

“Opening Higher Education”

“Opening Higher Education”
Discursive transformations of distance and
higher education government

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis takes as its starting point the 1990s and early 2000s political arguments for a more open and flexible Swedish higher education system. At this time, the issues of accessibility and participation were also brought into the debate by revitalized ideals of distance education. In this study, the aim has been to denaturalize and render discursive shifts visible by examining the assumptions and reasonings of "opening higher education." The empirical material is Swedish distance and higher education policies; Government bills, Government official reports, and replies from universities and university colleges, from 1992 to 2005. The thesis draws on a Foucauldian, post-structural understanding and approach of *governmentality*, focusing on how discourses take part in a governing that constitutes certain problems, solutions, and rationalities, made visible in policy. The overall purpose has been to analyze how discourses suggesting widened, flexible, and democratic participation involve regulations and orderings of students, institutions, and higher education systems.

The thesis includes four studies that demonstrate how discourses of openness become parts of governing distance and higher education; how rationalities of expansion and flexibility are aligned to securing higher education systems and populations, and how institutions and individuals should adjust to flexible and personalized higher education. The first study examines how a post-war, nation-based higher education expansion is re-configured in scale, into regional, IT-based, European and global spatialities. The second study examines flexible distance education in terms of gendered spatial orderings, problematically intended for female populations. The third study explores how a certain ideal subjectivity and self-technology of personalization is embedded in the notions of IT-based Learning management systems. The last study examines the discursive shift from distance education to flexible learning and how a spatial politics and polarizations of study modes (distance/flexible), university localizations (distance/campus), and ideals of distance education (distance/closeness) are produced.

The analyses reveal how liberal rationalities and self-organization of individuals, populations and spatialities take part of the governing and how orderings; differentiation of systems and exclusion of populations through spatial affiliation, gender, distance and IT study modes, market and performance logics, are produced.

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The research interest in distance and higher education began with my time at Mid Sweden University in the mid-1990s. Flexible learning, which traveled from Australia to Sweden, became a major assignment for the university college and I got involved in introducing the idea into institutional work. At the same time, I ran into post-structural theory studies at Uppsala University, which provided tools for thinking about educational knowledge, discourse, and power. I still remember the excitement of reading analyses that made use of the Foucault, Deleuze, and Butler that I had come to know through film and media science studies.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this thesis is how Swedish policies in the 1990s and early 2000s argued for a more open, flexible, and accessible higher education. Through these political proposals and solutions, I argue, the issues of higher education accessibility and participation are naturalized but also signified by re-vitalized ideals of distance education and a new emphasis on European and IT politics, for making higher education more democratic, effective and open in space and time. The aim of this study is to denaturalize and render discursive shifts visible by examining the assumptions and reasonings of “opening higher education.”

The aims of “opening higher education” are not limited to one type of policy or practice of policy-making. In official documents, commissioned material, higher education ordinances, statements from the higher education institutions, from agencies and instances to societal debates – in national policy spheres as well as via trans-national spheres, such as the EU – many have emphasized the necessity of renewing and making higher education systems more open and flexible. The questions are; How are distance and higher education becoming targets for Swedish politics and supposed to manage the encompassing, multifarious, and diverse tasks? How are discourses of openness operating, what are they signifying?

Like most other countries in the Nordic and European sphere in recent decades, Sweden has been concerned about having a well-functioning higher education system.¹ A fair, representative, and effective system has been viewed as a necessity for a democratic and prosperous society. Increasing and widening students’ access to and participation in higher education through rational planning have been some of the recurrent issues in response to such goals since the 1960s and 70s. In 1975 (Government bill², 1975, p. 488), the Swedish government articulated the need “to open higher education,” for example, by

¹ I use the same terms as the policies when approaching these issues; higher education [*bögere utbildning* or *högskola* in Swedish] and distance education [*distansutbildning*]. I am also interested in what these descriptions pick up and are paired with, like “open,” “flexible,” etc. (consequently, I will not discuss what is the most appropriate or true terminology).

² Government bill (*proposition* in Swedish) is the proposal the Government present to the Parliament. The bills are often prepared by Government commissions, presented in Government official reports (*Statens offentliga utredningar, SOU*, in Swedish). The Government official reports I will refer to is mainly from the Swedish Ministry of education (*Utbildningsdepartementet* in Swedish).

making it more accessible to different occupational groups in the labor market and by establishing new institutions outside the present universities.

The variety of post-war Swedish higher education policies and reform has been widely recognized. Due to the various state efforts to re-organize the higher education system, Sweden has been considered radical in creating an integrated higher education system in relation to other higher education systems (Teichler, 1988; Rothblatt & Wittrock, 1993). Often, the two major reforms, in 1977 and 1993 (Government bill, 1977, 1993a, 1993b; Higher Education Act, 1977), are used to exemplify this.

In this thesis, I have examined how Swedish policies in the 1990s and early 2000s take part in formulating goals, purposes, strategies and expectations for distance and higher education. Four types of policies have been selected: 1) the Government's official reports, including some predated official documents, politically processed through Commissions consisting of experts, "stakeholders," and bureaucrats resulting in the so-called SOU report; 2) the mandatory replies to these missionary reports written by the universities or university colleges; 3) the Government's bills, where the Swedish Governments stake out political directions and tactics; and 4) reports from distance and higher education agencies, for example concerning IT and Learning management systems.

Hence, I have chosen empirical material that is authoritative in a specific sense through its formal, procedural legitimacy and impact on the educational system (and I will come back to this definition in the chapter *Methodological considerations*). Even so, we can consider policies as a particular instance of a political apparatus of truth-telling, which also takes part in societal discourses, re-producing and modifying already available and historically related issues and discourses.

The following parts of this chapter is organized in six sections; a description of the main policies, higher education research issues of relevance for the study, the analytical focus, the qualities of analyzing policies, and lastly, the aim, purpose and questions, followed by an overview of the whole work.

To begin with, I will describe four policy reforms that mark out the key empirical materials from the time period of interest and how they, in different ways, propose an "opening" of Swedish higher education. The order I have used to illustrate them is not chronological but stems from 1998, 2002, 1992, and 2005. This is a way of illustrating that the short timeframe makes the chronology less important than their consensus and how they relate to each other.

The 1990s and early 2000s policies on “openness”

The first example is from the Commission on distance education, which worked between 1995 and 1998, and in 1998 suggested a *flexible, IT-based distance education* (Ministry of education [ME]³, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Distance education (and related study forms and concepts like alternative studies, correspondence studies, distance teaching, etc.), has been a recurrent issue for post-war Swedish policies (e.g. ME, 1962, 1975, 1992b) and questions of compensatory access and widened participation have been important arguments. Since the 1977 higher education reform, distance education also has been an integrated, but not uncontested⁴, part of the higher education system (Willén, 1981).

At least two wider political issues were connected to the reform of flexible education. One was regional and economical politics and the concern of distributing higher education to increase the levels of academic education to make rural areas, as well as Sweden more generally, grow economically. Large investments, new agencies, project funding, and networks were to support the renewal towards a flexible higher education and what became the common term in policies after 1998, “flexible learning.” Also from a Nordic perspective, the large monetary investments during the early 2000s have been considered significant (Paulsen, 2002).

Secondly, several other policies and decisions on IT were made in the mid 1990s and on, which aimed to widen and increase IT-use in Sweden (e.g. Government bill, 1996; ME, 2001). Likewise, the Swedish University Network, SUNET, was important in connecting higher education institutions to the Internet.

My second example is from one of the higher education policies, the Government bill of 2002, entitled *A more open system* (in Swedish *Den öppna högskolan*). Expressions of the following kind contributed to how openness was spelled out⁵:

³ I have chosen to refer to the educational departments as *Ministry of education*, although they have different names throughout time, e.g. the *Ministry of education and Ecclesiastic Affairs* in 1962 or *Ministry of education and science* in the 1990s.

⁴ Since then, the marginalization and large volumes of drop-outs in distance education recurrently has been problematized in policies. The successive integration of distance education in the system also has been depicted as a flourishing business of non-governmental interests diminished (see for example Gaddén, 1973).

⁵ I have made the translations from Swedish to English in this thesis and the citations have been checked by a bilingual person. Still, particular phrases or values might have been misinterpreted or gone unnoticed.

The open higher education is open to the world around. The recruitment to higher education hence must increase, level out and widen to new groups (Government bill, 2002, p. 18).

Enrolling students with non-academic backgrounds was part of the plan to widen higher education participation, and similar to other European and Western countries, a target of 50 per cent participation was set. "Openness" was suggested to become the "rule of practice:"

The idea of an open higher education is a guiding principle for all of the courses of actions the Government presents in this bill. This idea includes not only the possibility for as many as possible at some point having the opportunity to participate in higher education, but also the possibility for a person to acquire and develop knowledge during the whole lifecourse. This stems from the need of continuously learn and develop competence, and, a perspective of learning as a continuous process. For accomplishing this, education must be offered in a multiplicity of forms and ways.

Modern technology and new pedagogy make distance education a new opportunity. (Government bill, 2002, p. 23)

The bill also expresses that it is important "to be prepared to meet the unknown as well as known problems" (ibid., p. 18), and that higher education "gives better opportunities of meeting the challenges of our time and quick changes." According to the assumption, the only certainty here is change and flexibility – the most reasonable response to such circumstances and futures. What are "flexibility" and "openness" supposed to accomplish? What does "openness" as a "guiding principle of all the courses of actions" mean and signify here? Does it make higher education intelligible in particular ways?

With these kinds of statements, not only "open" and "flexible" but "lifelong learning" are emphasized and affect higher education in a profound way. The lifelong learning discourse has also been widely recognized in policy analyses in European and Swedish settings, suggesting a recasted educational mode (e.g. Edwards, 1997; Askling & Foss-Fridlitzius, 2001; Nóvoa, 2002; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Nicoll, 2006). Clearly, there are re-actualized arguments around access and participation at work through the vocabularies of "open," "flexible," and "lifelong learning," but are there also new meanings evolving?

Thirdly, "the open higher education" should be seen as part of similar transformations and policy proposals, suggesting university "freedom" and "autonomy" taking place in the 1990s. The 1993 reform, reported on first in

1992, was called “the Reform of freedom” (i.e. the report *Freedom, responsibility, competence* from ME, 1992a; Government bill, 1993a, 1993b), and was probably one of the most encompassing changes for higher education. The reform was firmly established early in the 1990s and the strategic importance of reforming higher education had been pointed out in economic policy (Government bill, 1990). Even though the ruling political parties shifted in the 1990s (with the Social Democrats resigning for a rightwing coalition government between 1991 and 1994), the general attitude was that higher education needed a new regulation and relation to the state.

With a growing economic crisis and unemployment, regional expansion became subjects of debate (Elzinga, 1993, p. 223). The establishment of university colleges, serving regional interests and recruiting local students, alongside the traditional urban research university’s more selective elitist student base, had made the higher education landscape differentiated and sparked discussion concerning isolation, poor education, and research quality (see also Elam & Glimell, 2004).

With the 1993 reform, higher education institutions were to get a more autonomous relation to the state by being able to organize education in a more flexible way to achieve the goals and results set by state regulations. A number of new administrative, managerial tools for planning and reporting results were launched to improve the efficiency of the system. For example, a performance-based system for allocating state resources to the institutions was introduced, based on the flow and intake of students.

In 2004-2005, re-emerging debates over the effectiveness and results of the higher education system problematized the 1993 reform. A commission was established in 2004 to analyze alternative ways of allocating resources and creating a more dynamic system (ME, 2005, p. 18), capable of managing times of expansion of student volume and what is referred to as “overproduction,” as well as moments of “underachievement” in the system. There are interesting, intersecting arguments rendered visible here, suggesting freedoms and liberties for the academic world alongside more controls and means for monitoring the activities and educational performances.

Lastly, the question of a more open higher education also received attention in relation to European education politics. In the Swedish bill (2005b, p. 26), entitled *A new world – a new higher education*, known as “the Bologna bill,” the Government suggested a more openly adjustable higher education system to support the Bologna process of European higher education. A number of higher

education agreements and declarations, such as the Lisbon agreement in 1999, had placed Swedish and other European higher education systems in the spotlight of change, to intensify and mobilize educational participation. Apart from suggesting a more extensive mobility for students through the Bologna project, one proclaimed the year 2010 as a goal to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” in the Lisbon European Council in 2000. Swedish education policies expressed similar gains of a joint, European higher education, as in the Swedish bill (2005b, p. 26):

The conviction is that we in Europe well can keep up with the international competition if we together develop higher education in the same direction. The presently proposed changes in the structure of higher education is also motivated in that they in themselves lead to a more qualified and attractive education also from a national perspective.

It is noteworthy that the strivings towards harmonization and competitiveness are such strong features here; higher education should develop “in the same direction.” Even though Swedish higher education could be associated with a highly modularized system of eligible courses and educational programs, it is here to adapt and serve student and European “needs” of more standardized and qualified competences, as well as from an international outlook and comparison.

What I find interesting is how we can elaborate on and conceptualize the simultaneous governing of a national, European-transnational, and international higher education, and also how the emphasis on students’ needs and possibilities of accessing and participating in higher education take part in such a government. It is suggested that the individual, the society, and the new demands of learning will all benefit from these developments and, across educational systems, the student perspective is at the forefront. The individual’s learning, her competence and employability are rhetorically opposed, to academic knowledge superiority, teacher or institutional dimensions. Clearly, the rhetoric at work in these policies makes use of persuasive and re-actualized arguments of a more open and accessible nature to suggest the “new” higher education. Distance education fits well with many of these suggestions, and historically has had a position of offering courses for labor market needs and enabling flexible, distributed, and individualized learning.

Taken together, the significance of higher education, and especially the way in which higher education has been re-actualized and suggested to open up on different scales – to the world, to the learner, to regional interests and, to re-configurations of knowledge and technology use – are central and encompassing themes in the Swedish policies of the 1990s and early 2000s.

In the present work, I have used a title that responds to this – “Opening higher education” – which is a common policy directive and principle, connecting openness to certain values, beliefs, and means. Indeed, it ranges over a complex and multifaceted area of politics, and responds to a problem of governing, and presumably, only partial segments could be rendered visible through a discourse analysis and my selection of scope.

The title “Opening higher education,” also alludes to my aim of problematizing the higher education politics and ideals of an open democratic access and participation.

Moreover, these issues align with a broader field of higher education research studies, which has discussed and reported on the transformations of higher education in the 1990s and onwards. Next, I will exemplify these kinds of studies and introduce what is presented more fully in the third chapter; *the Research review*.

Higher education, politics of knowledge, and governance

I will here describe some common features and narratives used to describe Western contemporary higher education, the challenges confronting it, and transformations in its relation to the state and society, and also how these issues have been approached in research. I will exemplify how the research field diverges in terms of how shifts of government are regarded and conceptualized.

From the 1990s on, a number of instances have pointed to a transformation of the higher education landscape. One of these discussions is the emergence of a “Knowledge society,” which receives particular attention, for example, through EU politics. One of the European Commissions’ main strategies is to create “a Europe of knowledge,” where higher education is being positioned within the areas of finance, regional or international politics, technological development, and innovation. However, also in research, new modes of knowledge production and collaboration (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman & Scott, 1994; Nowotny, Scott & Gibbons, 2001) are suggested to form a part of a new politics of knowledge. Higher education,

instead of being seen as the main power center of knowledge production and expertise, is considered to be an institution that open up for a flow of questions and demands from a wider, public space.

Explanations of a changing external world and context for higher education have become common ways of speaking and considering higher education change, constant learning, and knowledge performance, not the least of which are IT and web-based communication, as ir retrievable and conditional for our contemporaries. In that sense, higher education should be accountable, open, trans-disciplinary in order to illuminate urgent and broad societal issues, such as health problems, global warming, financial and democratic crises, and so on. The post-modern critique of the cultural and political aspects of knowledge also take part in these occurrences, questioning “truths,” “meaning,” “essentialism,” “excellence,” etc.

Hence, higher education is exposed to varied and contradictory political desires and moral values from living in “crisis,” or of acting in a “fateful” and “credible” way. The necessity of being flexible, adaptable, problem-solving, and so on are commonly motivated as responses to changes in working life and society and, for various reasons, for the “public good”: for universities to be more accountable and liable in relation to societal and work life needs, to improve students’ employability, for the systems to provide “choice” and increased “cost-effectiveness,” etc. The issues and “needs” are in a wide sense addressed to “the system” – universities, university colleges, lecturers, researchers, and students, regional and international interests, etc.

A very common narrative adapted by higher education researchers (e.g. Olsen & Maassen, 2007b, p. 12) describes this as “the TINA-syndrome” (There Is No Alternative), often associated with the 1980s British Thatcher politics. Sörlin and Vassuri (2007, p. 6) have pointed to how the issue of higher education accountability, since being used in the Thatcher era of New Public Management (NPM) and for making the public sector more “efficient,” receives a wider, democratic meaning than the earlier, more strict economic-managerial discourse.

A growing interest in research is the transformation of the governing of higher education. A firmly established concordance (e.g. Neave & van Vught, 1991; Bargh, Scott & Smith, 1996; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Kogan et al., 2006, Marginson & Considine, 2000; Olsen & Maassen, 2007a; Amaral, Bleiklie, Musselin, 2009; Dale & Robertson, 2009; Kalló & Rinne, 2009) suggests that higher education is increasingly exposed to new forms of “governance.” The term governance, often used in the phrase “from government to governance”

(Pierre, 2000; Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004; Dean, 2007), is taken up from very different positions, and not only in research, to illustrate a contemporary governing shift. Commonly, it suggests that the relations of educational systems, and mainly, a centralized nation or state, regulation and responsibility, have changed character. Particularly, market-like organizing, such as NPM, has been widely observed.

To demonstrate this, Marginson (1993) analyzed how education through NPM became a target early on for fostering “human capital” in policies from the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), where people should have flexible capacities for being able to respond to shifting market needs and new technological challenges. Marginson (2010, p. 151) also has stated that “NPM imagined the university as a quasi-corporation, and its field of operation as a national and later global market,” which he also has given a critical example of through how the growth of global market-standardized e-learning failed to consider, for example, language barriers in the Asia-Pacific region (Marginson, 2004).

Over the course of a couple of years, and what seems to be a shift around 2005, higher education research (e.g. Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson & Wedlin, 2006; Krejsler, 2006; Ozga, Seddon & Popkewitz, 2006; Olsen & Maasen, 2007a; Simons, 2007; Dale & Robertson, 2009; Foss-Lindblad & Lindblad, 2009) has increasingly addressed the issue of “the Knowledge economy,” where higher education becomes a strategic instrument, embedded in policy regulations and competitive activities like university rankings. Through these events and via supranational policies launched by, for example, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, UNESCO, and OECD (e.g. Marginson & van der Wende, 2007, Epstein et al., 2008; Peters, 2009), higher education gains a new significance through labels like “knowledge-intense enterprise.” There is general agreement here, suggesting that policies construct “markets” and that markets function as instruments and means to set off performative activities. According to Olssen and Peters (2005), the higher education regulations, from “free markets” to “knowledge capitalism,” should be described as changes in the economical, neoliberal discourses. “Under neoliberalism,” they claim,

markets have become a new technology by which control can be effected and performance enhanced, in the public sector” (ibid., p. 316)

There are also Nordic research (Esping-Andersen, 1996; Garsten & Jacobsson, 2004; Hasselbladh et al., 2008) that have made similar observations of

transformations of the public welfare systems. The research from 2005 and on thus demonstrates an interest in understanding and developing the notion of government and how the influential discourses surrounding NPM, OECD, and similar have affected higher education systems through new discursive and governing mechanisms.

However, even if the conclusions of a transformation are concordant, a common presumption in higher education research more generally is that the shift emanate from a changed (nation) state government or some other agenda-setting instance. Often, two broad accentuations of the shifting modes of state governance are made, either of de-centralization and de-regulation, suggesting more autonomous organizations, or re-structuring and re-centralization emphasizing more renewed forms of regulations and controls, for example, of quality.

This kind of debate is generally held to be important from a Swedish and Nordic higher education perspective. Several Swedish and Nordic authors (e.g. Grepperud & Toska, 2000; Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004; Kim, 2004; Kogan & Bauer, 2006; Kyvik, 2009; Unemar-Öst, 2009) have reported on how the concern of re-shaping higher education received a certain intensity and urgency during the 1990s. As a part of these findings, more flexible, effective, and open higher education systems are considered to have become important goals and means of policies. While the studies that reflect on how it contributes to substantiating the ideas of a huge shift differ, most take this change as profound and encompassing. Likewise, when the threshold or decisive breakpoints should have occurred is not clear, partly depending on the object of study – some claim the 1980s or earlier, and some the early 1990s.

In Sweden, the governance issues around centralization and de-centralization have a long history of debate, preceding the 1990s and 2000s. Despite the debate, there is a strong trust and taken-for-grantedness of state-driven policies as motors for societal change in most contributions to Swedish higher education. I will give a fuller description of these features in my review, but let me finalize this section here by giving two examples.

To begin with, Kogan and Bauer's (2006) comparative analysis of Swedish, Norwegian, and British higher education systems between 1965 and 2005 is but one example of the aforementioned discussion and position. They argue that the local-national characteristics have signified the policies of higher education expansion, and that Sweden stands out for early on being centralized and state-controlled. They also stress that it has been highly adaptive to corporate policy

involvement (see also Lindensjö, 1981), and that state intervention has made Swedish higher education exceptionally expansive in terms of its post-secondary education system integration and early establishment of new higher education institutions (e.g. Teichler, 1988, p. 48-50).

A recurrent post-war policy issue has been whether, and how, distance education should be integrated in the higher education system and where the dual, small-scale mode, where all institutions can offer both on- and off-campus courses, has been the preferred model for higher education (Dahllöf, 1977). Swedish distance education also relies on the *Volkbildung* traditions of popular adult education (ME, 1965; Willén, 1981), for example via the working class movement and the beliefs in the development of an active democratic participation through education (Dahllöf, 1988, p. 167).

Secondly, a massive critique has concerned the effects of the centralized and nation-based system. The 1977 reform, with the purpose of creating a more integrated, fair, and equally distributed higher education system, was questioned on at least three points. One critique was that the new admission system was insufficient in meeting the policy intentions (Kim, 1998, 2004). Another saw the problem as the effect of the mass character Swedish higher education had taken early on (e.g. Svensson, 1987). Yet another was that the shortcomings of the Swedish higher education reform were caused by its character of closure – of being non-competitive and lacking a necessary openness, for example, towards European higher education systems (Scott, 1991).

Conceptualizing the problem of government

The question is how we can understand, re-read, and problematize what the Swedish policies act upon as “problems” and “problematic” issues and times for higher education in Sweden and Europe? Here I use the concept of *problematization* (Dean, 2010) both to describe how the policies operate, by referring to problems and certain solutions to these, and my own position as researcher to problematize, to open up, and question what is suggested to be at stake and the problem of governing in policy.

What I am suggesting with this is a wider perspective on politics and *government* (Foucault, 1991a, 1991b, 2000), where the Swedish policy representations of problems discursively draw together a number of different arguments and lines of reasoning, cutting across time, nations, policy spheres, not determined by the Swedish Government, political parties or the legal status

of policies and similar. Politics here imply a contingent power and order of such arguments, which is possible to analyze in the representations of policies. With this approach, state government or European instances and similar do not have any automatic privilege to shape political directions or high-stake issues.

The focus of government I refer to here, and which I will develop further on, derives from Foucault's (1991b) perspective of *governmentality*. It offers a specific approach to government by linking governing to mentalities or modes of reasoning. Such reasonings, or rather, *rationalities*, refer to the knowledge claims of statements, theories, strategies, tactics, and similar. The approach builds on a broader, social understanding of government, rather than the common uptakes of government and governance, for example, used in state politics and research interests related to political science.

Let me specify what I mean by "government" here. Government is always directed toward something, and rests on assumptions of the target of government. How societal institutions and systems, should be governed and pushed in desirable directions, and above all govern themselves, is the focus of interest. Thus, the interest is how government operates, which includes the government *of*, and *through*, *subjectivities* – of individuals, populations, and so forth.

According to Dean (2010, p. 31), an "analytics of government" takes as its central concern *how* we govern and are governed;

[partly] how regimes of practices come into being, are maintained and are transformed... [partly] attempts to show that our taken-for-granted ways of doing things and how we think about and question them are not entirely self-evident or necessary.

A particular kind of question comes with this approach: What rationalities and discourses are used and produced in the governing? What kinds of problems and difficulties are considered present by the policies, and how do they refer to earlier problems? What are the targets of government? From here, I have chosen to elaborate on two aspects of how the discourses of openness take part in the government of contemporary distance and higher education policies. A main analytical point is that these rationalities take form, on one hand, through powers of *subjectivation*, and on the other hand, through *spatial* powers. I will develop this argument a bit further in the following.

Firstly, I found it worth examining the government of, and through, subjectivities. What subjectivity was formed? How was educational participation as a norm established? What individual and collective capabilities were created

and desired? Clearly, Swedish and European populations were considered in need of higher education and more individualized opportunities for learning and education; similarly, “women” as a group, but also others, like “non-academics,” were considered in need of a new flexibility and openness to be able to take control over their own study time and learning.

Secondly, I became interested in how higher education systems and new emerging societies were spoken of in terms of access to spaces or spatialities. To exemplify, higher education should provide more open, flexible, and IT-based spaces of learning, the space of “Bologna” and the European higher education area (EHEA) were established, etc. Space and spatial powers thus operated in certain ways and aligned to rationalities of access and participation to neutralize place-time restrictions of access and participation; to internationalize or to economize higher education; etc. Moreover, rather than regarding the two powerful domains of subjectivity and space as separated, I have incorporated how spatial orderings and regulations also produced subjectivities.

The two analytical focuses of powers of subjectivity and space will also structure the chapter that follows after this introduction, entitled *Analytical approach*.

Scope and delimitations of analyzing policies

I have chosen policies as the locus of study, and in a broad sense they represent and give expression to contemporary political questions under formation. As Rabinow and Rose (2003, p. ix) have written, “they are aspects of the ways in which we are governed, they involve asymmetrical relations of power, and they are subject to contestation.”

The fact that Swedish policies make distance and higher education a matter of importance for society, and, how the policies contribute to the powerful dimension of constituting certain notions of society, individuals, etc., motivate these kinds of critical analyses. Specifically, the critical contribution is, as Simons, Peters and Olssen (2009, p. x) have put it, to bring about, not “matters of fact,” but “matters of public concern” into a discussion. Based on my case, it is, in a literal sense, to open up a political field based on what the policies constitute as “an open and accessible higher education.”

This study is based on a theoretical framework from Foucault and the post-structural understanding of how language takes part in the constituting powers of *discourses*. My interest concerns the linguistic and argumentative dimensions of

the policies, for example describing scopes, aims, and means to achieve higher education access and participation, that shape discursive regularities and orders.

What does discourse mean here and how does it relate to the approach of government, then? Foucault (1972, p. 49) has described “discourses as practices that systematically form the object of which they speak.” Such discursive formations are always delimited and create particular shapes and orderings of practices (Foucault, 1991a).

A discursive politics makes higher education into an object of regulation and allow and shape what higher education is or could be, and who or what it should include and embrace. How discourses create orders and rules of a practice should thereby be considered setting the limits and norms of what could be made thinkable and practicable, at a specific moment and time.

Discursive politics are also constituted by criteria of transformation (Foucault, 1991a, p. 61). As new arguments are added or disappear, the formations and norms are in process of re-configuration continuously.

According to Deleuze (1986, p. 16), referring to what he saw as Foucault’s seminal contribution to discourse analysis, the concrete method is to “choose the fundamental words, phrases or propositions,” to detect “the simple function they carry out in a general situation.” However, here I am interested in the political and historical aspects of discursive formations and how the discourse formations through policies can create continuous and discontinuous trajectories. The interest is what often quite disparate logics, activities, and courses of events together constitute, and what the formations produce in terms of regulations and orderings.

It is the performative dimension of practices, which I try to emphasise here. Things are done and have effects through these practices, and contribute to shape the issues and operational means, affecting how we organize and regard aspects of the world. In some sense, they affect the possibilities of action and understanding, as in the present case, for example, it situates higher education as a specific kind of instance and how it is supposed to function in a societal structure and welfare apparatus. Structural elements are parts of a post-structural analysis. The difference from a structural analysis, however, is that the elements are not seen as in direct relation to a “reality,” representational or intentional, but as parts of constructing and ordering social life and “reality.” By focusing on how different and related arguments and similar are assembled and constituted, we can at least partially understand how powers of government are operating.

As my material is delimited to the 1990s and early 2000s, it has been important to have an analytical tool for distinguishing the anchor point(s) for the discursive formations. I needed a tool for examining what makes possible that the political, at least temporarily, is fixed and creates a discursive order of disparate and heterogeneous elements. I here made use of Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) distinction of the *nodal point*. It could be an expression, word, or something similar that creates an order and relation of meaning between signifiers, and I will explain how I have made use of it further on.

When referring to politics, I lean on Foucault's general insights on discourses as situated and contingent, for example, revealed through historical outlooks. As politics always have traces of conflict and compromise, the contribution from a research position is to give perspective and render visible "the moulds."

To exemplify this, Swedish policy-making on higher education takes place in some particular fields of forces. In a general sense, the policies are affected by the culture of compromise of policy-making, which make traces of polemics and controversies visible in the policy texts (and which have implications for what is possible and worthwhile to analyze). The governmental processes in Sweden and the missionary work of the "SOU" have been a part of what often is described as a quite exceptional way of organizing and processing the Government official reports and bills, where so-called stakeholders, like non-governmental organizations, have been part of the established procedures of proposals and replies. Liberal rationalities, and the mainstream, negotiated politics of political parties, bureaucrats, experts, and organizations, thus characterize the policy-making.

However, there are dividing lines between the liberal rationalities in higher education (see also Lindensjö, 1981). For example, left-wing and social democratic ideals are historically considered to have paid more attention to matters of equity of opportunity and uniformity of access, while rationalities of the right wing more often suggested freedom for the individual and freedom of choice. The questions that evolved are: Why are these the (only) present alternatives? What democratic issues are at stake?

In general, the analytical work in the governmentality tradition often has been carried out in a specific historical outlook of contemporary transformations. It connects practices of government throughout time and the elements constituting them. In that sense, policies and policy problems, for example in education, derives from specific political and historical formations

and “systems of reasoning” (Popkewitz, 1996), where discursive politics of exclusion and inclusion could be rendered visible. Foucault himself elaborated on the history and means of government from ancient Greek societies to modern welfare states (1991b), specifically, how liberal powers of government gained ground and transformed throughout time were of interest, making use of freedoms and self-regulating subjectivities. Later uptakes of the approach in the social sciences (e.g. Dean, 2010; Rose, 1999a, 1999b; Rose & Miller, 2008) have deepened our understanding of different contemporary, liberal modes of government.

I take the questions of openness and the way higher education has been problematized and suggested to open up, not as *a priori* and given. My intention is not to examine whether government succeeds or not with political goals and intentions, which seems to dominate the work in the field. However, the matters of equity and politics of higher education access and participation are not dismissed, but discussed on the premises of a discursive understanding and alternative.

The approach made me reflect on my own position as a university employee and teacher, and the difficulty and possibilities of taking the position of “critical reader” to the common, public documents and ongoing institutional work and strategies for creating better access, facilitating participation and learning for the students etc. With this focus, I will leave it to others to elaborate on how the recent developments are negotiated and put to work, or not, in everyday academic life, or how they correlate to “facts and figures” of higher education systems.

Next, I will sum up the first chapter by presenting the aim and purpose of the thesis.

Aim, purpose, and questions

The overall aim of this thesis is to examine discourses of openness in distance and higher education, based on Swedish distance and higher education policies between 1992 and 2005.

The purpose is to describe and analyze how discourses suggesting widened, flexible, and democratic participation – via rationalities of accessibility and participation, gender equality, IT, and EU politics – involve regulations and orderings of students, institutions, and higher education systems. The analytical questions in this pursuit are:

- How are discourses of openness becoming part of the problem of government, and what are the significances?
- How are individuals, populations, and spatialities being formed and differentiated, especially via self-organizing features of government? What subjectivating and spatial powers are operating as parts of such government?
- Based on these findings, what is revealed about discursive shifts and governmentalities?

Overview of the thesis

The thesis consists of seven chapters, including an Appendix with a list of the empirical material and four separate studies in full-text (listed below). Chapter 1 provides an *Introduction* to my research interest, including the *Aim, purpose and questions*. Chapter 2 describes the *Analytical approach* and Chapter 3, the *Research review*. Chapter 4 contains the *Methodological considerations* and Chapter 5, a *Summary of studies*. Finally, Chapter 6 contains the *Discussion* and Chapter 7 is a *Summary* in Swedish. The four studies are:

1. Securing higher education expansion: “Non-places,” “Markets” and “Transits” as a contemporary spatial politics (article manuscript, submitted)
2. Gendered distance education spaces: “Keeping women in place”? In S. Booth, S. Goodman, & G. Kirkup (Eds.). *Gender issues in learning and working with information technology: Social constructs and cultural contexts*. Hershey, New York: IGI Global, 2010. (co-authored with Sandra Riomar)
3. (Information) technologies of the self: Personalization as a mode of subjectivation and knowledge production (article manuscript, submitted)
4. Flexibel utbildning – ”något annat och mera”? Rumspolitiken i skiftet från distansutbildning till flexibelt lärande [Flexible education – ”something else and different”? The shift from distance education to flexible learning as spatial politics]. In T. Karlsohn (Ed.). *Sambälle, teknik och lärande*. Stockholm: Carlsson, 2009.

2 ANALYTICAL APPROACH

With the approach and types of questions raised in the work, I take as my starting point the Foucauldian conceptualizations of *discourse* and *government*. In this section, I will elaborate more fully on these concepts and discuss recent approaches to *governmentality*. Two parts make up the chapter: *Analyzing powers of subjectivation* and *Analyzing spatial powers*. I will represent two of Foucault's main contributions in the first part that follows: how *powers* operate and are constituted, and as a part of this, how *subjectivities* are formed.

Michel Foucault's analytical work is comprehensive, versatile, and sometimes contradictory. This perhaps explains the various efforts to topicalize and periodize it in different ways (e.g. Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 104-105; Deleuze, 1986; Hultqvist & Petersson, 1995). There is also a "post-Foucault," which refers to the manifold uptakes and developments drawing on Foucauldian theory (from such scholars as Gilles Deleuze and Nikolas Rose), where an important part is based on the English translations and publications in the 1990s (e.g. Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991).

Analyzing powers of subjectivation

Foucault, in his seminal work *The Subject and Power* in 1982, reflects on three phases of his work, which have focused on how subjects are formed in different ways. "My objective," he writes,

has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification that transforms the human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of enquiry that try to give themselves the status of sciences... In the second part of my work I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others... mad and the sane, sick and the healthy, criminals and "good boys." Finally, I have sought to study ... the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject... placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations which are very complex. (Foucault, 1982, p. 208)

Three ways of approaching an analytics of the subject are described here: one, by studying how the production of knowledge and science has constituted the human subject; two, by studying how ideal subjectivities are constructed,

simultaneously with the mobilization and intervention of the other, deviant; and third, by paying attention to how subjects govern themselves and others, what could be referred to as *subjectivation*. In the text that follows, I will relate to these aspects of forming subjects, with the purpose of describing my own analytical focuses.

One of Foucault's most known concepts is *discourse*, and he early on took an interest in studying how discursive elements formed regularities through *discursive formations*:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, then we are dealing with a discursive formation. (Foucault, 1972, p. 38)

The citation illustrates the scope of the approach at the time. It explored how discourses were produced, shaped, and constituted in discursive formations. Resemblances and inner regularities were emphasized. The analyses included how subjects were produced and continuously shaped through such formations, for example, via scientific knowledge. It points to the construction of subjects and subjectivities, which not are seen as given or ahistorical units. Rather, the historically-situated practices of how subjectivities were formed were analytically of interest, and especially the influence of the human sciences became important elements of the discourse analyses.

Peters and Burbules (2004, p. 44), writing on educational research, argue that “knowledge in the human sciences is not disinterested, neutral, objective or value-free; rather it is inextricably entwined with relations of power.” The implications of such an approach is typical for what is known as a post-structural knowledge conception, suggesting that power is intertwined in all social practices and the constant shaping of new truths.

The exercise of power creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information . . . The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. (Foucault, 1980, p. 51)

Foucault's contribution to scientific thinking has been influential in post-structural theory and many of the contemporary “turns” of the social sciences. The “linguistic turn,” commonly referred to as how language or discourse constitutes “reality,” is one important position. From a post-structural position,

the brackets around “reality” – and the perhaps strenuous use of quotation marks to denote the construction of such concepts – imply a certain questioning of the division both of an external, observable and representational reality and the researcher as objective interpreter. Rather, both the analytical “objects” and the research position are considered created and shaped by discursive processes. Hence, in the research position, the researcher herself are included in the powers of discourse, and construct the research questions and speaks from the position and norms of current research. I will come back to this in relation to my methodological reflections and in a discussion of how educational science relates to Foucault studies (Baker, 2007).

Another important aspect of a post-structuralist position is that power is seen as fragmented and dispersed, and not emanating from a certain center of origin. This means that the elements of discursive formations must be analyzed in plural and preferably qualified by different sources and interrelated elements. Furthermore, a post-structural analysis bases its analyses on structural elements and borrows much of the functionalist features of “goals and means” logics of structuralism. It is also assumed that there are translations possible to make between, for example, policy statements and how the world is constituted and “comes into being.” Even if discursive dimensions do not describe reality in a direct way, it is presumed that they take part in how we understand aspects of the world.

How, then, could a discursive formation be examined? At least three dimensions could be mentioned as constituting, and temporary settling, discursive formations (Foucault, 1982, 1991a; Dean, 2010). One is the field of visibility and significance: the kind of statements, metaphors, or expressions that are used to describe the “objects” and how these form regularities or differ etc. Another is the knowledge, or the justification, delimiting the formations: what it is possible to claim or say about the objects. And lastly, examining the orderings, how the object is ordered and specified, and if it possibly is re-positioned as part of the formation constituted. In a general sense, these are the main aspects of how discursive powers could be examined, with which the present study also aligns.

We should also consider Foucault’s publication, *Discipline and Punish* from 1977 (see Foucault, 1979), as a part of his early analyses of subjectivating powers. The focus was on micro-powers, how people’s conduct was regulated and governed in detail, and how normalizing and differentiating powers were operating, that is, how norms of certain desired behaviors were operationalized

by separating the normal from the deviant, the proper conduct from inappropriate behavior, etc., as the social practices were to become more efficient and manageable. The studies showed how disciplinary powers were operating and embedded in institutional forms, such as the school and the prison, and how the student or prisoners behaviour were shaped.

In Foucault's conceptualizations of power and *governmentality* in the late 1970s (in English first published as Foucault, 1991b), he uses a wider scope of analysis and includes how discourses appear and how they take form historically and politically. Significantly, the English uptakes of Foucault's originally French conceptualizations of governmentality [*gouvernementalité*] as well as problematic [*problématique*] exemplified in my study, are translations that keep the original expressions, and should be understood in a specific, epistemological sense. With the concept of governmentality, Foucault referred to how powers, based on a historically important shift, were made active and how "problems" of governing appear, transform but also are continuous throughout modern time:

How to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor – all these problems, in their multiplicity and intensity, seem to me to be characteristic of the sixteenth century. (Foucault, 1991b, p. 87)

The wide historical scope of Foucault's analyses is visible here. The spectrum of my own analyses are much more limited, depending on my interest in what ways a discursive shift is constituted at a certain time, distinguished by its political nature and debate.

Analytically, I also needed to have tools to conceptualize how fixations and discursive shifts take place. This is also why I found Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) concept "nodal point" relevant for understanding how political struggles are settled and agreed in different ways. As a node in a web, it knits together open, not-yet signified elements in a network-like order and thereby produces meaning and coherence in a specific way.

In the social sciences in general, there are also certain features that characterize the governmentality analyses, and that is the "sociological" and political dimensions of government. Questions of social security, democracy, etc., are some of these dimensions and critical elaborations. These kinds of studies also share an interest in societal institutions, social structures, public life and welfare, policies, and similar.

Walters and Haahr (2005, p. 5) in their book *Governing Europe*, argue that the approach has a particularly “conceptual-empirical orientation,” which they find highly valuable. This involves the simultaneous work on distinct empirical exploration and theory-driven inquiry for elaborating on how government in different configurations is constituted. They stress that analyses of government could be examined in terms of their relation to the history or disruptions in the history of governing. The project Walters and Haahr refer to focus on how “European integration” aligns to discourses and reasonings in the EU; its political practice, technocracy and programs, ideas of “a common market,” etc. In their analyses they elaborate on how the politics of European integration produces exclusion/inclusion in terms of the formation of an “un/democratic Schengenland.” As a part of such a stance, then present, contemporary discourses in these diverse settings are always seen as related to previous, or other, discourses, not in the chronological or consequential way, however, but in their claims and lines of reasoning, or their claims of knowledge.

In my analytical work, I have considered a certain discursive formation speaking of higher education openness, accessibility and participation an encompassing and important matter of concern, which tie arguments and operational forms of the Swedish welfare state, equal educational of opportunity, market efficiency etc. together in the higher education policies. Thus, policies produce and are produced by certain discourses and play a significant part in how higher education, as an object of government is regulated and possibly re-positioned in contemporary time.

Governing populations, individuals and “selves”

The problem of government that Foucault started to elaborate on in the 1970s and onwards involved a mode of subjectivation where the subject turned herself into an object of government, and modified and worked on her “self” in different ways. Foucault here made the argument that these powers, to be productive, depended on people considering themselves as “free” in some sense, and that power is exercised socially and relationally. As people were free, they were also governable.

I think that if one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western civilization, he has to take into account not only techniques of domination but also techniques of the self.... The contact point, where the individuals are driven by others is tied to the way they conduct themselves, is what we can call, I think,

government. Governing people, in the broad meaning of the word, governing people is not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself [sic]. (Foucault, 1993, p. 203-204)

Foucault's interest, again, was to historize, in this case, how subjectivating powers evolve and transform. For example how norms were maintained and spread as people were acting on others' actions, but also how self-governing appeared alongside powers of discipline and domination, and seldom worked only through "freedoms" and "free wills." He thereby introduced a wider view of governing powers, where the separately and disciplinary powers constituted were more toned down; instead, power, Foucault (1980, p. 96) claimed, "functions in the form of a chain" and is twofold, and relational;

It is never localised here and there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (ibid., p. 96)

This suggests that we cannot consider governmentality as one homogenous rationale affecting the *modus operandi* of everyone everywhere. Rather, a governmentality analysis is concerned with how different governing rationalities constitute government at a certain time and place. Thus, a *rationality* or mentality of government responds to liberal rationalities of some kind, and governability (Hultqvist & Petersson, 1995, p. 25) taking part of a government made visible in early modern society, used for diagnosing and examining aspects of the government of modern societies, individuals, etc. The research interest lies in how one could understand contemporary strivings and rationalities being posed, in a kind of diagnostic way: How could certain contemporary governmentalities be explicated, and what rationalities are drawn into government? Moreover, how do these regimes get the grip of our thoughts and our ways of organizing things and regarding people and society at a certain time?

the hypothesis being that these types of practice are not just governed by institutions, prescribed ideologies, guided by pragmatic circumstances...but possess up to a point their own regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence and "reason." It is a question of analyzing a regime of practice – practices being understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and

reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect.
(Foucault, 1991b, p. 75)

My analytical interest of governing powers is based on the specific case of Swedish education and how a policy apparatus – constructing educational systems, using a certain political vocabulary, creating goals for example of re-organization, democratization etc. – operates and takes part in imposing certain regimes. In a general sense, and as Dean (2010, p. 42) frames the analytical interest, we examine “by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule accomplished.” The expressions, representations, or targets of a governing regime should be visible in programmatic declarations, strategies, and theories (ibid.).

Self-governing features and powers of subjectivating powers are a part of such an apparatus, and could be directed both to populations, individuals and aspects of individuals. I will give examples of this in the following through the concepts of *bio-politics* and *self-technologies*.

Lemke (2001) has claimed that Foucault, with the governmentality approach, further emphasized and problematized society and state politics. Foucault, for example, carried out analyses of how a new political effectiveness, a “political economy,” develops in society, exemplified with the twentieth century development of American and German economy and politics. Foucault defined this government as:

The ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security. (Foucault, 1991a, p. 102)

The tactics and kind of economic thinking aligned to a specific type of subjectivation, and thus aligned to populations and individual entities (characters, aspirations, bodies, etc.) at the same time. Thus, a certain bio-political reasoning (Foucault, 2007), is rendered visible in his 1970s work describing a new state and governmental interest in the life of populations, to be governed, mapped and measured, but also liberally treated and governable. Elden (2007, p. 32) describes bio-politics,

as the means by which the group of living beings understood as a population is measured in order to be governed, tied to the political rationality of liberalism.

Hunter (1994, p. 28), who has examined the government of the eighteenth century public bureaucracy and school systems, has shown how a certain "school system could present itself as an appropriate instrument for transforming the capacities of the population into a problem and object of government." Schooling as a mode of government was directed to improve the capacities of populations. This government was made possible for example through "domain-specific 'problems' open for expert analysis" (ibid.), shaped by the present social sciences. The contemporary higher education systems, are similarly affected by and involved in such modes of government. The problems of access and participation, for example, have been a major concern of social science, which I will show in the next chapter when reviewing research in this field.

According to Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde (2006), Foucault's conceptualization of subjectivation was a response to the 1970s and 80s dominance of phenomenological and existential interpretations of subjectivity.

Following his work on governmentality, Foucault began to mark out a new way of thinking about these issues in terms of ethics. Ethics, here, was understood in terms of technologies of the self – ways in which human beings come to understand and act upon themselves within certain regimes of authority and knowledge, and by means of certain techniques directed to self-improvement. (ibid., p. 90)

The principles here, refer to *technologies of the self* (Gutman & Hutton, 1988; Foucault, 1990, 2003b). Individuals' dispositions, capacities, and conduct are of analytical interest and involve how a subject should reflect on and modify her "self," as a social activity. As Foucault (1997, p. 282) has stated, the powers of self-technologies are directed towards the

exercise of self upon the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being.

Foucault himself used the ethics fostered through self-technologies for understanding how the authority and knowledge in ancient Greek philosophy and early Christianity employed self-examination; for example, in terms of self-mastery or self-renunciation. One of Foucault's points was that from the religious practices in the Western world, and especially through the techniques of the confession, a transformation could be traced onto medical, therapeutic, and pedagogical practices of self-examination and self-reflection (see also Besley & Peters, 2007).

Throughout time, we can see how different ways of "working upon the self" have taken place and often how introspective, invisible methods of self-inspection have been used for an ethical self-constitution and self-regulation (Foucault, 1983). In Foucault's (1979) analyses of disciplinary powers, mediated through the educational institutions, self-technologies were directed to foster docile, anonymous bodies through routine and uniform behaviors. Through the acts of normalization, examination, and observation, an order and analytical differentiation was produced.

I will return to how powers of space and subjectivity intersect in the next part of this chapter. However, first, I would like to refer to how I used the concept of self-technologies. In one of the studies, I focus on how the certain managerial technologies in the government of higher education, such as IT and Learning Management Systems, foster a certain individualized care and involvement of "the self," where the subject voluntary should reflect on the practice of learning and the educational efforts. Even if disciplinary powers and the regulations of assignments, deadlines etc. should not be dismissed here, there are transforming modes of subjectivation constituted; specifically, the ways in which self-technologies intertwine with IT should be considered as a certain prescribed mode of "being" and acting in virtual environments of learning; where students should expose and reflect on their learning.

As a part of Foucault's critique on taking a subject-agent, with a stable identity etc., as a departure for studying social practice, he used the concept of "the problematic" to depict and criticize conceptions of human endeavor, such as conscience, existence, etc. According to Peters and Burbules (2004, p. 60), "a problematic used in this sense means a set of problems to be investigated, held together loosely by a network of beliefs, usually containing core metaphysical propositions protected from intellectual scrutiny." That is, certain beliefs and knowledges, made the action on others and oneself possible. These problems and solutions are soon taken for granted and difficult to question.

The questions of ethics, liberal self-government, and problematizations are connected here (Foucault, 2000). They shape the conduct of populations by working through desires, aspirations, interests, and beliefs (Dean, 2010). Several authors in the post-Foucault tradition (e.g. Gordon, 1991; Rose & Miller, 1992; Dean, 1999) also have described how recent governing practices involve problematizing activities.

For example, these analyses demonstrate the use of temporal government; via positive ascriptions and proposals for futures to come and by referring to

earlier problems, it governs the present (Pettersson, Olsson, & Popkewitz, 2007; Rose & Miller, 2008). Certain bodies of knowledge, such as economic, social, or pedagogical knowledge, contribute to create the issues at stake; they actualize and inform the problematic. Taken together, the power and knowledge of these instances, we can assume, work both to legitimate and prescribe change and the problematic, despite their ambition to criticize and problematize, for example, the assumptions of subject-agency.

Rose (1998) is one of the post-Foucauldians who has developed that the aspects of liberal powers and subjectivation further. One of his main points is that it is problematic to regard resistance and freedoms as things possible to act on from outside governing practices. “Freedom” should not “be opposed to government,” as Rose et al. put it (2006, p. 91), but take part within practices of government.

Analyzing spatial powers

This part describes an analytics of *space* and especially spatial powers as an analytical distinction, through some contemporary Foucault-based approaches and empirical analyses. As a part of this, I will describe the concepts of space I found relevant for my work. Firstly, by showing how space relates to aspects of time, place, and orderings, for example in spatial metaphors and *spatializations*. Secondly, I will also connect space to government, and how *spatial formations* could be approached.

Foucault’s contribution to the analytics of the powers of space has been recognized in different ways recently; for example, in geography and political science (Larner & Walters, 2004; Philo, 2004; Walters & Haahr, 2005, chapter 5; Crampton & Elden, 2007; Elden, 2007; Huxley, 2007, 2009). It is through these references, and especially Huxley and Elden, I have made this part of the review of “spatial powers” and their relevance to my study on higher education. Even if Foucault wrote on space⁶ infrequently, he is, as Huxley argues (2009, p. 1645), acknowledged for having a sensibility of taking the analytical potential of space in consideration throughout his work. Foucault (1994, p. 361) also has stated that “space is fundamental to any form of communal life, space is fundamental to any exercise of power,” which often is referred to.

⁶ See the essay “Different spaces” (Foucault, 1998).

We could cite three examples of how he has elaborated on discursive, spatial orderings. To start with, Foucault, in the analyses of the powers of observation and examination in eighteenth century educational arrangements, illustrate a detailed, spatial regulation (1979). The analyses focused on how classroom spaces were organized to facilitate analytical observation (by a teacher or supervisor of some kind, and the knowledge of “pedagogical” discourse). It describes the distributions of bodies in the classrooms, how pupils hierarchically were ordered based on their achievements, but also the re-arrangement of such positions as the pupils progressed throughout time. Thus, the positions in the room were dynamic in relation to time and orderings, and always replaceable by another body and pupil. The order was regulated in charts and tables, typical for the time and imbued with a belief in rational thinking. Hence, what was produced through the spatial arrangements were enclosed, institutionalized spaces of bodies (pupils), which, by their position in the room, were possible to observe, and examine, by the teacher’s gaze. Through the very concrete spatialization, an analytical observation and examination become possible.

Secondly, we have a spatialization exemplified through the powers of medical sciences (Foucault, 1980), involved in early city planning and outbreaks of the plague. The divisions of urban space, bodies, and diagnoses, etc., were to achieve medical and sanitary order.

Thirdly, Foucault (1972) also contributed to our knowledge about how the scientific practices are spatially ordered and organized; for example, how representational powers produced scientific legitimacy and how the dominance of systematized thinking and rationales became dominant. One example is Linnaeus’ famous botanic classifications, a technology for spatialized orders of scientific thinking (see also Foucault, 2001).

With these three examples, we see how spatial powers also produce orderings. There are certain “truths,” orders, and conducts produced in education, medicine, or science here – and they also involve orderings of places. Huxley (2008, p. 1646) describes analyses of space in the following way:

these studies do not undertake to provide a “theory of space”, nor a “history of spaces”, nor an analysis of space, place, locality or built forms to be added to other aspects of the study of prisons or discipline. Rather, they “make use of space itself as a critical tool of analysis”... they tease out how space ‘works.’

In the empirical observations of Swedish higher education policies, I have analysed spatial powers, and to begin with, noted a highly spatialized language of “new, open and flexible” spaces.

I also found it important to take the intersection of ideal, metaphorical spaces with places and localizations, into consideration, to reveal and understand how certain spaces became more legitimate and influential. The material raised such questions as: How does the “open, flexible space” of higher education, prescribed in policy, relate to the “university” as a place or to the distributed, IT-based distance education? and What kinds of orders regulate “the open space”?

Moreover, I also paid attention to how subjectivities were formed as a part of these metaphorical uses of open, flexible spaces; “Who” is mobilized through them, and make the powers possible? In one study, I also examined in what way gendering is at work in the construction of distance and higher education spaces.

Hence, I take up Besley and Peters’ (2007, p. 84) invitation of considering contemporary governing powers from the argument that

Nowhere is this more important than in the current debate concerning distance education or education on the Internet for in this most politicised of spaces questions of globalisation, the body and the politics of identity intersect in unexpected and novel ways.

With these kinds of questions raised, I consider spatial powers not only representing and constructing ideal spaces, metaphors, orders and conducts, but also *doing* something “concrete,” in organizing, arranging, calculating, and planning such a space. Even so, it could be argued that it is this constituency, which makes a spatial analysis of powers interesting and worthwhile. My interest, hence is: What do these spatial powers, for example, through the relation of spaces and place, and the gendering of space, produce in terms of differentiations or power asymmetries?

More structurally based research is different in how they conceptualize spatial metaphors as common, political features (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and how metaphors represent positions and controversy. In political struggles for example, spatial resources of different kinds are drawn into the argument and then referring to geographical territories, a certain people, etc. (Chilton, 2004, p. 57). Hence, spatial formations of these kinds constitute certain views and establish orders and alignments of different kinds.

If we compare this to Foucault’s argument (1994, p. 363), it is the productive, regulating, and inscriptive power working together in metaphors,

plans, and calculations, etc., which are of interest from his point of view, rather than what they simply represent.

A well-known example of such an apparatus is Foucault's elaborations of the "Panopticon" (1980), a prison design from 1785 by Jeremy Bentham. The design was to accomplish an effective, more humane and correctional treatment, with prisoners taking care of their own surveillance with an ever (possibly) present, invisible watcher. In a simple sense, it is a metaphorical device for surveillance. It is also something more: an expression of a regulating, spatial power, made possible also through a highly-influential social thought at the time, which make the apparatus powerful and productive. Prisoners should imagine a present surveillance and thereby regulate themselves through the spatial distribution of power.

My material is rich in metaphors of "open, flexible spaces" and adherent ideas of human resources, regional growth, politics of inclusion and access, etc. The way they "group together" and align to different means – for example IT – have made me consider them significant and powerful parts of spatial formations; that is, a discursive formation, ordered by spatializing (ordering) powers of some kind.

Spatial powers thus always refer to and interfere with connotations of "real" geographies, places, and circumstances. On similar grounds, Osborne and Rose (2004), drawing on a post-Foucauldian tradition, suggest that spatial powers could be understood as:

practices of spatializations; "Space" may be a construct, but "spatial relations" must be real enough if they are to be engineered at all. (ibid., p. 212)

Hence, we should regard space as a *relational* concept, for it always intertwines with certain orders, reasonings *in time*, and, very specifically, also with "factual" (not necessarily "real" but a concrete) *place*, as in the Panopticon example made concrete with the prison design. When speaking of place here, it could refer to the positions in the classrooms and other micro-practices exemplified from Foucault, or we could consider the ideal places – desirable places to be, connotations of places and their values. Edwards and Clarke's analyses of people's conceptions of space from British further education colleges (2002, Clarke et al., 2002) exemplified "the campus" as such a preferential place – its enclosure, intellectual spirit, and status – and how it interacts with new ideals of open, flexible spaces for learning.

Space and government

I have already described the shift in Foucauldian thought in the earlier section, and how a certain conceptualization of power is introduced through the aspects of government and governmentality (e.g. Foucault, 1991b). Several authors have picked up and developed Foucault's elaborations of space further from this. With the interest of governmentality in the 1990s and in the English-speaking world, interest has grown in understanding spatial powers and regard space as an aspect of government.

Certain issues in our time could explain the more immediate, empirical interest of Foucault's approach to space and government. According to Huxley (2008, p. 1635), geographic interests early on started to "raise[s] questions about the management of individuals beyond institutional walls."

The political scientists Larner and Walters (2004, p. 5) similarly state that "government of processes beyond or across political borders" has been the focus of their research community and understanding of contemporary society. Larner and Walters describe how this challenged the disciplinary field, used to the domestic "home front" as a point of departure of the analyses and how the spatial focus contributed to open up new grids of intelligibility. With the governmentality approach, they investigate how government operates and focus on issues like, "How to govern when flows of population cannot be contained by the political boundaries of the state?" (ibid., p. 7).

Moreover, Barry's (2001) contributions point to new territories of government in the growth of a technological society. As a part of this, Barry (2006) has given examples of how oil politics produces its own landscape through what he calls "technological zones."

In many ways, these authors are associated with what is called "the spatial turn," seen in the latter part of the twentieth century and affecting large parts of the social sciences. The spatial turn is a counterargument of the long dominating focus of physical geographies and traditional understandings of territories – as invested and guarded by, for example, nation states – to take the cultural, imaginary, or discursive aspects of space more seriously. In doing so, the binaries of geographical thought have been questioned (Agnew, 2005); for example, how space is seen as the global, abstract, and distant, and place as the local, personal, and near (e.g. Lefebvre, 1991). According to Agnew, these constructions have had a great influence on different analytical positions and values. Analyses of space also involve a critique of the dominating linear, causality-oriented research

traditions. These have treated space and geographies more as “frozen containers” and fixed settings, where action and processes take place. The spatial turn gives expression partly to space as a construct and partly, as relative; for example its dynamic interrelation with place, but also with different (political) categories and orderings.

Why educational science is largely excepted (e.g. Usher, 2002; Paechter, 2004; Symes & Gulson, 2007) from the approaches of the spatial turn is sometimes explained by the great emphasis on the temporality of much pedagogical-psychological thinking. Its conceptualizations and theories of development, focusing on knowledge maturity, ages, and progress of learning, stages and attainments, all carry certain temporal claims. Paechter’s (2004) explanation is the relatively fixed identity of spaces and how lecture halls, the educational systems, and similar have been seen as containers of temporal dynamics. From a similar line of argument, Symes and Gulson (2007, p. 8) point to how mainly educational architecture in the 1980s and 1990s has inspired analyses of surveillance and regulation, while dismissing other potential areas for analyzing spatial powers.

Furthermore, the interest of the Foucault-inspired spatial analyses could be explained as an outcome of the newly-published lectures and English translations based on the work between 1975 and 1979 (Foucault, 2003, 2007, 2008; see also Crampton & Elden, 2007). Several of these have dealt with aspects of space and the organizing and politics of space.

In the following, I will present some of these elaborations. Elden (2007), regards the lecture series *Security, territory, population* (Foucault, 2007) as highly important, but also, *The Birth of bio-politics* (Foucault, 2008) and *Society must be defended* (2003). Elden (2007) suggests that there are three important aspects of how Foucault conceptualized spatial and political powers.

The first is how Foucault conceptualized how different forms of powers have made use of different ways to regulate, distribute, and thereby, spatialize society. For example, he discussed powers of security and how political effectiveness should be secured through spatialization. The latter referred to the specific spatial powers of governmentality and governmental management, primarily aiming at the level of populations and working through what he called *spaces of security* (Foucault, 2007, chapter 1). As I see it, with the distinction of “spaces of security,” Foucault makes a more exhaustive inquiry of how “apparatuses of security” (see earlier citation from Foucault, 1991a, p. 102) are operating. That is, if early sovereign powers of the Western world, for example

through a king and his kingdom, mainly worked through the territory and order of the capital as center force, and, the disciplinary, through the architectural enclosure and detailed regulations of nation state bureaucracy, the governmental had yet another: powers “that require[d] the opening up and release of space” (Elden, 2007, p. 30).

The focus of government here emanates from a specific modern societal problem: with more mobile populations, towns growing, and state responsibilities spreading out, to feed and nurture health and prosperity over large territories became a problem for state governments. The main problematic of government thus was how security was to be maintained, where spatial distributed orderings of different kinds became the solutions.

In my own work, I relate to the concept of spaces of security to analyze and theorize about how policies produce certain spatial imaginaries around higher education expansion. The expansion rationalities include a variety of spatial organizations: extensions of space-time flexible and IT-based studies, opening Swedish higher education to the Bologna project, managing the increase in student enrolments, widening participation to “non-academic groups,” and so forth. By constructing and working with three metaphors to name these kinds of spatializations, “Non-places, Market and Transits,” enabling, mobilizing, and activating populations in quite specific ways, I also have seen distinct ways of securing and making the expansion productive in the policies.

Second, and as a part of the powers of “securization,” the problematic of government and the governing of populations is emphasized in Foucault’s work. He refers to the “mechanisms of security-population-government and the opening of the field that is called politics” (Foucault, 2007, p. 76) as his interest, and, according to Elden, especially the two last aspects, population-government, is in focus in Foucault’s work. However, it is not mainly the self-governing or self-technologies Foucault (2007) referred to, but how political powers worked both internally and relative to other spaces (nations) to shape populations.

The third theme concerns the emphasis on political economy and the politics of efficiency, governed through the powers of liberal thought. These powers are, for example, connected to statistical thinking and territorial mappings of populations, through demographics, etc. (see also Legg, 2005). The new material, Elden (2007, p. 32) writes, offers ways of understanding “the relation between governmental practices and territory, how space is rendered subject to mathematical modelling and control, and thought politically.”

Governmental powers do not necessarily need to be cut off from territorial claims and interests within nation-state boundaries. Elden (2007, in Huxley, 2009, p. 1645) discusses the absence of elaborations of the relation of territory-population and proposes that territory should be seen as “more than merely land, but a rendering of the emergent concept of ‘space’ as a political category: owned, distributed, mapped, calculated, bordered, controlled.” This argument is parallel to globalization as a kind of spatial governmentality, which we find in the introduction to Larner and Walters (2004). They raise questions in relation to recent space metaphors and how they help us see the “way in which the world has been named, coded, integrated and divided, appropriated and populated” (ibid., p. 9).

According to Johnson (2006), it is the activity of *emplacement* [in French, *emplacement*] of spatial conceptualizations that was important for Foucault, and how “emplacing” and locating implicates a subject, individual, or population. Hence, these powers of space attach to Foucault’s more general view of power – as situated in practices, and socially productive, producing orderings, exclusions and inclusions, differentiations, and other powerful asymmetries, etc. It makes space inherent in shaping subjects and co-producing populations, as Elden also pointed out in relation to the government of populations.

An important conclusion in the shift of arts, or modes, of government – for securing the spatial growth of modern society and more mobile populations – is that governing came to depend on means that work through reason and individualization, of individuals’ self-government and desires of inclusion, citizenship, liberation, etc. This is one way of describing how governing powers became productive, it shaped and worked through individuals and populations. Thus, this illustrates a shift from territorial government, “belonging inhabitants” and sovereign powers, as well as the disciplinary powers with their specific spatial arrangement and distributed powers; that is, enclosed space embedded in institutions like schools, prisons, and wards, occupying docile and self-adaptive bodies in more encircled spaces.

Moreover, and as pointed out by Philo (1992; see also Johnson, 2006), Foucault emphasized the multiplicity and dispersal of spaces. Philo considers this to be one of the most relevant contributions to a spatial (and poststructural) analytics. As a part of his argument, Philo (1992, p. 211) criticizes how Foucault has been taken up and used. Soja (1989), in particular, is discussed. Soja’s metaphorical use of “postmodern spaces,” its universalistic and totalizing accounts, describing a condition and time, is, according to Philo, too

essentialistic and generally diagnostic. In his argument, Philo (1992) uses and refers to a quote from Foucault, which describes how discursive, spatial formations take shape through dispersion and events or a series of non-linear events, rather than totalities:

A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre – a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape; a general history, on the contrary, would deploy the space of dispersion. (Foucault, 1972, p. 10)

Philo describes “how space works,” how orderings and hierarchies are established, and how totalizing conceptualizations are wrong paths to take. Thus, to characterize *spatial formations* seems to involve at least three considerations, which respond to the discursive formation analysis: firstly, to seek the differences in spatial features (metaphors, emplacements, discourses, rationalities, etc.) and arguments for how they create a formation; secondly, to “map” their temporality or history of significance; and lastly, to see how these elements work together and constitute a spatial formation. This more distinct analytical procedure could make up for some of the problems of too generally “diagnosing the present,” which Philo reminds us of.

If we look at Osborne and Rose (2004) again, we see a similar line of reasoning. They based their spatial analysis on how early survey techniques were operationalized in the social sciences. Osborne and Rose’s research interest is how influential scientists were “mapping” societal problems. This mapping intertwined with a moral order and devotion from the scientists at the time, who wished to improve living conditions, inequalities, etc. In their spatial analysis of this, Osborne and Rose elaborated on spatialization as “modelling” (p. 213):

Practices of modelling concern the modalities according to which space is itself conceived, the ways in which space is distributed within the space of thought, and the array of concepts that divide it up, make relations within it, distinguish and associate points, planes, sectors, and territories. In social thought, an inventory of practices of modelling would attempt to classify the various ways in which space is conceived.

Both Elden and Philo, whom I have referred to here, suggest a particular view of the spatial as dispersed and relational – always produced by an order and interrelation to different power mechanisms. Their Foucauldian position connects to specific political discussions of space. These align to the confrontations of representations of universal or global metaphors of a homogeneous world. Appadurai’s suggestion (1996) of formations of “scapes”

(of ethnoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, ideoscapes) is one example. These “scapes” suggest that we pay attention to our conceptualizations of political powers (cultural, economical, technological, etc.) so that disjuncture and difference could be marked out and problematized. Furthermore, human geographer Massey (1994) challenged monolithic views of global, political spaces. Firstly, she emphasizes space as co-constituted with place, but also dynamic in relation to time.

Place, according to her, has often been associated with the static, the local, and nostalgic; for example, in the connotations of “home.” Therefore, she points to the political dimension of “place” and “space” and its temporal situated-ness, as well as the difficulties of speaking of a global, universal space under formation (Massey, 1994, 2005).

In a general sense, I take her statement that “the way we imagine space has effects” (2005, p. 4) to be important and quite unexplored in relation to my own interest of educational policy, for example in relation to gender and distance education.

How spatial gender orderings are produced discursively has also been a starting point in one of the studies of space in this thesis, illustrating how certain gender-coded spaces were presumed and produced in distance education policies. This was done by considering how specific distance education spaces and environments were perceived in the policies as favoring “women” in need of flexible, time-space independent study forms, preferably conducted off-campus, at a learning centre or at home, and with the help of female-coded communication technologies.

Massey has exerted a strong influence on considerations of the gendering of space; for example, in questioning the “home” as a female place of “care,” “memory,” and fixed identities. Similarly, she questions the domination of a masculine, white, Western discourse, highly influential in space conceptualizations and theories of globalization. Accordingly, Massey (1999b, p. 168) considers that space and place “both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood.” In no ways are space/place to be perceived as apolitical or possible to grasp in universal terms. Spaces (which include places) are produced *by*, and *produce*, gendered orderings. Therefore, with the help of Massey, we can emphasize the relational character of how spatial powers are constituted; for example, through gender orderings.

However, Massey takes her conclusions of spatial powers, quite literally, to have real, direct effects upon women, men, North-South asymmetries, etc.,

which I find hard to combine with the Foucault approach I draw on for this thesis. I base this on her material, (post-)Marxist considerations of space and spatial effects. Notwithstanding, I take her destabilizations of concepts of space/place, as well as gender, to be highly important for my own understanding of the spatial powers involved in Swedish distance and higher education politics during the 1990s and early 2000s.

To sum up this chapter, what has been illustrated here is how Foucault, mainly through his late 1970s lectures, created an interest in conceptualizing and analyzing powers of subjectivation and space. In this work, he often relates to the government of the modern welfare state. In the uptakes and developments of his work, special attention has been directed to how such formations appear and transform societal practices, such as education and educational systems and populations (which I exemplified by Hunter, 1994). These uptakes also include analyses of how educational subjectivities appear and transform, and how certain rationalities and technologies render new or transforming modes of government visible. The present study aligns with these kinds of studies. In the chapter that follows, *Review of research*, I will come back to how studies of governmentality in education have been conducted.

In this chapter, I made comments on my own analytical interests. The purpose of choosing a Foucauldian theory is to be able to shed light on how the contemporary discourses of openness become parts of the problem of government in Swedish policies. Two main analytical interests have evolved.

Firstly, the powers of subjectivation, where the units of analysis have been *bio-politics* and *self-technologies*, that is, powers targeting and regulating populations, individuals as well as individual attributes.

Secondly, I have studied spatial powers through the concepts of *spatial securization*, *gendered spaces*, and *space/place*, which illustrate how spatialization and divisions of spaces are operating and how connotations of place can intersect and produce spatial governing metaphors.

3 REVIEW OF RESEARCH

The review will offer a reading of current research discussions and approaches to distance and higher education, relating to my analytical interest in the government of distance and higher education and issues of access and participation. In my selection of studies, the 1990s and early 2000s European, Nordic, or Swedish analyses of policy and reform have been of particular interest. However, historical and international threads of policy concerns and issues from the research also appear.

The review is structured around two main strands, the first one with a focus on *structural* approaches and the other on *post-structural* approaches. The main difference between these is how they understand the domains of policy and science; what constitute policies, how political issues like educational access and participation relate to policy, and, how these processes relate to the production of scientific knowledge.

My questions are: How are participation and access conceptualized in the literature in question, and how does these research traditions relate to policies and political reform? The aim has also been to problematize the relation between research and policy, even when it is not an explicit question in the research itself. My decision to do so derives from the observation of the assumed and intrinsic values of access and participation to serve aims of democracy, equity, and social “fairness” in much of the research. Or, to put it more bluntly, I have had an interest in the political nature of research and scientific knowledge itself.

The twofold structure connects to two main references. The first one is Teichler’s (1996, 2005) distinction⁷ of dominating research approaches in higher education, where *structural* and *functionalistic* approaches have been highly influential. According to Teichler, some specific research traditions dominate the functionalist-structuralist field of study. One is *comparative* approaches, historically focusing on institutional and legislative patterns, the representation of groups of people (in terms of class, gender, etc.), and by comparing characteristics of nation states and their respective constituencies. Educational science, sociology, and economics make up important parts of the focus on

⁷ Teichler (1996, p. 440-443) describes four groups of knowledge spheres in higher education research. The first one is *quantitative-structural* aspects, the second *knowledge and subject related* aspects, then, *person-or teaching and learning-related* aspects and lastly, aspects of *institution, organization and governance*.

admission criteria, access and representation of higher education participation. These traditions will be referred to in the first part of the review.

In Teichler's (1996) research distinction, questions of government are related to issues of institutions and organizations. Institutional planning, rational choice, management, and resource allocation, etc., have been important features here, according to Teichler, and such disciplines as economics, public administration, law, and political science have contributed. In my review, however, I consider questions of government and governance as broader research interests, and analyses of systems are not only part of structural approaches. I will refer to approaches transgressing the traditional macro-, meso- and micro dimensions, and divisions of systems, institutions, and individuals, in the second part of my review.

This brings me to my second reference, which inspired my approach of structuring the review in two parts (structural-poststructural), and that is a literature review made by Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000). In the review, they problematize how research dealt with what they call the governing of inclusion/exclusion, which relate to the issues of accessibility and participation. Their first example is research that unreflectively takes the problems suggested by policy, like inequality and exclusion of certain groups of people, for creating inclusive solutions (administrative categories like rules of admission, state legislations etc.).

The second example referred to by the authors is what we can call post-structural research, which questions the structural relation of policy-making and research, and shares an interest in how knowledge-power imbues political processes, e.g. how access and participation as liberal ideals are constituted both in policy and research. The knowledge dimension here relies on a Foucauldian understanding of how, for example, categories and structures are imbued with claims of reason and truth, e.g. how discourses of access construct and order how different subjects or subjectivities are able to act on such premises. With such an understanding, it is possible to challenge the distinctions of categories as "women," "low-educated" etc., and emphasize the constructions and implications of such representations.

The second part of the review will exemplify studies that take an interest in the politics of higher education and the social, cultural and intellectual organization of higher education. A common interest is how national, transnational and global politics challenges both the common nation-based, comparative "macro" dimensions and views of governance, and how institutions

take part of such transformations. The examples are drawn mainly from *organizational theory* and *neo-institutionalism* and *Foucault-based analyses of discourse and governmentality*.

As will be shown, a structural approach more often build on a linear and instrumental rationality where scientific conceptualizations and analyses are considered to enhance and improve state planning and policy-making, whereas post-structural approaches assume that science, for example through conceptualizations and problematizations, contributes in shaping political issues of society.

The review should reflect the theoretical underpinnings and research interest in the contemporary Swedish higher education policies, especially with the aim of finding ways to understand the Swedish higher education reforms for a more open, accessible, flexible, and IT-based education. In the final part of the review, I will summarize and argue for some of the main contributions of a Foucauldian approach, which also will be followed up in the final discussion of the thesis.

Structural traditions – Comparative studies of accessibility

The questions of access and participation in higher education research often take their starting point in the expansion of higher education systems and the significant increase of student enrolments since the 1960s.

Certain conceptualizations of the expansion have been widely adopted and recasted, such as Trow's (1974) typology of *elite*, *mass*, and *universal* higher education systems. It describes higher education expansion, generalized from early expansion patterns in the US. Basically, Trow argued that elite systems were those that enrolled up to 15 per cent of the age group, mass systems enrolled between 15 and 40 per cent, and universal systems enrolled more than 40 per cent. Often, the typology of "mass" and "universal" has come to describe the public good of the continuous increase of the volumes of higher education systems, but also to legitimate a more diverse system, containing all steps and forms of higher education – elite, mass, and universal – at the same time.

Trow's numerical expansion typology is still actively used, both in policy and research. In the 1990s, most Western societies were considered to have mass or universal higher education systems. Higher education research often refers this, at least to some extent, to democratization. However, a recurrent discussion

also has shown that the expansion has impoverished quality and diversified higher education, as the expansion has been initiated without accompanying economic adjustments. Altbach (1999) refers to this as "massification," characterized by budget cuts and increased demands for more efficient institutions (leading to a weakening of academic professionals in favor of new managerial staff) and making alternative, technology-based study forms more attractive (making distance education seem promising and cost-effective).

Many European policies have articulated a goal of 50 per cent higher education participation in the recent decade, which responds to Trow's typology. Johansson et al. (2005) have compared the policy goals of "widening participation" in Sweden and England, both with the aim of achieving a more fair and representative higher education. They found many similarities in policy formulations between the countries, but also how they differ in terms of how to accomplish the 50 per cent target by the end of 2010. Their conclusion is that Sweden's restrictive and centralistic admission system – as a part of a welfare model where uniformity constitutes the main principle for a fair social policy – has been a problem in accomplishing a widened and more universal participation. According to Johansson et al., the Swedish system is problematic in at least three ways.

Firstly, it shows too little concern for opening up to individual differences and social or ethnic diversity in admission regulations.

Secondly, it fails to take into account that more people have received the right requirements for higher education admittance.

Thirdly, higher education accessibility has come to rely too much on the individual higher education institution, despite the efforts taken to widen participation in the 1980s and 1990s reforms and the higher education system lacks proper follow-up mechanisms to be able to evaluate the achievements. Although this study questions uniformity as a basis for policy, policy as such or eventual problems of policy "transfer" are not questioned. It put great trust in systematic planning and the possibility of constructing the right dimensionality and admission mechanisms, for example, to cope with difference and to accomplish equity of higher education access and participation.

Kim's (1998) analysis of the 1977 reform, conducted over a period of 20 years, makes similar conclusions. She argues that the centralized and few criteria for admission do not equalize different educational student backgrounds, and, according to Kim, this is a way of dismissing the individuals' rights and possibilities for entering higher education. She has called it a paradox that

Sweden, with its seemingly mass system character, has restricted higher education access at the same time (Kim, 2002).

There are other studies that have focused on how higher education systems correspond to representativity and equity, for example Shuetze and Slowey's (2000) follow-up study of five European countries during the 1980s and 1990s, including Sweden. In the study, the authors make a point of using more extended conceptualizations of higher education participants, as "non-traditional students" and "lifelong learners," responding to Trow's typologies of specific (young) age cohorts to get what they consider to be a deeper understanding of the developments of mass higher education systems. Notwithstanding, their approach and conclusions seem to follow the assumptions of many other studies in the functionalist-structuralist traditions.

Bauer et al. (1999) have analysed the Swedish higher education reform of 1993. They suggest that there is a shift in how market-like mechanisms make questions of equality of access neglected compared to the earlier reform in 1977. With the 1993 decentralized, flexible steering reform of the higher education system, they claim, higher education "was no longer primarily to be used as a tool for societal reform as it was in the 1970s – with efforts to strengthen democracy and improve social class equality – but rather was to stimulate academic excellence, putting quality first" (ibid., p. 254).

As a contrast, Lindensjö's (1981) analysis of the debates before the 1977 Swedish higher education reform illustrates a discernable market thinking also in the 1970s reform. He has shown how the student revolution in 1968 and the questioning of the closure of the academic institution in privileges and directions became a part of the policy processes, but also how a functionalist, market approach gained ground in the policy sphere. Above all, labor market demand and the usability of education increasingly came to set the agenda, and the compensatory politics of access and equality of opportunity, that was to neutralize unequal social conditions, was re-formulated in that direction. From Lindensjö's analysis, it is possible to consider the early integration of higher education in the public, welfare apparatus and adherent functionalist perspectives of Swedish higher education as an early market adjustment, rather than a wholly new occurrence.

There are also comparative, international studies that make use of national characteristics for comparisons. In a study by Usher and Cervenán (2005), comparisons of 13 OECD countries were carried out, including Sweden. Two aspects of accessibility were measured. *Type I access* covered participation and

attainment rates and *type II access* reflected the social background of these populations. The latter category was based partly on “the Education Equality Index”– that is, covering social representativity (i.e. the correspondence with the student population and society as a whole). The other part consisted of gender parity as a measurement. Their result ranks Sweden as number nine – partly explicable by exposing the lowest gender parity figures and partly by being located in the mid range of the other indicator rankings. The Netherlands and Finland were at the top, and Germany, Belgium, and Austria at the bottom.

The question of accessibility from this case could be seen as a part of a more extended form of functionalist, market logic. The study depicts an internationalized higher education system, where the issues of access and participation are continuously shaped by the approach of equity. However, there are elements embedded here, a market logic produced by the competitive elements, which position the individual higher education systems in a “new, global and open market.” The common interpretation of such changes is that the autonomy and trust that marked the relation of higher education institutions and the state (Neave & van Vught, 1991) is profoundly unstable and displaced by quickly shifting economic ideologies (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Henkel, 2000). In the second part, I will illustrate some alternative ways of understanding how market logic operates and how “academic freedom” takes part of this.

Before going into the issue of accessibility in distance education, I will illustrate research that has challenged some of the functionalist-structural approaches to higher education accessibility.

Based on a critical, Bourdieu-based position, Broady, Börjesson, and Palme (2002), have analyzed the 1990s and early 2000s Swedish higher education system by examining the issues of accessibility in terms of interacting fields, determining “who get access to what.” In the research project, they problematized the selective and differentiating processes, taking shape as new groups of students entered higher education. They, asked, for example, what educational programs and higher education institutions the student body was participating in and recruited for. Their conclusions point to a reproduction of power asymmetries between university and university colleges, and high-status and low-status programs and academic disciplines, as well as social and gender imbalances in all of these dimensions. Their analytical focus makes the question of policy and recruitment multifaceted and the possibility of an open, fair, representational higher education system more complicated and complex than most other cases.

Ideals of openness and accessibility in distance and IT-based education

Distance education has occupied a specific position in questions of access and admission in research and policy in Western education policies. Indeed, distance education could be seen as a specific answer to the need of alternative study forms, and as Wallin (2005) has argued, investments in educational technology and distance education form a part of the beliefs in systematic and technologized planning of the educational systems.

Distance education has gone under many names. Two main features have characterized these namings. One is its association and use of technology, as in “correspondence studies,” “e-learning,” etc. Technology and other resources also have been considered crucial for bridging the distance between teachers and students, and geographically and psychologically-pedagogically, between the institution and the individual.

The other feature is how it has been associated with social goals inscribed in terms like “open education,” “flexible learning,” etc. The early British Open University tradition and major emphasis on open access and “education for all” serve as a role model here. Flexible learning, often associated with the early marketization and flexibilization of Australian higher education, rests on similar accessibility goals of creating access through time-space flexibility, despite their different ideological positions.

Distance education’s basis in technology and flexibility in time and/or space for specific groups of people – such as those in need of training, those who live in rural areas, those who have family and work commitments, etc. – has been used as a policy argument for its democratic potential. This is also an argument used in research.

The assumptions of the accessibility made possible via distance education often have been combined with an interest in study behavior and study rates, of which Willén’s (1981) early, and rare, Swedish study is an example. She illustrated the 1970s early distance studies, as a part of the integrative politics, in the 1977 higher education reform.

The hopes of a more fair and open access, associated with distance education, also have been considered an important part of the regionalization of Swedish higher education, e.g. in the 1980s and 1990s established by the local university colleges and local learning centers (Premfors, 1984; Wikhall, 2001). It was a counter-movement to urbanization and stabilized regional growth by

bringing education to the rural populations. The dichotomies of distance education (traditional-alternative, urban-rural) have been ongoing issues in structural discussions and illustrate ways of discussing the problem of equity and more extended enrolments in Swedish education systems.

Willén's study exemplifies how divides in different ways were created in the educational system. Conceptually, one has understood the incorporation of distance education into the higher education system as a dual mode organization, where every higher education institution could offer both distance and campus education. As Willén and others have argued, the conditions, study behaviors, and student population often differ between the two (but not in their achievements).

In a thesis from 2007, Olsson reported on what distinguishes a successful "flexible education" by using the same term and similar assumptions as in the Swedish policies in the 1990s and 2000s. His results showed that such factors as socioeconomic background, gender, and age proved not to be as decisive as the students' own expectations and study behavior for succeeding with academic studies.

This responds to similar conclusions of the research tradition I refer to in this first part of the review. A specific administrative-economical issue historically has been how to avoid so-called drop-outs and to understand and improve students' motivation in distance education. Solutions for improving and maintaining study rates and performance, of accomplishing "active participation," and involving students through "guided didactic conversation" (Holmberg, 1983) through new communicative technologies and so forth also have been important parts of how the theories of teaching and learning dimension of distance education has supported such solutions.

Evans, Haughey, and Murphy (2008, p. 17), as editors of the *The International Handbook of Distance Education*, discuss how the last 30 years of distance education have been framed within the discourse of access, but also how it seems to be superseded by lifelong learning discourses and new ways of launching flexible admission, active participation, and self-autonomy. By re-reading some of the most common distance education theories, they show how the beliefs and ideas around distance education and lifelong learning have contributed to such shifts. However, accountability, leadership, and "the business of distance education" constitute three of the six sections of the book and highlight that functionalist and economist perspectives of distance education still make up important parts of the research.

In the selected collection from a decade of influential European conferences on distance education and e-learning, entitled *Distance and e-learning in transition* (Tait, Vidal, Bernath, & Szucz, 2009), Guri-Rosenblit (2009) introduces some of the issues at stake for distance education. Despite the fact that she starts by stating the historical democratic goal of distance education that offers alternative study paths (see also Guri-Rosenblit, 2005), her main point is the blurred or vanishing boundaries of “traditional” and distance education, including the ones often mentioned in regard to contemporary higher education, e.g. internationalization, new private-public relations, the use of digital technology, etc. The main premise of this conference selection seems to be the creation of economies-of-scale, and a general contribution to a more effective, accountable practice of distance education.

The domains of policy-making and research are highly intertwined in distance education. Indeed, the boundary is sometimes hard to distinguish, as the research and evaluative contributions often has been conducted on state agency initiative, and through in-house experience and evaluative work in the universities (Richardson, 2000).

Similarly, recent networks and conferences closely relate to political decisions and suggestions on open and distance education, e-learning activities, etc., for example in EU⁸ spheres. From such spheres, researchers (de Freitas & Oliver, 2005; Conole, Smith, & White, 2007) have focused on in what sense policies on IT-based learning could drive institutional change and serve the new purposes of education. With these approaches, one engages in the appropriateness of different policy tactics for fulfilling ideas of a more open and expansive access or facilitating and enhancing processes of learning. Influential research traditions here are the ones regarding IT and learning as enablers of new and innovative modes for education, often based in transdisciplinary fields of information science, educational and computer science, and similar. Most often they are involved in analyses of whether IT-mediated learning exposes new communicative conditions and whether learning is organized and achieved effectively, making use of interactivity, learners’ competences and self-regulated learning, for example, or not.

⁸ Examples are *The European Open and Distance Learning Liaison Committee* (www.odl-liaison.org/) and *European Distance E-learning Network* (www.eden-online.org/), see also Tait et al. (2009).

The openness debate

A specific discussion in research on distance education has problematized the notions of “openness” in distance education; also the terms associated with open and distance education, have been debated. Often, it has concerned a critique of technical and institutionalized perspectives of open access and participation to instead suggest, by metaphysical descriptions, the enabling of “open minds” and the needs of free-minded individuals.

Harris (1987) has analyzed the British Open University, known for its open access and study modes, by arguing that it also has an opposite side, characterized by closure and restraints with negative effects for the students. Similarly, Rumble (1989, p. 34), in the journal *Open learning*, wrote that “institutions which claim to be open-learning-systems” simultaneously “may develop structures and artefacts that results in a closing of doors and minds.”

Evans and Nation (1989) participate in the debate when they call the character open learning can take “instructional instrumentalism.” Even though educational institutions are required to open their structures and practices to the needs of students and governments, the authors state, concepts for opening learning, and later terms such as “flexible learning,” become too narrow because they often deal with matters of access and delivery in ways that are too instrumental, controlled by the institution. In a later book, *Opening education* (Evans & Nation, 1996, p. 176), “this problem,” they state;

has not receded, but arguably can now be receded in terms of the globalisation of education, especially through the use and critical understanding of new computer and communications technologies.

Compared to the debate over flexibility, which in some sense takes over the issue of openness described here, there is a more explicit critique of marketization and market logic and ideology, being brought into distance and higher education as a cause of limiting educational opportunity.

Critical analyses of IT accessibility

The critical analyses of how IT is suggested to improve equality of access often base their argument on the discrepancy of rhetoric vis-à-vis reality and of the unequal distributions of IT resources and use, inspired by critical theory. Selwyn and Gorard (2003) have examined the hopes of IT-based education for

accomplishing widened participation and are critical about the “technical fix” in the problematic posed and what the the volumes of participation actually tell:

ICT can go *some* way to altering patterns of participation in education for *some* individuals, but should on no account be assumed to be a ready means towards “universal access” and the “radical improvement” of participation rates...We know that socio-economic status, educational background, gender, and age are currently the major determinants of participation in post-compulsory education. (ibid., p. 178-179)

According to their view, structural determinants more than IT determine educational accessibility and participation. There are other critical interventions pointing to how IT is supposed to abolish or transform inequalities in education. Carr-Chellman (2005, p. 5), for example, states that

the open access justification for online education programs is based on the concept that everyone can gain equitable access to those resources which are offered online.

However, from a global perspective, she argues, there are inequalities of equipment, infrastructure, basic electricity supply, and so on, which make a democratic (global) IT accessibility, via the Internet, overstated.

Another critical position here, is to regard a more open and accessible IT use as a way of resisting economic powers, where the instrumentalism and commercialization imbues IT provision and policy (Selwyn, 2007). Selwyn states:

the political privileging of ICT skills as a positional good both for national economic competitiveness and individual graduate “employability” has inevitably led to an approach to ICTs in terms of learning “about” computer technology rather than “through” computer technology. (ibid., p. 85)

Selwyn’s suggestion is a wider and empowering IT use (for example, through alternatives to the dominant PC/Microsoft use and management systems intended for private businesses, towards more extended, non-competitive open access networks and software, etc.), which could also alter the current politics of IT in higher education.

Burbules et al. (2006) make a similar contribution to the discussion of equity of access through IT-based education and possible counter-positions. Their argument is that the IT discussion has been too narrow and that it should be seen as something far more than a matter of a “digital divide” between those who have access and those who do not. They state their case by bringing in

counterarguments from pragmatics of how IT “actually is used.” Burbules et al. regard the structural explanations of the digital divide discussion and presumptions as questionable and base their critique on six arguments (ibid., p. 96-97).

The first three concern the “divide” and “gap” metaphors themselves, which, according to the authors, make the issue of access too narrow. This also includes reducing access to mean only “technical access;” thus they see it as problematic that “equal access” is considered to be possible and natural to distribute via IT.

Furthermore, they bring up the neglect of a nuanced understanding of what IT-based participation could mean and suggest alternative, more value-sensitive accounts that go beyond the question of “IT-use.” They show how it often is presumed that IT access is something good and illustrate examples of the opposite.

Lastly, they discuss the lack of understanding of these problems as a societal, local, and global dynamics at the same time, and above all, as highly political issues hovering between “good intention and unintended consequences.”

To sum up the first part, the studies I have referred to, are examples of how the shape and dimensionality of Western higher education systems since around the 1960s have been highly important focuses in policy as well as in research, which Teichler (1988, p. 96) also has suggested. The research has adopted the policy problems and focused on the right balance of dimension and volumes, of breadth or depth in education offerings in relation to democratic goals or labor market needs. Thus, there is certain viewpoint of faith nurtured in many of the functional-structuralist approaches that the right mechanisms and indicators produced by the research instruments could accomplish a representative distribution of higher education. A basic idea here is that with a more expanded and fair higher education admission, predefined in terms of class, gender, socio-economic groups, etc., an uneven, non-representative recruitment could be counteracted. Similarly, policy in a quite linear way is trusted to accomplish the aims of accessibility and participation in many of the examples of research.

Hence, the assumption here is that a representative system has a direct and “true” relation between a democratic access and participation. As a part of this, the success and performance become structural and “technical” design questions, and the binary or constructions of a dual mode organization or

division of active participants and the issue of non- or low- participation themselves, seldom become problems in these approaches.

Interestingly, similar starting points could be used from different ideological approaches, from Marxist to economic-managerial approaches, seeking the representative higher education system, and using similar ways of describing “access,” e.g. to societal participation and personal development, or to have access to the labor market. Presumably, issues of access and admission are also of interest in making the mass higher education systems legitimate and adjusted to fit to such purposes.

However, there are also explicit concerns in the research approaches to reduce causal relations of system access and participation, e.g. by incorporating how students or academic staff respond to or are affected by change and policy reform.

Notwithstanding, quantitative-structural approaches have informed much of the research with questions of relevant admissions requirements, participation rates, and the composition of the student body, based on the belief that a fair, democratic system is a possible and ultimate end.

I will now turn to the other section of the review and give examples of post-structural approaches.

Post-structural traditions – Regulations and transformations of higher education

In the second part of this review, I will refer to research traditions that problematize and explore how the regulation and organization of higher education systems, institutions, and similarly relate to society, culture and knowledge. To exemplify, the question of accessibility, participation and expansion become interesting due to its historical and contemporary influence, its knowledge claims, and how it regulates systems, institutions, individuals, knowledge, etc. Thus, they share an interest in how knowledge and research contingently are shaped both by academical and political circumstances. As a part of this, scientific concepts and theories are regarded as productive and taking part in shaping and organizing politics of higher education and its relation to society.

The tradition also point to the problems of considering change as forced onto higher education from the outside, simply as effects or consequences. Instead, changes in higher education, nation-based public systems or academic

fields, as scholars contend, need a more situated or simultaneous “macro” and “micro” approach.

Firstly, I will refer to some general contributions from higher education researchers. After that, two main traditions will be described.

One, the *neo-institutional perspectives*, empirically focusing on the interrelations of institutional and cultural characteristics and macro-structures. Scholars have, for example, studied the changing relations of higher education institutions and the nation state (Huisman, Maassen & Neave, 2001). For example, how “the European university” (Olsen & Maassen, 2007a) is formed by competitive features in newly established intra-institutional and supranational co-operations, such as the Bologna project.

As a specific part here, scholars from the *Scandinavian institutionalism* have examined higher education transformations, for example how new global standards for comparisons and evaluations of higher education are spread (Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson, & Wedlin, 2006).

Secondly, *Foucault-based studies of discourse and governmentality* sharing the interest in how government in a wide sense relates to higher education transformations, mainly by paying attention to how policies shape rules of reasonings and prescribe ways of organizing education. They look at, for example, how certain imaginaries of new or emerging societies, such as the “Learning society” (Masschelein et al., 2007) or “Knowledge society” (Peters, 2009) also inscribe ideas of certain desirable subjectivities, activities, and similar.

From this short presentation, we see how these studies share an interest in how newly established technologies and rationalities of government, especially market-like thinking, are affecting higher education and its knowledge formations, institutions, students, etc.

Massification and internationalization as part of societal transformations

Partly as a response to the structuralist-functionalist approach and its close bonds to national characteristics and policy-making, higher education researcher Scott (1995) has located “mass higher education” in a wider context. By doing so, he also questions the single, linear use of Trow’s typology for understanding mass higher education as a uniform and linear process. “Instead,” he writes, “it has plural meanings, being one of a series of multiple modernizations – of society, economy, culture and science as well as academy” (ibid., p. 158)

Delanty (2003, p. 78), as part of a discussion of the contradictions of the ideals of the "Knowledge society" between the forces of postmodernism and neoliberal third way rationalities, argues that "mass higher education has not necessarily led to a democratisation of higher education" and that there are tensions between demands of widened participation and managerialism, especially in terms of how "inclusion" is used and how it is far from producing "equality."

Scott (1998b), similarly to Delanty (2001), Becher and Trowler (2001), considers the developments of mass higher education as part of a broader, societal change, affecting knowledge dimensions and the academic world in different ways, to re-shape, modernize, and open up to a globalizing world. Scott (1998b, p. 122) writes;

all universities are subject to the same processes of globalization – partly as objects, victims even, of these processes, but partly as subjects or key agents of globalization.

According to Scott (1998a), the local, nationally state-based institutions have made up the ground of most higher education systems in modern times, and as its knowledge production is to be increasingly opened up, it is to achieve internationalization. "Globalization," on the other hand, Scott argues, "has other incentives and is inescapably bound up with the emergence of a knowledge society that trades in symbolic goods, worldwide brands, images-as-commodities and scientific know-how" (Scott, 1998b, p. 127). Scott thus distinguishes between a difference of values of knowledge in changes towards internationalization and globalization. However, he also states that both are characterized by market transformations, mutually shaped and governed by the institutions, countries, and academics themselves.

A number of other higher education researchers, for example Slaughter and Leslie (1997, see also Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004), have made similar contributions to how higher education is regulated and self-organizes to adapt to managerial techniques, efficiency and quality controls, and other market-like technologies, for example, to compete and recruit "the best" students. A common conclusion here is that the market logic will articulate what knowledge, values, and so on, are the most sound, and that academics can resist these through other knowledge ideals, academic freedom, etc. As Bargh et al. (1996, p. 3) put it, "in the 1990s it is no longer possible, therefore, to regard the government of higher education institutions as settled, and uncontroversial

matter.” Are there other ways of understanding and conceptualizing change and reform in higher education than mainly in terms of contestation and contradiction?

Homogenization and Europeanization of higher education

As concluded by Meyer and colleagues (Schofer & Meyer, 2005; Frank & Meyer, 2007), a deep homogeneity distinguishes the changes of the organization and purposes of higher education worldwide in the post-war era, not least in the regularities and significant expansion waves and student enrolments. From a neo-institutionalist position, these studies explain the similarities of values and institutional changes of government, with the drift and imitation of ideas globally. The ideas of expanding the higher education systems actualized today also connect to certain political strivings, highly visible after the Second World War. Thus, Meyer and his colleagues’ understanding of these changes, as outcomes of a global, rationalist world system homogenizing the higher education systems and their beliefs, is in agreement with similar observations in this tradition.

Based on European higher education occurrences, Olsen & Maassen (2007b) focus on how “European integration” as a homogenizing force and a European ideal are affecting higher education institutions. They see a significant change in perspective that higher education no longer should be a concern only of domestic matters and national economy, but regulated through European goals of incorporation, coordination, and increased efficiency:

However, recently it has become more common to emphasize the need for a European perspective on universities as university governance has become embedded in a variety of organized settings beyond the territorial state. There are trans-national, intergovernmental and supranational processes of cooperation and policy-making and new actors, issues, solutions, resources and modes of governance have been introduced. The Commission, in particular, has claimed that a dynamic knowledge-based economy (and society) requires modernization of the European University. (Olsen & Maassen, 2007b, p. 6)

There are also analyses of specific academic fields, as higher management education and Master of Business Administration, MBA programs, as early examples of homogenization within higher education systems (Mazza, Sahlin-Andersson, & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2005). Hedmo, Sahlin-Andersson and Wedlin (2006, p. 24) describe these fields as “forerunners” in establishing

competitiveness through international rankings of higher education institutions and education programs.

Frank and Gabler (2006) have studied the latest century's knowledge expansion of higher education in terms of how the academic fields and topics have expanded but also contracted and re-configured over the latest century. They explain the transformations in terms of cultural shifts in the academic world and changed conceptions of reality, rather than adaptations from an outside demand.

Aamodt and Kyvik (2005) has made an interesting Nordic comparison of the questions of accessibility and how Sweden, especially, early on established a reformed higher education politics through an integrating and homogenizing policy work. In the 1977 reform, a new, integrated system, called *högskola* in Swedish (see also Teichler, 1988, p. 47-50) was planned. With a more homogenized system, Swedish higher education for the first time was to be regulated by a joint higher education ordinance, nationally established agencies, and goals of educational programs. The reform was preceded by an influential post-war social engineering and welfare modelling of the educational systems. The idea reported in Swedish policies, was to utilize "the reserve of talents" [*begåvningsreserven*] (Husén, 1946; ME, 1958; see also Husén & Härnqvist, 2000) to serve "man-power planning."

As a part of re-shaping Swedish higher education, the naming of "higher education" itself constitutes a part of the "mass" character and integrative politics. Much of the post-war, Westerns reforms illustrate a systematic work of assembling "vocational," "adult education" in a coherent organization and under such titles as "tertiary," "post-secondary" education and similar. Aamodt and Kyvik (2005) also stress the significance of the conceptualization of "higher education," which not should be considered as uncontested or homogeneous. From my perspective, these authors confirm the contingency and construction of higher education as a system, created and embedded in certain socio-political occurrences.

Governmentality analyses of historical and political powers

Several policy analyses, many of them from a Foucault-based position (Nóvoa & Lawn, 2002; Enders, 2004; Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Rizvi, 2006; Simons, 2007; Dale, 2009; Popkewitz & Rizvi, 2009) have taken up a

discussion of the challenges of conducting policy analysis when “the national” is increasingly embedded in European or global education policies and politics. They see government stretching over the boundaries of the educational institutions and public sector (e.g. Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004; Dale, 2009; Popkewitz & Rizvi, 2009). These discussions make visible how policies and ideas “travel” and are embedded within wider policy fields.

From the 1990s on, there has emerged a growing field of research using the concept of governmentality (Foucault, 1991b) to analyze how governing rationalities are used and produced both by policy and science. The approach differs from the earlier ones described in the second part here, as it takes interest in the discursive dimension of government. The research community is closely connected and concentrated into quite a few institutions in Europe and North America (e.g. in the US, Belgium-Germany, and Sweden-Finland-Denmark), which the recent decade’s publications also illustrate (Baker and Heyning, 2004; Popkewitz et al. 2006; Besley & Peters, 2007; Peters & Besley, 2007; Masschelein et al., 2007; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Peters et al., 2009). The analyses share a research interest in how contemporary forms of government operate, contingently take shape, and align with or detach from historical formations or distinct socio-political discourses. Hence, the governmentalities of higher education is approached by historicizing or analyzing the political aspects of how government operate.

I will exemplify these kinds of studies with how they have approached five issues, of relevance for my distance and higher education research focus; comparability, educational rights, subjectivation, spatial powers and lastly, IT.

The critique of comparability

Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003, p. 436), from a Foucauldian position, have taken the sciences of structural and comparative education research as a focus of interest and problematized the implications of how categories like “facts, events, countries, systems” are used and made comparable. They suggest that such categories should be seen as a mode of government, which regulates and homogenizes education in particular ways. They especially discuss how comparability as a regulatory ideal has a relation and close affinity to policy-making historically and how it has intensified in the present time. They suggest that it might be more appropriate to compare “the history of problems” to destabilize the structural and unproblematized conceptions of “systems.”

They follow an interesting line of argument on aspects of space and time, specifically, how educational systems are presumed to be fixed and comparable, which they find questionable. Their conclusions of how technologies of comparison operate, as in creations of systems and categories, could be considered as important aspects of how education has been made governable and open for shifting policies of accessibility. Hence, what is interesting for these authors are the similarities and comparisons of what are considered to be problems, in short, what has recurrently become the object of reform and issues in education policies.

A growing research interest in governmentality studies concern new modes for comparing educational systems. Recent examples are the “Open Method of Coordination” (OMC), the so-called “stock-taking reports” of the EU, and university “bench-marking.”

Walters and Haahr (2005) have analyzed comparability regimes through OMC used in the EU, where countries report on their achievements of the EU goals in an “open” and “voluntary” form. The aim of government is to achieve what is inscribed as an integrated and competitive European education space and the OMC becomes a technique, for example, in monitoring countries and setting self-government to work. Walters and Haahr also discuss the usefulness of considering “governance” instead of “government” for understanding “a wider field of power relations” seen today (ibid., p. 117). However, they question whether a shift is the most appropriate way of understanding the rationalities of these transformations. Instead of a change of governing techniques, as is often stated by the OMC, they stress the continuities of liberal, welfare state thinking with today’s government and, they write:

The various ways in which governance under the welfare state, even though it may have been bureaucratic and technocratic, was still, in important respects, *liberal* governance. (ibid., p. 117-118)

A liberal, “open” government, exemplified through the OMC, interestingly could constitute a joint, but also internally more or less self-organizing, EU space. The EU nations, working at a distance and on the level of relating to others by self-report and self-improvement, thereby govern themselves.

Krejsler, Olsson, and Petersson (2010) have made similar conclusions. In a current research project, they make use of the EU’s stock-taking reports to analyze how Nordic higher education reports and positions itself through these processes, and how a European dimension of education is constituted.

Analyses of liberal and neo-liberal powers and subjectivation

Governmentality studies, in line with post-poststructuralist “manners,” aim to destabilize notions and presumptions, for example, of the “rights” and “liberties” of education. The critical readings of the discourses of lifelong learning are examples of this. Several authors (Edwards, 2002; Fejes, 2006; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008), have shown how discourses of lifelong learning inscribe and foster governable and educable individual subjectivities. This fosters a subjectivity that takes the responsibility for his or her own learning in a language of rights and duties, and in all aspects of life, where liberal and disciplinary powers are mutually reinforced. Especially, aspects of self-government and of making subjects constantly self-responsible have been widely acknowledged and problematized as significant, shifting modes of powers of learning.

Simons and Masschelein (2008) argue that today’s “grammar” and assembled government of “learning” have connected education to society in novel ways and reshaped educational practices. They argue that the liberal powers stated with learning discourses have disconnected the normalizing powers of social, participatory education by instead fostering an individualized, self-governed subject. This self-government and the ability of a subject to involve in learning, is conditioned with subjects seeing themselves as “free”:

We want to stress once again at this point that looking at learning and the liberation of our learning (from the state, from institutions, from the dominance of the teacher, from the impact of economy, and so on) as a condition for our freedom and autonomy implies that we forget that this learning and the way in which we conceive it are from the very beginning both effect and instrument of the current governmental regime. (ibid., p. 413)

Powers of liberation and freedom thus presuppose the forming of a learning governmentality, according to the authors, and “learning” is a part of a governing regime.

In studies of governmentality in educational science, scholars have also observed shifts towards neoliberal rationalities, often by referring to Rose (1999) and his discussion of learning regimes and self-government as an aspect of a contemporary advanced or neoliberal rule. Besley and Peters (2007, p. 133) define these kinds of neoliberal powers “as an intensification of an economy of moral regulation.” These shifts refer to rationalities and technologies of “markets,” “flexible choice,” and entrepreneurial government, where liberty and freedom to access and participate in learning constitute part of the government.

Several authors (e.g. Peters, 2005; Simons & Masschelein, 2009) have also discussed “entrepreneurial selves” as an important subjectivation taking part in such transformations. A specific governmentality noted here is that a democratic citizenship and welfare is to be accomplished through market-like establishments and relations with individualized offers and choices, which produce what Peters (2005, p. 131) calls “citizen-consumers:”

in making consumer choices concerning education as a service, individual consumers in effect become actuaries who must calculate the risks of their own self-investments.

Fejes (2008) also studied European dimensions in the early 2000s, based on Swedish and EU Bologna policies on higher education. His analytical focus was on how the European government above all operates by constructing a specific ideal European citizen who is to be flexible and self-regulating as part of a neoliberal governmentality. Fejes points to the double government, which occurs as certain subjectivities are to be included and others simultaneously are excluded and denied.

Nóvoa (2002, p. 139) has shown how mid-1990s EU policies on lifelong learning formed an important breakpoint in constituting a European education policy dimension and subject. The “restructuring of the European education space,” in Nóvoa’s words (2000, p. 45-46), especially promoted and inscribed a specific European dimension in education by shaping an ideal, educational participation. As a part of this, employability, flexibility, and generic competences were highly emphasized. However, his suggestion of “space” here, is not further developed or related to the governing of participation. Notwithstanding, the efforts and arguments to increase educational participation, via the rhetoric of a new European citizenship, according to Nóvoa (2000, p. 46), was striking in how it was made practicable:

The increasing rhetoric of *participation* must be seen as strategy followed by different states to adopt new regulations and to regain control over the reformation process.

There are also contributions to the changing public role of higher education. Simons’ (2007) results point to how the hybrid character of what we understand as a Western university, and how views of its moral and civic duties and its public role, have been produced by certain “intellectual technologies,” firstly, the principled milieu (with the persona of the academic as critical intellectual), and

secondly the governmental milieu (with the persona of the state official or governmental expert). Simons' main contribution is that he does not presume "academic autonomy," the self-organizing academic or university, or the "renaissance of the university" are new configurations, but rather, that they are emphasized in new ways.

Talburtt (2005) makes similar points. She has elaborated on how US faculty staff at public research universities increasingly are involved in self-governing practices. Rather than, as she claims, taking the common outlook on higher education government as "crisis," "assaults on structure and function," or problems of funding and competing values of higher education (ibid., p. 460) as a point of departure, Talburtt examines how higher education institutions become part of an adaptable and more open environment through self-government. The examples of how the public American research university responds to and takes responsibility for its accountability and success, she argues, makes it especially vulnerable and exposed to shifts of market values.

Two Swedish studies, one on the university dean's councils (Bjuremark, 2002) and one on doctoral education reform in the late 1990s (Haraldsson, 2010), have come to similar conclusions, and show how strong managerial technologies are advocated and place higher education staff and doctoral students in a performative mode of government to serve the competence needs of society and academia.

Scholars like McLeod (2001, 2003) and Ringrose (2007) have discussed gender and feminist approaches in relation to governmentality. According to McLeod (2001), feminist arguments for gender equality and women's rights could be seen as problematic as it is essentializing "women" by claiming "women's differences" and "needs." Furthermore, she sees it as a problem, that they are paired with neoliberal government and that the propositions and positive notions of flexibility, choice, and individualism are used as feminist positions. Ringrose (2007), in a similar way, has discussed today's differentiated feminist field and the problem of bringing in an aprioritized subjectivity of "women" and "women's rights" from the "post"-perspectives. Therefore, she suggests that feminism and women's rights also must be seen as part of governmental powers, where feminism helps constitute liberal, empowering rationalities of educational participation. Others, like Davies (2000, p. 180), claim that a poststructuralist, feminist approach could contribute in important ways to destabilizing powers of subjectivation and "its opening up of possibilities for undermining the inevitability of particular oppressive forms of subjection."

These studies point to the relation between subjectivation and politics (of feminism), which is interesting and complicated. How can we discuss the implications of certain politics, how are the politics of access, and gendering, for example, affecting higher education? How can we question the essentialism of women as a category and point to gender power asymmetries – possibly affecting men and women, or rather female and male subjectivities – in a reasonable way? Clearly, how the categories of women are constituted needs to be questioned along with other aspects.

The approach chosen in this study examines in what ways gendering is at work when matters of access and participation are called attention to by policies, for example, “to favour women,” and “create equal gender opportunities,” etc. The discourses produced could then be discussed in terms of gender power asymmetries and, for example, delimitations of how “women” (and “men”) are directed to certain spaces of higher education, and thereby restricted and excluded from others.

Spatial governmentality

Based on an analysis of New Zealand’s higher education, Lerner and Le Heron (2005, for a methodological elaboration on the case, see 2002) have shown new calculative technologies, such as benchmarking, where “New Zealand universities are being positioned, and, are positioning themselves, in the neo-liberalizing, and increasingly globalizing, spaces of university education” (2005, p. 844). Interestingly, they make use of a spatial analytics to depict higher education government and suggest that their higher education has been characterized by three phases of spatialization, differing in terms of scope and economic rationalities: the first, based on the nation-state and colonial rationality; the second, by managerialism and massification; and the third, by rationalities of performativity. Hypothetically, and while rejecting the possibility of comparing the different phases, they ask,

What system is better; the low-cost system of the post-war period that had skewed access and, limited options, or the higher-cost system of recent years with more open access, broader curriculum choices, and better funding (albeit supported by student loans)? However, a longer-term perspective might encourage us to reframe these questions. The university is an institution that has successfully reinvented itself in the past (most recently as a nationbuilding institution). Today, it is clearly undergoing another transformation as it becomes part of a globalizing

education system. If the future will be different, how will the university be performed? By whom and towards what ends? What spaces and subjectivities will be constituted? (ibid., p. 859)

What Larner and Le Heron's discussion highlights is that events of higher education policy are ongoing and in process and that the present neoliberalization probably will be transformed or displayed by other powerful configurations. They also show that these are highly political issues. That is, they intervene in questions of access and participation, which are hard to discuss or judge from a universal, ahistorical, and non-situated outlook. Even if we discuss homogeneous transformations, are there still local differences in how the policies produce space and spatial orderings?

Several globalization theorists, both from a more "traditional" political science outlook on state government, like Held and McGrew (2002, see also Sassen, 2005), as well as from the "alternative" Foucauldian-based approaches of government, such as Walters (2004; Larner & Walters, 2004; Walters & Haahr, 2005), connect current changes to a destabilized state government over territories and geopolitics to new patterns and spaces of government rendered visible. These authors share certain conclusions (even if they differ in considering globalization as "real" or discursive). Opposed to other conceptualizations of globalization, they consider it problematic to regard globalizing processes as universal and apolitical, or de-territorializing and "placeless." What is suggested is rather the opposite, a disjunctive globalization (Appadurai, 1991). Above all, they see a new economic imperative imbuing these processes, creations of markets and market mechanisms, and new territories of government.

Studies of IT as part of government

In the book *Political machines* (2001), Barry argues that new territories of government appeared with an increasingly technologized society. He conceptualizes the "technological society" by referring to a "specific set of attitudes towards the political present which have acquired a particular contemporary intensity, salience and form" (ibid., p. 3). In his introduction, he refers to an event with former EU commissioner Edith Cresson in late 1990s, which renders visible the problems at stake concerning education, technology, and politics. Barry particularly refers to how technology increasingly shapes the problems (and solutions) of government. For example, he shows how the

understanding of a technological society is used metaphorically as a model for political intervention in the EU through networking, interaction, and self-organization (see also Barry & Walters, 2003). Hence, the EU as a spatial metaphor operates as a technology and “political machine.” As part of these developments, Barry also see changed modes of subjectivation where “a feature of concern of technical skills, capacities and knowledge of the individual citizen” come to the fore, and he discuss the potential of interactive environments for democratic participation, e.g. through the example of new museum environments. He includes a digression on the problems of mainly regarding these powers as democratic and liberating; his discussion, however, would have gained a destabilization of “active participation” and “interactive learning environments.”

If we refer to Barry’s contribution to aspects of government in relation to distance education and its contemporary relatives (open, flexible, IT-based learning or e-learning), we can observe that the critical and political discussions of technology are few in the governmentality literature. More specified aspects of how powers are involved with IT or IT-based education are quite rare in this field. However, they are regarded as important signifiers of strategic and managerial infrastructures as higher education is increasingly neoliberalized (e.g. Olssen & Peters, 2005). Edwards and Usher (2003; 2007 chapter 8; Edwards, 2004) also made some contributions, and, for example, pursue a discussion about possible ways of regarding new technologies based, however, on rather general suggestions of a new (potential) connectivity and new forms of literacy and knowledge (Usher & Edwards, 2007, chapter 8). They also refer to Barry’s (ibid., p. 78) example of the learning environments of museums and suggest that the interactive museum practice must be understood as more dynamic and could also be labelled and understood as disciplinary (as well as liberal). Lee (2009) has made interesting historical analyses of correspondence studies. Based on conference material, he concludes that the ideals of “mass-individualization,” as a mix of disciplinary and liberative powers, carry certain assumptions of technology that constitute the early study form, but also has bearing upon the present education forms.

Edwards and Nicoll, in different constellations, made policy analyses and situated “flexible learning” in societal discourses of flexibility (Nicoll, 1998; Nicoll, 2006) and how they operate in educational practices through migrating metaphors (Edwards, Nicoll, & Tait, 1999). In relation to distance, flexible, or IT-based education, these authors also made similar observations of how certain

educational ideals have imbued the study forms, from more egalitarian to more neoliberal ones. What their studies illustrate is that distance education should not be considered an effect or consequence of an outside context or need, or a stable, universal tradition of offering access and widened higher education participation, but an integrated part of discursive shifts and new or renewed governing rationalities.

Furthermore, the debate on openness has been taken up. Peters and Britz (2008) and Peters (2009) have argued that the actualization of openness, as a kind of catchword of our time (as in “open access,” “open learning,” “open education,” etc.), relate to the government of a new social and knowledge-based production, which is rendered possible via IT. According to Peters (2009, p. 203), we should consider the concern of openness, the ways it has recently been related to education and a new knowledge accessibility, and its social, participatory dimension, as connecting also to “deeper registers that refer more widely to government (“open government”), society (“open society”), economy (“open economy”).” Thus, this is a way of approaching government and the discourses of openness in higher education and its relation to societal, democratic, and economical reasoning, which I have found inspiring in assembling my case concerning Swedish policies since the 1990s. I will return to this in my last chapter and discussion.

Conclusion

Based on the review here, we can get a more manifold and deep understanding of the demands of “opening higher education” in Swedish policies to favor a new accessibility and participation. Clearly, the problematization of Swedish higher education should be seen in the light of wider changes. The contemporary higher education, similarly to other public institutions, but also in its specific position as an instance of learning and “knowledge production” in society, undergoes transformations and re-configurations in the 1980s, 90s and onwards – at least, this is suggested in the European and North American literature I mainly have referred to here.

These transformations are associated with shifts that include the re-organization of social, institutional practices, the knowledge production of higher education; and how dominant discourses influence and are picked up in higher education. The transformations pave the way for new types of analyses of

government, challenging or complementing the traditionally structural-functionalistic approaches on the issue of access and participation.

Based on the review here, what could be the specific contribution of a Foucauldian theoretical framework to recent transformations of higher education? I will refer to four conclusions I draw from the examples of the second part of the review, which mark some of my most important analytical interests.

To start with, the approach offers an alternative perspective of the government, and the re-orientation of higher education beyond a state-driven policy outlook and functional-structural understandings, by taking *governmentality* as an analytical focus into serious consideration. It renders visible interrelated historical and political powers – new, or rather, renewed forms of government taken shape in policies – which seem relevant from the contemporary discourses of openness I pay attention to in my work.

As Dean (2010, p. 20) has argued, he sees the main contribution of the approach in “the way it provides a language and a framework for thinking about the linkages between questions of government, authority and politics, and questions of identity, self and person.” Thus, it could be argued that the approach offers new ways of approaching concepts, rationally held beliefs, for example, the assemblage of separate discursive elements and macro and micro powers of recent Swedish higher education government (the rationalities of expansion, aspects of spatial imaginaries, individualizing technologies, gendering, etc.)

Secondly, and especially interesting, is the *discourses* made visible in the concepts and terms, for example, “flexible learning,” inscribed in higher education reforms, and how they play a productive role in signifying change, modernization, improvements, democratization, etc. If these political catchwords in different ways represent a turn, for example in the question of higher education government, are important to understand better, also because of the relatively few studies of distance and higher education government.

Thirdly, a dominating feature of the research is the observations of *neoliberal governmentality* and a new economic politics being produced, suggesting that the views of the economic benefits and competitiveness of higher education often supersede others. However, there are also liberal powers and rationalities of higher education in circulation – as a wide, “public good,” open for all, which we should pay attention to. Examples of such liberal rationalities are

individualization, women's emancipation and access to higher education via distance education, etc.

Lastly, several scholars make visible the importance of examining how different policy fields are intertwined and governed in contemporary education, for example, national, European or IT-mediated spheres. Due to the politicization of space, the spatial imaginaries and metaphors at the time period of interest, *a spatial approach of power* might explicate aspects of government. Few studies in educational science and based on a governmentality approach have been carried out here.

These four aspects have informed a large part of my separate studies and in the next chapter on *Methodological considerations*, I will present and reflect on the work carried out, the empirical material, and how it has been approached.

4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I will here describe my approach to analyzing policies. The purpose is to illustrate and give an account of the principles, conditions, and challenges of my research process – what I understand as methodological considerations. The chapter consists of two parts.

Firstly, I will describe the analytical process through what I have called *Locating–Selecting–Assembling*. *To locate* here means both to identify and characterize the empirical material and to define the work theoretically and through questions. It also includes locating myself in the work. *Selecting* is about creating a kind of internal consistency in the choice of focus and material, and finally, *Assembling* is to be able to see things together and discuss overall results.

Moreover, I have chosen to account for the procedural work of selecting the policy material in the last section.

Locating

What characterizes policies? How is it relevant to study policies in order to analyze discourses? To begin with, the policies I have studied are Swedish, text-based, public documents of various kinds: products of missionary work, proposals, policy replies, and re-formulated proposals of the Swedish parliamentary process, but also state agency and IT management proposals. These documents to a large amount share a certain legitimacy; the missionary work or bills could be described as “authoritative documents” or “primary sources” because of their legal status, influence in different instances, and societal role in coordinating organizations and goals, etc. Some also motivate their choice of documents when conducting governmentality analyses based on such considerations (see for example Walters & Haahr, 2005).

There are other approaches and critiques of such choices; for example, that they neglect non-parliamentary material (Larner, 2000) and societies and rationalities that are not Western and liberal-democratic (Ong, 2006). Moreover, some traditions of discourse analyses also refer to material as “naturally-occurring” as a legitimating feature, and depending on the concept of text it could cover everything from human conversations to media communications, in some sense, claiming to be objective as the text is “untouched” by the researcher and the situation.

Taken together, these different uses of texts as empirical material for analyzing discourses share an interest in motivating the choice of material through the status of the texts. However, the different explanations also constitute a dividing line of how one regards the empirical material. As Gale (2001, p. 383) put it,

[it] raises epistemological and ontological questions about the activity of research: that is, is data on policy “out there” to be found or do researchers produce it?

I incline to the opinion of policies as authoritative material to be a relevant description of much of my policy material. However, equally important is that they are chosen and assembled from a research position and based on analytical considerations, what Gale refers to as produced by the researcher.

I also consider the official documents I have chosen as parts of contemporary narratives of society and ways of thinking of higher education. With the approach to discourse in my work, the methodological question is not a “pure” methodology in the sense that it is detached from the outer world and only concerns “methods” and “techniques of data gathering.” Rather, methodological choices are a part of the theoretical and analytical approach, the purpose of which is to bring new insights, interrelations, and circumstances to a familiar case or issue, as, in my example, concerning higher education. This implies a certain view of knowledge, where the importance of language for constituting social practices and our understanding of them is at the forefront. As a part of this, systematic analyses of the politics of representations, are a central part of understanding aspects of contemporary society, shaped by discourses and in the process of change.

What, then, characterizes and conditions policy texts and their production? As exemplified before, practices of policy-making are characterized both by some continuous and discontinuous features. In general, policy texts are characterized by being processed and rewritten, and assembling different fields of politics within a certain institutional apparatus, which in turn give them a procedural legitimacy. It is not the policy apparatus itself I am interested in here, but the texts produced through these conditions.

Another feature of policy texts is their commonly non-controversial suggestions and writings. They operate within a certain level of abstraction and dense form of text production, which is characteristic of “the genre.” Therefore, there is a need to understand the dynamics of policy production and how policies take part in a certain time of societal, educational occurrences, and its

contradictions, but also how the authority and legitimacy is established in and around them, rather than being given.

The Swedish policies in the 1990s illustrate some particular changes (with a new medialization, digitization of material, short-term work, expertise, internationalization, etc.), which influenced my case, in terms of my analytical and practical work. It is a common notion that the policies volumes and preparatory work have increased and that it has become commonplace to have one expert – bureaucrat or scientist – instead of larger committees. Hultqvist (2004, p. 174) has observed how the use of individual authors, writing in their own name and opinion has become more common for Swedish education policies in post-war time. Similarly, policy expertise is not delimited to scientific positions and knowledge, but speaks for example through citizen needs, demands and lobbies (Yeatman, 2007). As Lindensjö and Lundgren (2000) describe it, Swedish policies have lost some of its status. Such transformations could be seen as part of wider public sector re-modelling.

Since around the 1980s and onwards, hearings and expert committees more often replace the traditional, representational and more long-term Swedish policy-making process. The long preceding missionary work from 1968 until 1973 (ME, 1973) before the 1977 higher education reform is for example a telling example of earlier conditions. Policy and committee members are presumed to present results and solutions in shorter time periods and often based on urgent and evidence-based answers. Media events and web-based documentation are the most commonplace public information channels.

One of my experiences of “Locating” was based on my first observations of the 1990s Swedish policies, mainly in education policies (but also in policies on, for example, budget proposals, IT, regional politics, and adult education). Distance and higher education policies in similar ways were stating the importance of a new accessibility to higher education. I asked; In what ways are distance and higher education becoming a target of government? What was at stake in the policies? What were the conditions made visible in them and that allowed for these discourses? The phase of locating the issues I refer to here was necessary to address my case in a reasonable way both empirically and theoretically while connecting it to previous research.

Firstly, it seemed reasonable to give further details about what I intended to produce and look for. The theories and concepts to be used could not be regarded as value-neutral “objects” (Taylor et al., 1997, p. 18), but rather put to work by me as a researcher with the aim of contributing to a discussion in some

way. As a part of this, I saw that the policy issues and present problems and solutions stated, were not given, or one-sided issues, but drew together a number of arguments and contradictory reasonings.

In an early phase of my work, I elaborated on two different but related post-structural approaches of discursive and political dimensions of policies. One would account for the contingent, contested, and more short-term political and discursive elements and uncertainty in struggles for dominance (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), while a second took into account educational issues re-actualized in the present and how different discursive elements (rationalities, technologies, etc.) actually worked together, which refer to a Foucauldian discourse approach. Laclau and Mouffe's discourse approach made possible a fine-grained conceptual apparatus. One particular notion that has followed my analytical work is the use of regarding the temporary fixations of discursive formations, and, for example, a certain politics, as constituted by "nodal points" with Laclau and Mouffe's terminology as mentioned earlier.

However, I saw the possibilities of theoretically-conceptually relating the issues of higher education access and participation to a Foucauldian understanding of discursive formations and government, as I considered the issue a "classic" educational issue more interesting to pick up than the hegemonic struggles and antagonistic positions of the issues and separate discourses (presumably economical, democratical, academical, etc.). The use of Foucault in education, especially in its English-speaking and sociological branches, also shared a tradition of using policies as empirical material to examine educational practices that I found valuable to connect to. Thus, I considered it possible to conceptualize how policy issues were a part of discourses taking part of government, for example, how certain rationalities and technologies of "openness" targeted and regulated distance and higher education systems, individuals etc.

Secondly, I started to find a way of contributing to the discussion of accessibility and participation. What kind of critical analysis could I accomplish? As Simons, Olssen, and Peters (2009) discuss in their introduction to the policy methodology book *Re-reading education policy* – what kind of critical attitude and ethos would my study draw on? How could I re-read the policies and bring new insights to the Swedish case? What was the Swedish occurrences part of or examples of? Compared to Laclau and Mouffe's approach, or rather, Mouffe's research position (more than Laclau, according to Wenman, 2003), which put a strong emphasis on revealing antagonistic and pluralistic features of discourses

for contributing to a democratic argument, the Foucauldian approach, on the other hand, is not a position used as strongly prescriptive. To be critical in a Foucauldian sense is to analyze the conditions of a discourse to appear or make detailed analyses of how power is exercised, regulating, and operating.

However, the notion of the intrinsic relations of power and knowledge makes the research position highly accountable, both in producing discourses and re-producing political reasonings. This implies that the research position unambiguously has a political dimension: To analyze and show how politics are constituted or dissolved, as well as to destabilize presumptions and unquestioned “truths” as part of such politics. In a more implicit sense, it aims to contribute to, re-read, and thereby refine and nuance common-sensical beliefs of policies.

In what ways has educational science made use of Foucault’s political endeavors? To take an example, Petersson, Olsson, and Popkewitz (2007, p. 55) have cited Foucault to make an argument about their political contributions through analyzing policies.

The work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others; it is, through the analysis that he [sic] does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and starting from this re-problematization (where he occupies his specific profession as an intellectual) to participate in the formation of a political will (where he has his role as a citizen to play). (Foucault, 1989, p. 305-306)

What they do in this article is draw together such usually disparate fields as teacher education, public health, and criminal justice to “diagnose” how learning discourses contingently govern the present (either through recalling a nostalgic past or through a future associated with risks) and foster the populations of these fields. Their strategy is to contest these contingent arrangements and point to possible re-articulations of the present, or in their words,

to disturb the groundwork that makes the present possible is a form of resistance that potentially makes possible other alternatives (Petersson, Olsson & Popkewitz, 2007, p. 55)

The ethical position they allude to aims to de-naturalize and de-stabilize as a part of rejecting “truths” in these fields. I regard my own position and participation in higher education also as a position from which resistance and critique should be practiced by elucidatory analyses and illustrations. There is no possibility of “stepping out” of present-day higher education discourses. I take part in

practices of educational science, teaching, and learning and contribute to their ongoing “operations” as a researcher, teacher, university employee, citizen, etc. However, to account for my involvement and purposes is probably the most just way of claiming one’s research integrity.

How could one understand the embeddedness of Foucauldian studies in educational science, for example, affecting the type of analyses conducted and claims made? Baker (2007) has made an interesting contribution to these questions in the journal *Foucault Studies*. Her argument is that the sometimes grammatical form Foucault-based studies have taken lately is partly a reaction to ideals of educational sciences, rather than Foucauldian theories. The regimes of educational science obstruct Foucault-inspired studies in certain ways and create norms of “the right uses” of Foucault.

Education has a long history of scientizing theoretical frameworks, standardizing their parameters, and moralizing their uptake, and this sets the limits for resistance within the field. (ibid., p. 18)

These features, according to Baker, have contributed to the fact that the post-structural turn coming out of Foucault-based studies of education for example is a paradoxical dismissal of structural descriptions and elements, at the same time emphasizing systematic work and theoretical contributions. Moreover, rather than problematizing the ethical position of research and education, it is neglected or neutralized. Thus, taken together, what forms and delimits what is possible to research and criticize in “educational Foucault studies” is imbued with a kind of value neutral position being fostered.

The political nature of my case made it interesting as I saw it, but it also made me aware that the way of approaching these issues is delimited by my being a part of the practice of what Baker describes as the prescriptive uses of Foucault in educational science.

Notwithstanding, in my work process I have found that the newly-stated arguments of access and participation aligned to important political and recurrent issues of education, as equity of opportunity in higher education and specific ways of responding to such issues in policy. I started to examine what the present government targeted, who was addressed as a participant; for example, if there were discussions about access, what was it distance and higher education should accomplish? What was to be considered new or re-newed in the “new language” of openness? Distance education seemed to be especially untouchable as a common and public good, as I found in my research. As a part

of this, I started to trace *where* and *when* in the different policies one related to flexibility, openness, and so forth (and I will present this thorough work and the studies resulting from these processes in the last part of this chapter). Furthermore, I started to analyze significances of the discourses, which lead us to the next phase, of "Selecting."

Selecting

The next work phase was about selecting, in terms of scope, choice of texts and excerpts, and analytical focuses. I created more specified questions, as stated in my Aim and purpose section; How are individuals, populations and spatialities being formed and differentiated, especially via self-organizing features of government? What subjectivating and spatial powers are operating as parts of such government?

At this time in my analysis, I had access to a number of policies that I read by, for example, focusing on how organizings and orderings of systems, institutions populations and so forth were established; how the relations of higher education, society and individuals were suggested to change; what rationalities were made visible; etc. I also looked for formulations and meanings ascribed to flexibility, openness, and mobility as part of these searches. Each policy was described separately, including notes on important passages and citations, and then categorized, first in temporal clusters and through mapping significant breakpoints and time periods, (e.g. how terms like distance to flexible education changed and were introduced), and then in more content-related clusters (e.g. how the importance of IT was emphasized, or how regional politics was expressed). This was a way of finding patterns and coherences in the overall material. These clusters were used, modified, and re-arranged throughout my working process, and in relation to my different ideas of analytical approaches in the separate studies.

The interest of the specific time period, the 1990s and early 2000s, was based on some particular shifts in government in the mid-1990s, with the 1993 reform and the distance education reform initiative. As a part of this, I first decided to particularly address aspects of subjectivation, in terms of individualization (e.g. the citizens' new needs of individualized learning opportunities) and self-regulation, illustrated in the notions of self-regulated learning and learning systems in the policies.

Secondly, I observed how a certain language of space and new “geographies” (e.g. an extended and expanding higher education area and IT space) played a significant part of government.

At this moment I had decided to focus on higher education in a general sense, not going into discussions of educational levels (basic, advanced, post-secondary, doctoral, etc.), specific educational programs or sciences, or policies on research or other education forms (although they are highly intertwined in these discussions). I had observed that the European dimensions through for example lifelong learning (EC, 1995, 1997), the Bologna project (EC, 1999) and e-learning policies (EC, 2000) were represented and highly influential in the Swedish policies. First, I considered integrating European policies in the study, but confined myself to reading some of them closely. Rather, as the European politics were embedded in the Swedish policy material I was able to make analyses of how the national and transnational government operated.

There are, of course, a lot of questions discussed concerning distance and higher education in the 1990s and 2000s that are not visible throughout my studies, but many of them are incorporated into my overall work (e.g. aspects of higher education volumes and resources, the new regional university colleges, reforming teaching and learning, IT and distance education, internationalization, Bologna, gender equality, and students’ social and legal rights).

After this, I started to choose different ways of turning analytical interests and focus into separate and distinct studies, and I decided that those discourses that I had found significant here in terms of powers of subjectivity and space – expansion, flexibilization, and personalization – should form the outline. This implied that other themes and ways of approaching the issues were excluded. For example, mobility could have been such a focus, but is only briefly touched upon. Similarly, diversity is another theme of importance at the time, however, based on my empirical material I have not found it significant, but disregarded (and I will come back to this in my final discussion). Thus, the four studies share a thematic, but are also chosen to be different by focusing on the governing of systems and populations (study 1 and 2), and institutions and individuals (study 3 and 4).

Four studies make up the body of my thesis (two of these are on flexibility and spatial powers, including one on gender, one on expansion, and one on personalization). With these, I have taken up some of the more significant dimensions of the issues of access and participation at the time, which span different aspects (the rationalities of higher education expansion, the gendering

of distance education, the spatial politics of flexibility, and personalized, IT-based learning). These reflect different aspects of the case I wish to address here, and share some features of interrelating what we could call micro and macro powers.

There are certain weaknesses when trying to assemble a complexity of discursive elements and formations. Shifts and ruptures tend to be less visible, in favor of the composite and broad illustrations. Based on the slow transformations of discourses and reasonings of most Foucault-based analyses (see also Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 34), these analyses could be criticized for not being distinct enough, represented in too-sweeping gestures, and being too coherent, as the contradictory is framed within discursive formations of government. At the same time, my own analysis could be criticized for not being more historicizing and including policies from a longer post-war period. This would probably have made my conclusions more distinct on matters of eventual ruptures or significant shifts of government. Moreover, I have prioritized the analytical, argumentative, and narrative order, rather than representing whole policy areas and separate reforms.

Furthermore, the studies have somewhat different characters, partly depending on the conditions of the doctoral work and publication opportunities. One is, for example, addressed to a Swedish popular science audience (Bergviken Rensfeldt, 2009) and one is co-authored for an international gender and IT publication (Bergviken Rensfeldt & Riomar, 2010), based on my empirical material and observations. The first study on expansion is intended for a British-English policy analysis audience and the other on personalization for an American-English journal on IT-based learning, which influenced my analytical scope and language use.

How, then, was what was found and connected to be interpreted and represented? Basically, there was no linear process of approach or “data collection,” followed by a choice of theoretical concepts, but a simultaneous empirical and conceptual work process. This means that I moved in and out of the empirical material, based on what I found reasonable and what represented “powerful orderings,” which I wanted to argue and develop in the studies.

Even though the research process could be considered systematic, it is more fair to describe it as a constant and changeable process, where one sharpens and redirects one’s analytical interests on the way. In the end, this does not mean, however, that all arguments are equally valid.

Several contributions to methodological issues of discourse analysis (Howarth, 2005; Neumann, 2001) argue that this kind of discourse analysis must be internally consistent. In my case, preferably a satisfactory number of policies should point in the same direction, to strengthen and “prove” the case and “problem of government.” To make distinctions in time, policy domains, issues, and specific citations etc., is a part of this, as I see it.

Furthermore, the case preferably should be sound and relevant to a wide practice of expertise. One important way has been to present and demonstrate the tentative analyses in seminars and conferences. The analysis should also provide some new insights on “the familiar” and contribute to open up what has been temporally agreed and fixed.

There were quite a few extracted citations from the policies. Most of them I also had access to in digital form and could search and re-read. I have considered some of the policies as more innovative or important, as they contribute to produce visionary or encompassing discourses in higher education. These are represented in my work by being more used and referred to in the analyses carried out. Some of the most important citations were translated into English to be included in the separate studies, and the more central ones also became block citations in the separate studies. The translations from Swedish to English are, therefore, my own, and the scope and selection made are based on my interpretations and conclusions and their transferral into English. It probably would have been possible to come to other conclusions, based on other selections and details of the language; however, I believe that my aim of internal consistency and overall coherence in the material negates some of these problems.

When one conducts policy analyses, separate extracted citations and episodic representations, form the basis of the analyses. My process of writing is also characterized by being narratively constructed. In my re-presentations of the policies and their content, as well as the different positions of research in my review, for example, I make use of citations and passages by creating a narrative. As Czarniawska argues (2004, p. 117) when writing scientific texts, we *emplot* narratives; that is, we employ narratives with “plots” and events that are expressive and described as connected, to suit our theoretical purposes and stories, and in order to convince and make research comprehensible and meaningful to others (and ourselves).

I also recognized certain other problems as I worked; for example, how certain terms appeared both as theoretical conceptualizations and in policy

citations (for example, government). I have tried to be specific when using and representing the empirical and analytical features in the studies, and, for example, explain and mark the analytical use of *government* (in italics), and the other uses in terms of precise uses, i.e. the Government, state government, sometimes also by referring to the Swedish Government in references, etc.

The language of policies and my own is not so different, either (compared to, for example, talk or other text genres). I have tried to have some strategies in the analysis, for example, using block citations, followed by my interpretations, and to illustrate the complexity of a discursive formation in details and locations of policies and citations. Nonetheless, certain weaknesses come with this process of working and sometimes make it tricky to make the studies readable and distinct. In general, there seem to be few elaborations of such methodological considerations in these fields.

Assembling

Lastly, a specific phase of the work has been characterized by assembling the experiences and analyses of the discursive formations by asking what did they produce and render visible as new or shifting modes of government. One of my research questions also was, based on the analyses made; What is revealed about discursive shift and governmentalities?

This is where the introductory chapter of the thesis comes in. I have seen it as an opportunity to regard the disparate studies together and make a further analysis of my observations, both in introducing the Swedish case and in providing a discussion. What I mainly could give expression to was the period of interest, 1992 to 2005. However, in relation to earlier research and some historical policy references in the studies, I considered it reasonable to refer the analyses of the discursive dimension to a question of a wider re-configuration of higher education in my final discussion, placed in chapter 6 of the thesis. At this point, I had conducted all of the separate studies, although two were still unpublished manuscripts.

The procedural work of selecting empirical material

I will here describe what I selected from the Swedish policies. All the policies that I refer to and used as empirical material are listed in the *Appendix* of the thesis.

In the work carried out for selecting and making thorough readings of distinct policies, I approached the policies on distance education and higher education somewhat differently. Few analyses had been done on Swedish distance education policies, so I considered distance education policy-making needed a more thorough examination.

I first read all the commissary documents from the 1990s and early on decided the final proposals in 1998 to be most important (ME, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c), suggesting a new organization and conceptualization of flexible studies, and IT-based and flexible education. This left the earlier documents on for example TV and education (ME, 1995, 1997) out of my material.

I then went into the Commissions of Distance education's work through the 24 volumes in the National archives to get a picture of the discussions and problems at stake. I made observations of a considerable "lobby," including interests from regional politics, popular and adult education, and (mainly) university colleges and a small group of academics involved in the policy-making process. I also was in contact with three of the latter to get more information. Through the archive material, I noted how one connected to, for example, adult education reform as *A strategy for the knowledge society* (ME, 1996) and the IT commission (working between 1994-2004) and their policies suggesting a widened IT use (Government bill, 1996). In 2005, there was a new IT-policy, *From an IT policy for society to a policy for the information society* (Government bill, 2005), which, similarly to the former, made higher education (as well as other areas of education) one of the targets of a new IT politics. I also refer to this policydocument in one of my studies.

A similar observation from the archive work on distance education was that higher education received much attention for being a problem and main target of reform. Distance education was still considered "a strange bird," as the Distance education commission at one point expressed it, and financial incentives were considered necessary to make it more successful. The Commission also had a large project to manage and evaluate (reported in ME, 1998a) where distance and IT-based learning for different educational forms (e.g. adult, popular and higher education) were launched.

I went back and read and reflected on the present policies by looking at the earlier ones from 1962, 1975 and 1992 (ME, 1962, 1975, 1992a; National board on higher education [UHÄ], 1992). Some of these also were referred to in the separate studies for casting light on the continuous interests and discontinuous aspects of the matter of accessibility throughout time.

Moreover, I decided that the policy replies from higher education institutions, including some agencies, to the 1998 Commission proposals (38 in all) should be a part of my empirical analyses to get a picture of how the issues were responded to in these instances. For pragmatic reasons, I have referred to these and constructed them as one volume; ME, 1998a. In the policy replies used and referred to in my analyses, I have regarded these as more or less coherent discussions and arguments of the policy-making process, as the consensus was very strong in them. However, I refer to the institution when using direct citations, not least since these show how different universities and university colleges position themselves as “flexible learning institutions” and similar.

As a part of observing the policy discussions and understanding the discursive formations of the policies, I followed the work of the manifold agencies, networks, and distance education consortia and their missions, which helped me get a picture of the political shifts in the processes after 1998; for example, the regionally strategic importance of where agencies should be located and how different agencies were established and closed down during a short period of time.

I noted how the aims and missions of Netuniversity changed (proposed in the Government bill, 2002) to support the IT-based, flexible education, provide a national web and network platform, initiate collaborations for supporting IT-based distance courses in higher education institutions, and, later on, manage and coordinate the huge issue of widened participation between universities. I also refer to some of the reports on the Netuniversity work on widened participation from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (hereafter SNAHE, 2004, 2005a, 2005b) in my studies.

Moreover, the Netuniversity report (2005) on a collaborative project to define standard criteria for IT course management has been a central part of my analyses of personalization. As previously mentioned, several evaluations of the Netuniversity were carried out by SNAHE and were generally very positive about the outcomes of the achievements of widened participation. In addition to this, I used policies from 2000 and 2001 on quality management and student influence (Government bill, 2000), and one suggesting pedagogical and technological innovation in higher education, *New conditions for learning in higher education* (ME, 2001).

The Government bill in 2002, in the English translation entitled *Reforms in Higher Education – A more open system*, integrated the proposals of a more flexible

education, while at the same time suggesting a wider access and participation politics for higher education. This was the start for me to examine the recent higher education policy field. I decided not to include detailed studies on the policy-making process around these, for example, new ways of reinforcing policy aims through the special committees on recruitment, regional cooperation in higher education, or policy replies to specific proposals. Rather, main empirical material included Government official reports (SOU) and bills, and their suggestions of a “new” politics of access and participation, as well as how they were connected in aims and strivings.

For example, the Commission on resources established in 2004 (ME, 2005) problematized the expansion of the system and the 1993 reform (ME, 1992b; Government bill, 1993a, 1993b) on how state resources should be distributed within the system and higher education institutions. Based on the significance of the 1993 reform in the matter of accessibility, these were included in my material. I also delimited my material to the early 1990s at this point and based it on an understanding of a decisive breakpoint; for example, the intertextual references made in the present policies.

My empirical material on higher education from 2004 and 2005 represents the endpoint of my case. This is also a point in time, which both could be considered a time of closure and openings and new starting points. The question of internationalization is brought to the fore in the bill called *New world – new higher education* (Government Bill, 2005) and to some extents it represents a shift in the way Swedish higher education is discussed.

In the following, the two remaining chapters of Part 1 of the thesis are presented, the *Summary on the studies* and my discussion of the results.

5 SUMMARY OF THE STUDIES

Four studies have been carried out in this thesis and have been reported on in four separate contributions. The different contributions should account for the discursive dimensions of openness taking part in the government of distance and higher education.

Firstly, higher education *expansion*, and secondly, two different contributions to *flexibility*: one on gender and “flexible distance education,” and one on the conceptual shift from distance education to “flexible learning.” Lastly, I studied the individualized modes of learning suggested in policy through *personalization* and “personalized learning.”

These contributions provide different insights into the issue of interest here, and in the following, I will summarize the focus and main findings of the four studies. After that, they will be synthesized and discussed in Chapter 6.

Study 1 Securing higher education expansion: “Non-places,” “Markets” and “Transits” as a new spatial politics

This study⁹ concerns the rationalities of expansion and the contemporary policy strivings of increasing higher education participation by examining its *spatial powers*. Swedish policies between 1992 and 2005 make up the empirical material and are also partly reflected in the 1977 reform. The questions raised are: *What kinds of spatially regulating powers are involved to accomplish higher education expansion? What spaces or spatial imaginaries are deployed – what signifies them and the governing of higher education expansion?*

The study problematizes the highly “spatialized language” of opening higher education; of extending space-time, flexible education and enabling transnational, European student mobility, etc. In different ways, the politics naturalize the expansion of higher education systems – of student volumes, wider and representative participation, a 50 per cent goal of participation, and an alignment to the European higher education area – as a parallel expansion of more democratic education opportunities. The analysis shows how the spatial politics operates by securing an expanding higher education through certain *spatialities*, and more specifically, in calculating on *spaces of security* (Foucault, 2007,

⁹ Manuscript, submitted.

p. 11, 20). These spatialities also take part in the government of and through populations.

In the analysis, I have constructed and elaborated on the spatial politics in three distinct spatial metaphors: *Non-places*, *Markets*, and *Transits*. My argument is that the three formations represent a spatial politics, which intervene in the organizing and calculations of higher education systems and participants and thereby also produce certain orderings. As a part of these spatial powers, there is a shift of scale in the expansion politics. The securing and ordering of higher education spaces is at work in: the *Non-place* configuration, by securing a deterritorialized and extended space of participation, enabled by infrastructural, IT-mediated means and space-time flexibility; the *Market space*, by making expansion operate through market offers and choice, knowledge flow and competitive, transnational powers; and the *Transit*, in activating a goal-operating politics of participation through the 50 per cent target and interventions to mobilize and prepare “non-participants” for higher education.

Two decisive spatial orderings should be pointed out. One is how the expansion politics is manifold, differentiated, and acts upon populations in different ways, which renders power asymmetries visible. In that sense, these spatial powers intersect in the possibilities of having access and being able to participate in higher education. Second, the neoliberal, relational powers of the formations create centers and peripheries. Often, this is played out in an ethico-political register of dichotomized values – of we versus them, flexible and inflexible conduct, good and bad universities, of subjects being responsible and participating actively or not. The relational, economical powers also involve a fabrication of strategic places. Thus, the open, flexible higher education is still produced relative to a territory and place, where Swedish, regional, or European assets, populations, and higher education institutions are to remain central forces.

The mix of democratic and (neo-)liberal rationalities should be questioned as exclusions, and relational, hierarchical powers render power asymmetries of access and participation visible. For example, *the Non-place* is open for an expanding higher education system; with more higher education participants and offerings at the same cost, it should neutralize the burdens of campus expansion by de-territorializing higher education. Moreover, the shared European *Market space* would not necessarily violate the traditions of the territorial logic of nations, but however, with the solidarity with them outside the Market space, i.e. the non-EU members of Europe or “the non-competitive,” those who are not

comparable or movable in any shared space. *The Transit* space calibrates participants as “educationless” and “disadvantaged” to prepare for academic studies through different supporting measures: preparatory years, motivational efforts, centers for academic writing, and customized courses. These are activated, but also responsible for their own “active participation” to be included in higher education and, in the meantime, they are allocated to a marginal, temporary space – a *Transit*.

Securing higher education expansion is linked to recurrent features of the expansion argument; the spatial widening as a securing democratic movement is reused from earlier policies, such as the 1977 reform. However, the self-organizable, self-extended spaces produced reconfigure the expansion politics. The spatialities mainly draw together arguments for inclusion, protection, and self-activation as features of such a government. The geographically neutralized and differentiated spaces produced stress that we use an understanding of spaces where geographical inhabitation is not the main point, but participants’ affiliation to spaces (see also Nóvoa, 2002, p. 139). What is at stake in the Swedish example is thus a governing aiming to strengthen a widely educated and individualized population, off-campus, regionally, trans-nationally, etc.

It is concluded that these expansion rationalities are a re-activated postwar welfare politics, which nurture higher education participation and activate different participatory, “open” spaces to secure expansion. What is new are the shifts of scale in terms of self-organization and self-association which, produce a heterogeneous expansion and make the Swedish policy case an example of a regional, European, and global spatial politics.

Study 2 Gendered distance education spaces: “Keeping women in place”?

The potential for widening access and enhancing learning opportunities through “flexible distance education” is here approached in terms of gender.¹⁰ Specifically, the issue of more equal gender education opportunities through flexible distance education is problematized.

¹⁰ Published as Bergviken Rensfeldt, A. & Riomar, S. (2010). Gendered distance education spaces: “Keeping women in place”? In S. Booth, S. Goodman, & G. Kirkup (Eds.). *Gender issues in learning and working with information technology: Social constructs and cultural contexts* (pp. 192-208). Hershey, New York: IGI Global.

The Swedish policies on distance education in 1998 put a heavy emphasis on the benefits for women to be able to participate in higher education with the possibilities of the open, flexible, and liberating features of distance education. Women were, for example, considered to have commitments to work, family, children, and the home, and in need of flexibility for undertaking education. With their inherent communicative skills and interests, women were also regarded as having good prospects of succeeding with IT-based, flexible learning. Distance education was seen to be place-independent, flexible in time, and openly accessible with the help of IT, local learning center facilities and similar.

The study problematizes the gendered orderings of such policy claims and the gender power asymmetries rendered visible. The issue is approached in terms of a spatial gender ordering and how flexible distance education becomes a *gendered space*; that is, how discursive spaces, such as the open, flexible spaces associated with distance education, are formed by a gender ordering and make the flexible education suggested in policy a female space.

Theoretically, the study draws on Butler's (1990) uptake of Foucault's conceptualization of discourses in producing and maintaining gender orderings. The spatial approach relates to Massey's (1994) work on the intersection of space, place, and gender, with the difference that a discursive, Foucault-based understanding of power is used.

The questions posed are: *In what senses could distance education be regarded as a gendered space?* and *What gender power asymmetries are produced?*

Three commissioned policies (Ministry of Education, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) form the basis of the empirical material. These are also seen in relation to other Swedish education policies (ME, 1962; Swedish Government Bill, 2002, 2005) dealing with issues of distance and higher education reform both in historical and contemporary times.

The study is organized around three analytical focuses: first, the continuities and discontinuities of gendered spaces, where we discuss "female" flexible learning in relation to "male" correspondence study. We stress how the gendered features of flexible distance education in the 1990s, as a highly economized and effective IT-based space, is strongly associated with the female gender and an intended, flexible labor, in contrast to the masculine gendered correspondence study and a high-status, prospective professional in the policy in the 1960s. We also discuss gendered technology use and how women are essentialized and constructed as certain kinds of learners (communicative, non-technical, etc).

Second, we analyze academic spaces and problematic power and access in a differentiated university. We provide insights into the gender power asymmetries and aspects of place, mainly the campus as a privileged place, and how it can exclude the female flexible learning population.

Lastly, we try challenging the notion of “home” as a private, female place for learning, and the domestication of such spatial orderings, but also the possible opportunities of IT-mediated societal participation.

Taken together, the analysis shows how distance education policy is shaped by a spatial politics, heavily informed by the idea of an equality of opportunity for women and men to have access to higher education. In the notions of flexible distance education, however, traditional female and male positions are re-produced.

Significantly, quite different reasonings of flexible, IT-based education are drawn together in the policies; on the one hand, the transparent, de-politicized and gender-neutral, and on the other hand, woman-friendly and a predominantly female endeavor.

The classic, structural question of “who gets access to what” is elaborated on, and how a spatially restrictive educational access and only some educational alternatives seem to be possible and “open” to a female population. It is concluded that the gendered flexible learning spaces are characterized by enclosure and restrictions that risk “keeping women in place,” and thus need to be questioned and challenged by feminist readings.

Study 3 (Information) Technologies of the Self: Personalization as a mode of subjectivation and knowledge production

“Personalized learning” and “personalization” have been actualized by the interrelated body of policy, research, and IT provisions. A common argument for personalization (e.g. EU, 2007) is that it responds to the demand of re-organizing and customizing public and educational services to serve the individual citizen with a new, more open, and democratic accessibility. This study¹¹ pays attention to how personalization and personalized learning are inscribed in Swedish policies on distance and higher education policies (ME, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2001; Government bill, 2002), how higher education

¹¹ Manuscript, submitted.

institutions replied to some of the suggestions (ME, 1998d), and the proposals of IT management from the Agency of the Netuniversity (2005).

The purpose of the study is to problematize how liberal, positive, and self-involving features of personalization create a certain ideal subjectivity and mode of learning and knowledge production. To clarify, the concern is not to discuss the reasonableness of “personalization,” or whether personalized and IT-based learning are “better,” or more “truly” meet what is suggested to be the needs of “the new learner.” Rather, the aim is to examine how personalization is naturalized and presumed to favor students’ access to and participation in higher education.

The questions raised are: *What kind of subjectivity is shaped in the discourse of personalization? What is governed in terms of capabilities and conducts? How are individuals governed and preferably govern themselves in personalized and IT-based modes of learning?*

Specifically, the interest is in how self-government and self-regulation are shaped by ethical powers of self-involvement and self-improvement through *technologies of the self* (Gutman & Hutton, 1988; Foucault, 1990, 2003b) directed to the individual’s dispositions, capacities, and her “self.”

The results are represented as three aspects of personalization and as a specific mode of subjectivation, where state government, IT management, and knowledge dimensions intertwine and shape the mode of subjectivation.

Firstly, this concerns how a changing welfare provision and third way rationality, together with liberative powers of distance and flexible, IT-based education, nurture the idea of a necessary individualization and ethics of self-responsibility.

Secondly, it involves how standardization of IT and knowledge content and the self-capability to optimize the knowledge production intertwine in the government of personalized learning. The educational system as imagined should be “standardized, but still, as far as possible, suited to personal needs” (ME, 1998b, p. 41) and IT-based, modularized, and self-instructive knowledge content are a part of how this is to be accomplished in the higher education institution. The ideal is a re-usable and customizable education through datadriven management, modularized education offers, and the Learning Management System (LMS), which are suggested as the main means.

IT works as a strong symbol and enabler for collecting, distributing, and hosting all personal learning activities; it also makes monitoring the subject’s self-involvement and self-performance possible. This includes the teachers, supervisors and managerial staff and units, which are to make knowledge

production efficient by contracts, detailed study plans, and support. Hence, the space produced is dedicated to optimizing the performance – the market-defined knowledge production – where individuals are shaped to engage in “effective interaction” with a learning environment. IT, together with market and performance technologies, constitutes the subjectivation here.

Thirdly, we have a mode of subjectivation where the LMS and the data-driven management foster an ethical substance where ongoing self-control form part of the mode of subjectivation. The LMS provides self-accessible overviews of progress and exposure of knowledge processes for individuals. One should act personally and flexibly, applying the right means and sources at the right moment, in a responsible way, through exteriorizing and exposing that knowledge in relation to others and oneself.

The effectiveness and self-regulated “economy” made visible is dedicated to optimizing the knowledge production by working through “the self,” while at the same time, one is securing the legal right of the individual, i.e. keeping track of performance and examination of each individual. This re-shapes the relation of the institution and the student, as well as processes of learning and examination, where previously unmediated information would be made available for new interventions and re-alignments.

Taken together, my argument is that two particular and intertwined technologies of government constitute the individualized and personalized regulations: one, the IT-based learning environment, and two, the self-technologies. This creates a productive and personalized space, made possible through ethical self-constitution in IT-mediated learning environments, and an ideal, performative knowledge production.

I explain that what makes the issue of personalization appear ambiguous and questionable is that the self-technologies are not considered to be limiting the activities and modes of subjectivation; rather, they are governed “freely” by being personalized and flexible.

However, liberal modes of government also structure the possible field of action (Foucault, 2003a, p. 138) and have implications for educational participation. This, for example, raises questions about the possible limitations of social and informational action of IT-based flexible learning spaces, and possible risks of exposure and connectivity in these self-governable learning environments.

Study 4 Flexible education – “something else and different”? The shift from distance education to flexible learning as spatial politics

This study¹² takes as its starting point the conceptual shift from “distance education” to “flexible learning” in Swedish policies in 1998, connecting to the issues of “opening up higher education” and making it more accessible.

The analytical focus is the spatial politics of flexibility and how it functions as a governing metaphor through a polarizing and politicized language in the policies. For example, flexible education is suggested to be “something more and different” than distance education (ME, 1998b, p. 28), as distance education is considered to be teacher-controlled, restricted in space-time, and limited to one-way communication.

To destabilize these notions, I have approached the spatial politics in terms of how tensions of *space* and *place* are played out metaphorically. I suggest that the flexible spaces referred to here, work together, or in contradiction with place and localization, which produce certain orderings. Thus, the space/place formations, when working together, could produce spatial exclusions and delimitations of different kinds. A spatial politics is here suggested as a way to analyze how power-knowledge operates and creates orderings. This includes the reason and “truths” of these policy arguments, for example making use of theories and assumptions of traditions of distance education.

The space/place politics of flexibility has been elaborated on with four different focuses. The first is entitled *Spatial differentiations* and concerns how spatial conceptualizations and different study modes, like distance and campus education, are used and valued relationally and thereby produce orderings and divisions of education. I also pay attention to how the arguments about IT take part in the governing and how the flexibility of IT should dissolve such orderings and provide for place independence through technology use and progression, as well as educational planning. I problematize such assumptions and also the reductions in what IT and IT-based education could be used for.

The second focus is entitled *A new spatial government?* which concerns the break of an institutional, public higher education organization and state withdrawal, and how a self-regulating individual is a presumption and an effect of such government. I elaborate, on the one hand, on how spatial

¹² The publication is in Swedish and published as: Bergviken Rensfeldt, A. (2009). Flexibel utbildning – ”något annat och mera”? Rumspolitiken i skiftet från distansutbildning till flexibelt lärande. In T. Karlsohn (Ed.). *Sambälle, teknik och lärande* (pp. 122-144). Stockholm: Carlsson.

differentiations make this shift appear reasonable, and on the other hand, how the activation of individuals locates flexible learning in the individuals. I also emphasize the significance ascribed to IT to engineer a more democratic educational participation and the norms that prescribe flexible learning and “e-learning.”

My third example, the *The polarization of closeness – distance*, represents a common argument and truth about distance education that polarizes “the close, near” and “the distant.” Distance education theory, psychological-pedagogical explanations, and communication theory modelling have all been influential in producing ideas of an instrumental transmission and psychologized distance of education and teaching as characteristic for distance education. The physical meeting has been considered more authentic and idealized and, as a part of this, distance education has been considered problematic and difficult, and more of a complement or substitute.

Lastly, *The manifold places of higher education – new spatialities* puts the relation of the IT-based higher education to the campus-based higher education in focus. I elaborate on how spatialities, such as the learning center, are established and challenge traditional, campus-based higher education. Moreover, I also point to how strong mechanisms of exclusion and localization connect particular populations, such as “women” and “rural populations,” to certain places and activities, such as flexible learning.

With this study, the aim was to destabilize the promises of what flexibility should solve and what the flexible learning spaces are supposed to accomplish. The analysis renders visible how the spatial politics is made productive by using the universal, boundless meanings associated with IT and by polarizing flexibility to earlier forms of distance education. In arguing for a shift from distance to flexible learning, the policies also reflect traditions, beliefs, and theories of distance education, where flexibility is associated with “equality,” “distribution,” “democracy,” “individualization,” etc. The analysis also shows how notions of place and localization always take part in the politics of open, flexible spaces, with idealized and typified places like “the campus” or “the home,” and how certain populations also are being bound to such places, which in a sense makes the flexible space exclusive and restrictive.

6 DISCUSSION

This thesis has examined the problem of government articulated in Swedish education policies in 1990s and early 2000s, where certain aspects of openness are involved. The purpose has been to analyze how discourses suggesting widened, flexible, and democratic participation – via rationalities of accessibility and participation, gender equality, and IT and EU politics – involve regulations and orderings of students, institutions, and higher education systems. My questions were:

- How are discourses of openness becoming part of the problem of government, and what are the significances?
- How are individuals, populations, and spatialities being formed and differentiated, especially via self-organizing features of government? What subjectivating and spatial powers are operating as parts of such government?
- Based on these findings, what is revealed about discursive shifts and governmentalities?

This chapter is organized around five main conclusions, which provide insights into the government and how openness operates. To begin with, *how openness functions as an anchoring point* of a multifaceted governing operating; as a political vocabulary, in geographical terms, for pedagogical purposes etc. It works through rationalities of expansion and flexibility to secure the development of Swedish, European and dual mode higher education system, via populations; in making institutions and individuals to adjust to flexible learning via IT and personalization.

Secondly, *the governing and orderings of populations and individuals* as a main conclusion is discussed, based on the results of bio-politics and self-technologies in my studies. Thirdly, I describe how *a revitalized distance education genealogy* is embedded in higher education reforms. Fourthly, I reflect on *the politics of representation*, and lastly; *ordering the “open spaces”* as a specific aspect of government is dealt with.

Moreover, I will also make some methodological comments in the different parts.

Anchoring government through openness

I will here develop the argument of openness – as illustrated in the expression “opening higher education” – as a discursive anchoring point for a problem of government made visible through Swedish policies between 1992 and 2005.

A first observation is that, instead of governing through detailed and direct intervention in the universities and university colleges’ activities, the government at the time (highly visible in the 1993, 1998, 2002, and 2005 reforms) targeted and regulated “the system,” “goals,” “purposes,” “processes,” and “methods.”

These regulations include, for example, the policy contributions of a 50 per cent participation goal, a further expansion of the higher education system, the attempt to widen participation and improve students’ rights and influence, adapting to the Bologna process, and adopting methods like IT-accessible studies and flexible learning.

Hence, I have focused on three related features of how openness is regulated in the policies at the time: *expansion*, *flexibility*, and *personalization*.

First, with expansion, an extended higher education system, increase of enrolments, geographical distribution and student mobility, time-space flexibility is being formed. It is based on the general assumption that democratic and competitive higher education is accomplished through opening and widening the higher education system.

Second, the wide notion of flexibility, addressing stretchable, adaptable qualities of higher education systems, institutions and individuals; through flexible offerings and services and by attempting to meeting the diverse and shifting needs of student populations and creating flexible learners, and to become more efficient. The IT-based and flexible distance education has been the focus of two studies, problematizing gender and the spatial orderings produced through such notions.

Third, opening higher education is also signified as individualizing education, which makes possible the self-managing individual; even so, personalizing education foster a specific mode of governing working on the subject through her personality and self-capabilities, which I explored in study 3.

The three features of opening higher education here are not necessarily all new problems stated in policy. However, they take part of discursive transformations of openness, reconfiguring distance and higher education government and changing the relations between systems, institutions, individuals, technology. The reconfiguration could be explained by the plasticity

and ambivalence of openness: it has the capability of drawing together different rationalities, liberal as well as neoliberal arguments of student's rights, influence, choice, etc., stretching over the *Volkbildung* traditions of distance education to neoliberal ideals of effectiveness.

My analyses show that *two of the most significant regulating and ordering powers are subjectivation and spatialization*. The first will be discussed in the following and the latter in the last section of the chapter.

Governing and ordering populations and individuals

The study I have undertaken, even if my work is limited to a short time period and empirical material, should be regarded as *a biopolitical problematic being re-actualized but also undergoing transformations*.

Three aspects of subjectivating powers has been distinguished in the analyses (and will be more fully elaborated on in the following): firstly, they work both on and through populations and individuals; secondly, they produce orderings of higher education systems, populations and individuals; and thirdly, they are ethically fostered and maintained through relational powers.

Some particular historical and political features connect and reconfigure the 1990s governing of populations. The discourses of openness in policies of the 1990s and later, in part, respond to a classic biopolitical concern and "population problem" (Pongratz, 2009) engaged in such questions as: Who is populating and represented in the system? Are they too few, too many? etc. To exemplify, in the Government bill (2002), a certain problem of higher education were stated; the socially uneven representation and the non-participation were considered inefficient and dysfunctional and part of a wide problem of not meeting competence needs, diversity, inclusion, etc.

"To open higher education" in this sense, also responds to a problem of government articulated throughout the Swedish post-war era, in the 1960s and 70s regulated by technocratic, fit-to-purpose solutions to fulfill social and economical aims of justice and inclusion and to take advantage of competencies and talents among the population. It also has bearings on the Swedish welfare model of education more generally, attending to educational needs at different levels and relating to the "social problem" of inequalities in society.

However, the main issue and problem of government in the 1990s and early 2000s renders visible a re-configuration, where the main problem of government could be formulated as: How can higher education participants be

mobilized and activate themselves in higher education learning? The question implies a questioning of state government and withdrawal of direct intervention. It also implies that the subject here is governed through freedoms, partly on the level of populations and by norms of participation and promises of inclusion through active participation, and partly through individual attributes and requirements, acting upon the learners' qualities, desires, and personalities.

The openness suggested here connects to a transformed notion of welfare offerings through activate participation and fundamental shifts towards self-responsibility and obligations of being committed and bestowing competencies over a lifetime. In these processes, the individual is directly related to Sweden's prosperity and societal progress (Government bill, 2002, 2005) as I have shown.

The transformation relate to a large commission on democracy and societal influence and participation around the millennium shift (Prime Minister's Office, 2000; see also 1990), which made similar declarations. As pointed out by Dahlstedt (2000), the attributes of "civil society" here played a significant part in constituting this kind of active "democratic" participation of society, where citizens should be responsible for and involve themselves in societal development.

Pongratz (2009) has made an interesting point about how discourses of lifelong learning take part of a governing moving away from citizens being passively allowed access, to participate and involving themselves into the government, encouraged or obliged as participating citizens and learners. My conclusions, based on the Swedish policy analyses, can explain his tentative observations further, as taking part of subjectivating powers, where the specific ethico-political rationality produce and activate the norms of participation and self-responsible subjectivities. This is rendered visible both in the "macro-powers" of expansion and the "micro-powers" of personalization, which I have demonstrated in my studies.

Governmentality analyses share the analytical interest in subjectivating powers, and studies of lifelong and flexible learning have made similar observations of how these discourses govern an adaptable, changeable, and self-responsible subjectivity (e.g. Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Nicoll, 2006). Often these kinds of studies state, quite generally, that the governing of inclusion by necessity produces exclusion.

My analyses contribute to more specified arguments about such exclusions, for example, how different segments of the population, like "non-academics," "rural populations," "women," "Swedes," "Europeans" are created and acted

upon to self-activate and how orderings and exclusions thereby appear. To exemplify, the second study illustrated how a flexible learning space also was a gendered space, presumed to appeal to female populations. “Women” were assumed to need and engage in flexible learning. Others, like “non-academics,” examined in the first study, were recruited or acted upon for taking responsibility for their own learning. The subjectivation is imbued with certain ethically fostering and self-regulating capabilities projected onto, and via, these populations. In both cases, populations are restricted and allocated to particular spaces of higher education, which creates a differentiated access and participation. Even if such a conclusion might essentialize and simplify the regulations and orderings at work, it is noteworthy that exclusions operate discursively.

In the rhetoric operating here, the subject has few possibilities of resisting the demands of getting educated as it is always made possible, via IT, at home, in the workplace, individually, in preparatory courses and university services, etc.

Lastly, few governmentality studies have explored the micro-powers of IT and subjectivation in relation to macro-powers. That is, IT-use is more often associated with the neoliberal rules of new work and world orders of communication and knowledge production and of fostering employable, flexible citizens with generic competences (see for example, Olssen & Peters, 2005). Interestingly, the Swedish case illustrates how IT, through the interdependence of distance education, also involves certain liberal powers, and I will explain this further in the following.

A revitalized distance education genealogy

In my work, an important conclusion, and a part of all the studies, has been that distance education is being positioned and related to higher education in the policies of the time. As illustrated in my review, distance education relies on a history and genealogy of being a compensatory, neutralizing, and democratizing study form, imbued with the ideals of openness. My analytical work started in distance education policies, and it became clear that distance education, based on such beliefs, also maintains a central position in the work of reforming and “opening” Swedish higher education in the mid 1990s; how and by what means this was accomplished will be demonstrated here.

What I have shown in the analyses, is that *the distance education genealogy is being embedded in a broader notion of reforming of higher education*. With a widened

meaning of distance education expressed – the IT-based, flexible mode is to cover the whole (but mainly the Swedish) university – higher education is considered able to expand and meet individual and regional needs while keeping its structure, building in the offer dual mode and fulfilling its economical goals and restrictions. This re-vitalization of the distance education genealogy can also explain why regional politics and national scope are so strongly emphasized in my material, and not, for example, the issue of diversity, which was another influential policy issue at the time (see for example ME, 2000). Similarly, the issues of an IT-based international or European higher education are not brought into the discussion of distance higher education in my material.

As discourses of openness become part of the governing, a distance education genealogy is actualized in two particular ways. One is the argument of liberation in space-time and individualization for making geographical and social exclusions less salient. The other is the belief that technology solutions can bridge distances geographically and psychologically to provide accessibility to education.

The 1998 policies described flexible distance education as “new and something else” (which I pick up in the fourth study), and ”a radical shift” of power and influence in favor of the self-paced, individualized learner. According to the assumptions, a more individualized learning was made possible through flexible and IT-based study forms and a more modernized pedagogy. Compared to early distance education and correspondence study, the features of individualization, individual liberalization, and technology determinism remain. However, what is changing is how these features are linked to adaptability to quickly shifting conditions of society more widely and target a ”self,” making flexible access and participation in higher education necessary.

Through distance education and the governing of openness here, a certain powerful governmentality is produced. It sets off the self-regulated and self-responsible learner to work individually and in a more or less differentiated space-time. It also intervenes in the organizing of institutions and staff to become more flexible, innovate pedagogy, and enable and support the active, self-responsible learner. This reconfigures the relation between student and institution, student and student, and institution and system and it becomes important to act and position oneself as flexible, individualized, pedagogically strategic, etc.

Furthermore, a political economy contributes to some specific features of this government. It is suggested that the productive and self-organized learning

activities, to a great extent, should be independent of campus facilities and teacher-led education and classes; and new controls and ways of monitoring the performance of self-regulated learners should be introduced as a part of the students' liberation from the institution. As shown in the study of personalized learning, the subjects' self-capacity and voluntary involvement in producing and performing knowledge in IT-based learning is a crucial part of this.

How IT in different ways takes part in the open governing regime is interesting, and I have dedicated the third study to the question, where I propose that IT and self-technologies co-constitute a mode of subjectivation and knowledge production in educational settings. Mainly, this is done by these governing technologies being paired with neo-liberal rationalities of performance, self-monitoring, and accountable knowledge. What this further adds to the argument of transformations of subjectivating powers, in combination with the rationalities of a distance education genealogy, is that not only an individualized government is re-produced, but a governing working on, and through, personalities and "selves." Notably, the individualized, IT-based government is not necessarily anti-social (Lyotard, 1984), but based on the norms of social, relational powers of active participation. IT-based personalized learning is socially regulated, as I have exemplified through the exposure and performance of knowledge, interaction, social norms and orders of active participation.

Few governmentality studies have elaborated on these aspects of subjectivation empirically, even though Rose (1999, p. 52), for example, touches upon it. In the book *Powers of freedom*, Rose argues that "IT entails more than computers, programmes, fibre-optic cables," and intertwines with other means of government:

Every technology also requires the incalculable of a form of life, the re-shaping of various roles for humans, the little body techniques required to think in terms of certain practices of communication, the practice of the self oriented around the mobile telephone, the word processor, the World, Wide Web and so forth. (ibid., p. 52.)

The governmentality I have exposed here, with individualized and personalized education and learning, involving ethico-political rationalities and responsible and competitive selves and systems, make distance and higher education appear as enablers and productive forces. Their task is to secure the individual competence and production of human capital, which Swedish society considered

lacking or at risk of losing, in the new order of the Knowledge society. In that way, access to a higher education system in the traditional sense becomes a less important democratic issue than IT accessibility and participation through IT-based, flexible learning activities. If access is spelled out in the Swedish policies, it either concerns IT access and the technical-administrative solutions (see also Burbules et al., 2006; Selwyn, 2007), for example via the Learning Management System, or it is used as a way of describing a universal (nation-wide) access and the necessity of infrastructures for facilitating and enhancing higher education participation and learning.

Educational accessibility is a central factor for individuals' possibilities of developing their competence, as well as for the nation's growth. Increased accessibility to education and training also are important for regional growth. Distance education should meet the nation-wide needs of education. The technical prerequisites of a continuing development of distance education are good partly due to the well-spread use of IT technology [sic] in Sweden, either at home or at a learning centre in the local municipality (ME, 2001, p. 110-111)

These matters relate to the openness debate I referred to in the review, where researchers have criticized the instrumental, universal, and economical uptakes of IT-based distance education. Simultaneously, the debate has neglected the role of liberal, subjectivating powers and how openness embeds liberal, as well as neoliberal, powers. Notably, much of the research on distance and IT-based flexible learning have taken the characteristics and "public good" of these study forms as given in their research. Hence, they contribute in making subjectivating powers salient by focusing on questions like the study behavior and expectations of distance learners, how to avoid drop-outs and keep study rates high, how to engage learners in active participation and interaction, etc.

The politics of representation

As suggested by the Foucauldian approach to governmentality, liberal powers play a significant part in understanding how governing powers operate. Such powers make self-government, self-adaptation, and self-organization possible. The official public discourses on higher education openness are typical for liberal powers, working through the positive notion of freedoms, possibilities, individual opportunities, etc. To exemplify, the questions of accessibility and participation here get a new significance and meaning by being described as "open," "liberal," "effective," and "flexible" in the 1990s and on, rather than, for

example, “equal,” “fair,” and “teacher-led.” The three discourses of higher education I have demonstrated in the study make use of such liberal powers in suggesting an expanding, flexible, and more personalized higher education.

I have mostly paid attention to how openness and liberal rationalities, characterize the government. However, I also refer to neo-liberal powers, especially when “flexible choice,” self-responsibility, and knowledge production as a politics of accessibility and participation were paired with competitiveness and a more explicit economical order. Whether this is a valid conclusion could be questioned. The liberty of choice, equal opportunities, individual freedom, and empowerment through education, etc., could be seen as classical discourses of modern society, and not necessarily neo-liberally flavored. Furthermore, neoliberal powers should be distinguished, either as means as with the third way rationalities, where state government sets off the economic orders, and constructs markets and competitiveness within a given system, or as an end, where state withdrawal, and full market mechanisms for example position universities as corporations.

It could be argued that the liberal powers are more dominant in the Swedish policies and that neoliberal governmentality is more of an exception (see also Ong, 2006), at least if we look at the case as a continuous post-war government and struggle for openness as a democratic force.

The liberal, “open government” I have described here, involves a politics of representation; that is, how policies name and speak of higher education, how they organize, embed, create extensions of higher education – even if they only are fictions, plans, or empty signifiers – and also *do* something in the world. Policy representations and discourses regulate by creating orderings that render others invisible, unrealistic, or inconceivable.

Hence, the different meanings of openness is an ordering that makes us think of higher education in specific ways (and not others); it governs us as individuals and ascribes to higher education certain desirable qualities, such as “open,” “flexible,” “democratic,” and “efficient“ (and not “closed,” “restricted,” “inflexible,” or “bureaucratic“).

In a practical sense, my analysis points to the potential political force made possible through the open, liberal powers; they rely on self-governability and qualities of re-invention, re-interpretation, and conversion.

The government I have described as significant for the 1990s and early 2000s should indeed get institutions involved in strategies and tactics of “opening” universities and university colleges, particularly their courses,

education programs, and student activities. Significantly, these powers are exercised by means and methods that neutralize their political nature (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 196). The discourses of openness are naturalized as democratic and efficient and find their way in by the aforementioned processes, methods, and projects and by systems, institutions, and individuals willing to show, prove, and report on their openness, accessibility, flexibility, etc. Necessarily, we – as researchers, teachers, students, employees, etc. – need to clarify and explicate the terms and meaning we build on and discuss what it is they do.

Ordering the "open spaces"

This thesis contributes to governmentality studies by examining the spatial powers of distance and higher education. In three of my studies, it is shown how *the spatilization of "open, democratic spaces" become productive imaginaries in forming rationalities of access and participation*. With "open spaces" here, I refer to the spatialities produced and regulated by inclusion, participation, encouraging self-organization etc. Examples from my studies are flexible, IT-based spaces, spaces of "markets," what I called "transits," and also the notions of "the Knowledge society" and the space of "Bologna," etc. To secure such spaces, an ongoing production and circulation of knowledgeable individuals and learning opportunities take part of the governing.

Based on the approach to government it is not state rescaling, decentralization, or re-centralization that is most interesting and which has been discussed quite extensively (see for example Dale, 2009). Rather, the spatial powers involved here work through different modes and targets of government, most often enabled by state initiative, and liberal, self-organizing principles.

For example, in the 1993 reform liberal rationalities position universities and university colleges as "autonomous". The suggestion of "opening higher education" also reconfigures the liberal idea of academic autonomy, as the institution should open up its knowledge privilege and instance as expertise (Gibbons et al., 1994). However, these liberal governmentalities do not exclude that the system is evaluated, controlled, or compared with other systems (Neave & van Vught, 1991; Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2004), rather, much indicate that such regulations are intensified at the time of the studies (see also SNAHE, 2006).

The spatial politics of expansion is one of the more influential spatial powers at the time of my studies for accomplishing open, extended higher education. Often, the expansion has been connected to times of mass or universal higher education (Trow, 1974; Scott, 1998b), and peaks of nation-based higher education systems as they grow in volume. More seldom, (but there are exceptions here, e.g. Scott, 1998a; Schofer & Meyer, 2005) the expansion is connected to the conceptualizations of internationalized or globalized higher education systems.

My argument is that the nation state boundaries, commonly used in policy and research (for example for making comparisons and evaluations possible), are deceptive here and that a discursive, spatial analysis of the politics of expansion can make this clearer. Even though I base my conclusions on Swedish policy material, they contribute to the discussion concerning a transnational, European, or global government and how it can be elaborated on. Clearly, “the European dimension” and “the Knowledge society” are constituted and made productive through powerful regulations and governmentalities – as I have shown through spatialities, as well as subjectivations of populations and individuals securing an expansion – and also through the “locally” produced, Swedish policies.

There are two aspects of how space works here. One is the creation of spatialities, suggesting new volumes, new wider student populations, more effective studies, more flexible, self-organizing systems, and participatory spaces.

The second is the dissolution of spaces, where the policies discuss the campus’s over-populated space, the bureaucratic institution, the restrictive system of admission, and the domestic, inward-looking higher education system.

The analyses reveal how liberal rationalities and self-organization of spatialities take part of the governing and how orderings openness/closure and inclusion/exclusion are produced. This differentiates systems and excludes populations through spatial affiliation, gender, distance and IT study modes, market and performance logics. With a differentiated higher education space, new scales, scopes, centers – and peripheries – of distance and higher education appear that involve asymmetries between universities/university colleges, off-campus/on-campus study modes, and European/non-European higher education systems.

Only briefly have my studies touched upon the question of the knowledge dimension and the politics of knowledge by, for example, Gibbons et al. (1994), described as an open, porous character the knowledge interchange of higher education, business and a public space takes in “the new mode of knowledge

production.” I have noted that the “new knowledge production” and “Knowledge society” are highly influential elements in the discourse of openness in the Swedish policies. To open higher education and the university to “new knowledge” in this sense is also a way of managing new rationalities of knowledge and more open, relative knowledge conceptions for being an accountable and trustworthy public institution. The knowledge of IT-based and distance education also takes part in such shifts; for example, from being organized as public authorities and national centers, it is formed in collaborative constellations between higher education institutions, networks, and transnational cooperation and EU projects since around 2005. To explore the knowledge dimension in contemporary distance and IT-based education policy and networks, and also how it is formed in higher education institutions and strategies, is an interesting project as I see it.

Much indicates that what happened after 2005 in Swedish distance and higher education policies are occurrences that more strongly take hold of the organization of knowledge, for example, based on discourses of quality, compared to the qualities emphasized around 2000 that intervened more in the organization of systems, individuals to become “open,” “flexible,” and so forth. The notion of “the Knowledge economy” has a stronger impact and higher education and research become more tightly connected.

According to Peters (2009), a new knowledge organization that speaks of “open spaces,” based on an ethic of participation and “open access” to and exchange of information, takes part in such a government. Knowledge should be “open for all,” and the guiding principle is the “public good” of distributing, sharing and collaborating on knowledge. The new language of openness here involves higher education institutions in creating Open Educational Resources, making courses and material more publicly accessible, working in open source Learning Management Systems etc. Interestingly, the government of openness here seems to receive yet another meaning, also made possible through liberal powers.

7 SWEDISH SUMMARY

“Öppna högskolan:” Diskursiva transformationer i styrningen av distansutbildning och högre utbildning

Inledning

Denna avhandling handlar om hur svenska policies under 1990- och tidigt 2000-tal argumenterar för att den svenska högskolan ska vara mer öppen, flexibel och tillgänglig. Detta låter kanske också rimligt och rätt, och grundat på “goda” intentioner, men förslagen leder likväl till att frågor om tillträde och deltagande i den högre utbildningen blir förgivettagna. Frågan är hur, och med vilka konsekvenser och innebörder detta sker? Ett viktigt inslag här är till exempel distans- och IT-baserat lärande som med en individualisering och flexibilitet i tid och rum, är tänkt att kunna förverkliga målet om en ny öppenhet och tillgänglighet i det svenska högskolesystemet.

Denna studie har som syfte att denaturalisera och synliggöra diskursiva skiften, genom att undersöka hur öppenhet och flexibilitet tillskrivs mening som något ”nytt” och antas kunna “öppna högskolan.”

Frågorna kring ett öppet och demokratiskt tillträde och deltagande i högre utbildning svarar mot en styrningsproblematik som varit i fokus för en rad policyreformer och forskningsbidrag under de senaste decennierna. Frågan om att “öppna högskolan“ (SOU, 2001/02:15), är inte att betrakta som en ny idé. I 1975 års proposition (Prop, 1975:9, s. 488) används till exempel samma uttryck, baserat på en utbildningspolitisk strävan att sörja för yrkes- och arbetsmarknadsbehov och för att skapa nya högskolor utöver de redan etablerade.

Internationellt sett anses Sverige ha genomgått genomgripande högskolereformer (Teichler, 1988; Rothblatt & Wittrock, 1993). Ofta nämns 1977 och 1993 års propositioner (Prop, 1976/77:59, Prop, 1992/93:1, 1992/93:169; SOU, 1992:1) som exempel på detta.

Förutom den tidigare nämnda tillträdespolitiken, så får också de europeiska frågorna ett stort utrymme under 1990-talet. Detta handlar bl a. om att studenter ska kunna röra sig i ett europeiskt utbildningssystem och att sociala och ekonomiska vinster, som social inkludering och effektivisering, därmed ska

uppnås. Högre utbildning är också tänkt att tillgodose individens anställningsbarhet och flexibilitet vilket ska bidra till "det allmännas bästa," och ett mer utvecklat "kunskapssamhälle."

Under 1990-talet har det också blivit mer uppenbart att högskolepolitiken visar en allt större lyhörighet för förändringar i kunskapsproduktionens villkor, och till att etablera och stadfästa kunskapssamhället. Här anses högskoleinstitutionerna få en ny, mer öppen position präglad av ett ansvar för att bidra med kunskapsrelevans, effektivitet, osv. (Gibbons et al., 1994; Nowotny et al., 2001).

En viktig del i detta vittnar samstämmigheten från olika forskningspositioner kring att styrningen genomgår ett skifte; "from government to governance" (Pierre, 2000; Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2004; Dean, 2007). Distans- och högskoleutbildning internationellt (Neave & van Vught, 1991; Evans & Nation, 1996; Kogan et al., 2006; Amaral et al., 2009; Dale & Robertson, 2009; Tait et al., 2009), såväl som i nordiska sammanhang (t ex. Grepperud & Toska, 2000; Fägerlind & Strömqvist, 2004; Kim, 2004; Kogan & Bauer, 2006; Kyvik, 2009; Unemar-Öst, 2009) anses utgöra en del av detta skifte. Framförallt handlar det om en förändrad reglering av högskolesystemen och att relationen mellan utbildningssystem och en nationellt baserad statlig styrning och ansvarsfördelning, förändrats.

Snarare än att gå in i diskussionen kring denna förändring och frågor kring re-centralisering, de-centralisering osv., eller att frågorna relativt entydigt sker på basis av statens eller någon annan agendasättande instans (som EU) initiativ, riktar denna studie fokus på styrning i en vidare mening. Det handlar om hur styrning utövas, genom att konstruera problem och lösningar (Dean, 2010) och genom att länka samman skilda instanser och medel för styrning; högskolesystem, studenter, institutioner, resonemang, teknologier. Detta perspektiv grundas på Foucaults (1991b) bidrag kring *governmentality*, styrningsrationalitet på svenska, där mitt intresse är hur styrning diskursivt reglerar individer, populationer, system t ex.

Mål, syfte och frågor

Avhandlingens övergripande mål är att undersöka diskurser kring öppenhet inom distans- och högskoleutbildning, baserat på svenska, utbildningspolitiska dokument från 1992 till 2005. Syftet är att analysera diskurser som föreslår ett breddat, flexibelt och demokratiskt utbildningsdeltagande – genom rationaliteter

kring tillgänglighet och deltagande, jämställdhet, IT- och EU-politik – och hur detta reglerar studenter, institutioner och högre utbildning och skapar maktordningar. Mina frågor är:

- Hur, och med vilka signifikanser, tar diskurser kring öppenhet del av en styrningsproblematik?
- Hur formas och differentieras individer, populationer och rumsligheter, speciellt med hänseende på självorganisering? Hur tar en subjektiverande och rumslig makt sig uttryck i denna styrning?
- På basis av ovanstående, vad kan vi hävda i fråga om diskursiva skiften och styrningsrationaliteter?

Översikt över arbetet

Avhandlingen i sin helhet består av sju kapitel. Dessa är, i ordningen som följer: *Introduktion*, *Analytisk approach*, *Forskningsöversikt*, *Metodologiska överväganden*, *Sammanfattning av delstudierna*, *Diskussion* samt denna *Sammanfattning på svenska*. Därutöver finns också ett *Appendix*, som består av en förteckning över det empiriska materialet, och mina fyra delstudier; två artikelmanuskript och två bokkapitel (varav en är på svenska):

1. Securing higher education expansion: “Non-places,” “Markets” and “Transits” as a new spatial politics (inskickat artikelmanus)
2. Gendered distance education spaces: ”Keeping women in place”? In S. Booth, S. Goodman, & G. Kirkup (Eds.). *Gender Issues in Learning and Working with Information Technology: Social Constructs and Cultural Contexts*. Hershey, New York: IGI Global, 2010 (sambörfattare Sandra Riomar)
3. (Information) technologies of the self: Personalization as a mode of subjectivation and knowledge production (inskickat artikelmanus)
4. Flexibel utbildning – ”något annat och mera”? Rumspolitik i skiftet från distansutbildning till flexibelt lärande. I T. Karlsohn (Red). *Sambälle, teknik och lärande*. Stockholm: Carlsson, 2009.

Forskningsöversikt

Ser man till de traditioner som ägnat sig åt frågor kring tillträde och deltagande i högre utbildning är de framförallt de strukturalistiskt-funktionalistiska som varit dominerande (Teichler, 1998, 2005). Forskningsintresset har riktats mot system-

strukturer och dimensionalisering av system, t ex. att skapa representativa sammansättningar av studentpopulationer. Ofta har man tagit sin utgångspunkt i kvantitativa, komparativa metoder för att laborera med och analysera implikationerna av tillträdesregler utifrån kategorier som klass, kön, etnicitet osv. I forskningsöversikten exemplifieras också hur distansutbildning varit en av efterkrigstidens lösningar på tillträdesproblematiken och hur forskningen har ägnat sig åt hur studentpopulationer bättre, och utan avbrott och avhopp, kan tillgodogöra sig denna utbildningsform.

Här menar jag att forskningsperspektiv som betonar aspekter så som styrningsrationaliteter, och sannings- och kunskapsanspråk kring tillträde, deltagande och social inkludering (Popkewitz & Lindblad, 2000) och hur sådana konstitueras historiskt och politiskt, utgör ett viktigt bidrag.

Jag har valt att gå in på organisations- och ny-institutionell teori samt Foucault-baserade diskurs- och styrningsperspektiv i forskningsöversikten. Gemensamt för dessa är att de placerar frågor kring tillträde och deltagande och liknande frågor, i ett samtidigt mikro- och makroperspektiv, genom social-institutionell eller diskursiv organisering. På basis av analyser av samtida utbildningssystem har man identifierat en homogenisering av högskolesystem, marknadsiering, teknologisering, Europeisering, ideal kring jämförbarhet, osv. Från de Foucault-baserade traditionerna har man bidragit med analyser av styrningsrationaliteter och olika former av liberal maktutövning för att konceptualisera och diagnosticera samtida utbildningspolitik, inte minst hur ett självreglerande subjekt blir en effekt och ett instrument för styrning.

Analytisk approach

Arbetet är baserat på en post-strukturalistisk, Foucault-baserad förståelse av diskurser (Foucault, 1972, 2000) och hur dessa utgör delar av en styrning och maktutövning (Foucault, 1991b). Foucaults (1972, p. 49) utgångspunkt är att diskurser ingår i konstituerande praktiker; “discourses as practices that systematically form the object of which they speak.”

Framförallt placerar jag in min studie i en governmentality-tradition, som intresserar sig för hur styrningsrationaliteter och styrningsformer tar sig uttryck samhälleligt och historiskt-politiskt genom att skapa styrbara och självreglerande system, individer osv. Med denna approach utgår jag ifrån att svenska, utbildningspolitiska dokument sätta att representera styrningsproblem knyts samman av en rad argument som skär över tid, nationsgränser och policyfärer.

Denna politiska dimension är därför inte avhängig svenska regeringar, partipolitik och liknande, vilket gör det möjligt att rikta intresset för styrning till hur diskurser, resonemang och rationaliteter formas och transformeras i styrningsrationaliteter (governmentalities). Med detta synsätt, får styrning inflytande över hur vi uppfattar, organiserar och ser på samhällsinstanser som högre utbildning och dess mål och syften.

Mina studier har två huvudsakliga analytiska ingångar. Dels maktordningar som subjektivering (*subjectivation*) och dels rumslig eller spatial makt (*spatialization, spatialities*). Gemensamt för dessa är att de handlar om föreställningar om det ska styras; individer, utbildningssystem och liknande.

När det gäller subjektivering så har aspekterna bio-politik (*bio-politics*) (Foucault, 2008) och själv-teknologier (*self-technology*) (Gutman & Hutton, 1988; Foucault, 1990, 2003b) varit i fokus. Detta är maktordningar som reglerar både individer, populationer och individers "själv," via självreglerande mekanismer och självstyrning. Foucaults koncept har här utvecklats och tillämpats av bl a. Nikolas Rose (1999) inom sociologin, men även inom pedagogik (e.g. Masschelein et al., 2007; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Peters et al., 2009).

Analyserna av de rumsliga dimensionerna handlar om att undersöka diskursiva aspekter av rum, dvs. hur rum och rumsligheter får betydelse genom föreställningar och tillskrivningar, t ex. hur vissa platser, som ett statustyngt "campus" eller ett "öppet," IT-baserad rum får betydelser historiskt och politiskt. Det handlar exempelvis om hur man styr genom att konstruera rumsligheter, bl a. genom det Foucault (2007, s. 11, 22) beskrivit som *spaces of security*, "att spatialisera" för att säkra, värna och effektivisera "samhällsrummen." Här har jag utgått ifrån spatialisering (*spatialization*); how "space figures in the 'thought', aims and rationalities of government" (Huxley, 2008, s. 1653), som en central aspekt i denna maktutövning. När det gäller rumsanalytiska begrepp och förståelser hämtar jag inspiration framförallt från statsvetenskapliga och geografiska användningar (Larner & Walters, 2004; Philo, 2004; Walters & Haahr, 2005; Crampton & Elden, 2007; Elden, 2007; Huxley, 2007, 2009), utvecklade från Foucaults relativt få rumsanalyser (t ex. Foucault, 1998, 2007), samt rumspolitiska genusanalyser (Massey, 1994).

Polycymaterialet

De policydokument som ingår i det empiriska materialet består av offentliga utredningar, propositioner, remissvar från universitet och högskolor samt

myndighetsrapporter kring IT- och distansutbildning. Jag vill här illustrera några av de förstnämnda, från år 1998, 2002, 1993 och 2005. Ordningen markerar deras relationer och samstämmighet i att knyta an till frågor kring öppenhet.

Under 1998, återaktualiseras distansutbildning som en del av att förändra och göra den högre utbildningen mer flexibel och öppen. Distansutbildning har under efterkrigstiden återkommande varit intresse för utbildningspolitiken (SOU, 1962:16, 1975:72, 1992:1). Det som föreslås i samma departments utredningar 1998 är en vidare betydelse av distansutbildning, genom flexibel, IT-based utbildning (SOU, 1998:57, 1998:83, 1998:84) och som ska kunna förändra högskolesystemet på ett genomgripande sätt med bland annat individualiserade lösningar.

Frågan om den flexibla utbildningen följs upp i propositionen *Den öppna högskolan* (SOU, 2001/2002:15) som ett led i att man vill skapa ett mer demokratiskt och effektivt högskolesystem. Breddad rekrytering, ett utbildningsdeltagande på minst 50 procent, och livslångt lärande utgör också delar av propositionen. Uttryck av det här slaget ingår i resonemangen; "Den öppna högskolan är öppen mot omvärlden. Rekryteringen till högre utbildning bör därför öka, utjämnas och vidgas till nya grupper" (ibid., s. 18). Öppenhet är tänkt som en "vägledande princip" (ibid., s. 23). Policyn betonar också att man måste vara beredd att möta skiftande och nya problem och snabba förändringar (ibid., s. 18). Detta bygger på ett antagande om att det enda säkra är förändring och att flexibilitet är det enda möjliga svaret på detta problem.

1993 års reform och (Prop, 1992/93:1, 1992/93:169), också kallad "Frihetsreformen," föreslår frihet och universitetsautonomi, företrädesvis från inblandning av staten, men samtidigt med ökning av kontroller och utvärderingar. Reformen problematiseras igen under 2004 med krav på ett mer konjunkturoberoende system för att hantera skiftande antal studenter och studieprestationer (SOU, 2005:48).

2005 års reform *Ny värld – ny högskola* (Prop, 2005:162), den så kallade "Bologna-propositionen," föreslås att det svenska högskolesystemet blir mer öppet för en europeisk högskoleexpansion och studentmobilitet. En europeisk högre utbildning ska stödja att Europa blir världsledande och mer konkurrenskraftigt, samtidigt som arbetsmarknad och social gemenskap ska säkras. Europeisk politik och mål bäddas därför in i de svenska.

Policyanalyserna – genomförande, fokus och överväganden

Arbetsprocessen har präglats av tre faser av *Att lokalisera, Välja ut* och *Samla ihop*. Lokaliseringsfasen handlade dels om att gå in i ett omfattande arkiv- och policymaterial kring, först distans-, och senare också högskoleutbildning. Här valde jag ut distansutbildningens utbildningspolitiska dokument som mer relevanta att fördjupa sig i, eftersom få svenska studier gjorts på området.

Jag hade också att lokalisera arbetet till min egen position som lärare, universitetsanställd, såväl som teoretiskt. Baker (2007) menar att Foucaultstudier i utbildningsvetenskap har tagit vissa programmatiska former och tampas med ett utbildningsvetenskapligt, värdebaserat och vetenskapsideologiskt ideal (Baker, 2007), som jag också fått balansera.

Jag har framförallt utforskat två olika diskursanalytiska ansatser, lämpliga för mina syften. Jag gick dels in i en som betonade det tillfälliga och motstridiga i diskursordningar (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), dels in i en mer historiskt inriktad och "sammanhållande" diskursförståelse, enligt en Foucaulttradition. Även om vissa inslag i den förra har följt mig (nodalpunkters betydelse för diskursfixering), så blev det Foucaultlinjen som kom att betyda mest.

Den andra fasen handlade om att gå in i ett omfattande textmaterial och välja signifikanta avsnitt, utdrag och frågeställningar, men också välja bort vissa detaljnivåer, frågor och områden som utbildningsnivåer, specifika utbildningsprogram osv. De val jag gjorde här, gjordes mot bakgrund av avhandlingens syfte, inte med ambition om ett representativt urval av reformer. I detta skede kom också tre av de begreppsligt mest signifikanta inslagen i de utbildningspolitiska dokumenten att utkristalliseras: *expansion, flexibilitet och personalisering*. Dessa står i fokus i de olika delstudierna och relaterar huvudsakligen till styrning genom system och populationer (studie 1 och 2) och genom institutioner och individer (studie 3 och 4). Studierna har något olika karaktär och vänder sig till olika intresseområden och olika slags publik.

I min sista fas av analysarbete, har det handlat om att syntetisera resultaten i delstudierna. Jag har valt att presentera resultatet i termer en styrningsproblematik som förankras genom diskurser kring öppenhet.

Sammanfattning av delstudierna

Studie 1, "Securing higher education expansion" utforskar de spatiala maktordningarna kring expansion och normer för utbildningsdeltagande. Analysen visar att skapandet och säkrandet av rumsligheter, "spaces of security", är en viktig del av

styrningen. Tre distinkta rumsmetaforer, *non-places*, *markets* och *transits* används i analysen för att se hur mål, rationaliteter och lokaliseringar knyts ihop.

För det första, “the non-place“ verkar genom att en avterritorialiserad och expanderande rumslighet görs möjlig genom flexibilitet och IT. För det andra, “the market” gör expansionen produktiv genom marknadslogik och “flexibla val” samt genom transnationella, europeiska rum för kunskapsproduktion. Slutligen, “the transit” mobiliserar och förbereder kategorier som icke-deltagare och studieovana och verkar också genom att sätta procentmål för deltagande. Utmärkande för dessa “säkrade rum” är att de verkar för inkludering, protektion och självorganisering. Framförallt så kan man se en rekonfigurering i skala, från efterkrigstidens nationella expansionspolitik till en regional, IT-baserad, europeisk och global rumspolitik. Effekterna av dessa rumsliga maktordningar skapar svenska och europeiska “territorier” och tillgångar, befolkningar och universitet, som samtidigt stänger ute och gör konkurrensförmögna, inflexibla rumsligheter och populationer perifera.

Studie 2, “Gendered distance education spaces” tar upp frågan om den flexibla distansutbildningens genusordning och hur “kvinnor,” med familj och band till hem och lokalsamhällen, antas vinna på ett flexibel utbildningstillgång och studieform. Studien problematiserar hur kvinnor som population också blir en policykonstruktion för åtgärder och allokeringar, exkluderade från campus och reguljär utbildning. På det sättet blir de flexibla länderummen genusdifferentierade, och det kvinnligt kodade, flexibla rummet en konsekvens. Teoretiskt knyter studien an till Butlers (1990) förståelse av hur diskurser producerar genusordningar och Masseys (1994) konceptualisering av spatiala genusordningar.

Analysen grundas dels på en jämförelse med efterkrigstidens korrespondensundervisning som en manligt kodad studieform och hur den flexibla utbildningen fostrar en mer anpassningsbar och utsatt subjektivitet med flexibla kompetenser och en flexibel arbetsmarknad att relatera till. Dels analyseras hur campus som en privilegierad plats, skapar en restriktiv tillträdespolitik där “kvinnor,” genom att hänvisas till distansstudier, inte får lika tillträde. Som en sista del problematiseras det kvinnligt kodade “hemmet” som både kan förstås som en domesticering och möjlig öppning mot ett alternativt, IT-baserat deltagande i samhälle och utbildning. Med denna analys påvisas hur distansutbildningspolicies formas av en rumspolitik som är starkt genus- och jämlikhetsladdad, i linje med en förebildlig svensk jämställdhetspolitik, som för den skull inte undslipper kvinnliga och manligt kodade polariseringar. Det finns

därmed anledning att ifrågasätta hur “kvinnor hålls på plats” genom en sådan rumspolitik.

I studie 3, “(Information) technologies of the self” analyseras hur “personalisering” och personligt utformat, IT-baserat lärande, som en del av en individualisering och omorganisering av offentlig sektor, ska göra högskolan mer tillgänglig och service- och kundinriktad. Resultatet visar hur en viss subjektivering görs produktiv och hur individer är tänkta att styra sig själva genom de liberala, positiva och självmotiverande inslagen i personaliserade, IT-baserade system.

Fokus riktas på självteknologiers sammanflätning med IT och tre aspekter bidrar till denna styrning visar min analys. För det första, att en ny välfärdsorganisering och tredje väg-politik bidrar till en individualisering och en självansvarig subjektivitet tar form. För det andra, hur standardisering av utbildningssystem och IT-lösningar som Learning Management Systems (LMS) blir centrala delar av detta, samt hur egenförmågan att optimera sitt lärande och sin kunskaptilläggen involveras. Och slutligen, hur en etisk “substans” och förmåga får näring genom att subjekt ska utföra självkontroll och kunskapskritik baserat på själv-övervakning, exponering och mediering via LMS. Den effektivitet och självförmåga som här åsyftas, ska hjälpa till att optimera en kunskapsproduktion. Med denna kritiska analys, av ett till synes liberalt, flexibelt och frivilligt utbildningsdeltagande, finns dock inneboende problem, där till exempel integritet och arbetsbördor inte är reglerade.

Till sist, studie 4, Flexibel utbildning – ”något annat och mera” behandlar flexibilitetsmetaforiken som en rumspolitisk styrning och hur denna bygger på en styrningsrationalitet kring ett öppet, tillgängligt utbildningsdeltagande, producerat som ett “skifte från distans- till flexibel utbildning.”

Genom fyra tematiker tar jag upp hur den flexibla rumsmetaforiken tar sig uttryck och verkar tillsammans med konnotationer kring plats och lokaliseringar av olika slag. För det första, hur flexibel utbildning målas upp som “något annat och mera” än distansutbildning, genom polariseringar med tidigare teknologigenerationers och studieformers tillkortakommanden. För det andra, hur en brytning med en institutionell ordning byggs under och ställs mot ett individualiserat, flexibelt lärande, där IT som en demokratiserande motor blir en avgörande styrningsresurs. För det tredje, behandlas hur distansutbildningsteori bidragit till polariseringar mellan distans-närhet genom pedagogiskt-psykologiska tolkningar, och hur distansutbildningen ses som en utmaning som kräver pedagogiska lösningar. Det sista temat tar upp relationen mellan den IT-baserade

högskolan och den campusbaserade högskolan och gör den sistnämnda, möjligen till ett nav, men också en del av en mer differentierad rumslighet för den högre utbildningen, där bland annat lärcentrat ingår och potentiellt utmanar campushögskolan. Sammanfattningsvis visar studien på hur flexibilitet och IT är tänkt att kunna bidra till en demokratisk utbildningsdeltagande, men hur denna rumspolitik samtidigt pekar mot en differentiering och asymmetri i deltagandet.

Avslutande kommentarer och diskussion

Studiens resultat har delats in i fem huvudsakliga slutsatser. För det första, att öppenhet bildar en förankringspunkt för de diskursiva skiften och den styrning vi ser under 1990- och 2000-talets distans- och högre utbildningspolitik. För det andra, att en biopolitisk styrning av högskoledeltagande blir reaktualiserad genom ett självansvarigt subjekt, för det tredje, att distansutbildningens ideal bäddas in en nutida högskolepolitik och "öppen" styrningsregim. För det fjärde, att en liberal, produktiv och polariserande representationspolitik tar sig uttryck och bidrar till en styrning som är dominerad av liberala, "öppna styrningsrationaliteter, och slutligen, att "öppna rumsligheter" är en maktordning som griper in i distans- och högre utbildning. Jag vill här avsluta med att kommentera några av dessa resultat.

Diskurserna kring öppenhet omfattar en rad olika inslag, som politiska argument, geografiska utsträckningar och pedagogiska lösningar. Den styrning som talar om öppenhet verkar också indirekt, genom att reglera "system," "mål," "syften," och "processer" istället för att intervensera direkt i utbildningssystemen. Denna teknologiska och praktiskt inriktade styrning neutraliserar frågornas politiska natur (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 196), den ska enkelt kunna ta form i strategier, planer och projekt där individer, institutioner och system själva omsätter och signalerar sin öppenhet, flexibilitet osv.

I mina delstudier är det tre aspekter av öppenhet som behandlats: *expansion*, *flexibilitet* och *personalisering*. Hur dessa verkar kan enkelt beskrivas som; att expandera, sträcka ut, distribuera utbildning, som att nå 50-procentigt deltagande eller öka studentmobiliteten; att skapa flexibilitet och anpassningsbara kvaliteter, både i system, institutioner, pedagogik, som hos studenter och studenters lärande och slutligen; att personligt utforma och skapa ett involverande lärande genom IT-baserat, flexibelt lärande.

Expansion är en av de mer inflytelserika diskurserna och produceras genom en styrning kring utbildningsdeltagande. Snarare än att se expansionen som

avgränsad till en viss tid, och maxintag för ett högskolesystem, med ett nationsbaserat mass- eller universellt deltagande (Trow, 1974; Scott, 1998), vill jag poängtera den diskursiva dimensionen och hur genomslaget av internationalisering, globalisering och IT gör att expansionen i skala och omfattning är rekonfigurerad. En metodologisk poäng är att detta görs "lokalt," i svenska policies.

Idén om en öppen och tillgänglig högre utbildning, är en stark symbol för en biopolitisk styrning av högskoledeltagande. Lågt, ineffektivt utbildningsdeltagande ses som ett samhällsproblem i propositionen (2002, p. 22). Detta knyter också an till vidare, samhälleliga demokratidiskurser och förändrad välfärdsorganisering i det svenska sammanhanget, som signalerar inflytande och social inkludering genom "aktivt deltagande" som norm. På det sättet kan vi också se att den högre utbildningen blir ett medel får att nå vissa, angelägna offentliga mål. Som en del av deltagandestyrningen, har också vissa segment av populationer gjort till mål för insatser; "kvinnor" och "studieovana" är två sådana kategorier som förmodas ha vissa egenskaper och behov. Ett bidrag här är att mina analyser preciserar frågan om subjektivering och hur vissa segment av populationer konstitueras och exkluderas.

Distansutbildningens öppenhetsideal, att kompensera, jämna ut och demokratisera deltagande inom utbildning, blir en viktig del av styrningen för att förnya och "öppna högskolan." En tidsrumslig frihet, teknologi som distansöverbyggande och socialt inkluderande genus- och regionalpolitik ingår i denna maktordning. Öppenhetsidealet hör ihop med en svensk välfärdsmodell och idéer kring allas lika möjligheter och ett rättvist och representativt högskolesystem står modell för detta. Styrningen inkluderar också en institutionell organisering och flexibilitet, där innovativ pedagogik och att möjliggöra ett aktivt deltagande, inte minst via IT, ingår.

En av mina slutsatser är att med flexibilitetsstyrningen, så som den kommer till uttryck i bland annat 1992 och 1998 års utbildningspolitiska dokument, vrids innebörderna av öppenhet mot självansvar och en etiskt laddad självregleringsordning, med skyldigheter att vilja, eller att vara skyldig, att delta i högre utbildning. En av mina delstudier handlar också om hur IT och självteknologier integreras i denna typ av styrning, som framförallt sammanfaller med en neo-liberal rationalitet kring prestation, självövervakning och självbedömning av kompetens och insatser. I detta ska också kontroller och uppföljningen av den självreglerande individens resultat inbegripas. En särskild politisk ekonomi (Foucault, 1991b) bidrar till styrningen av det produktiva och

självreglerande lärandet som är tänkt att bli oberoende av campus- och lärarbaserad undervisning.

I förståelsen av governmentality, ingår liberal makt som en viktig del av hur styrning opererar, vilket gör möjligt självstyrning och självorganisering. Den svenska, offentliga diskursen kring öppenhet är signifikativ för liberal makt, som verkar genom positiva värden som frihet, möjligheter, frivillighet. Policytermerna kan ändras, är tänjbara och möjliga att konstruera på olika sätt, vilket också är en förutsättning för att styra högskolan. Plasticiteten möjliggör att termerna kan lånas till olika diskursordningar och syften. Denna representationspolitik och hur utbildningspolitiken ger namn och talar om högre utbildning – även om det är fiktioner, planer och tomma betydelser – gör något *i* och *med* världen. De föreslår och ger utrymme för vissa organiseringar och gör andra osynliga, eller otänkbara.

Diskurserna expansion, flexibilisering och personalisering ingår i denna väv, framförallt genom maktutövningar som subjektivering och spatialisering som jag visat. En ”öppen” styrningsregim riktar sig dels mot en liberaliserad, självreglerande och flexibel subjektivitet och dels mot ”öppna rumsligheter” för lärande och utbildningsdeltagande genom flexibla kvaliteter i högskolesystemen. Därmed skapas också nya intellektuella geografier som jag visat, de rumsliga räckvidderna rekonfigureras, och nya medelpunkter (och periferier) skapas, där högskolan som rumslighet blir differentierad.

Jag vill betona att det därmed inte är statens utsträckningar och styrningsräckvidd (se t ex. Dale, 2009) som är mest intresserant i min studie, utan hur den spatials styrningen aktiveras genom ett självstyrande subjekt och självorganiserande principer, till exempel genom IT och ”infrastrukturer”. Huruvida neoliberal maktordningar är mer inflytelserika eller bara ett mindre inslag i dessa ordningar kan diskuteras – ”flexibla val,” ”rätten att välja” osv., är inte entydigt med en ekonomisk logik. I ljuset av att governmentality-analyser ofta sett neoliberal styrningsrationaliteter som dominerande för samtidens utbildningspolitik, pekar min studie därför i en delvis annan riktning.

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APPENDIX

List of the empirical material

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