the expectation of circumstantially balanced reciprocity or ECBR', where those who have more should share with those having less (Gregory 1975:74). Perhaps 'the pillars of society', *samhällsbärare*, exemplify ECBR in the Swedish context? In relation to the Swedish state, ECBR could be expressed in the progressive tax system and subsidies based on income levels. The exchange balance is struck at society level and is talked about as equality. Most people in Sweden agree to this in general, since they define their national identity in terms of the welfare state (Svallfors 1996:221), but maybe also in their sense of equality as put forward by statist individualism (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006). However, with their justifications of informal purchases, many expressed an outstanding debt on the part of the state. The state is perceived to owe them something and as the state in their opinion will not be able to pay this debt back, they take charge themselves and buy work informally. As such, it is an expression of an unequal reciprocal relation with the state and its members. The notion of ECBR does not need to stand in opposition to the idea of a balanced reciprocal relationship. There are few who would like to buy everything *svart*, only the occasional transaction is acceptable as an attempt to even out an outstanding debt, to balance a reciprocal credit.

These two triadic reciprocal relations provide a background for understanding how the Limningers justify their informal buys in order to equalise perceived outstanding obligations. The assessment of the transfers is balanced not only in relation to the state, but also in relation to other residents – to ideas of their contribution to and benefit from the common coffer available for redistribution. As such, it is a subjective valuation nourished by news, rumour, tales and habits. It is a perceived triadic reciprocal relationship based on transfers between the individual and the state, on one hand, and between other citizens (the community) and the state, on the other.

The balancing act

Two triangular reciprocal relationships have thus been put forward. The reciprocal triadic transaction emphasises individuals' relation to the state through the everyday dealings on the formal market, the payment of diverse types of taxes as well as manifestations of services provided by the state in return. The societal triadic relation addresses the individuals' relation to the state as part of a community in which all contribute to the state. When buying informally, the Limningers justify the purchases within their view of a 'moral economy'.

So how is it that they, like those who consider themselves as the pillars of society, believe in the state to such an extent that they are willing to provide more in taxes than they ever expect to get back? In de Swaan's words, why do we see 'the surrender of individual chances of survival or economic gain, for the sake of an advantage that accrues to all within a given collective, regardless of their own contribution' (de Swaan 1988:25)? De Swaan argues that this is not a paradox, but should instead be viewed as a transitional movement. People involved in the endeavour have an expectation that most of those deemed members of the community will collaborate, and thus contribute. As it is transitional, it implies that they can abandon this effort when it suits them better – for example to buy *svart*. De Swaan describes the contemporary welfare state as a 'strategic environment in which people operate as calculating entrepreneurs' (ibid.229). This is opposed to the view of the Limningers who mostly still believe in and are proud of their welfare state. They are seen to 'balance' instead.

Balancing is a perceived notion of equalising something which is tilting to one or another side. Think of an old-fashioned market scale with too much weight in one of its bowls or a see-saw with a larger child sitting firmly at ground level with the smaller child left hanging in the air. Balancing is used here to underscore a process of continuous giving and taking. Similar expressions such as 'regime of equivalence' (Ledeneva 1998:145) or 'balanced reciprocity' (Sahlins 1972) are interpreted in relation to specific exchanges within a dyadic relationship.

Gauging a balance can at least be described as involving of what is exchanged with what is received in return. If these seem equal, the exchange relation is balanced (ibid.269). This is what takes place within the reciprocal triadic transaction, not through one specific trade but accumulated over time. The second way is to compare both exchangers' respective (alleged) profit on the items exchanged. As exchangers seldom value what they exchange in exactly the same way (cf. Slater 2002), social exchanges are perceived to be a 'positive-sum game' (Befu 1977:270). Perception is, of course, crucial here. What is of value for one person does not necessarily have the same value for someone else (as seen in Tomas' barter of bricks in chapter five). This latter type of relationship provides the basis for the societal triadic reciprocity.

It needs to be emphasised that the purchaser's strategy to maintain a balance within a triadic relationship is not with the supplier. The acceptable purchase of *svart arbete* is voluntary in the sense of agreeing to the transaction and the resulting reciprocity taken into account here lies in the relation with the state. It is an

imaginary balance, obviously not possible to calculate in numbers but in terms of a discernment of evenness and thus of no less importance.

The model proposed has two sides. According to Mauss, it could be said to consist of reasons for giving and taking. The giving side balances what are perceived as contributive errors. These are feelings such as: I have paid too much money, devoted too much time or conferred too much knowledge already. In short, I have given too much. It also means that others have not done their share for example by cheating with taxes (which I, of course, have already paid).

The synonyms used to circumscribe *svart arbete* all refer to avoiding taxes, fees and other dues to the state: *momsfritt* – VAT exempt, *utan moms* – without VAT, *du får betalt utan att det går till beskattning* – you will get paid without being subject to taxation, *det är sånt man gör när man inte betalar skatt* – those activities on which tax is not paid, *arbete som inte är belagt med sociala avgifter* – work without imposed social service contributions.

These practices will be called contributive balancing. They are individual feelings, which are reinforced from the opposite side, the ‘taking side’ of distributive balancing. Here, the justifications concern others taking too much – those not deemed deserving. Examples are politicians and bureaucrats who use money unwisely; badly, inefficiently, selectively – either for their own benefit or that of a specific group of other people. Other illustrations could be citizens making claims they are not entitled to in terms of subsidies, using social insurance unjustly, claiming unemployment benefits while working (often *svart*), etc. The distributive balancing seldom originates from direct examples, but rather through rumours, the media and diverse interpretations of reports and evaluations.

So in this ‘fair and equal society’, the Limningers’ justifications still point to situations perceived as unfair, in that some people have advantages that others do not have. For example, craftsmen have services they can exchange with each other, whereas clerks, civil servants, bureaucrats and other so-called white-collar workers have nothing to offer in return. Why should the office worker or bureaucrat have to work three to four hours in order to pay for one hour *vitt* (see also chapter three) when the service can be bought informally instead, making the exchange balanced and equal (in the amount of work put in, as in chapter five)? One hour for another. In the same vein, the Limningers reason that there are always ‘others’ who earn more and should therefore be able to buy everything *vitt*. There are many ways to find justifications for a distributive side to balance the contributive side. However, voices are heard saying that, having paid the world’s highest taxes, the welfare provided should be good value for the money (see also chapter five).

Finally there is the double-sided emphasis of the give and take relationship. From one point of view, the perceived feeling of being cheated on both the give and the take side. Disenchantment and disillusion. Society has treated me badly and cheating back a little is not enough to balance the relationship. In this case there is not much trust in the state left.

On the other side, there are the double takers. Those who do not contribute while they simultaneously reap the benefits. These practices are seen as completely despicable by the Limningers.

Before discussing these two aspects of reciprocal relations with the state, first a note on strategies to maintain this balancing act.

cheating: strategies to maintain the balance

A way to maintain the balance is to cheat, *att luras*. Where there have been demands for the transfer of provisions to those in power, there has always been more or less resistance to providing it (e.g. Isacson 1994, Laurin 1986, Pardo 1996, Roitman 2005). It has even been suggested that it is a trait almost as universal for humans as the propensity to exchange (cf. Scott 1990). Ruben is much concerned about the larger picture and thinks that people in general comprehend this:

Most people understand that they should not do it [buy services *svart*], as in the end we are all afflicted by it. But you know, well I don't know, but there is cheating in all societies. I don't think that we can say it is because we have these high taxes. It is some sort of built-in phenomenon, that it is fine to cheat the magnanimous VIP's once in a while. But I have to say that I think it is wrong.

Ruben is not the only one to emphasise the contradictions between acquiring services for private use while still caring about the larger community to which they belong. This cheating takes place, as has been shown, as hidden transactions (chapter five).

James Scott depicted the resistance of destitute people in societies with large differences in wealth and power. Hidden actions are a sign of resistance which has often, especially in social science, been interpreted as being directed against the public and the official. This resistance is articulated as an expression against formal relations between the weak and the powerful (Scott 1990:13). These theories are not false, Scott argues, but incomplete as there are many actions performed by the less powerful which contradict the official version – actions which are mostly hidden. For example, 'if it were a matter of taxes they prefer evasion instead of open tax riot' (ibid.86).

Can the same type of logic be referred to regarding Swedish tax evasion? Is the informal purchase of work an evasive strategy rather than an open protest? There is less in terms of social difference amid Swedes than amid the Malaysian village people depicted by Scott. But the Limningers perceive Sweden not to be the just society it claims to be, but rather a society where rules and regulations make it possible for the privileged to have and take additional liberties. In an 'equal society', that could imply that the privileged are even less worthy when buying *svart*. For example, by international comparison Swedes do not have greater trust in the judiciary to provide them with honest treatment than any other country (Skatteverket 2006:4:217).

Börje's account can illustrate this lack of trust. Now and then he buys things for private use, which he pays for through his one-man firm. He has no problem with this. 'You still pay some [in taxes] and the little bonus you get out of it, you can live well on. This is as wrong as those government guys who earn heaps and cannot decide on anything. The difference is that they pay taxes on it [their incomes].' Börje here sums up an important aspect of the idea of equality in the Swedish state (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006, Daun 2005). If he is not paid as much as the bureaucrats who earn their income on his taxes without doing a fair job, he takes redistribution into his own hands. He compensates for it where he can.

When the credibility of the state becomes an issue, resentment and distrust are fostered among people. This nurtures a view of actions taken by the state and its institutions as morally disputable (Pardo 2004:11). The response of ordinary people is to use their own ingenuity, attempting to balance their reciprocal relation to the state. Paraphrases in this context are: *lura Sträng* – cheating Sträng, a former Minister of Finance; *inte skicka mer pengar till Stockholm* – not sending more money to Stockholm, the capital; *skall nåt av pengarna till Stockholm?* – is any of this money bound for Stockholm?; *staten snålar* – the state is stingy, *bibi där lurade vi Ringholm* – heehee, we cheated Ringholm; *och så skall Bosse ha sitt* – and Bosse should have his share; *jag tycker vi skiter i Bosse* – we should not give a damn about Bosse. Bosse Ringholm was at the time of the interviews incumbent Minister of Finance.

The cheaters, regardless of which position they occupy in society, have everything to lose in expressing their resistance openly. Most instances of buying *svart arbete* look like any other work. The same actions can be performed more or less undisclosed to the Tax Agency, although most other people in society know about them. As described earlier, it mostly concerns how the compensation is made. Thus, it is a better strategy to keep their transactions hidden (cf. Scott 1990:86).

As Héléne says, 'this is our way of protesting, even if it is a problem that we cheat some money from the state, which might need it.' This type of reasoning enforces the idea of the state as 'them', 'over there' and not 'us'. Lars situates the cheating:

It depends on where you come from, which culture. It is probably culturally conditioned. It is wrong to steal, but not from the state. It is something we have. Maybe it is our way of protesting somehow. It has always been legitimate to steal from the state. Especially if you succeed with a [tax] deduction, then you are a star. Such as with a few extra kilometres [when driving to work].⁷³ There is even advice in the papers on how to do it.

Underlying the concept of cheating is (as seen in chapter five) the wish to make an impression of being smart while making a good deal (Henry 1978, Mars 1982, Pardo 1996, Smart 1999, Smith 1989). In Italy there are local varieties of expressions regarding the smart ones who know their way around and the stupid, the naïve and credulous. In southern Italy, people have been described as

roughly divided into two groups – those who are smart, quick and successful and those who let opportunities pass by and are deemed slow and somewhat dumb. In Sicily they are called *furbi* and *fessi* (Smart 1983:129), in Naples *sapè fà*, which is to be clever, apt and somewhat cunning and the opposite *'n addurmut* (Pardo 1996:27). A *furbo* (singular) has the capability to improve the situation, to take and use the opportunities offered, but these possibilities do not mean that a *furbo* wrongs other people; on the contrary this person has a good reputation and is smart and entrepreneurial, whereas a *fesso* is compared to a sheep. The sheep follows the flock and misses opportunities to better its life, instead it struggles and plods on in everyday life without possibilities to improve its situation. Naples' *popolino* are not seen as lazy; on the contrary, they work hard but according to their own norms and aiming to enhance the living standard for the entire family (Pardo 1996:37). They emphasise work as a moral act, not necessarily following the laws and living on and off the state, in a way similar to the Limningers.

To be identified as smart after having made a cheap exchange is not peculiar to Italy. This is something many Limningers do and compare their smartness in relation to others.

adapting and protesting against increasing state control

Ruben talks about *svart arbete* as an ongoing process, interacting with the state's increasing involvement in its inhabitants' daily activities:

The state, those in power, well we have a larger control of citizens than we had 50 years ago. Way back then it was not that kind of [societal] construction. *Svart* did not exist. Now everything we do ought to be known. I think it [*svart arbete*] by definition has increased, because there is more control today. But go back 50 or 100 years and apply the same template as we have today? I do not think it has increased, we just did not think in those terms then.

And he continues with an example which is still in existence today, but only in sectors with possible unaccountable waste, such as restaurants and fresh food providers:

Well, hell, if you had a grocery in the 1950s. If you needed five kg of butter to bake on a Saturday, you just took it home. Today, it ought to be taxed, otherwise it is wrong. It wasn't like that before. That's why it [*svart arbete*] has increased by definition.

Ruben reflects on how the state is seen as having more insight into households' economies and at the same time separates the private from the public. This is an example of a perceived triadic relation. To change people's behaviour is not that easy for the state, especially if people have to pay more dearly for it.

Larissa Adler Lomnitz (1988) aptly describes the interrelation between the formalisation of systems and people's responses which take the form of increasingly informal activities. She argues that, with the growing bureaucratic

formalisation of exchanges in society, there will be a similar growth in informal mechanisms which might mirror the increase in Swedish *svart arbete*. For Adler Lomnitz, formalisation can mean inefficiencies and thus an increasing number of informal transactions which take place in society amongst groups with similar interests. Although strengthening the relations within such groups, these informal activities fractionalise society (ibid.53). In the Swedish context, we can see loose-knit networks of craftsmen, for example those that Torsten, the engineer, and Tomas, the craftsman, referred to respectively in the previous chapter. They help each other in reciprocal networks, omitting the state and also taxes, fees, etc.

For example, within organisations, it is argued that increasing rules and regulations can have a contradictory effect since they amplify the opportunities for individuals to acquire and achieve their goals and strategies (Ahrne & Brunsson 2004:218). Informal purchases of work can be a result of adaptations to laws and regulations which are perceived to be contradictory. With perceived increased incongruities in laws and regulations, the cheating can expand. Lars sees *svart arbete* as a result of this. He works within the construction sector and is (as seen earlier) positive with regard to the *svart* practices as a criticism of the state:

The [political] majority is incredible. I mean, the sector where I work is sensitive to political decisions. So now they are back, these ROT⁷⁴ deductions. For a period VAT was differentiated between materials and work. No fool would then buy materials, just a bloody lot of working hours. Then you had to fool around with that type of shit.

What Lars was referring to was the change of wording on invoices, minimising the costs for materials and changing as much as possible to become work – which is then subsidised. The increasing formalisation of society (Adler Lomnitz 1988), for example through the ‘explosion of rules’ (Ahrne & Brunsson 2004), was able to provide a background for how the possibilities for transacting *svart arbete* also increase. It does not erase *svart arbete*, just makes it look different. People adapt continuously to changes, seeking and taking opportunities to make a smart deal.

Informal transactions of work flourish not only between people who are socially related or within interest-based groups. Instead they can almost become a norm, feasible to perform between complete strangers. Swedes wanting to acquire a service *svart* rarely have a problem finding one. We have seen how Limningers who want to buy services *svart* only need to ask cautiously, in ambiguous language: I don’t need an invoice, can I get a jolly good price, can you do it at the weekend?

The justifications for evading taxes are thus manifold. Next, we shall see how these strategies can be articulated as triadic reciprocal relationships – to pay less or to take more.

contributive balancing: paying too much tax

Among the Limningers, one of the most common explanations for the existence of *svart arbete* is the Swedish tax rate, which they perceive as very high by international comparisons. The Limningers' diverse opinions on the reasons for its existence, reached an almost consensual crescendo when talking about taxes. Hasse: 'I think you feel like that. With the world's highest taxes, if you get the chance, I think you will cheat, yes you will.' Viktoria, who runs her own business, says:

Of course you connect the tax-rate level with *svart* money. That is, it is clear to a five-year-old, a teenager – in any case a young grown-up person – that there is some sort of balancing going on. That people and companies try to avoid the taxation rules.

It is not peculiar to Sweden, but a seemingly common feeling throughout the world, that people feel that they are paying more than what they get for it (cf. Laurin 1986). The amount of tax on work as part of GNP has a high correlation with informal purchases of work (Skatteverket 2006:4:222).

Susanne, the PR manager, is convinced that we are taxed to pieces in Sweden. People are really fed up with paying taxes on everything, she says. That's why they buy *svart*. With the array of taxes, there are some who express a creeping feeling that anything which can be taxed will be:

Bloody hell, you shouldn't pay taxes for something you have already paid for with taxed money. You can't pay taxes on taxes, it is stupid. That's how it is with the gas [for the car]. You pay VAT on it. That's tax on taxes. The [cost of] gas is only a third of what you pay. When you take things like this into consideration, I really think working *svart* is fine. We don't protest enough in Sweden. We just clench our fist in the pocket and go on.

says Lars, who obviously does not have much regard for the current state of taxation policies in Sweden.

Almost everyone I talked to referred to this perceived one-sided preponderance. Their narratives make up a chorus of annoyed voices, not peculiar to Sweden although easy to voice here, in a country with 'the world's highest taxes' (Skatteverket 2006:4:1). Åke who lives abroad quoted Benjamin Franklin saying that 'the only certainty in life is death and taxes', and added: 'regardless of how little you pay in taxes, you will always feel that you are paying too much?'

Larry and I talk about synonyms for *svart arbete* and he effortlessly lists a few, which then leads him on to reflect on the state:

Svart, black, *utan kvitto*, without receipt, *vid sidan om*, on the side, or should some of the payment go to Stockholm? Well, I think I said this once. I have sent far too much money to Stockholm. It [talking like this with a customer] was like having a mutual enemy all of a sudden. It was so much easier then.

Finding a common justification for why a transaction should be cheaper gets the exchangers in a good mood. Both transactors have done a good deal and saved money for something else, so the reciprocity created by the transaction makes them feel that they have balanced out the relationship to the state slightly. It is about getting even – that others who have cheated and been smart are now on a more equal footing. The common enemy is those in power – located in Stockholm, the capital. Although we do not know what the purchaser of Larry's services was sniggering about, it is yet another expression of cultural intimacy as 'the play of power, while often oppositional, draws on shared symbols that are then differently used and interpreted according to interests, resources and desires of actors' (Herzfeld 2005:25). It should be pointed out that the state is in some sense an imagined foe, as in reality most of the income taxes paid are for, and used by, the local municipality. Only higher incomes are subject to state taxes, whereas VAT and other non-income taxes are for redistribution by the state.

distributive balancing: the state's unwise redistribution

Contributive balancing is a reaction to a state seen as taking too high a portion of incomes, and takes place in opposition to the enforced collection of taxes. Viktoria, eloquent and very opinionated about taxes and their impact on society, said what most expressed in one way or the other, as she brought up a second aspect on balancing – that what has been paid in taxes is unwisely spent, and intentional or not, public decision-makers do not measure up to the task of redistributing all this money. In this view, taxes paid should provide something in return:

I think that people generally are very irritated that the efficiency is so low in society, without being able to put it into words. We are constantly fed news by the media about politicians taking out increasingly higher wages, at the same time arguing for the general pay level to be kept at bay. They get apartments and golden handshakes. Morale diminishes of course [she laughs] if the role models do not practise as they preach. I do not have anything against paying taxes, but I get irritated over not getting more for them [the taxes].

Viktoria's reasoning above supports the result of a study about the attitudes of Swedes to cheating with taxes. The majority, 65 percent, justified the behaviour with the option 'because people in important positions break norms of society' (Skatteverket 2006:4:39). Thus, if powerful people seem to do wrong, then the ordinary citizen, *Svensson*, makes up for it when the opportunity arises. Purchasers of *svart arbete* do not want to pay their dues to the state, because others – who have more – do not or because they take out more than they should. These are people who could be described as 'free riders' (Svallfors 1996:36).

Monika relates a lot to other Swedes and their respective situation when it concerns why people buy *svart*. 'I can understand if you are very poor and try to cheat to get some extra. But not if you earn 25-30, 40 thousand a month. I

don't think that you need it then. That's petty.' She lifts her gaze to include all members of society and adds:

As an assistant nurse you are really badly paid and there is so much nagging and carping that Sweden does not have any money. A lot of people are like that. Then you read in the newspaper the next day that the Prime Minister got a rise of 5,000 more a month. I really think that it is too much of a difference. I can never imagine that they are worth that type of increase. That's what makes people so mad when they pay so much in taxes.

There are different reciprocal relationships at play here. First of all what taxes are spent on. Swedish income tax starts at quite low income levels. Most people pay a high proportional rate, but if in need there are different subsidies in compensation. If these taxes are seen to be spent 'frivolously', i.e. as high incomes and remuneration for government employees, the informants deem it immoral behaviour. Ordinary tax-payers have worked hard for their incomes and struggle on their own to make ends meet. Seeing taxes spent unwisely hurts, like Monika who illustrated with absurd incomes and rises for bureaucrats and officials.

Viktoria sees it from the same point of view:

Well, actually, I imagine that people think the state is cheating them. I think the general perception is that the state cheats them for so and so many *krona* in taxes. So what do I get for this amount paid? Well, one part goes to all the politicians with their increasingly high wages, to those who are members of committees and boards and get compensated for a few hours of work. And then they get pensions in ten years for one year of work. It is such a tremendously big difference compared with a regular salaried employee. They are not that many, but this doesn't matter because they are the role models. It is a bit like cheating people for money, I think that people's morals... well, many justify theirs, they don't cheat in return but they justify their *svart* payments and recompense. They think they earn it; they have paid so much but have not got the yield they deserve.

Anita has a similar opinion – 'as things are now, when you read about those high positioned civil servants and politicians who line their pockets in different ways, it gets more acceptable to do it. If they can take a share, why shouldn't I, an ordinary person?' While these practices amongst the supposed role models continue, *svart arbete* will continue to exist. As Monika explains. 'I think that it is difficult to do anything about it. As long as the politicians give those false signals, they are a bit corrupt. If everybody knew that they [the politicians] were sort of law-abiding [things would be different].'

Corrupt in the real sense of accepting bribes is not of relevance here.⁷⁵ Instead, these comments refer to high-positioned bureaucrats who have access through their employment to benefits, pensions and travels, etc., which are unavailable to ordinary common people. In this way, the informants extend

their justifications not to the redistribution of taxes to other citizens, but to perceived improper handouts such as excessive incomes or rises. Especially amongst politicians. Anders, the plumber, reasons along the same lines:

It is enormous amounts. [If I take] 1,000 here or there, it is really nothing. If you see how these devils, these old men grab, those who should be role models, with their bloody travels. Look at the EU politicians, they trick here and there in order to get additional money when they travel, and in the end they travel the cheapest way anyway. In practice, you should be able to travel three times for the amount they get net.

Staffan can reinforce this view:

It is not that strange that there is such an effect. That's how you reason when you see role models in society – politicians, high-positioned civil servants, corporate leaders – who take their share in an absurd way and even break laws and regulations. I am convinced that they have such an effect on people in general. They think, if the role models can, so can I.

Staffan also includes other public figures outside the state administration. Their salary level is not at stake in his reasoning, but rather how they can get away with favours way out of reach for common people.

Is there a difference between complaining about the contributive versus the distributive balancing in analytical terms? If perceived to be paying too much, there will also be expectations of getting as much back. On the other hand, getting very little from the state also means that the willingness to contribute is even less. It could be put as a question of the chicken and the egg, but in terms of a reciprocal relation it is rather about how the Maori proverb was originally translated. 'Give as much as you take, all shall be very well' (Mauss 2002 [1990]:91).⁷⁶

This translation has been questioned. In a historic analysis of 'organising' within the Auschwitz extermination camp, Narotzky and Moreno argue that reciprocity as a concept is only useful if seen in the light of moral implications, taking account of both the negative and positive aspects (2002:282). Although a far-fetched contextual comparison, I lean on claims that reciprocity as a human feeling is universal (cf. Gouldner 1960). Reciprocity is often linked to social stability, creating community and society through exchanges. The bonds between individuals generate morals, rights and duties between people – 'a world of mutual obligation' (Narotzky & Moreno 2002:285). However, these authors argue that there is a tension between the actions of giving and of taking, maybe due to a faulty translation of the Maori proverb Mauss used to argue for his thesis (ibid.288). One might wonder what would happen to reciprocity and the way it has been analysed within the social sciences if an exchange were to start with the act of taking instead of giving. More emphasis might have been put on the recipient, or rather the taker, as initiator of an exchange if Mauss had translated the Maori proverb in the right sequence, following the claim of Narotzky and Moreno.

Reinterpreting the proverb, the Maori god Maru instead of starting with the generous undertaking of giving, begins by taking *before* proceeding to give back. This changes the meaning and especially how reciprocity is perceived and acted upon. Having taken something means an obligation to give back, which means that an deliberate action is expected. Having given transforms the giver into a passive person, one who awaits a gift in return. Expectations then accumulate, the passive potential recipient is increasingly distanced – never getting enough back. The interesting aspect of reciprocity is rather ‘the articulation between forms of political generosity and the legitimisation of claims over resources and the tension between acceptance and rejection among those contributing to the accumulation of a distribution pool’ (Narotzky & Moreno 2002:286). If we can translate this to the Swedish welfare state, it supports the view that the distributive transfers that have the least support among the population are those that are the least general, those where the recipients have to demonstrate their need (Svallfors 1996:56).

Larry can further illuminate the contributive vs. the distributive reciprocity. ‘They cheat me everywhere, so I take a little bit in return. I minimise the damage. I would like to see those who decide, those in power.’ He hesitates, and brings to mind and refer to a ‘commercial’ seen in the movie theatres at the time of the interviews which was paid for by the Tax Agency. This film clip shows a decrepit neighbourhood, with run-down high-rise buildings giving an image of poor modern ghettos where unemployed no-good youths are running around, mostly spending time having a go at what there is left to trash. Larry describes seeing this ad and reflects on it:

You know, when you go to the movies and see some commercial with the message that it is cool to pay taxes and then they push over some park bench. I can understand that, in the best of worlds, it would be perfect. But whom do Swedes cheat, then?

I ask if he is referring to the Tax Agency’s film clip, and he nods and continues:

I’ve been doing jobs for people who work at the Tax Agency. ‘Imagine if they knew about this’, these people say and chuckle. So for a moment... OK, who should be most ashamed in this instance? Maybe I, who have been so nasty as to ask? I don’t know.

This film clip is a warning of what will happen if the Swedes do not continue to contribute. Society will deteriorate into declining suburbs drained of regular citizens and ‘pillars of society’, it cannot continue to maintain a welfare state for those most in need. Redistribution will suffer and images from poor areas of the Bronx or the riots in Paris’ immigrant suburbs come to mind. These images threaten the idea of the Swedish well-kept, stable and safe People’s Home, *folkbemmet*, a somewhat ethnocentric pride.

Larry’s justifications highlight the tension between giving and taking. Larry does not contribute when earning money *svart* through the work he performs outside his ordinary employment. But neither do the purchasers. They ought to pay VAT as well as a higher price to Larry if the money he earns is to cover

social fees and taxes. The purchasers avoid contributing, although they work collecting and organising tax contributions. This again highlights the difference between private and public roles and the respective purchases one makes in each. Avoiding contributing will mean that there is less to distribute. If those working collecting citizens' contributions do not live according to the rules and laws, who does? When Larry meets the enforcers of the tax laws wishing to purchase *svart* for their private use, he cannot help wondering about the moral contradictions between acting in public and private roles.

when balancing does not work: the unjust society

There are, in a moral sense, cases that are more severe than contradictions in the occasional *svart* purchase. Some of these provoke real clashes in an individual's view of the rights and responsibilities he has in regard to the state. Niklas, the teacher, elaborates on this:

I just feel that... no, I really thought about this with myself as a starting-point, I put myself into a hypothetical situation. I feel that if society had put me in the trash bin, they would not have helped me, and then I would feel that, what the hell, I don't care about it. I would act out of control, buying or working *svart* or whatever. That barrier is not important then. Because you do not feel any type of solidarity. I think it is like that. But, of course, where we draw the line differs amongst people.

When Johan tells me his story, he seems a prime example of Niklas' reasoning. Johan does not feel he has support from society at large and is deeply suspicious, vis-à-vis both the authorities and society. He feels abandoned and betrayed. When I meet him, he is trying, unsuccessfully, to make a living as a tradesman. It is not a job he likes, but at the very least he says he can decide about his own dealings. Formerly, he made a living as a professional bass player but he has also tried a lot of different jobs:

From the very start when I played, you know you are brought up with Olof Palme [former Prime Minister, my addition] constantly in the background. And somewhere, I had this bad conscience about these *svart* gigs. Maybe not so much, there were other things I had a worse conscience about. But it diminished over time, as there was no other way of getting gigs. They [the club owners] explained that there was just no alternative, and then they had to take another group. If they had paid social contributions, etc., there would only be a 50-bill left and you don't want that. Or you have to raise [the entrance fees] and that becomes impossible. But I've also had quite a few gigs *vitt* for that matter.

[My views] have changed over time, you get older and more interested in how society is run, and I voted a few times and thought a lot. Many things feel very strange and this [working and purchasing *svart*] has been a way of taking my distributive responsibility. I have large debts since my business was taken away from me. We were in the hands of an auditor

and I did not get one *öre*. It was my big defeat then. I had tried to save the firm and somehow got the blame. It is not something I care about now, it doesn't bother me at all. The police couldn't do anything even if I called and nagged. So I trust my distributive ability a lot, lot more than I trust Göran Persson's.

Johan embodies the welfare responsibility of the state in the then incumbent Prime Minister, Göran Persson. Johan feels betrayed, not only by the state but also by society at large. The state could not help him when he lost his firm and taken together with other defeats like his fight for custody of his son, he feels alienated. This alienation is not perceived in the Marxian sense through his labour, but rather in a Maussian sense of giving to society and not getting anything back (Graeber 2001:162). Johan tells me that he has taken a time out from society. He does not read the news or listen to the radio, etc. Both the state and society owe him a debt which is balanced back in his favour by his working and dealing *svart*.

double abuse of the tax system is wrong!

Lars does not seem to have these bad personal experiences of society, he is just disillusioned with how citizens use and abuse society for their own private benefit. He told me many stories of having seen how others grab what they need from society. The following story was one of many, and can in addition show explicitly how being involved in informally recompensed work practices is a learnt behaviour:

One thing that really bothers me was when I was employed in Gothenburg. We worked for AMU [*ArbetsMarknadsUtbildning*, a government-funded labour market training centre, especially for craft trades]. Well, you know from the start I was a concrete man (sic!). But I am always freezing, can never keep warm. Anyway, I had to work outdoors. There is no bloody place on earth so damp and cold, really awful. Anyway, do you remember Linus Jansson? We were working at one site where it was damn cold outside and that bastard stood indoors and hammered panels and teased me. I could have killed him, I was eighteen, nineteen perhaps? So I took this extra course at AMU, to be able to work indoors. One thing led to another and one of the instructors had started a shop of his own. He was really charismatic, but damn blunt. He was a towering bloke, at least two meters tall and weighed at least 140 kg, you know, the kind of person who takes over any room he walks into. No one dared to question anything [he said or did]. So he took us out on *svart* jobs. He took the best guys, you know I was a concrete man and used to work with these things. There were also bus drivers and shipyard men, but they didn't know a thing. So he asked me if I wanted to come along, I don't remember what I got paid. But first I got travel compensation from the dole fund. Then I got paid by him, *svart* of course. It was great, super.

But there is more. We were there during this course, and when it ended I got a job with his firm. That's how he managed and made it grow. Just went in and took the guys he wanted. The other instructors had no say, maybe they got a piece as well, what do I know? Everybody who worked in his firm had been at *AMU*, by the way. He ran a great business, with good guys and we had fun together. Actually, it was a really good time. So we continued working for *AMU* and did all the jobs there. There was a lot of immigration and other stuff going on, lots of construction at this enormous centre they had in Gothenburg. So we went around, built offices, refurbished and even tore down things we had constructed ourselves. There was nil planning and too much money.

We were even at the home of the boss of the entire *AMU* Gothenburg and installed a bloody big oak door in his garage. He did not pay five *krona* for it, of that I'm certain. We built a carport for another boss, *AMU* paid for the materials and we were paid on the side as you say [*svart*]. We did so many reconstructions and there was so much money, and as I was already then a bit interested in how society works, I thought it was damn disgusting. Even if I was being paid, it irritated me that government money went on this! They spent so much money that there finally was a directive from above that no invoices could exceed 25,000 for refurbishment. This just resulted in a hell of a lot of 25,000 *krona* invoices. How bloody stupid can you be?

This is just one tale he tells about having learnt to work *svart*. His statement confirms what is considered a general reason for buying *svart* – disillusionment because of public distribution of tax money. This feeling is especially ripe in this society which is argued to be marked by a sense of equality. Lars is partly fed up with society. At some point he says: 'I just want to pay for my house; I want to be free, not having anything to do with society. That would, sometimes, feel bloody nice.'

Lars' tale above is an example of double abuse of the system. The *AMU* managers reap benefits from the state and simultaneously work *svart*. Börje once received help from someone with a disability pension, a man deemed unfit for work and who therefore received a pension for the rest of his life:

Once, I needed help closing a tube to a heater, I'm so bad with the 'plumbing'. So I called one of my contacts. It was this disablement recipient who came. So he got paid by me and also got paid by the state. I only used him once, it was an emergency. So you think about this guy, how you would act yourself and then about the others. Well, it is no good. You have to pay your dues and everything. If you don't, living on social allowances and working *svart* is bloody wrong. But if you pay your dues and taxes and then take a little bit apart for yourself [it is OK]. We would not have any entrepreneurship in Sweden if it wasn't for this [possibility to cheat on dues to the state].

In this sense the solidaristic notion of being a member of the state is vigorously alive; all citizens should provide according to their abilities, i.e. through their salary, to the common coffer. What you then do is up to yourself, is the common understanding.

At first, Börje's reasoning seems irrational. Cheating on income is presented as morally OK, whereas the other man's cheating is perceived as depraved. They both can be seen to have their fingers in the state's, and thus their common, coffer. However, Börje has put in work for which he receives payment. The whole or part of this income is taken on the side. Both the purchaser and the provider get off a bit more cheaply, they have both saved a little on this transaction by not paying the taxes due. Börje pays taxes for most of the work he does; the tax transfer is just reduced a little by his occasional *svart* job and he contributes less money than he should to the common coffer. But the man who receives a retirement pension, for being unable to work, earns his living from the state. Even though he is not legally permitted to work, he works extra, which he should not be able to because of his retirement pension. This is morally wrong in Börje's view (cf. Frykman & Hansen 2009:66). Needless to say, the early retired plumber certainly has his own tales of justification. He may have been forced into early retirement, it may have been against his will and he has thus lost the possibility of a full-time wage.

Those regarded as cheaters are those who have not done their fair share in contributing to society before using their free time to earn some extras. In Börje's view it is the cheating plumber who has his fingers in the coffer, Börje just puts in a bit less than he should – avoiding paying taxes on certain services he buys.

Björn, the trucker, is really adamant about this as well:

If you are knowledgeable in craftsmanship. Working seven to four, what you then do in your free time, going to work for someone, that's more legitimate than being on the dole and working *svart*. I see red, really get mad, then... then you are a societal parasite. Really. It is so bloody common, especially in the craftsman business... you don't contribute with anything then. Working *svart*, at least you are doing something. If you then pay the state, well. But [when there is] grabbing out of a common coffer to which everyone has contributed, then you can get a bit huffy.

Hasse has a less severe view on those who work *svart* while they are unemployed. He finds it a risky endeavour:

I cannot understand how they dare? They've got family and house, etc. *A-kassa*, [the unemployment benefit fund] what does that give you? You cannot run a house and family on it. I understand the need for some additional ... but to work all the time like that? No, I do not understand... That they dare, I cannot understand it. If you are suspended from the *A-kassa* then it is to hell with family and all.

From the above justifications, the balancing act is seen as the Limningers' response to living within a Swedish regime of living. Through the balancing – informal purchases of work – they create a moral economy. Having worked full-time and contributed with both work and taxes to society, the fair share as citizen has been accomplished. Anyone then wanting to make an extra effort doing additional work should, in the view of the Limningers, be able to do this according to his own judgement, without having to contribute more to society (as seen in chapter three). When the idea of reciprocity with the state is fulfilled by working full-time and complying with laws and regulations, a citizen's contribution is fulfilled, at each person's level of ability.

Receiving the dole when one is unable to contribute by working is acceptable; it is part of living in a welfare state. But in combination with working *svart*, it is definitively not. People who do this are seen as simultaneously living off the state and also not contributing by paying taxes on the income they get. They are capable of doing something, i.e. working *svart*, so there is both an immoral receipt of the dole (they are able to work) and a simultaneous cheating with taxes on the recompense for the work performed. This is perceived as doubly immoral.

In addition, it is seen as a wrongful distribution on the part of the state; an able person has received a disablement pension. Purchasing work from such a person is seen as illicit. But exceptions exist, informed by other logics.

The purchasers of *svart arbete* keep an imagined balance with the state and other people in society. The triadic reciprocity with the welfare state is, in the legal sense, both tainted and broken. Buying services *svart* stabilises a perceived deficit in favour of the purchaser back towards a more balanced relation. Exchanges of *svart arbete* are thus performed informed by ideas of reciprocal relations when the state is seen not to have supplied what it ought to do or where other residents have taken or received transfers to their advantage. The Limningers' view on *svart arbete* in terms of reciprocal relations between themselves, other people considered part of the community and society as well as the state highlights tensions between the good, strong community and the all-encompassing welfare state.

Concluding remarks

Purchasing *svart arbete* is seen in this chapter as both a habit continued and an adaptation to a market-oriented society through the maintenance of reciprocal relations with the state.

Values of equal worth and opportunities are a principal feature in Sweden (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006:51). The notions of 'statist individualism' and 'pillars of society', *sambällsbärare*, sketch a background to how Swedes can be said to relate reciprocally to the state that governs them. In this way Swedish citizens can be said to maintain a moral economy in their dealings with the state, consisting of their tax payments and the general welfare received. The residents are also the object of many direct subsidies and/or tax incentives regarding

work from the welfare state. Since those transfers most often are specifically aimed, they provide plenty of ways for citizens to justify their own economic appraisals when buying or selling services. Paying for *svart arbete* for private use can thus also be a way of balancing the reciprocal relation a citizen has with the Swedish state.

This balancing is one contemporary interpretation of a Swedish moral economy. It is a model for how giving and taking, in relation to the state and towards others' contributions, ought to work. There are a number of ways of maintaining a balance in the dealings with the state. If the array of existing benefits is perceived as unevenly distributed, Limningers take the occasional opportunity to buy things *svart* in order to straighten things out – to balance. So, not given what they think they have the right to, they withhold means due to the state. It is the Limningers' adjustments to economic realities, creating their version of a Swedish moral economy.

Buying *svart* can thus be seen as a response to a feeling of having contributed too much to the state. The tax level is used by many as a justification, said to be too high or too encompassing. Another reasoning is that one individual contributes more than others do, 'I pay more than other Swedes do.' The 'others' are seen to provide less than what they should do. In this perspective, buying *svart* is a means of evening out other citizens' negligence in contributing fairly to the state. 'And if they cheat, I am stupid if I do not do the same.'

Another justification puts the redistributive capacity of the state in focus. Others are seen to benefit more than the individual does, so 'I do not get back what I deserve.' Sometimes representatives of the state seem to have benefits attached to their employment which are inappropriate or they are seen to take advantage of their position. In either case, the flow of taxes and other fees received by the state is seen to be unwisely, and unjustly, spent when it is redistributed. If others are seen to ignore paying their dues or otherwise taking advantage of the state, the solidarity with other Swedes (which the Swedish welfare state is built upon) is seen to have been neglected. It is despicable, for example, when prominent and more resourceful members of society are perceived as not contributing their due share. Most abominable in the view of the Limningers are the 'double cheaters' who receive subsidies from the government while working *svart*.

Furthermore, justifications may be built on repetitive disappointments with the state and its welfare system. One may not have received due care and welfare, and another has perhaps even been subject to direct maltreatment. In this state of mind, the relation to the government is severed.

In a society deemed to be one of the most egalitarian in the world in terms of incomes, these justifications are also negotiated in relation to other citizens' perceived opportunities. It is not cheating by taking from those who have more but rather from those who are seen to have benefited on behalf of others and used the taxes wrongly (cf. Jacobsson & Sandstedt 2005). This behaviour is usually personified in hero figures like Robin Hood whose practices can be seen as a historical version of the reciprocal balancing act. Cheating the state via *svart* purchases is seen as taking back something which rightly belongs to me. It is a

balancing act in which reciprocal relations between oneself, other residents and the state are considered.

By buying *svart arbete*, an imaginary balance of reciprocal relations is maintained. On a societal level, this is the origin and reproduction of the vicious circle of increasing amounts of *svart arbete* resulting in fewer contributions to and thus less trust in the fair welfare state. Conflictual relationships between individuals and the state are highlighted through these licit but illegal exchanges of services.

8. Conclusion: Moral dilemmas when purchasing work informally

Svart – a code for a functioning services trade⁷⁷ (*Expressen* 1.1.2007).

At the beginning of the interview, Niklas asked me – what are we talking about? What is *svart arbete*? The definition seems easy enough, but strictly according to the Swedish tax law any exchange of work not subject to taxation is *svart* – and thus illegal. People constantly help and exchange, buy and barter in order to make society possible. There is thus a substantial grey zone – of illegal yet licit exchanges of work.

Aiming to understand why Swedes buy *svart arbete*, this book has described how purchases in this grey zone can be justified. A group of middle-aged Swedes, here referred to as the Limningers, have identified and described the social practices that make an exchange of services *svart arbete* and, in particular, what makes certain purchases licit and others not.

The object for analysis has thus been talk about the exchange itself – an informal purchase of work. The purchases are often planned and deliberate, but sometimes also unintentional and identified as informal only when talked about in retrospect. Scrutinising the legitimisations points to different set-ups of the amount, the frequency, who the provider is, the relationship to this person, the type of work, as well as where and when it takes place. More generally, we can talk about different combinations of practices and the relation to the prospective provider as what makes *svart arbete* more or less licit. The Limningers' justifications are thus multifaceted.

In the background lingers always the legal definition, which begs the question of the Limningers' relation to the state. That is perhaps why these purchases are in many ways referred to by slang, thus lessening the illegality. A *svart* purchase is in this way verbally removed from society's formal and legal market realms into a more private exchange that takes place between people with closer relations. As such, it emphasises a type of cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 2005) in the Limningers' view of themselves as Swedish citizens. They are generally proud of their welfare state, which concurs easily neither with doing smart deals for private consumption nor with being a moral and law-abiding citizen.

Thus, what do they consider *svart arbete* to be? The classification process is a fluid one, although in the background lies a common referral to the Swedish

Tax Agency's definition of what they call 'black work': 'payment for work carried out, that should be subjected to tax in Sweden but has not been declared to the Swedish Tax Agency' (Skatteverket 2006:4B:19). The Tax Agency divides the practices into two types of tax evasion: either as 'undeclared income from employment' or as 'undeclared business income for self-employed' (ibid.20). Any exchange of work having value is according to the laws and regulations, *svart* if it is untaxed, regardless of the mode of settlement. Although settlement can be of any kind, barter as a type of income has disappeared from the governmental definitions and instead there is an implicit emphasis on cash as recompense.⁷⁸ In fact, *svart arbete* becomes a subject for investigation when it takes a more organised character and if it is performed by professionals, i.e. people who make their living by it. A second slight change of emphasis is that from thwarting the supply side, increased attention is put on both exchangers – buyer and seller.

What can be considered *svart arbete* in the legal sense thus covers an array of exchanges of work with diverse moral implications. It could be a teenager babysitting for neighbours on a regular basis or a plumber fixing the leaking faucet of an acquaintance in return for help with painting his newly-built veranda, but also the more organised abuses of undocumented immigrants working for petty recompense. *Svart arbete* are exchanges ranging from larger-scale exploitation of people and fraud with tax money, to the occasional cash-paid minor repair job or help exchanged between people in close relations. Using the same expression for such a widespread supply of exchanges risks diminishing the criminality of such actions. It also makes the distinction between the acceptable and unacceptable more difficult to pronounce.

The fluidity of the term means that the Limningers also recognise that almost any exchange of services could be regarded as illegal. In their justifications, they express an innate feeling that taxes ought to have been paid on any given exchange of work, however quickly this is contradicted by recognising the absurdity in enforcing such a law. It would result in even barter between family-members or friends running the risk of being considered *svart*.

This means that it is more pertinent to ask what type of *svart arbete* the Limningers take part in and what they consider licit. As we have seen, what they think is right and what they do do not always converge. When making a *svart* purchase licit, the Limningers justify it in relation to how they want to be seen by others in Swedish society. Simply the act of pronouncing particular purchases *svart arbete* makes them increasingly licit (although I do not imagine that I was told about all their informal purchases). This inherent tension is often recognised as an afterthought. Buyers refer to laws and regulations, on the one hand, but at the same time acknowledge that it is a licit exchange – invoking a negotiation between ideas of house-holding and responsible citizenship. This ambiguity makes purchases of *svart arbete* a moral issue.

A simplistic public view holds that Swedes who participate in *svart arbete* are immoral, especially vis-à-vis the welfare state but also in relation to their fellow citizens. Through the accounts of these inconspicuous exchanges, Limningers can be said to construct a moral economy. It is moral, since the justification for

it is based on an attempt to even out perceived inequalities in daily life, inequalities imposed by the restraints of living in a contemporary modern welfare state.

The diverse restraints on which purchases can be justified have been argued to take place within a regime of living. It is important to note that the Swedish regime of living described here is not quantifiable or definite, neither a set frame nor a general picture of contemporary Swedish ethics. It is viewed as contextual sets of constraints that make purchases more or less acceptable. A Swedish regime of living points to connections amongst ethical problems in different aspects of life and is an attempt to respond to the question of 'how one should live'.

The way they invoke these social practices can be talked about as giving agency to people living within the constraints of such a regime. When the possibility arrives, they take the opportunity to buy and barter *svart*. To keep the transactions hidden from state and society thus stretches the limits of the regime. It has been seen as constructing a moral economy.

Talking about acceptable purchases of work has thus provided glimpses into contemporary Swedish life of which the licit purchase of *svart arbete* is part. I take the view that as exchanges they cannot be seen as an economy apart but are actually part of constituting economy in society.

purchases of *svart arbete* made acceptable

Informal purchases of services are made licit as an arrangement of practices in relation to the provider and to the state. The diverse justifications broadly follow three different logics that have been used to organise this book. These can be emphasised through the expression: 'buying work informally'. 'Buying', as it concerns the act of exchanging and the manner in which the exchange is settled. 'Work', as the foundation for the exchange and finally 'informally' as an expression of the relationship to the provider of the work as well as to the state which governs what makes a deal more or less formal. When classified in opposition to the state, there is no doubt about the purchase being identified as *svart*. The justifications of these logics overlap and intervene, but they each enlighten us about what makes the illegal purchase licit.

The foundation for the exchange, 'work', makes up an important aspect of Swedish life. Normative ideas around work trickle through much of Swedish society, going back to the Protestant ethic and the construction of the Swedish welfare state. Although work is primarily defined as providing means for survival, it is also much more: homework, domestic chores, voluntary tasks in civil society, etc. Purchases of work are thus often preceded by negotiation between doing the work oneself and buying it *vitt* or *svart*.

If bought *svart*, the transaction is made more licit when carried out outside normal working hours, after the provider's ordinary work. Outside means having worked full-time, paid income taxes and fulfilled other duties in relation to the state. What is paid and earned beyond this, in the remaining leisure-time, should not be of concern to anybody else. This is one way in which purchases of *svart arbete* are made acceptable. Another is in terms of resolving societal

bottlenecks, by acquiring services which a citizen has the right to, i.e. municipal childcare. These contexts loosen the restraints for an acceptable purchase.

To 'buy' services *svart* often follows conventions and habits. It can be a way of exchanging that is learnt at home, ways of bartering and acquisitions amongst people with close relations. It may mean doing exchanges the way they have always been done; amongst family and friends, but also within certain vocations. *Svart arbete* is assumed to flourish amongst craftsmen. This occupation is by no means the only one but can exemplify the professional knowledge needed to barter or sell services informally. A craftsman who insists on purchasing *vitt* from colleagues is often regarded as a bit of a fool, of wanting to spend more money than necessary when he has knowledge that can easily be bartered – with a considerable amount of money saved. This type of justification can be regarded as a calculation between working time expended in different worlds of worth: professionally and privately but also as referring to citizenship. Referred to as money-hour, it involves converting the time it takes to earn money that should be used to acquire a service. There are considerable differences in value of money-hour bought *vitt* or *svart* or bartered or performed by oneself.

The practices of buying *svart* are informed by notions of cheapness and simplicity. Buying cheap is a good deed, not only as house-holding and being economical with time and money, but also with reference to living in a market-oriented society. Many formal services are increasingly complex to acquire, for example car repairs which is another often-mentioned sector prone to *svart arbete*. Garages with authorisations have long waiting lists; they keep the car for a long time, requiring perhaps several visits, and are costly. Cars repaired *svart* can, on the contrary, be done in an afternoon, while having a chat and at a cost a fraction of the formal and invoiced one. In this sense it is seen as a smart deal.

In order to make the purchase of *svart arbete* more licit, it is talked about as invoking a closer relation to the provider, a reciprocal relation. It is a type of social exchange or an exchange made away from the formality of market transactions, 'informally'. In this aspect, the purchase is justified as help or barter between friends or neighbours, amongst colleagues or people with closer relations. While people make their *svart* purchases more licit, they move them closer to the private realm and they are talked about as private deals, outside the formal market. Avoiding speaking about monetary payment also moves the deal away from the government as an issuer of money and collector of taxes. What is justified as barter can in reality be a deal settled with money, but without paying taxes or publicly acknowledging the deal by issuing an invoice. As barter, it is a habit made more illegal through the increasing number of rules regulating Swedish economic life. Bartering this way can also be done as a way of expressing one's relation to the state and to the government, leaving the authorities out of the picture. It is appropriate to ask if Swedish barter rings, like HOURS and LETS, would be regarded as a form of *svart arbete*, in the legal sense.

In contrast, when the state is involved it makes the exchange more formal and lessens the need for trust between exchangers. The relation to the state and especially its representatives is often invoked when buying *svart*. A citizen pays

taxes and other fees and commissions to the state and, in return, welfare services and subsidies are received. When other citizens are included, the exchange has been described in terms of triadic reciprocities – a *svart* purchase invoked as part of an ongoing relationship involving the state and other citizens who contribute and take part in the Swedish welfare system. Justifications of this sort are referred to as a balancing act, where the purchaser creates a moral economy. The occasional *svart* purchase is justified between an individual's and other citizens' contribution and the state representatives' distributive capacity. It is a moral economic purchase taking place within the constraints of a Swedish regime of living.

Stopping to think and putting the Limningers grumbles in perspective, can we say something about how the Swedish regime of living is constructed – not only the responses to buying *svart* as such!

I want to end this book by expanding on some inherent tensions evoked by the everyday cheating of the state. These can be said to constitute 'processes of reflection and action in situations in which living has been rendered problematic' (Collier & Lakoff 2005:22). These dilemmas are not oppositional in the sense of what is good for the state is bad for its citizens and vice versa. Rather, they are posed by a welfare society based on taxes on income from work.

Buying *svart arbete* means breaking laws and avoiding taxes; there is no doubt about this both in the view of citizens and in the view of their state. Firstly, from the citizen's perspective, bartering and buying *svart* both build on and result in (reciprocal) relations with people, but can simultaneously undermine the idea of the welfare state that most informants are said to believe in. Secondly, when the state values and prices all services, it reinforces the perception of a society where everything should have an economic value. This can be perceived as transactions that increasingly govern relations between citizens, on the one hand, and between them and their state, on the other, which concurrently can undermine the propensity for people to help each other and thereby to strengthen social relations. Thirdly, trying to maintain a reciprocal balance with the state by purchasing *svart* can fuel the vicious circle of *svart arbete*. In the following, I shall briefly outline these dilemmas which, I repeat, do not signify a welfare state set against its citizens. However, no one except the state can resolve or at least mollify such tensions. A few of the Limningers who have made their voices heard will elaborate on these dilemmas.

between helping out and believing in the welfare state

Tomas can exemplify the dual bewilderment of helping each other and cheating the state. He works in the building industry and has been exposed to a lot of *svart arbete*. Tomas has insight into his contradictory practices and provides intimate accounts of his everyday doings which stand in contrast to the society in which he wants to live and believe. As Herzfeld puts it, 'Cultural intimacy is, above all, familiarity with perceived social flaws that offer culturally persuasive explanations of apparent deviations from the public interest' (2005:9). Tomas' *svart* dealings are easy to understand from a personal micro perspective, al-

though we might not agree with them from a societal macro view. Tomas is not alone in this insight, but since he works in the building industry he is more exposed to them.

It is evident that he does not want to tell me about all his *svart* dealings, but he hints at his knowledge and the probing all-encompassing existence of it. Being involved, he is also very aware of the supposed consequences for society, and tries on the one hand to explain this apparent contradiction between the practices he himself and his friends and colleagues are involved in and, on the other hand, the concepts that build up the welfare state he lives in:

Yeah, yeah... well, that's how I would explain it. It is idiotic, for societal economy, it is completely stupid with *svart arbete*. Completely idiotic. But, what we lose on the swings, we win on the roundabouts. I mean, in the end you have to pay any which way. The most widespread type of services, according to my view, is physical services and they are most common within the construction industry. However, I can also imagine that many commodity sales have it and the restaurant business is affected. I'd rather call it heavily affected, it sounds better.

When asked if he means that it is the people who are affected, Tomas nods and continues:

Svart arbete often concerns the physical work, that's where it is most widespread. Then there are all the services, the cost-free services, you might call it. Like when I go and help my neighbour and hammer something and then he comes over and helps me hammer something or does something else I cannot do. That he has a chain saw that I don't have. Well, the question is whether that's *svart arbete* or if it is a favour?

So on the one hand, Tomas knows perfectly well that the taxes he and everybody else who makes *svart* deals avoid, are money that could have financed welfare. However, he also underscores the importance of helping each other, of working together in one's free time. He values the fact that he and his neighbours exchange help, creating reciprocal and closer relations between themselves, what people in a good society should do.

These exchanges are thus not *svart arbete* in his view, but still very similar to practices he has earlier described amongst his network of craftsmen. They are performed in a network of more or less weak ties, which are strengthened as exchanges are made licit. The network is easily expanded because of the possibilities of making cheap and simple deals.

From the state's perspective, if one is too conscientious in the pursuit of *svart arbete*, any help between people risks being considered *svart*. What does this do to the idea of a good society in which people help each other?

Most of the Limningers reflected on this dilemma. Although they know that bartering is *svart*, when performed within closer relations they justify it according to their definitions of a moral and just economy. They balance their relation to the state through purchases of *svart arbete*.

valuing work and the economisation of relations

To tax a service, we need to know the value of it. The intent to value all services in monetary terms also affects people's propensity to object. Börje defines the licit in relation to the illicit when he refers to the practices in the welfare state, embodied here by former Social Democratic Finance Minister Gunnar Sträng. 'Yes. Where is the border? That's when you cheat Sträng.⁷⁹ You have started these illegalities, made a custom of them, which you live off.'

Börje does not argue in terms of certain representatives of the state taking an illicit share. He is more annoyed at how modern society as a whole has taken a turn; that people as members of society do not express solidarity with each other by helping out and instead seem to put all the emphasis on economic values.

Börje does not find exchanging work strange; it is something people have always done, he reasons. He sees the barter of work becoming *svart arbete* when Sträng 'valued the work barter in terms of money. That's when you get into the grey zone.'

Börje is not the only one becoming irritated at how the state increasingly seems to value services exchanged. Recall that all services of value exchanged ought to be subject to income taxation. This economisation undermines, in the view of the Limningers, the propensity to help each other. In addition, valuing all exchanges also puts claims on the state. Citizens seem increasingly aware of the economic value of the services they receive – and pay for – and can compare them with alternatives. This amplified attention creates reciprocal expectations, to get value for money paid although knowing that one can never settle accounts exactly. Nevertheless, perception is what counts, when justifying both the occasional and more organised purchases of *svart arbete*.

If relations to the state are increasingly expressed in economic terms, the expectation of a balanced reciprocal relation is basically impossible to arrive at. The ambition of the state to quantify the worth of a service in time or money makes it easier to see any exchange as a way of cheating with taxes, instead of offering the occasional help to a compatriot in need.

the vicious circle of *svart arbete*

Although Swedish *svart arbete* is all-encompassing and finds its expression where the occasion presents itself, it is important for the Limningers that it does not expand even more in society, as an opposition to laws and regulations. Regardless of the views on and acceptance of the phenomenon, this is something most of my informants agree on. Pontus, the photographer, commented at the start of this book and he voices a conclusion. He sees the practices of *svart arbete* in relation to other countries' economies:

If we get this hoolahoop economy, some sort of Russian variety, we shall not keep it [the welfare state]. You have to go *vitt*. Otherwise we shall build another structure, one with bribes and payments under the table. It is a risk of a bad societal model. I think the Swedish welfare model is so

cool. We are so naive. Therefore, we can't do too much *svart*. Our society would crash then.

Buying *svart* is for many a dilemma as they recognise what their actions imply. They want to lead a life where actions and transactions go hand in hand with the morals according to which they live. Many Limningers asked for the state to change its laws and regulations, narrowing the gap between the licit but illegal, on the one hand, and legal, on the other. So that more people would find the licit purchase equal to a legal one. One change asked for was less tax; a slimmer tax wedge would mean that more consumers could buy work *vitt* instead of *svart*. This purely economic reasoning was made more complicated by pointing out that tax evasion is a global phenomenon. The level of taxes is not the only reason for the existence of *svart arbete*, although the larger the difference the easier it is to make an economic decision to buy *svart* instead of *vitt*. Instead, buying *svart* is seen as resistance to a state that imposes complicated and unfair laws and regulations making life more difficult. Buying *svart* is a way of balancing the reciprocal relations between citizens and their state.

When the relation to the state is defined in terms of triadic reciprocal relations based on a sense of equality between and amongst Swedes, the continuous re-creation of the vicious circle of *svart arbete* can be understood from a different viewpoint. Including both distributions and contributions between citizen, compatriots and their state, it is a delicate balancing act. Perception is, of course, the key word here, as a precise account is impossible to maintain or calculate. If others are perceived to cheat, so will I. If they get more than I do, then I shall take what is rightly mine when I have a chance to do so. The same reaction will result from the feeling that I pay more than I get back. The result is an endless amount of possible reciprocal relations to the state. These express themselves as disillusionment, lack of trust, calling into question, etc. As has been noted elsewhere, the less general the audience that a specific welfare distribution targets, the less support it has amongst Swedes (e.g. Svallfors 1995). The vicious circle of cheating the state is likely to continue unless a change appears in people's perception of equal treatment from the state and that they get back what they have been or will be contributing over a lifetime.

What the Limningers refer to is simultaneously ideas of contribution and of the existence of a common coffer, the contents of which should be shared by all. It is not an idea of redistribution but of reciprocity. As Mauss noted: 'Give as much as you take and all will be well'. However, in contrast with the notion of 'ECBR', the expectation of circumstantially balanced reciprocity, where those who have more should share with those having less (Gregory 1975:74), there is a tension. To simultaneously give/pay and expect the same in return contradicts the notion of sharing more with those who have less. This cleavage leaves much room for individual balancing strategies, especially if others who have more – the rich, the powerful, etc. – are perceived to be getting away with contributing less to, or taking more from, the common coffer.

The intention with this book has been to point out the social practices, talk and actions, that make it possible to justify purchases of *svart arbete*. It offers no

solutions, but shows how widespread and widely accepted *svart arbete* is and the ambiguity involved in justifying these purchases (cf. Rappert 2001). Perhaps the social practices described to make *svart* purchases more licit can suggest where legal interventions ought to be considered?

The book has shown that existing laws and regulations that make any exchange of work illegal, contradict the idea of the good society based on people who help and support each other. Therefore it also underlines the importance of the Tax Agency's being indulgent but consistent when imposing laws on the occasional exchanges of lesser value between people with closer relations.

Svart arbete is a macro-level definition, encompassing every type of recompensed work where the state is not benefiting by getting its lawful share of the 'cake' through taxes, social fees, etc. On the micro-level, for people on the street, it has the implication that if every untaxed exchange of work is considered *svart arbete*, especially if it is insignificant, the notion of *svart arbete* as a serious crime is then diminished. If one type of *svart arbete* is perceived as allowed, other and more serious types, in a moral and an economic sense, are perceived as increasingly licit.

However, when this happens, it also makes the regime of living more forgiving towards breaking laws while making gains for private use. Is this perhaps the flip-side of statist individualism? With the background that the Swedish citizen is individualistic in his or her relation to the state and hence has more belief in the Swedish state than in the family (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006), it is not strange that cheating the state by buying *svart arbete* is so widespread. The Swedes carry the idea of an egalitarian society, to which all people contribute and in which no one should be dependent on family or personal relations for his survival. However, if one's relation to the state is increasingly characterised by economic relations through transactions, these transactions have to be perceived as fair – i.e. that they are balanced. Otherwise, the vicious circle of *svart arbete*, and maybe also other cheating practices, will most probably continue.

Appendix 1: Swedish expressions used

<i>arbete</i>	work
<i>arbetslinjen</i>	the Work Approach. Political ambition
<i>arbetsmarknad</i>	labour market
<i>att byta ihop sig</i>	to barter together
<i>att luras</i>	to cheat
<i>avrunda neråt</i>	round off (downwards)
<i>betala vitt eller ta det svart</i>	pay white or take it black
<i>betalt utan att det går till beskattning</i>	you will get paid without being subject to taxation
<i>Brå</i>	Swedish Crime Prevention Council
<i>dagmamma</i>	‘day mother’. A person who take care of other people’s children in her home when these people work. A <i>dagmamma</i> can be commissioned by the municipality, but there are also many who do it <i>svart</i> .
<i>det är sånt man gör när man inte betalar skatt</i>	those activities not taxed
<i>faluröd</i>	a deep dark red which is the cheap traditional colour for painting wooden houses. The material originates from a residual product when mining copper. The word derives from the coppermine of Falun.
<i>fickpengar</i>	pocket money
<i>fika</i>	coffeebreak
<i>folkhemmet</i>	the People’s Home. Concept coined by Social Democratic leader Per-Albin Hansson in the 1930s.
<i>friggebod</i>	a newish shed or small cottage (<i>bod</i>) occupying an area of less than 10 squaremetres. The name comes from former minister Birgit Friggebo who reduced the restrictions on building permits for new houses/buildings of less than 10m ² . Sweden is thus filled with small houses fulfilling many purposes; for housing gardening tools, saunas and as small guest retreats at summer homes.
<i>Försäkringskassan</i>	the Swedish Social Insurance

<i>Galne Gunnar</i>	an outlet/mega-store in the Swedish countryside, a place for daytrips where one can make 'good bargains'
<i>ge företagservice</i>	business services provider
<i>gött arbete, ett</i>	the good work
<i>gråsossar</i>	old-fashioned and hard-core Social Democrats
<i>grädda på moset</i>	cream on top of the dessert, make life a little better
<i>guldkant läge</i>	a golden-edge opportunity
<i>gymnasium</i>	the secondary school in Sweden, somewhat equivalent to the US High School or the French Lycée. It is not compulsory, but the gymnasium offers both practical and theoretical (pre-academic) education
<i>hibi där lurade vi Ringholm</i>	heehee, we cheated Ringholm. Bosse Ringholm was at the time of the interviews incumbent Minister of Finance (1999-2004)
<i>hjälpa</i>	to help
<i>husa</i>	Housemaid
<i>hushållsnära tjänster</i>	domestic services
<i>hygieniker</i>	sanitary technician
<i>inte skicka mer pengar till Stockholm</i>	not sending more money to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden
<i>jag tycker vi skiter i Bosse</i>	we don't give a damn about Bosse. Bosse Ringholm was at the time of the interviews incumbent Minister of Finance (1999-2004).
<i>kan resten vara svart</i>	can the remaining amount be <i>svart</i> ?
<i>kolsvart</i>	black as coal
<i>konditori</i>	old-fashioned coffee-shop, mainly offering sweet breads and cakes.
<i>kontoret på fickan</i>	having the office in the pocket
<i>kontors- / lokalvärdare</i>	caretaker of offices or premises
<i> kreativ finansiering</i>	creative financing
<i>krona</i>	the Swedish currency. Approximately 10 krona to 1 euro and 7 to a US dollar
<i>krydda på moset</i>	spice for bland mashed potatoes
<i>KUMRIF, Kontant Utan Moms Raket I Fickan</i>	cash without VAT straight into the pocket, payment of money directly from buyer to provider
<i>käckt pris</i>	jolly good price
<i>Kärt barn har många namn</i>	we find many names for those we love
<i>LO, Landsorganisationen</i>	the Swedish Trade Union Confederation
<i>lura</i>	Cheat
<i>Lyckoslanten</i>	the Lucky Coin. A magazine distributed

	through schools to all 9-12 year old children in Sweden since 1926 on behalf of the savings banks, aiming is to be both funny and educative and inspiring for teachers in education about the economy and money.
<i>Macken</i>	title of movie
<i>momsfritt</i>	without VAT
<i>och så skall Bosse ha sitt</i>	and Bosse should have his share. Bo (Bosse, is diminutive for Bo) Ringholm was at the time of the interviews incumbent Minister of Finance (1999-2004)
<i>pengar under bordet</i>	money under the table
<i>pengarna raket ner i fickan or rätt ner i fickan</i>	a straight cash transaction, the money changes hands and quickly disappears into the recipient pocket
<i>piga</i>	maid
<i>pigdebatten</i>	the maid debate
<i>polska</i>	a woman from Poland
<i>Riksdagen</i>	the Swedish Parliament
ROT	<i>reparation, ombyggnad, tillbyggnad</i> – repairs, refurbishment, extensions. Recurring tax deductions for work in private homes. The aim is to support the building industry in periods of slow economic growth, but also a way to lessen the propensity for <i>svart arbete</i> . ROT is almost unanimously supported both by politicians and citizens.
<i>Roy</i>	main character in movie <i>Macken</i>
<i>Riksrevisionen, formerly Riksrevisionsverket</i>	the Swedish National Audit Office
RUT	<i>renhållning, underhåll, tvätt</i> – cleaning, maintenance, laundry. Play on words compared with the ROT deductions Subsidised governmental programme for domestic services for private persons.
<i>samarbete</i>	cooperation, literally working together
<i>sambällsbärare</i>	pillars of society
<i>skall nåt av pengarna till Stockholm?</i>	should any of this money go to Stockholm?
<i>skattekil</i>	tax wedge
<i>Skatteverket</i>	the Swedish Tax Agency. In the text referred to as the Tax Agency. As a literature reference as itself, Skatteverket.
<i>Slösa</i>	Lavish. One of two girls figured in a magazine (<i>Lyckoslanten, the Lucky Coin</i>) distributed

	through schools to all 9-11-year-old children in Sweden since 1926. Slösa is sloppy and spends her money frivolously on amusement and consumption.
<i>Spara</i>	Save. Spara in <i>Lyckoslanten</i> is neat and cute, her hair nicely done with a big red bow. She works and waits to spend her savings on something she has yearned for a long time.
<i>specialklass</i>	School class for pupils needing extra attention
<i>Stadshotellet</i>	the town hotel
<i>staten snålar</i>	the state pinches
<i>Sträng</i>	Gunnar Sträng was a legendary Minister of Finance (1955 – 1976).
<i>städerska</i>	female cleaner
<i>svart, svarta</i>	black (and conjugations thereof)
<i>svart arbete</i>	literally black work, exchanges of work omitting taxes and/or rules and legislation
<i>svart jobb</i>	black job/work
<i>svarta börsen</i>	black market
<i>svarta händer gör vita pengar</i>	black/dirty work make white/clean money
<i>svartköp</i>	informal purchase of work or products without VAT
<i>Svenskt Näringsliv</i>	Confederation of Swedish Enterprises
<i>Sveriges Riksbank</i>	Sweden's central bank
<i>särbo</i>	a steady relationship but not living together
<i>ta det så, ta det vid sidan om</i>	take it that way, take it on the side
<i>Taxeringskalendern</i>	a yearly publication of all residents' taxed income
<i>Tjänstebeskattningsutredningen</i>	the Public Investigation of Taxes on Services (my translation)
<i>utan kvitto</i>	without receipt
<i>utan moms</i>	without VAT
<i>vid sidan av, om</i>	on the side
<i>vanligt svartande</i>	the common black practices
<i>Vita riddaren</i>	the White Knight
<i>vit, vita, vitt</i>	white (and conjugations thereof)
<i>öre</i>	monetary unit. There are 100 öre in 1 krona

Notes

¹ The expression *vanligt svartande* was introduced by Bergström & Gidehag in an article about *svart arbete* in the journal *Axxess* (8) 2003.

² The limit for prosecution is about three quarters of a basic amount (in 2008 *kr* 41,000), an amount based on the administrative costs allocated for a court case.

³ In spring 2003, there were headlines about upper-class women in a fancy suburb who had been caught using a Lithuanian woman without a work permit to clean their homes two hours every other week. The newspapers displayed an array of views; the tabloids proclaimed moral indignation of upper-class abuse of a poor illegal immigrant, whereas the morning papers reported a more multifaceted case. Letters to the editor in general supported these women and there was renewed interest in *svart arbete* in media discussing the event (Björklund Larsen 2005, 2006). The cleaning woman was fined and had to leave the country. The purchasing women were initially convicted with quite heavy fines, for offences against *Utlänningslagen* (Legal statutes for aliens), the level of the fine being what an employer would have paid for a full-time worker. The women appealed and were acquitted at the next higher hearing in spring 2004.

⁴ SAOB (*Svenska Akademiens ordbok*), The Dictionary of the Swedish Academy. A dictionary for Swedish language, published since 1521.

⁵ Foreign experts have for a long time been able to work on temporary work permits. This has created a loophole for the organised import of self-employed workmen. Creative entrepreneurs made a business of borderline cases of legal and ethical behaviour when using foreign workers from countries less well-off than Sweden. Agencies like *Polenkonsult* and *Byggbemannning AB* provide foreign carpenters (as reported in the TV-programme *Uppdrag Granskning*, SVT 1 26.11.2002). These carpenters are self-employed with their own private firms in their home countries, visiting on three-month visas and getting help from these Swedish agencies with all legal and practical arrangements.

⁶ The campaign consisted of numerous cinema and TV advertisements, and a black box with education material delivered to schools and websites such as www.jobbvitt.com (2003), now defunct.

⁷ *Allmänhetens synpunkter på skattesystemet, skattefusket och myndigheternas kontroll*, 'The Public Views on the Tax System, Tax Evasion and Governmental Control'. Skatteverket Report 2003:2.

⁸ The definition of the shadow economy used here is: barter transactions and non-recorded legal activities, as well as criminal activities and tax evasion.

⁹ Gagnef is a village located in rural Dalarna, 240 km northwest of Stockholm.

¹⁰ An interesting fact is that, in Swedish, this type of cheating is called *svart arbete* which emphasises work. This is not only used among people in general but also in official reports and governmental research. In English, the emphasis is on the economy with informal or other synonyms like hidden, subterranean, etc.

¹¹ This term will be used regardless of whether it is applied to singular or plural mode. In Swedish the latter would correctly be written as *svarta arbeten*.

¹² An alternative is 'trade' which in addition refers to the content of a job, but can also be used more derogatorily as a sell-out of one's skills and abilities and will therefore be used only when referring to professional aspects.

¹³ According to SCB, Statistics Sweden, there are no publicly available statistics for the consumption of services. An estimate for 2008 is that 47,7 percent of the products included in the Consumer Price Index can be considered as services. (E-mail from the Price Unit at SCB 12.1.2008)

¹⁴ The two former regimes are inspired by Luc Boltanski's affective regime and the regime of justice as presented in a lecture at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton, NJ, March 1992 (Ledeneva 1998:144). These are predecessors of the theory of justification, used in this book.

¹⁵ There have been statements in favour of categorising those who are most prone to buy *svart* according to class. There is, for example, the view that the working class participates most in producing *svart arbete* (Simon 2001:40), or educated workmen (Laurin 1986:375), or young skilled men (Riksstyrelsensverket 1998:61:45) and the highly educated (Williams & Windebank 1998:42). Other explanations for heavy involvement are lack of money and a fight for survival. This view has been advocated both in qualitative (cf. Capecchi 1989:194, Leonard 1998:6, Sassen-Koob 1989:61, Smith 1989:298) as well as quantitative analyses (Skatteverket 2006:4:33, Wibe 2003:9). A third view is that it is the rich and well-off, in the upper echelons of society, who are most predisposed to buy *svart arbete* (Sjöberg 2000). Ideological explanations conclude that the rich often have political opinions on the right (Skatteverket 2006:4:33), and as right-wingers have less trust and belief in the state, the causal effect being that they are more inclined to cheat with taxes. However, most analyses do not consider class to be an explanatory factor (Svallfors 1996:36, Wibe 2003). There is thus a clash in opinions of the forces driving the consumption of *svart arbete* and exchanges of informal activities.

¹⁶ Instead, it 'hid' the questions about *svart arbete* amongst many other questions, mostly pertaining to environmental conditions for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

¹⁷ Limninge is the pseudonym used for the city I grew up in and where my informants and I attended school.

¹⁸ The search was done in the databases *Artikelsök*, *Mediearkivet* and *Presstext*. These databases cover most newspapers and magazines distributed in Swedish.

¹⁹ See Hannerz for a discussion on how anthropological topics may be present in our everyday lives (2001:30).

²⁰ *Pengar* is Swedish for money. Tips are subject to tax on the same basis as other income.

²¹ For a discussion about the researcher's empirical knowledge, please see Flyvbjerg 2001:22.

²² *Konditori* translates as an old-fashioned café, where in addition to coffee, a broad selection of cakes and maybe sandwiches are served. Limninge offers a nice variety of this type of cafés.

²³ I have known only two persons in my life who make coffee this way: my long-deceased grandfather and a former dormitory friend from Piteå in the far north.

²⁴ *Fika*, a coffee-break, is a common occurrence for socialising in Swedish society. Both at workplaces when taking the regular breaks over a cup of coffee or tea, sometimes accompanied by sweet breads or cakes. As a verb you can also *fika*, have a coffee-break, with friends. At home and in cafés, a *fika* is a way of meeting friends and acquaintances. At basically all interviews, I was invited for a *fika*.

²⁵ Or in Sweden KBB:are. *Köra*, *Bära*, *Betala*. Börje talked about this as a father in relation to his children. As a mother of three I can closely relate to it.

²⁶ Of the total membership in *Svenska Frisörföretagare* 2007 (Association of Independent Swedish Hairdressers).

²⁷ *Lagen om etikprövning av forskning som avser människor* 2003:460 This is a law on ethical review of research involving humans.

²⁸ I am grateful to three chosen classmates who in November 2003 gave me feedback in a pilot study using the questionnaire and the contact letter, which resulted in a few corrections.

²⁹ I am equally grateful to Professor Gerd Baumann who suggested this at an informal discussion during the Vienna Socrates Intensive Programme, August 2004. Although not many informants had stories to tell, it opened up the interview into a more relaxed mode.

³⁰ *Gymnasium* is the secondary school in Sweden, somewhat equivalent to the US High School or the French Lycée. It is not compulsory, but the gymnasium offered both practical and theoretical (pre-academic) education at the time I attended.

³¹ As he further explained to me, 'Why do you think all building stores offer all these additional goods that have nothing to do with building? It is because people can buy this, use it for private consumption and bill it on their firm.' In addition, within the Swedish taxation laws, if you have a registered firm you can deduct VAT (25 percent) from these purchases.

³² Plumbers and electricians are the two crafts most people avoid buying *svart* as the risk is so big if something is not properly done. In addition, home insurances will not cover these types of installations if done without a receipt or by an unauthorised craftsman.

³³ The domain of inspiration is inspired by the work on grace by St Augustine. Code words are feelings, passion, enthusiasm, originality, phantasms, genius, creativeness, independence, etc.

³⁴ It takes its inspiration from Hobbes' work on honour in *The Leviathan*.

³⁵ The main influence comes from Rousseau's work *The Social Contract*. The beings of the civic world 'are persons when they are capable of having rights and obligations, that is, when they have been created or authorized by an act in which the will of all is expressed' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006:187). It is the common interest which defines the worth of the civic person, regardless of militant, peaceful or political circumstances. Programme, policy, transcripts, poster, slogans, seat, visit/business card mandate, membership are code words which can describe this world.

³⁶ The industrial world finds its inspiration in the work of Saint-Simon.

³⁷ *Bra karl reder sig själv*.

³⁸ See footnote 3.

³⁹ An alternative translation of *arbetslinjen* is the Work Strategy (e.g. Junestav 2004). I have chosen the Work Approach as I want to emphasise the deeper, historical meaning with the underlying idea rather than solely a governmental policy growing since 1930. As Junestav shows, the Social Democratic policy which coined the concept as such was made possible by an institutionalised idea of work as morally good for citizens and important for society as a whole. However, the political content of what can be considered *arbetslinjen* has differed (ibid.19).

⁴⁰ *Dagmamma* is someone, usually a woman, who takes care of other people's children in her home. Most *dagmammor* are employed by the municipality as a way at smoothing periods when demand exceeds the supply offered by larger day-care centres. A child residing in Sweden has the right to public childcare from one year of age and there is a wide array of choice. Municipal day-care is heavily subsidised and with strained municipal budgets, there is also a relatively large supply of informal *dagmammor*. Choosing between *dagmamma* and day-care centre is not only an economic decision, since many parents prefer the former's more homely environment to a public, institutional setting regardless of whether it is privately or publicly run.

⁴¹ This lesser price contrasts with the idea of a perfectly competitive *vit* market, where the demand for *dagmammor* would have driven the price up.

⁴² This can be illustrated further by the fact that the self-employed are often accused of being more involved than other work categories in *svart arbete* and tax fraud. The causal reason is said to be that they have to conform with complicated accounting and reporting procedures (e.g. Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:68). But if a company is run from home, costs for services (which can easily include private quarters of the house) can be part of the regular expenditures in the company accounting. It is perhaps easier for the self-employed to blend activities belonging to the domestic world with the industrial and civic worlds.

⁴³ The term 'money-hour' is inspired by Janet Roitman's introduction of 'the tax-price complex' as an analytical concept in her study of fiscal disobedience in the Tchad region (2005). Instead of the taken-for-granted 'tax' and 'price' respectively, she attempted to see how certain types of tax extractions became normalised.

⁴⁴ Proverb taken from a website of Swedish sayings, http://www.livet.se/ord/kategori/St%C3%A4dning_och_Tv%C3%A4ttning/15. Accessed 2.11.2009.

⁴⁵ One of many anecdotes can illustrate this further. I presented a paper at EASA, European Association of Social Anthropologists, in Vienna in 2004 on this subject. A Danish panelist questioned whether I was not exaggerating the Swedish reaction to this, whereas a Swedish colleague probed me further. He said he often wondered about other colleagues who always have a spotless home, never commenting on how it is accomplished.

⁴⁶ *Tjänstebeskattningsutredningen* (SOU 1997:17), The Public Investigation of Taxes on Services (my translation).

⁴⁷ Interview with Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt. Melin, Lena in *Aftonbladet* 21.12.2008.

⁴⁸ Garne, Cecilia in *Expressen* 2.9.2006.

⁴⁹ Including VAT up to SEK 50,000 yearly, which can be retroactively deducted.

⁵⁰ That is, if spouses share the domestic work.

⁵¹ ROT are recurring subsidies for work in private homes. The aim is to support the building industry in periods with slow economic growth, but also a way to lessen the propensity for *svart arbete*. ROT is almost unanimously supported both by politicians and citizens. RUT, stands for *renhållning, underhåll, tvätt* (cleaning, maintenance, laundry). RUT is also a play on words with earlier established ROT deductions. RUT is also a female name and women traditionally perform the cleaning in Sweden.

⁵² *Hemfrid* is one of the larger companies on the expanding Swedish market for domestic services.

⁵³ AB stands for AktieBolag – Incorporated. I telephoned the company and asked about the origin of the name. The current proprietor told me that it was the former owner, who according to him liked to be a pain in the ass, who had chosen this name. According to the proprietor, the Tax Agency did not find this amusing. The first couple of years they had made a very thorough audit of the bookkeeping.

⁵⁴ Bill Maurer (2005) described the American town of Ithaca and its barter commodity HOURS as a tradition of exchange indicating historical and cultural depths.

⁵⁵ According to Håkan Malmer, with Skatteverket until 2006. Malmer is an expert on *svart arbete* in Sweden and authored for many years the part on faults and cheating in the yearly report by the organisation (interview on the phone 12.9.2008).

⁵⁶ Exchanges of work between professionals and for professional use are legal as VAT payments then are net and there is no need for taxes to be paid.

⁵⁷ *Friggebod* is a newer shack or small cottage (also translated as *bod*) occupying an area of less than 10 m². The name comes from former Minister Birgit Friggebo who reduced the restrictions on building permits for new houses/building if less than 10 m² (now 15m²). Sweden is thus filled with small cottages fulfilling many purposes; for gardening tools, saunas and as small guest retreats at summer homes.

⁵⁸ In addition, an HOUR is pegged to a dollar at an exchange rate of 1:10. When firms accepting HOURS placed advertisements in an Annual Directory, the barter looked more like a sale (Maurer 2005:50).

⁵⁹ There are 100 öre for 1 Swedish krona.

⁶⁰ A personal helper, *personlig assistent*, takes care of and help handicapped people taking care of themselves in their daily life. It is often an employment offered by the municipality. The personal helper is usually dedicated to one person.

⁶¹ These shopping trollies are called *dramaten*, literally towfood that is also a play on words as *Dramaten* is the common name for Stockholm's biggest theatre. *Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern*, The Royal Theatre is regarded as a national institution.

⁶² Oxford Concise English Dictionary.

⁶³ The regime of status is not seen as applicable in this context. It plays out entirely on how others in society regard gifts/help. Swedes purchasing *svart arbete* are concerned with how the surrounding community views them because of the illegality of the exchanges in which they take part. These exchanges are not based on reciprocity with the counterpart in the exchange. The regime of status is based on giving/receiving in relation to the counterpart in the exchange.

⁶⁴ *Faluröd* paint is based on meagre copper ore from the coppermines in Falun. This ore has a unique combination of different minerals which preserves wood in normal weather. The ore is processed, ground and cooked which produces this traditional Swedish colour. The choice of *Faluröd* is often a sign of keeping to Swedish tradition and the good, simple life http://www.lansmuseum.a.se/byggnadsvard/byggfarg.cfm?in_idnr=51. Accessed 10.3.2006.

⁶⁵ A shack is often found in Swedish private gardens to house tools, garden furniture during winter, etc. These shacks sometimes replicate the main house in style and colour. See also *friggebod*.

⁶⁶ There are no official statistics on this issue, neither from the *Migrationsverket*, the Swedish Migration Board nor from the Tax Agency.

⁶⁷ One supporting piece of research for Berggren & Trägårdh's book is the World Value Survey's measurements of cultural values, a survey aiming to describe variations in these values amongst approximately 70 nationalities. The result is visualised on the 'Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World', showing one axis with 'traditional values' at the lower end escalating towards 'secular-

rational values'. On the other axis, 'survival values' are set against self 'expressional values'. Sweden displays an extreme result on the graph compared with other countries, being situated in the extreme upper right-hand corner. According to this survey, Swedes are simultaneously particularly rational and the least prone to worry about survival issues. The World Value Survey argues that there is a continuous inclination towards these values, which makes Sweden appear as a modern and somewhat trend-setting country <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>. Accessed 12.12.2008.

⁶⁸ The questionnaire asked for the last vote cast, in local and state elections.

⁶⁹ The notion of *Sambällsbärarna* (*The Pillars Of Society*, 1982) was first used as a title of the crime novel by Leif G.W. Persson, professor in criminology.

⁷⁰ Several have mentioned Mona Sahlin's statement. 'If you are a Social Democrat, then you think it is cool to pay taxes. Tax is for me the finest notion of what politics is all about.' Swedish Television 8 September 1994 (my translation).

⁷¹ The countries Abram de Swaan analysed and which I take the liberty of comparing with Sweden were Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States.

⁷² If the buyer is part of the production chain, the VAT can be deducted but if the product is aimed at private consumption (thus end-usage) VAT should be paid.

⁷³ The kilometres Lars refers to are those you can deduct from taxes when you drive your private car for professional use.

⁷⁴ ROT (*reparationer, ombyggnad, tillbyggnad* – repairs, refurbishing, attachments) subsidies have been used now and then to boost the building industry, in times of a slack economy. These subsidies could be used for certain types of reconstruction work at private homes with tax deductions up to a given amount, cf. note 51.

⁷⁵ Sweden is considered one of the least corrupt regimes in the world (Transparency International 2008).

⁷⁶ Mauss pointed out in a footnote that the wording is rather 'as much as Maru gives, so much Maru takes and this is good, good' (Mauss 2002 [1990]:189). The Maori account Mauss used is based on a translation in 1855 by a Reverend Taylor where the giving and taking concerns the doings of Maru, a god of justice and war.

⁷⁷ '*Snart* – en kod för tjänstehandel som funkar'. Stated as one of seven most important words during 2006 according to the tabloid *Expressen* (1.1.2007).

⁷⁸ In the latest issue of *the Tax Statistical Yearbook of Sweden* this is only found in one table (Skatteverket 2007:228). In earlier studies, e.g. Riksrevisionsverket 1997:59:27 untaxed in kind as well as cash payments were considered *snart arbete*.

⁷⁹ Sträng is an old soldier name meaning literally severe, strict or rigid: an appropriate name for a fair redistributor of money of which all want to have a larger share. His heyday was during the 1960s and 70s, when he, with a powerful, dark voice and heavy eyebrows, seemed to both collect and distribute the money sternly.

References

- Adler Lomnitz, Larissa (1988) Informal Exchange Networks in Formal Systems: A Theoretical Model. *American Anthropologist* 90(1): 42-55.
- (2004) Family, Networks and Academics. *Ethnos* 69(1): 113-126.
- Adler Lomnitz, Larissa and Diana Sheinbaum (2004) Trust, Social Networks and the Informal Economy: A Comparative Analysis. *Review of Sociology* 10(1): 5-26.
- Ahrne, Göran, Magnus Boström and Anders Forssell (2004) Meningen med föreningen: vad är frivilligt med frivilligorganisationer? In M. Boström ed. *Den organiserade frivilligheten*. Lund, Liber: 144-162.
- Ahrne, Göran and Nils Brunsson eds. (2004) *Regelexplosionen*. Stockholm, Stockholm School of Economics.
- Ahrne, Göran, Christine Roman and Mats Franzén (2003) *Det sociala landskapet: En sociologisk kommentar till Sverige från 1950-talet till början av 2000-talet*. Göteborg, Bokförlaget Korpen.
- Alalehto, Tage (2002) *Fifflarens personlighet: En studie om personlighetsdragets betydelse vid ekonomisk brottslighet*. Umeå, Umeå universitet.
- Albrecht, Terrence L., Gerianne M. Johnson and Joseph B. Walther (1993) Understanding Communication Processes in Focus Groups. In D. L. Morgan ed. *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications Inc.: 51-64.
- Allvin, Michael (2004) The Individualization of Labour. In Garsten, C. and K. Jacobson eds. *Learning to be Employable: New Agendas on Work, Responsibility, and Learning in a Globalizing World*. Basingstoke, Macmillan: 23-41.
- Ambjörnsson, Fanny (2004) *I en klass för sig: Genus, klass och sexualitet bland gymnasietjejer*. Stockholm, Ordfront förlag.
- Ambjörnsson, Ronny (1998) *Den skötsamme arbetaren*. Stockholm, Carlsson.
- Amit, Vered (1999) Introduction: Constructing the Field. In V. Amit ed. *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. Florence, Routledge: 1-18.
- Amnå, Erik (2005) *Civilsambället: Några forskningsfrågor*. Smedjebacken, Gidlunds.
- Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, Verso.
- Appelgren, Leif and Hans Sjögren eds. (2001) Introduktion. In auths. *Ekonomisk brottslighet och nationalstatens kontrollmakt*. Smedjebacken, Gidlunds: 11-34.
- Applebaum, Herbert (1995) The Concept of Work in Western Thought. In F.C. Gamst ed. *Meanings of Work: Considerations for the Twenty-First Century*. Albany, State University of New York Press: 46-78.
- Arendt, Hannah (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago & London, The University of Chicago Press.
- Baarts, Charlotte (2005) Arbejde er livet: Reflektioner over 'det grænseløse arbejde'. *Tidskriftet Antropologi* 51: 87-98.
- Barry, Andrew and Don Slater (2002) Introduction: The Technological Economy. *Economy & Society* 31(2): 175-193.
- Barth, Fredrik (1994) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Oslo, Pensumtjeneste.

- Befu, Harumi (1977) Social Exchange. *Annual Reviews in Anthropology* 6(1): 255-281.
- Bénatouïl, Thomas (1999) A Tale of Two Sociologies: The Critical and the Pragmatic Stance in Contemporary French Sociology. *European Journal of Social Theory* 2(3): 379-396.
- Bennich-Björkman, Li (2008) Medborgarsamhället: Politisk kultur och politiskt beteende i Sverige. In L. Bennich-Björkman and P. Blomqvist eds. *Mellan folkhem och Europa*. Malmö, Liber: 40-62.
- Bentham, Jeremy (1995) Panopticon. In M. Bozovic *The Panopticon Writings*. London, Verso.
- Berggren, Henrik and Lars Trägårdh (2006) *Är svensken människa? Gemenskap och oberoende i det moderna Sverige*. Stockholm, Nordstedt.
- Bergström, Fredrik and Robert Gidehag (2003) Högstskattestaten föder skattesmitare. *Access* (8) 2003: 16-20.
- Björklund Larsen, Lotta (2003) Robin Hood och rättvisan: Om småfiffel i det moderna samhället. In C. Garsten and K. Sundman eds. *Moderna människor: Antropologiska perspektiv på samtiden*. Malmö, Liber: 19-38.
- (2005) Om städning: Hur svart blev vitt? In G. Sjöstrand *Fiffelsverige: sociologiska perspektiv på skandaler och fusk*. Malmö, Liber: 48-65.
- (2006) Svart arbete, vitt arbete: Hur lite skit i hörnen blev ett rent helvete. *Tidskriften antropologi* 51(2005/2006): 39-58.
- Blim, Michael (2005) *Equality and Economy: The Global Challenge*. Walnut Creek, AltaMira Press.
- Bloch, Maurice and Jonathan Parry (1989) Introduction: Money and the Morality of Exchange. In M. Bloch and J. Parry eds. *Money and the Morality of Exchange*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1-32.
- Bohannan, Paul (1959) The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy. *Journal of Economic History* 19: 491-503.
- Boltanski, Luc (2002) Nécessité et justification. *Revue Economique* 53(2002/2): 275-289.
- Boltanski, Luc and Eve Chiapello (2005) *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. London, Verso.
- Boltanski, Luc and Laurent Thévenot (1999) The Sociology of Critical Capacity. *European Journal of Social Theory* 2(3): 359-377.
- (2006) *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Borgström, Bengt-Erik (1997) *Cherished Moments: Engaging with the Past in a Swedish Parish*. Stockholm, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology.
- Bowman, Glenn (1997) Identifying versus Identifying with the Other: Reflections on the Siting of the Subject in Anthropological Discourse. In A. James, J. Hockey and A. Dawson *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. London, Routledge: 34-50.
- Brodersen, Søren (2003) *Do-it-yourself Work in North-Western Europe*. Copenhagen, Rockwool Foundation.
- Brå (2003:1) *Förebygga ekobrott*. Auth. L. E. Korsell. Stockholm, Brottsförebyggande rådet.
- (2007:27) *Organiserat svartarbete i byggbranschen*. Auth. A. Carlström, H. L. Hedström, A. Heber. Stockholm, Brottsförebyggande rådet.
- Bäck, Henry and Torbjörn Larsson (2006) *Den svenska politiken: struktur, processer och resultat*. Malmö, Liber.
- Böröcz, Jozsef (2000) Informality Rules. *East European Politics and Societies* 14(2): 348-380.
- Callon, Michel (1998) Introduction: The Embeddedness of Economic Markets in Economics. In M. Callon ed. *The Laws of the Markets*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers: 1-57.

- (1999) Actor-Network Theory: The Market Test. In J. Law and J. Hassard eds. *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers: 181-195.
- Callon, Michel, Yuval Millo and Fabian Muniesa eds. (2007) *Market Devices*. Sociological Review Monographs. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.
- Capecchi, Vittorio (1989) The Informal Economy and the Development of Flexible Specialization in Emilia-Romagna. In A. Portes, M. Castells and L. A. Benton eds. *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press: 189-215.
- Carlberg, Peter (2005) Svartjobb ett tillväxthot. Ekobrottsmyndigheten varnar för att uppsving i ekonomin äts upp av ekobrotten. Interview with Director Gudrun Antemar in *Svenska Dagbladet* 13.12.2005
- Carrier, James G. and Daniel Miller (1999) From Private Virtue to Public Vice. In H. L. Moore ed. *Anthropological Theory Today*. Cambridge, Polity Press: 24-47.
- Carrier, James G. and Josiah McC. Heyman (1997) Consumption and Political Economy. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3(2): 355-373.
- Castells, Manuel and Alejandro Portes (1989) World Underneath: The Origins, Dynamics, and Effects of the Informal Economy. In A. Portes, M. Castells and L. A. Benton eds. *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press: 11-37.
- Ciulla, Joanne B. (2000) *The Working Life: The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work*. New York, Three Rivers Press.
- Cohen, Anthony (1979) The Whalsay Croft: Traditional Work and Customary Identity in Modern Times. In S. Wallman ed. *Social Anthropology of Work*. New York, Academic Press Inc.: 249-267.
- Collier, Stephen J. and Andrew Lakoff (2005) On Regimes of Living. In A. Ong and S.J. Collier eds. *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Malden, Blackwell Publishers: 22-39.
- Colloredo-Mansfeld, Rudi (2005) Consumption. In J. G. Carrier ed. *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar: 210-225.
- Corrigan, Peter (1997) *The Sociology of Consumption*. London, Sage Publications Ltd.
- Crump, Thomas (1981) *The Phenomenon of Money*. London, Routledge.
- Daun, Åke (1998) *Svensk mentalitet: Ett jämförande perspektiv*. Stockholm: Rabén Prisma.
- (2005) *En stuga på sjätte våningen: Svensk mentalitet i en mångkulturell värld*. Eslöv, B. Östlings bokförlag Symposion.
- Davies, Charlotte Aull (1999) *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. New York, Routledge.
- Davis, John (1992) *Exchange*. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques (1997) The Time of the King. In A. D. Shrift ed. *The Logic of the Gift. Toward an Ethic of Generosity*. New York, Routledge: 121-147.
- Douglas, Mary (1997 [1966]) *Renhet och fara: En analys av begreppen orenande och tabu*. Nora, Nya Doxa.
- (1999) Jokes. In *Implicit meanings: Essays in anthropology*. New York, Routledge: 146-164.
- Douglas, Mary and Baron Isherwood (1996) *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. New York, Routledge.
- Dreyfus, Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (1986) *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of Computer*. New York, Free Press.
- Edelman, Birgitta (1997) *Shunters at Work: Creating a World in a Railway Yard*. Stockholm, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology.
- Ehrenreich, Barbara (2001) *Barskräpad: Konsten att banka sig fram*. Stockholm, Leopard förlag.

- Ekobrottsmyndigheten (2002) *Erfarenheter från frisörprojektet i Malmö*. Malmö, Ekobrottsmyndigheten.
- Elyachar, Julia (2003) Mappings of Power: The State, NGOs, and International Organizations in the Informal Economy of Cairo. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45(03): 571-605.
- Ensjöö-Rappe, Tinni and Lars Strannegård (2004) *Rent hus: Slaget om den svenska dammrättan*. Stockholm, Nordstedts förlag.
- Esser, Ingrid (2005) *Why Work? Comparative Studies on Welfare Regimes and Individuals' Work Orientations*. Stockholm, Swedish Institute for Social Research.
- (2006) *Trygg och arbetskygg: Inställning till arbete i ett internationellt perspektiv*. Stockholm, Socialförsäkringsutredningen.
- Fangen, Karen (2005) *Deltagande observation*. Malmö, Liber.
- Fernandez-Kelly, M. Patricia and Anna M. Garcia (1989) Informalization at the Core: Hispanic Women, Homework, and the Advanced Capitalist State. In A. Portes, M. Castells and L. A. Benton eds. *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press: 247-264.
- Fink, Deborah (1986) Skjult arbejde, skjult skade: Landbokvinders arbejde under ændring. In K. F. Olwig and S. Sampson eds. *Uden Regning*. Copenhagen, Rosinante: 59-72.
- Firth, Raymond (1979) Work and Value: Reflections on Ideas of Karl Marx. In S. Wallman ed. *Social Anthropology of Work*. New York, Academic Press Inc.: 177-206.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent (2001) *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Freeman, Carla (2000) *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work, and Pink-Collar Identities in the Caribbean*. Durham, Duke University Press.
- Frey, James H. and Andrea Fontana (1993) The Group Interview in Social Research. In D. L. Morgan ed. *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications Inc.: 20-34.
- Frykman, Jonas and Kjell Hansen (2009) *I ohälsans tid*. Stockholm, Carlssons.
- Galbraith, John Kenneth (1975) *Money: Whence it Came, where it Went*. London, Bantam Books.
- Galemba, Rebecca B. (2008) Informal and Illicit Entrepreneurs: Fighting for a Place in the Neoliberal Economic Order. *Anthropology of Work Review* 29(2): 19-25.
- Gamst, Frederick C. (1995) Considerations of Work. In auth. *Meanings of Work: Considerations for the Twenty-First Century*. Albany, State University of New York Press: 1-45.
- Garcia-Parpet, Marie-France (2007) The Social Construction of a Perfect Market: The Strawberry Auction at Fontaines-en-Sologne. In D. MacKenzie, F. Muniesa and L. Siu. eds. *Do Economists Make Markets? On the Performativity of Economics*. Princeton, Princeton University Press: 20-53.
- Gardberg Morner, Claudia (2003) *Självständigt beroende: Ensamstående mammors försörjningsstrategier*. Göteborg, Göteborg University, Department of Sociology, Studies in Sociology.
- Garme, Cecilia (2006) Perssons lortiga lögn om smutsen. *Expressen* 2.9.2006.
- Garsten, Christina (1994) *Apple World: Core and Periphery in a Transnational Organizational Culture*. Stockholm, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology.
- (2004) Be a 'Gumby': The Political Technologies of Employability in the Temporary Staffing Business. In C. Garsten and K. Jacobsson eds. *Learning to be Employable: New Agendas on Work, Responsibility, and Learning in a Globalizing World*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan: 152-171.
- (2008) *Workplace Vagabonds: Career and Community in Changing Worlds of Work*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, Basic Books.

- Gershuny, Jonathan (1988) Time, Technology and the Informal Economy. In R. E. Pahl ed. *On work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 579-597.
- Gouldner, Alvin W. (1960) The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement. *Sociological Review* 25: 161-178.
- Graeber, David (2001) *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of our own Dreams*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- (2005) Value: Anthropological theories of value. In J. G. Carrier ed. *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar: 439-454.
- Granovetter, Mark S. (1973) The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.
- (1983) The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited. *Sociological Theory* 1: 201-233.
- (1985) Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3): 481-510.
- Gregory, Christopher A. (1982) *Gifts and Commodities*. London, Academic Press.
- (1994) Exchange and Reciprocity. In T. Ingold ed. *Companion Encyclopaedia of Anthropology*. London, Routledge: 911-939.
- Gregson, Nicky and Michelle Lowe (1994) *Servicing the Middle Classes: Class, Gender and Waged Domestic Labour in Contemporary Britain*. London, Routledge.
- Grey, Chris and Christina Garsten (2001) Trust, Control and Post-Bureaucracy. *Organization Studies* 22(2): 229-250.
- Gudeman, Stephen (2001) *The Anthropology of Economy: Community, Market, and Culture*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- (2008) *Economy's Tension: The Dialectics of Community and Market*. New York, Bergahn Books.
- Guibourg, Gabriela and Björn Segendorf (2007) *The Use of Cash and the Size of the Shadow Economy in Sweden*. Stockholm, Riksbank Research Papers Series no. 204.
- Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson (1997) Discipline and Practice. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson eds. *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries of a Field Science*. Berkeley, University of California Press: 1-46.
- Gusterson, Hugh (1997) Studying Up Revisited. *PoLAR Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 20(1): 114-119.
- Hakim, Catherine (1988) Homeworking in Britain in R. E. Pahl ed. *On Work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 609-632.
- Halperin, Rhoda and Sara Sturdevant (1990) A Cross-Cultural Treatment of the Informal Economy. In M. E. Smith ed. *Perspectives on the Informal Economy*. Lanham, University Press of America: 321-334.
- Hannerz, Ulf (2001) Introduktion: när fältet blir translokalt. In U. Hannerz ed. *Flera fält i ett: Socialantropologer om translokala fältstudier*. Stockholm, Carlssons: 7-35.
- (2006) Studying Down, Up, Sideways, Through, Backwards, Forwards, Away and at Home: Reflections on the Field Worries of an Expansive Discipline. In S. Coleman ed. *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology*. Oxford, Berg Publishers.
- Hart, Keith (1973) Informal Economy Opportunities and the Urban Employment in Ghana. *Journal of Modern Africa Studies* 11(1).
- (1982) *The Political Economy of Agriculture in West Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- (1992) Market and State After the Cold War: The Informal Economy Reconsidered. In R. Dillely ed. *Contesting markets: Analyses of ideology, discourse and practice*. Edinburg, Edinburg University Press: 214-230.

- (2001a) Informal Economy. In *International Encyclopaedia of Social and Behavioural Sciences*. Oxford, Elsevier: 845-846.
- (2001b) *Money in an Unequal World*. New York, Texere.
- (2005) Money: One Anthropologist's View. In J. G. Carrier ed. *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar: 160-175.
- (2007) Marcel Mauss: In Pursuit of the Whole. A Review Essay. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49(2): 473-485.
- Hasselström, Anna (2003) *On and Off the Trading Floor: An Inquiry into the Everyday Fashioning of Financial Market Knowledge*. Stockholm, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology.
- Hastrup, Kirsten (1992) *Det antropologiske projekt om forbløffelse*. København, Gyldendal.
- Hastrup, Kirsten (1993) Native Anthropology: A Contradiction in Terms? *Folk* (35): 147-161.
- Henrekson, Magnus (1998) En ond cirkel för tjänstesektorn. *Arbetsmarknad & Arbetsliv* 4(2): 137-151.
- Henry, Stuart (1978) *The Hidden Economy: The Context and Control of Borderline Crime*. Port Townsend, Loompanics Unlimited.
- Herzfeld, Michael (2005) *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-state*. New York, Routledge.
- Heyman, Josiah. McC. and Alan Smart (1999) States and Illegal Practices: An Overview. In J. McC. Heyman ed. *States and Illegal Practices*. Oxford, Berg: 1-24.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell (1997) *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*. New York, Metropolitan Books.
- Hollis, Martin (1994) *The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Holm, Pelle (1964) *Bevingade ord och andra talesätt*. Stockholm, Bonnier.
- Holy, Ladislav and Milan Stuchlik (1983) *Actions, Norms, and Representations: Foundations of Anthropological Inquiry*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Humphrey, Caroline and Stephen Hugh-Jones (1992) Introduction: Barter, Exchange and Value. In C. Humphrey and S. Hugh-Jones eds. *Barter, exchange, and value: An anthropological approach*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1-20.
- Ingelstam, Lars (1995) *Ekonomi för en ny tid*. Stockholm, Carlssons.
- (2006) *Ekonomi på plats*. Linköping, Linköpings universitet, Centrum för kommunstrategiska studier.
- Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel (2005) *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Isacson, Maths (1994) *Vardagens ekonomi*. Hedemora, Gidlunds.
- Jacobsson, Kerstin (2006) *Durkheims moralsociologi och välfärdsstaten*. Stockholm, Score-report 2006:3.
- Jacobsson, Kerstin and Erik Löfmarck (2008) A Sociology of Scandal and Moral Transgression: The Swedish Nannygate Scandal. *Acta Sociologica* 51(3): 203-216.
- Jacobsson Kerstin and Eva Sandstedt (2005) Upprördhet och moralisk ordning – om politikernas lyxpensioner. In G. Sjöstrand ed. *Fiffelsverige: sociologiska perspektiv på skandaler och fusk*. Lund, Liber: 132-151.
- Jagd, Søren (2004a) Laurent Thévenot and the French Convention School A Short Introduction by Søren Jagd. *Economic Sociology* 5(3): 2-9.
- (2004b) The French Convention School and the Coordination of Economic Actions. *Economic Sociology* 5(3): 10-16.
- Jiménez, Alberto Corsín (2003) Working out Personhood: Notes on 'Labour' and its Anthropology. *Anthropology Today* 19(5): 14-17.
- Junestav, Malin (2001) *Arbetslinjen i den svenska socialförsäkringsdebatten och lagstiftningen 1930-1955*. Uppsala, Uppsala Universitet och Arbetslivsinstitutet.

- (2004) *Arbetslinjer i svensk socialpolitisk debatt och lagstiftning 1930-2001*. Uppsala, Uppsala University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Economic History.
- Keesing, Roger (1989) Exotic Readings of Cultural Texts. *Current Anthropology* 30(4): 459-479.
- Kjellberg, Hans and Claes-Fredrik Helgesson (2006) Multiple Versions of Markets: Multiplicity and Performativity in Market Practice. *Industrial Marketing Management* 35(7): 839-855.
- (2007) The Mode of Exchange and Shaping of Markets: Distributor Influence in the Swedish Post-War Food Industry. *Industrial Marketing Management* 36(7): 861-878.
- Knodel, John (1993) The Design and Analysis of Focus Group Studies: A Practical Approach. In D. L. Morgan ed. *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications Inc.: 35-50.
- Komter, Aafke (2007) Gifts and Social Relations: The Mechanisms of Reciprocity. *International Sociology* 22(1): 93-107.
- Kondo, Doreen K. (1990) *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Kopytoff, Igor (1986) The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. In A. Appadurai ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 64-91.
- Korn, Dan (1989) *Utdöingsbygd*. Pixbo, Industritryck.
- KPMG International (2009) *KPMG's Individual Income Tax and Social Security Rate Survey*. http://www.kpmg.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/Individual-Income-Tax-Rates-Survey-2009_v2.pdf.
- Kring Lauridsen, Thomas (1986) Haveforeningen Fredrikshøj: socialt fællesskab med historiske rødder. In K. F. Olwig and S. Sampson eds. *Uden Regning*. Charlottenlund, Rosinante: 88-104.
- Kvale, Steinar (1997) *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*. Lund, Studentlitteratur.
- Lag (2003:460) om etikeprövning av forskning som avser människor. Accessed 10.11.2009 <http://www.notisum.se/tnp/SLS/lag/20030460.htm>
- Lakoff, Andrew and Stephen J. Collier (2004) Ethics and the Anthropology of Modern Reason. *Anthropological Theory* 4(4): 419-434.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980) *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago, Chicago University Press.
- Larsen, Niels (1986) Frihed og samfund: Den uformelle økonomi blandt Danmarks kystfiskere. In K. F. Olwig and S. Sampson eds. *Uden Regning*. Copenhagen, Rosinante: 73-87.
- Laurin, Urban (1986) *På heder och samvete: Skattefusketts orsaker och utbredning*. Stockholm, Norstedts.
- Lebra, Takie Sugiyama (1975) An Alternative Approach to Reciprocity. *American Anthropologist* 77(3): 550-565.
- Ledeneva, Alena (1998) *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchanges*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Leonard, Madeleine (1998) *Invisible Work, Invisible Workers: The Informal Economy in Europe and the US*. London, MacMillan Press Ltd.
- Lewin, Leif (2008) Samling kring folkhemmet. In L. Bennich-Björkman and P. Blomqvist eds. *Mellan folkhem och Europa*. Malmö, Liber: 20-39.
- Lezaun, Javier (2007) A Market of Opinions: The Political Epistemology of Focus Groups. *The Sociological Review* 55(2): 130-151.
- Lien, Marianne E. (1997) *Marketing and Modernity*. Oxford, Berg Publishers.
- Lindgren, Sven-Åke ed. (2001) *White-Collar Crime Research: Old Views and Future Potentials*. Stockholm, Brottsförebyggande rådet Report 2001:1.

- Lindvert, Jessica (2006) *Ihålig arbetsmarknadspolitik? Organisering och legitimitet igår och idag*. Umeå, Boréa bokförlag.
- Mackintosh, Maureen M. (1988) Domestic Labour and the Household. In R. E. Pahl ed. *On work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 392-406.
- Marcus, George E. (1998) *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- (2006) Where Have All The Tales of Fieldwork Gone? *Ethnos* 71(1): 113-122.
- Marcus, George E. and Michael M. J. Fischer (1986) *Anthropology as a Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Mars, Gerald (1982) *Cheats at Work: An Anthropology of Workplace Crime*. Winchester, George Allen & Unwin.
- Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman (1995) *Designing Qualitative Research*. London, Sage Publications.
- Martin, Emily (1997) Anthropology and the Cultural Study of Science: From Citadels to String Figures. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson eds. *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Berkeley, University of California Press: 131-146.
- Marx, Karl (1977) *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. London, Lawrence & Wishart.
- Maurer, Bill (2005) *Mutual Life, Limited: Islamic Banking, Alternative Currencies, Lateral Reason*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Mauss, Marcel (2002 [1990]) *The Gift* (trans. W.D. Halls). London, Routledge.
- Melin, Lena (2008) Ständning är en konststart – Statsministern njuter av att göra julfint hemma. *Aftonbladet* 21.12.2008: 10-11.
- Merton, Robert (1972) Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge. *American Journal of Sociology*: vol 78(1): 9-47.
- Miller, Daniel (2002) Turning Callon the Right Way Up. *Economy & Society* 31(2): 218-233.
- Moeran, Brian (2005) *The Business of Ethnography*. Oxford, Berg.
- Morgan, David L. and Richard A. Krueger (1993) When to Use Focus Groups and Why. In D. L. Morgan ed. *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*. Newbury Park, Sage Publications Inc.: 3-19.
- Möller, Tommy (2007) *Svensk politisk historia: Strid och samverkan under tvåhundra år*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Narotzky, Susana (1997) *New Directions in Economic Anthropology*. London, Pluto Press.
- Narotzky, Susana and Paz Moreno (2002) Reciprocity's Dark Side: Negative Reciprocity, Morality and Social Reproduction. *Anthropological Theory* 2(3): 281-305.
- Norberg, Joanna (2008) *I skuggan av välfärdssambället: En sociologisk intervjustudie om svartarbets villkor i Öresundsregionen*. Lund, Lund University, Network for Research in Criminology and Deviant Behaviour.
- OECD (2002) *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy. A Handbook*. Paris, OECD Publications Service.
- (2004) *OECD Employment Outlook*. Paris, OECD Publications Service.
- Offer, Avner (1997) Between the Gift and the Market: The Economy of Regard. *The Economic History Review* 50(3): 450-476.
- Olwig, Karen Fog (1986) Økonomi som kultur. In K. F. Olwig and S. Sampson eds. *Uden Regning*. Copenhagen, Rosinante: 7-16.
- Olwig, Karen Fog and Steven Sampson eds. (1986) *Uden Regning*. Copenhagen, Rosinante.
- Ong, Aihwa (1999) Clash of Civilizations or Asian Liberalism? An Anthropology of the State and Citizenship. In H. L. Moore ed. *Anthropological Theory Today*. Cambridge, Polity Press: 48-72.

- Opp, Karl-Dieter (2001) Norms. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*. Oxford, Elsevier: 10711-10720.
- Ortiz, Sutti (1979) The Estimation of Work: Labour and Value among Paez Farmers. In S. Wallman ed. *Social Anthropology of Work*. New York, Academic Press Inc.: 207-228.
- (1994) Work, the Division of Labour and Co-operation. In T. Ingold ed. *Companion encyclopaedia of anthropology*. London, Routledge: 891-910
- Ortner, Sherry B. (2002) Subjects and Capital: A Fragment of a Documentary Ethnography. *Ethnos* 67(1): 9-32.
- (2003) *New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Culture, and the Class of '58*. Durham, Duke University Press.
- Pardo, Italo (1996) *Managing Existence in Naples: Morality, Action, and Structure*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- (2000) Introduction – Morals of Legitimacy: Interplay between Responsibility, Authority and Trust. In I. Pardo ed. *Morals of Legitimacy: Between Agency and System*. New York, Berghahn Books: 1-26.
- (2004) Introduction. In I. Pardo ed. *Between Morality and the Law. Corruption, Anthropology and Comparative Society*. Ashgate: Aldershot.
- Passaro, Joanne (1997) “You Can’t Take the Subway to the Field!”: “Village” Epistemologies in the Global Village. In A. Gupta and J. Ferguson eds. *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Berkeley, University of California Press: 131-146.
- Pedersen, Søren (1998) *The Shadow Economy in Western Europe: Measurement and results for selected countries*. Copenhagen, Statistics Denmark.
- (2003) *The Shadow Economy in Germany, Great Britain and Scandinavia: A measurement based on questionnaire surveys*. Copenhagen, Statistics Denmark.
- Persson, Leif G.W. (1982) *Sambällsbärarna: en roman om ett brott*. Stockholm, Norstedt.
- Plattner, Stuart (1983) Economic Custom in a Competitive Marketplace. *American Anthropologist* 85(4): 848-858.
- Platzer, Elinor (2004) *En icke-lag i sökljuset: Exemplet hushållstjänster i Sverige*. Lund, Lund University, Sociology of Law, Research Report 2004:2.
- Portes, Alejandro, Manuel Castells and Lauren A. Benton eds. (1989) *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.
- Portes, Alejandro and William Haller (2005) The Informal Economy. In N. J. Smelser and R. Swedberg. *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton, Princeton University Press: 403-425.
- Powdermaker, Hortense (1966) *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*. New York, Norton & Company.
- Pred, Allan (2000) *Even in Sweden: Racisms, Racialized Spaces, and the Popular Geographical Imagination*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- Rappert, Brian (2001) The Distribution and Resolution of the Ambiguities of Technology, or Why Bobby Can't Spray. *Social Studies of Science* 31(4): 557-591.
- Renooy, Piet H. (1990) *The Informal Economy – Meaning, Measurement and Social Significance*. Utrecht, Netherlands Geographic Studies nr 115.
- Riksrevisionsverket (1997:59) *Svart arbete. 1. Arbetstagare och företagare. Insatser*. Stockholm, Riksrevisionsverket.
- (1998:28) *Svart arbete. 2. Arbetstagare och företagare. Omfattning*. Stockholm, Riksrevisionsverket.
- (1998:29) *Svart arbete. 3. Arbetstagare och företagare. Struktur*. Stockholm, Riksrevisionsverket.
- (1998:36) *Svart arbete. 4. Förslag*. Stockholm, Riksrevisionsverket.

- (1998:61) *Illicit Work in Sweden: A Report on a Welfare State Dilemma*. Stockholm, Rikskansliets utredningsverk.
- Robertson, Alexander F. (2001) *Greed: Gut Feelings, Growth and History*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- (2006) Misunderstanding Corruption. *Anthropology Today* 22(2): 8-11.
- Roitman, Janet L. (2005) *Fiscal Disobedience: An Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central Africa*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Ronco, William and Lisa Peattie (1988) Making Work: A Perspective from Social Science. In R. E. Pahl ed. *On Work. Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd: 709-721.
- Rothstein, Bo (1992) *Den korporativa staten: intresseorganisationer och statsförvaltning i svensk politik*. Stockholm, Norstedts.
- (2002 [1994]) *Vad bör staten göra? Om välfärdsstatens moraliska och politiska logik*. Stockholm, SNS Förlag.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jaques (1996) On the Social Contract: Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men. In M. Cohen and N. Fermon eds. *Princeton Readings in Political Thought: Essential Texts since Plato*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Ryen, Anne (2004) *Kvalitativ intervju: från vetenskapsteori till fältstudier*. Malmö, Liber.
- SAOB, Svenska akademiens ordbok (2006) <http://g3.spraakdata.gu.se/saob/>.
- Sahlins, Marshall D. (1972) *Stone Age Economics*. London, Routledge.
- Sampson, Stephen (1986) Italienske tilstande eller utopi? In K. F. Olwig and S. Sampson eds. *Uden Regning*. Copenhagen, Rosinante: 17-43.
- Sandemose, Aksel (1936) *A Fugitive Crosses his Tracks*. New York, A.A. Knopf.
- Sassen, Saskia, (1993) The Informal Economy: Between New Developments and Old Regulations. *Yale Law Review* 103: 2289-2304.
- Sassen-Koob, Saskia (1989) New York's Informal Economy. In A. Portes, M. Castells and L. A. Benton eds. *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press: 60-77.
- Sayers, Sean (1988) The Need to Work: A Perspective from Philosophy. In R. E. Pahl *On Work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd: 722-741.
- SCB (2003) *Föreningslivet i Sverige. Välfärd, Social Kapital, Demokrati*. Auth. J. Vogel, E. Amnå, I. Munck, L. Häll. Stockholm, Statistics Sweden, Levnadsförhållanden rapport nr. 98.
- van Schendel, Willem and Itty Abraham (2005) Introduction: The Making of Illicitness. In auths. *Illicit Flows And Criminal Things: States, Borders, And the Other Side of Globalization*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press: 1-37.
- Schlosser, Eric (2003) *Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin.
- Schur, Edwin M. (1965) *Crimes Without Victims*. Engelwood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.
- Schwimmer, Eric (1979) The Self and the Product: Concepts of Work in Comparative Perspective. In S. Wallman ed. *Social Anthropology of Work*. New York, Academic Press Inc.: 287-315.
- Scott, James C. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Scott, Marvin B. and Scott M. Lyman (1968) Accounts. *American Sociological Review* 33(1): 46-62.
- Simmel, Georg (1964) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (trans. KH Wolff). Glencoe, The Free Press.
- (1978 [1907]) *The Philosophy of Money*. London, Routledge.
- Simon, David R. (2001) *Elite Deviance*. Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

- Sjöberg, Lennart (2000) *Svart arbete, skatter och tidsanvändning: Ett diskussionsmaterial för Svenska Kommunförbundets Skattebasberedning*. Stockholm, Sveriges Kommun och Landstingsförbund.
- Sjöstrand, Glenn ed. (2005) *Fiffelsverige: Sociologiska perspektiv på skandaler och fusk*. Lund, Liber.
- Skatteverket (2006:4) *Svartköp och svartjobb i Sverige: Del 1. Undersökningsresultat*. Auth. A. Persson and H. Malmer. Stockholm, Skatteverket.
- (2006:4B) *Purchasing and Performing Undeclared Work in Sweden: Part 1. Results from Various Studies*. Auth. A. Persson and H. Malmer. Stockholm, Skatteverket.
- (2007:1) *Svartköp och svartjobb i Sverige: Del 2. Möjliga åtgärder mot svartarbete och bidragsfusk*. Auth. A. Persson and H. Malmer. Stockholm, Skatteverket.
- (2007:3) *Medborgarnas synpunkter på skattesystemet, skattefusk och skatteverkets kontroll*. Auth. A. Bahrami. Stockholm, Skatteverket.
- (2008) *Skatter i Sverige 2008: Skattestatistisk årsbok*. Stockholm, Skatteverket.
- (2008:1) *Skatteflekskarta för Sverige. Hur togs den fram och hur kan den användas?* Auth. A. Hansson and K. Wallberg. Stockholm, Skatteverket.
- Slater, Don (2002) From Calculation to Alienation: Disentangling Economic Abstractions. *Economy & Society* 31(2): 234-249.
- Smart, Alan (1999) Predatory Rule and Illegal Economic Practices. In J. McC. Heyman ed. *States and Illegal Practices*. Oxford, Berg: 99-128.
- Smart, Nick (1983) Classes, Clients and Corruption in Sicily in M. Clarke ed. *Corruption: Causes, Consequences and Control*. London, Frances Pinter Publishers Ltd.: 127-145.
- Smith, Adam (1990) *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica.
- Smith, M. Estellie (1989) The Informal Economy. In S. Plattner ed. *Economic Anthropology*. Stanford, Stanford University Press: 292-317.
- Socialförsäkringsutredningen (2005:4) *Vad är arbetslinjen?* Stockholm, Samtal om socialförsäkring.
- SOU (1997:17) *Tjänstebeskattningsutredningen: Skatter, tjänster och sysselsättning*. Stockholm, Finansdepartementet och Statens offentliga utredningar.
- (1999:69) *Individen och arbetslivet*. Stockholm, Statens offentliga utredningar.
- (2004:119) *Hållbara laster: Konsumtion för en ljusare framtid*. Stockholm, Statens offentliga utredningar.
- Spradley, James P. (1979) Interviewing an Informant. In auth. *The Ethnographic Interview*. Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers: 55-68.
- Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart (2005) Ceremonial Exchange. In J. G. Carrier ed. *Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar: 230-245.
- Svallfors, Stefan (1995) The End of Class Politics? Structural Cleavages and Attitudes to Swedish Welfare Policies. *Acta Sociologica* 38(1): 53-74.
- Svallfors, Stefan (1996) *Välfärdsstatens moraliska ekonomi*. Umeå, Boréa bokförlag.
- Svenska Dagbladet* (1932) Svart arbetsmarknad. Unsigned article 5.10.1932.
- de Swaan, Abram (1988) *In Care of the State: Health-care, Education and Welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Swedberg, Richard (2003) *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- (2008) The Centrality of Materiality: Economic Theorizing from Xenophon to Home Economics and Beyond. In T. Pinch and R. Swedberg eds. *Living in a Material World. Economic Sociology Meets Science and Technology Studies*. Cambridge, MIT Press: 57-87.
- Sykes, Gresham M. and David Matza (1957) Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency. *American Sociological Review* 22(6): 664-670.

- Söderberg, Johan (2002) Att studera konsumtionen: Om långa linjer i tänkandet. In G. Ahrne and R. Swedberg eds. *Ekonomi i samhället – ekonomisociologiska perspektiv*. Lund, Studentlitteratur: 193-219.
- Tengblad, Åke (2002) Den svarta ekonomin. In SOU 2002:118 *Utveckling och förbättring av den ekonomiska statistiken*. Stockholm, Statens offentliga utredningar: 243-271.
- Thévenot, Laurent (2001) Organized Complexity: Conventions of Coordination and the Composition of Economic Arrangements. *European Journal of Social Theory* 4(4): 405-425.
- Thompson, E. P. (1971) The Moral Economy of the English crowd in the Eighteenth Century. *Past & Present* 50: 76-136.
- Vetenskapsrådet (2001:17) *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning*. Stockholm, Vetenskapsrådet.
- Viby Mogensen, Gunnar (2003) *Danmarks uformelle økonomi. Historiske og internationale aspekter*. København, Spektrum.
- Wadel, Cato (1979) The Hidden Work of Everyday Life. In S. Wallman ed. *Social Anthropology of Work*. New York, Academic Press Inc.: 365-384.
- Wagner, Peter (1999) After Justification: Repertoires of Evaluation and the Sociology of Modernity. *European Journal of Social Theory* 2(3): 341-357.
- Weber, Max (1949) *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. New York, Free Press.
- (1978) *Den protestantiska etiken och kapitalismens anda* (trans. A. Lundquist). Lund, Argos.
- (1983) *Ekonomi och samhälle: förståendesociologins grunder*. Lund, Argos.
- Wibe, Sören (2003) *Attityder till ekonomisk brottslighet 1988 och 2001: Resultat av en enkätundersökning*. Stockholm, Brottsförebyggande rådet.
- Wibeck, Victoria (2000) *Om fokuserade gruppintervjuer som undersökningsmetod*. Lund, Studentlitteratur.
- Wilkinson, John (1997) A New Paradigm for Economic Analysis? *Economy and Society* 26(3): 305-339.
- Williams, Colin C. and Jan Windebank (1998) *Informal Employment in the Advanced Economies: Implications for Work and Welfare*. London, Routledge.
- Willis, Paul E. (1981) *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Wulff, Helena (2000) Access to a Closed World: Methods for a Multilocal Study on Ballet as a Career. In V. Amit ed. *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World*. London, Routledge: 147-161.
- (2002) Yo-yo Fieldwork: Mobility and Time in a Multi-Local Study of Dance in Ireland. *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures*, issue on Shifting Grounds: Experiments in Doing Ethnography, 11: 114-136.
- Wästerfors, David (2004) *Berättelser om mutor: Det korruptas betydelse bland svenska affärsmän i Öst-och Centraleuropa* [Stories about Bribes: The Meaning of Corruption among Swedish Businessmen in Eastern Central Europe]. Stehag, Symposion.
- Zelizer, Viviana (1997) *The Social Meaning of Money: Pin Money, Paychecks, Poor Relief, and other Currencies*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Zelizer, Viviana (2005) *The Purchase of Intimacy*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Zimmerman, Benedicte (2001) Work and Labour: History of the Concept. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*. Amsterdam, Elsevier: 16561-16565.
- Öberg, Lisa (1999) Ett socialdemokratiskt dilemma: Från hembiträdesfråga till pigdebatt. In C. Florin ed. *Kvinnor mot kvinnor: Om systerskapets svårigheter*. Stockholm, Norstedts: 159-199

Index

- Abraham, Itty, 6, 7, 28, 58
academics, 37, 41, 160-61
Adler Lomnitz, Larissa, 14, 17, 23, 36, 147, 163, 187-88
agency, 26, 62, 153, 203
altruism, 143, 148-49, 156, 168, 173
anonymization, 46-47, 51
arationality, 28, 55
baby sitting, 5, 141, 164, 202
balancing: 22, 27, 110, 144-50, 157, 172-73, 177, 180-83, 185; contributive, 184, 189-90; distributive, 184, 190-93
barter: 18, 23, 33, 87, 110, 113-20, 125, 139-40, 144-46, 148, 172, 204; as help, 151, 153, 201-6; monetary, 122-24, 130-31, 141-42
barter ring, 119-20
Befu, Harumi, 22-23, 145-148, 150, 153, 158, 183
Berggren, Henrik, 4, 76, 79, 99-100, 151, 153, 163, 173-74, 182, 186, 198, 206
Bloch, Maurice, 125
Bohannan, Paul, 115, 125
Boltanski, Luc, 28-29, 60-64, 69, 76-81, 89, 91, 100, 103-105, 109, 117, 137, 148, 166, 172, 174
Callon, Michel, 18, 22, 111-14, 136
car repairs, 11, 59, 135-37, 158, 165, 204
Carrier, James G., 21-24, 179
Castells, Manuel, 14-17
cheapness, 109-12, 114, 132, 135, 138-40, 204
cheating: refuse, 134, 136, 186-188; subject to, 181, 184, 194; those in power, 36, 134-35, 171, 196; unacceptable cheating, 196-98, 199
civil society, 12, 76, 92, 203
cleaning, domestic, 6-7, 99, 11, 15, 35, 59, 68, 76, 90, 93, 95-108, 151, 154, 164, 175; office or workplace, 11, 98
Collier, Stephen J., 21, 25-27, 106, 114, 131, 139, 157, 179
construction work, 11, 39, 41, 55, 67-68, 88, 118, 121, 130, 161-62, 168, 188, 196, 206
craftsmanship, 29, 92, 138
craftsmen, 9, 29, 33, 48, 56, 67, 81, 85, 88, 91, 98, 117-18, 121, 138, 147, 158-63, 168, 174, 180, 188, 197, 204, 206
Crump, Thomas, 125, 127
cultural intimacy, 20, 28, 36, 190, 201, 205
Davies, Charlotte Aull, 37, 47-50, 54
Davis, John, 22, 142, 146-47, 165
day-care, 15, 29, 40, 43, 54, 82, 90, 101
disentangle, 113-14, 124, 139-40
dole (*A-kassa*), 86, 195, 197-98
Douglas, Mary, 20, 22, 24, 36, 95, 98, 111-12, 149
economic rationality, 110
economisation, 133, 207
economist, 61, 96
economy: 10-12, 18, 21-22, 25-26, 71-72, 110, 113, 117, 128, 131, 147, 158, 180, 203, 206; alternative, 176; black (*svart*), 8, 13, 55; cash, 116; command/centralised, 25, 147-48, 176, 179; formal, 18, 26, 41, 85, 147, 166; 'hoolahoop', 208; informal, 3, 13-19, 26-27, 34, 47, 126, 179; of regard, 145, 148; Swedish 1, 10, 13, 18, 41, 75; welfare, 116
entangle, 18, 23, 114-15, 135, 137, 150, 153
Esser, Ingrid, 4, 29, 72-73
ethnographic interviews, 47, 65
exchange: economic, 27, 30, 178; hidden/inconspicuous, 7, 20-21, 129;

- social, 140, 151, 153-54, 163, 183, 204
- fieldwork: fragmented, 38; of homecoming, 36-38; reflections on, 34-39, 52, 54; yo-yo, 38, 45
- Firth, Raymond, 71
- focus group, 32, 49-15, 133
- Garsten, Christina, 70, 76, 104
- Graeber, David, 18, 21, 22, 24, 71-72, 91, 122-23, 125, 146-47, 149, 153, 195
- Granovetter, Mark S., 18, 113, 162-63
- greed, 27, 61, 62, 110, 132-3, 135
- Gregory, Christopher A., 72, 84, 115, 145-46, 182, 208
- Gudeman, Stephen, 18, 21-22
- hair dressers, 29, 43-44, 130, 216,n26
- Haller, William, 14-15, 17
- Hannerz, Ulf, 34, 37, 51, 54, 216n19
- Hart, Keith, 13-17, 23, 115-16, 125, 127, 130-31, 172, 176, 178
- help: abuse of, 100; in relation to barter, 23, 56, 57, 81, 116, 120-123, 127, 130, 139, 142-143
- 'helping-out', 6, 30, 100, 141-143, 150, 160, 169, 205-207
- Henry, Stuart, 15-17, 70-186
- Herzfeld, Michael, 2, 20, 28, 36, 58, 86, 91, 98, 106
- Heyman, Josiah. Mc., 24
- homo economicus, 22, 110-112, 114, 136, 179
- 'house-holding', 110-11, 126, 132, 180, 202, 204
- Hugh-Jones, Stephen, 115-119
- Humphrey, Caroline, 115-119
- illegal and illicit, 11, 13, 18, 25, 57, 110
- illegal exchanges, 8, 12, 18-21, 26, 29, 53, 64, 109, 202; speaking about, 46-48, 52-53, 57, 62, 110
- illegal work, 5, 6, 17
- illegality, 14-15, 20, 25-26, 105, 143, 204, 207
- illicit, definition of 6-7, 11, 13, 18-19
- individualism, see statist individualism
- informal: purchase, definition of, 19; work, 1, 17, 70, 83, 97, 124
- informal economy, see economy
- informant: middle-aged, 31, 34, 38, 40-42, 52, 119, 131; previous relations with, 65, 201; trust with, 52-53
- insider, 53-54
- interview, as anthropological data, 47-49
- irrational reasoning, 28, 56, 197
- Isacson, Mats, 12, 15-17, 22, 79, 111, 116, 120, 142, 185
- Jacobsson, Kerstin, 92, 172, 178, 199
- joke, 20, 36, 49, 58, 171
- Junestav, Malin, 72-73
- justification theory, 28, 60-65, 76-82, 92, 100, 107, 48, 174
- Lakoff, Andrew, 21, 25-27, 106, 114, 131, 139, 157, 179
- Laurin, Urban, 13, 15-16, 23, 27, 185, 189, 217n15
- Ledeneva, Alena, 16, 25, 111, 115, 148, 154, 158, 163, 177, 183
- legal definition of *svart arbete*, 5-6, legal and licit, 6-9
- leisure, 16, 41-42, 45, 67, 76, 84-85, 90, 92-93, 105, 203
- Leonard, Madeleine, 14, 16-17, 19, 23, 70, 80, 176
- licit, definition of, 6-7, 18-20, 24
- maid debate (*pigdebatten*), 9, 93, 95-97, 102, 106
- Marcus, George E., 35, 37, 52, 54
- Mars, Gerald, 14-17, 70, 179, 186
- Marx, Karl, 69-72, 165, 195
- Maurer, Bill, 18-19, 47, 111, 119
- Mauss, Marcel, 22, 70, 142-147, 149, 168, 172, 177-178, 182, 184, 192, 195, 208
- memory of informants, 51, 53, 65
- metaphors, 19-20, 29, 35
- methodology, ethics in, 32, 46-47, 59
- Miller, Daniel, 18, 21-23, 179
- money: and time, 87-93, 110-11, 138, 154, 160, 204; as compensation, 5, 8, 45, 77, 82, 85, 100, 105, 110, 115, 120-24, 133-35, 146, 159-60, 164, 207; concealed/hidden, 20, 83, 127-30; definition of, 63, 125-26; types of, 126-27, 130-31
- money-hour, 69, 88-91, 204, 217n43
- moral dilemmas, 142, 201-209
- moral economy: 27, 119, 179-80, 183, 198-99, 202-3, 206; a Swedish version of, 35, 179-80, 199
- morality, 27, 119, 125
- Narotzky, Susana, 23, 142, 192-93
- neutralization, 61

- Offer, Avner, 22-23, 145-46, 148
 Olwig, Karen Fog, 8, 16-17
 Ortner, Sherry B., 34, 37, 53-54
 outsider, 53-54
 paraphrase, 29, 186
 Pardo, Italo, 15-16, 23, 27, 111, 115, 176, 185-87
 Parry, Jonathan, 125
 pillars of society, 172, 176, 182-83, 193, 198
 politicians, 9, 13, 27, 35, 43, 96-97, 171, 177, 184, 186, 190-92, 195, 207, 217n47, 219n70
 polymorphous engagement, 36
 Portes, Alejandro, 14-17, 115, 174
 private sphere, 41-42, 76, 88, 101, 107, 129, 135, 145-54, 175
 public sphere, 41-42, 54, 63, 76, 88, 129, 145
 publicly employed, 55, 132, 160, 171
 rationality, 56, 110-11, 114; see also arational and irrational
 reciprocity: and market exchange, 23, 146-47, 163, 165, 190; and morality, 192-93; balanced, 143, 160, 183; definition of, 22-23, 143-45; in the domestic world, 63; in work exchanges, 147, 149-54, 169; negative, 115, 144; triadic, 180-83, 198; with the state, 173, 177-78, 190, 198
 regime: of affection; 148, 154, 157-58, 169; of equivalence, 148-49, 154, 157, 163-64, 169, 183; of living, 25-26, 41, 69, 106, 114, 131, 138, 140-41, 153, 168, 198, 203, 205; of status, 148, 157, 177, 218n63; reciprocal, 25
 restaurant; 11, 29, 70, 81, 133-35, 167, 187, 206
 retrospective sensemaking; 28, 29, 57
 risk, calculations/negotiations of, 53, 102-4, 142, 151, 167-68, 197, 202, 206
 Robertson, Alexander F., 33, 117
 Roitman, Janet L., 25, 126, 160, 179, 185, 217n43
 Rothstein, Bo, 4, 178
 Rousseau, Jean-Jaques, 80, 99-100, 217n35
 rules, explosion of, 188
 Sampson, Stephen, 14, 16, 17, 19, 176
 Scott, James C., 14, 16, 20, 185-86
Skatterverket, see the Swedish Tax Agency
 Slater, Don, 22-23, 110, 114, 138, 154, 166, 177, 183
 Smart, Alan, 7, 26, 186
 smart deal/exchange, 36, 50, 60, 109-112, 118-19, 131-33, 135, 139, 154, 159, 186-88
 social practice, 7, 20, 106
 societal bottlenecks, 23, 25, 82-83, 93, 128, 148, 158, 204
 statist individualism, 172-73, 182, 198, 209
 'strength of weak ties', 162, 164
 subsidies, 4, 9, 75-76, 80, 102, 178, 182-84, 191, 198-99, 205, 217n40, 218n51; of domestic services, 9, 96-97, 99, 102-3, 107, 113, 218n51
 Svallfors, Stefan, 3, 174, 178-80, 182, 190, 193, 208, 217n15
 de Swaan, Abram, 4, 178, 183
 Swedberg, Richard, 110-111, 146
 Swedish National Audit Office (*Riksrevisionen*), 6, 10-11
 tax: cheating 43, 56, 119, 134, 140, 160, 169, 172, 176, 184, 191; paying, 80, 113, 177, 186, 189, 193; refund, 2; wedge 88, 208
 Tax Agency, (the Swedish Tax Agency, *Skatterverket*), 5, 9-12, 24, 26, 35, 40-41, 47, 53, 80, 86, 107, 109, 115, 124, 128, 131, 141-42, 177, 186, 193, 202
 taxation: avoiding, 22, 25 subject to, 5, 24, 78, 80, 82, 88, 115, 141, 184, 201, 207; wedge, 88, 208
 Thévenot, Laurent, 28-29, 60-64, 69, 76-81, 89, 91, 100, 103-105, 109, 117, 137, 148, 166, 172, 174
 time bind, 90, 101
 transparency, 119, 130, 136, 139, 165, 219n75
 triadic, reciprocal relationships in society, 30, 142, 180-83, 187-88, 198, 208; trade, 181
 Trägårdh, Lars, 4, 76, 79, 99-100, 151, 153, 163, 173-74, 182, 186, 198, 206
 value: and worth 77; economic/monetary, 21, 24, 63, 87, 91, 106, 118-19, 122, 124, 126-30,

141, 153, 165, 179, 202, 205, 207;
 ‘exchange-value’, 72, 84; societal
 values, 26, 37, 54, 61, 79, 85, 114,
 116, 132, 198, 206; ‘use-value’, 72,
 84, 117-18; ‘value for money’,
 106, 132, 157, 175, 207
 van Schendel, Willem, 6, 7, 28, 58
 warranty, 105, 135, 138-39, 143, 147,
 163, 166-69, 173, 180
 VAT (*moms*), 20, 88, 89, 109, 119, 130,
 134, 173, 178, 180-84, 188-90, 193
 welfare: society, 4, 10, 54, 64, 73, 79,
 84, 96, 116, 119, 171, 176, 179,
 205; contributing to the welfare
 society, 87, 93, 176-77, state, 3-4,
 8, 16, 23, 72, 75, 82, 86, 92, 96,
 100, 166-67, 172-78, 193, 198,
 201-08; welfare state and informal
 economic activities, 17, 23;
 (ab)using the welfare state, 195-97
 Williams, Colin C., 14, 16-17, 174
 Windebank, Jan, 14, 16-17, 174
 work, aspects of, 69-71; ethic, 69, 79,
 85; ‘the good work’, 69, 73-74, 92,
 156; values of, 38, 68-69, 71, 73-
 74, 81, 90-92, 95-97, 107, 131, 150;
 yourself, 35, 85-87, 91-93, 100
 Work Approach (*arbetslinjen*), 4, 69, 72-
 73, 87, 92, 217n39
 world(s) of worth: and time, 87-89,
 204; compromises between, 29,
 61, 64, 69, 77, 82-83, 90-92, 96, 99,
 103-5, 117, 137; definition of 28-
 29, 63-64; compared to value, 77;
 civic, 63, 80-81, 85-86, 92, 99, 104-
 8, 117, 140, 172; domestic, 63, 78-
 79, 81, 84-86, 98, 103-7, 137 ;
 fame, 63, 81; industrial, 64, 77-78,
 81, 83-85, 93, 98-99, 105; inspira-
 tion, 63, 81, 109; market, 63, 107,
 117, 137, 140
 Wulff, Helena, 38, 54-55
 Wästerfors, David, 47, 56, 60
 Zelizer, Viviana, 75, 115, 125, 131, 145
 Öberg, Lisa, 11, 96, 106

Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology

1. Caymanian Politics: Structure and Style in a Changing Island Society. Ulf Hannerz. 1974.
2. Having Herds: Pastoral Herd Growth and Household Economy. Gudrun Dahl och Anders Hjort. 1976.
3. The Patron and the Panca: Village Values and Pancayat Democracy in Nepal. Bengt-Erik Borgström. 1976.
4. Ethnicity and Mobilization in Sami Politics. Tom Svensson. 1976.
5. Market, Mosque and Mafraj: Social Inequality in a Yemeni Town. Tomas Gerholm. 1977.
6. The Community Apart: A Case Study of a Canadian Indian Reserve Community. Yngve G. Lithman. 1978 (Available from Univ. of Manitoba).
7. Savanna Town: Rural Ties and Urban Opportunities in Northern Kenya. Anders Hjort. 1979.
8. Suffering Grass: Subsistence and Society of Waso Borana. Gudrun Dahl. 1979.
9. North to Another Country: The Formation of a Suryoyo Community in Sweden. Ulf Björklund. 1981.
10. Catching the Tourist: Women Handicraft Traders in the Gambia. Ulla Wagner. 1982.
11. The Practice of Underdevelopment: Economic Development Projects in a Canadian Indian Reserve Community. Yngve G. Lithman. 1983.
12. Evil Eye or Bacteria: Turkish Migrant Women and Swedish Health Care. Lisbeth Sachs. 1983.
13. Women of the Barrio: Class and Gender in a Colombian City. Kristina Bohman. 1984.
14. Conflict and Compliance: Class Consciousness among Swedish Workers. Mona Rosendahl. 1985.
15. Change on the Euphrates: Villagers, Townsmen and Employees in Northeast Syria. Annika Rabo. 1986.
16. Morally United and Politically Divided: The Chinese Community of Penang. Claes Hallgren. 1987.
17. In the Stockholm Art World. Deborah Ericson. 1988.
18. Shepherds, Workers, Intellectuals: Culture and Centre-Periphery Relationships in a Sardinian Village. Peter Schweizer. 1988.
19. Women at a Loss: Changes in Maasai Pastoralism and their Effects on Gender Relations. Aud Talle. 1988.
20. 'First we are People...': The Koris of Kanpur between Caste and Class. Stefan Molund. 1988.
21. Twenty Girls: Growing Up, Ethnicity and Excitement in a South London Microculture. Helena Wulff. 1988.
22. Left Hand Left Behind: The Changing Gender System of a Barrio in Valencia, Spain. Britt-Marie Thurén. 1988.

23. Central Planning and Local Reality: The Case of a Producers Cooperative in Ethiopia. Eva Poluha. 1989.
24. A Sound Family Makes a Sound State: Ideology and Upbringing in a German Village. Karin Norman. 1991.
25. Community, Carnival and Campaign: Expressions of Belonging in a Swedish Region. Ann-Kristin Ekman. 1991.
26. Women in a Borderland: Managing Muslim Identity Where Morocco Meets Spain. Eva Evers Rosander. 1991.
27. Responsible Man: The Atmaan Beja of North-Eastern Sudan. Anders Hjort of Ornäs och Gudrun Dahl. 1991.
28. Peasant Differentiation and Development: The Case of a Mexican Ejido. Lasse Krantz. 1991.
29. Kam-Ap or Take-off: Local Notions of Development. Gudrun Dahl och Annika Rabo (red.). 1992.
30. More Blessed to Give: A Pentecostal Mission to Bolivia in Anthropological Perspective. Göran Johansson. 1992.
31. Green Arguments and Local Subsistence. Gudrun Dahl (red). 1993.
32. Veils and Videos: Female Youth Culture on the Kenyan Coast. Minou Fuglesang. 1994.
33. Apple World: Core and Periphery in a Transnational Organizational Culture. Christina Garsten. 1994.
34. Land is Coming Up: The Burunge of Central Tanzania and their Environments. Wilhelm Östberg. 1995.
35. Persistent Peasants: Smallholders, State Agencies and Involuntary Migration in Western Venezuela. Miguel Montoya Diaz. 1996.
36. Progress, Hunger and Envy: Commercial Agriculture, Marketing and Social Transformation in the Venezuelan Andes. Monica Lindh de Montoya. 1996.
37. Shunters at Work: Creating a World in a Railway Yard. Birgitta Edelman. 1997.
38. Among the Interculturalists: An Emergent Profession and its Packaging of Knowledge. Tommy Dahlén. 1997.
39. Shamanic Performances on the Urban Scene: Neo-Shamanism in Contemporary Sweden. Galina Lindquist. 1997.
40. Cherished Moments: Engaging with the Past in a Swedish Parish. Bengt-Erik Borgström. 1997.
41. Forests, Farmers and the State: Environmentalism and Resistance in Northeastern Thailand. Amare Tegbaru. 1998.
42. Pacific Passages: World Culture and Local Politics in Guam. Ronald Stade. 1998.
43. Under One Roof: On Becoming a Turk in Sweden. Judith Narrowe. 1998.
44. Ambiguous Artefacts: Solar Collectors in Swedish Contexts: On Processes of Cultural Modification. Annette Henning. 2000.
45. "The Hospital is a Uterus": Western Discourses of Childbirth in Late Modernity – a Case Study from Northern Italy. Tove Holmqvist. 2000.
46. "Tired of Weeping": Child Death and Mourning Among Papel Mothers in Guinea-Bissau. Jónína Einarsdóttir. 2000.
47. Feminine Matters: Women's Religious Practices in a Portuguese Town. Lena Gemzöe. 2000.
48. Lost Visions and New Uncertainties: Sandinista Profesionales in Northern Nicaragua. Inger Lundgren. 2000.
49. Transnational.Dynamics@Development.Net. Internet, Modernization and Globalization. Paula Uimonen. 2001.

50. "Gold is Illusion": The Garimpeiros of Tapajos Valley in the Brazilian Amazonia. Enrique Rodriguez Laretta. 2002.
51. Lucknow Daily: How a Hindi Newspaper Constructs Society. Per Ståhlberg. 2002.
52. Only For You! Brazilians and the Telenovela Flow. Thaïs Machado Borges. 2003.
53. "They Call For Us": Strategies for Securing Autonomy among the Paliyans, Hunter-Gatherers in the Palni Hills, South India. Christer Norström. 2003.
54. "Our Fury is Burning": Local Practice and Global Connections in the Dali Movement. Eva-Maria Hardtmann. 2003.
55. Species Aid: Organizational Sensemaking in a Preservation Project in Albania. Peter Green. 2004.
56. India Dreams: Cultural Identity Among Young Middle Class Men in New Delhi. Paolo Favero. 2005.
57. Irish Scene and Sound: Identity, Authenticity and Transnationality Among Young Musicians. Virva Basegmez. 2005.
58. Eurocrats at Work: Negotiating Transparency in Postnational Employment Policy. Renita Thedvall. 2006.
59. The Un/selfish Leader: Changing Notions in a Tamil Nadu Village. Björn Alm. 2006.
60. 'When Women Unite!'. The Making of the Anti-Liquor Movement in Andhra Pradesh, India. Marie Larsson. 2006.
61. Med facit i hand: Normalitet, elevskap och vänlig maktutövning i två svenska skolor. Åsa Bartholdsson. 2007.
62. From Slaves to Princes: The Role of NGOs in the Contemporary Construction of Race and Ethnicity in Salvador, Brazil. Örjan Bartholdson. 2007.
63. Exercising Peace. Conflict Preventionism, Neoliberalism, and the New Military. Mattias Viktorin. 2008.
64. Opening the Orange Envelope: Reform and Responsibility in the Remaking of the Swedish National Pension system. Anette Nyqvist. 2008.

Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology. New Series

Published by Stockholm University
Editors: Gudrun Dahl and Christina Garsten

1. Christina Hedblom. "The Body is Made to Move": Gym and Fitness Culture in Sweden. Stockholm 2009.
2. Lotta Björklund Larsen. Illegal yet Licit. Justifying Informal Purchases of Work in Contemporary Sweden. Stockholm 2010.

Subscriptions to the series and orders for single volumes should be addressed to any international bookseller or directly to the distributor:

eddy.se ab, B, SE-621 24 Visby, Sweden.
Phone: +46 498 253900
Fax: +46 498 249789
E-mail : order@bokorder.se
<http://acta.bokorder.se>

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS STOCKHOLMIENSIS

Corpus Troporum
Romanica Stockholmiensia
Stockholm Cinema Studies
Stockholm Economic Studies. Pamphlet Series
Stockholm Oriental Studies
Stockholm Slavic Studies
Stockholm Studies in Baltic Languages
Stockholm Studies in Classical Archaeology
Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion
Stockholm Studies in Economic History
Stockholm Studies in Educational Psychology
Stockholm Studies in English
Stockholm Studies in Ethnology
Stockholm Studies in History
Stockholm Studies in History of Art
Stockholm Studies in History of Ideas
Stockholm Studies in History of Literature
Stockholm Studies in Human Geography
Stockholm Studies in Linguistics
Stockholm Studies in Modern Philology. N.S.
Stockholm Studies in Musicology
Stockholm Studies in Philosophy
Stockholm Studies in Psychology
Stockholm Studies in Russian Literature
Stockholm Studies in Scandinavian Philology. N.S.
Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology. N.S.
Stockholm Studies in Sociology. N.S.
Stockholm Studies in Statistics
Stockholm Theatre Studies
Stockholmer Germanistische Forschungen
Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia
Studia Fennica Stockholmiensia
Studia Graeca Stockholmiensia. Series Graeca
Studia Graeca Stockholmiensia. Series Neohellenica
Studia Juridica Stockholmiensia
Studia Latina Stockholmiensia
Studies in North-European Archaeology