



Who, what and where is the bourgeoisie of today?

After twelve years of Social Democratic rule, Sweden have since September 2006 been run by a rightwing government. In this issue of Fronesis, we ask ourselves whether this political change entails a return of the bourgeoisie. Before we can answer that question, we need to know what "bourgeois" means today. Who is part of the bourgeoisie of the 21st century? And what is the difference between the middle class and the bourgeoisie? These political transformations and conceptual uncertainties are the point of departure for Fronesis no 24.

One way to understand the new bourgeoisie is to start in the changes of production and what can be seen as a "new spirit of capitalism". In an analysis of management literature, **Luc Boltanski och Ève Chiapello** search after the "new spirit" that permeates today's capitalism and bourgeoisie. It is a spirit that is more concerned with the alternative cultures of the 1970's, and their critique of hierarchies, rather than with the strict bourgeoisie of the fin-de-siècle that Max Weber referred to in his writings on the spirit of capitalism.

The question concerning who is part of the bourgeoisie creates uncertainty not only on the conceptual level: the uncertainty is also experienced. The bourgeoisie has always been anxious about its relation to other groups and social classes, but also about its internal differentiation, moral character and political future. This is manifested in various differentiating practises that are developed in order to position the bourgeoisie in relation to other groups. In her historical exposé, Orsi Husz examines how the bourgeoisie in Sweden has attempted to position itself towards the growing middle classes, using characteristics such as the privilege of education, wealth and lifestyle. Other forms of differentiating practices are discussed in Stephanie Lawler's analysis of the middle classes' disgust for the lower classes.

The bourgeoisie's relation to its surroundings is also discussed in Jakob Norberg's essay on the history of coffee. Using the German legal philosopher Carl Schmitt's conceptualisation of the bourgeoisie, Norberg illustrates how the life of the bourgeoisie is situated in the private sphere — thereby perceiving the rest of the world as a strange and dangerous place. The individual is narrow-minded in the sense that he (since the bourgeois subject during this time is primarily defined as male) is focused on his own well-being, and is unable to form a spirit of togetherness with others than his own family.

Finally we scrutinize the world as economist Richard Florida presents it. Can his "creative class" be seen as a new bourgeoisie? The creative class dissolves the classical division between the productive bourgeoisie and the bohemian — and thereby gives rise to a new creative subject that holds the future in its hand. Jamie Peck discusses the implementation of these ideas in contemporary

big cities, and shows how capital investments intended to attract the creative class to the city clearly prioritise an urban middle class and amplifies gentrification processes. On a similar note Camilla Elmhorn shows how the lifestyle of a new urban elite in contemporary Stockholm presuppose, and through demand generate, a service sector based on low wages. Here, it is often migrated women that provide for the demand for maids and domestic help.

Fronesis no 24 also includes texts by Jürgen Kocka, Werner Sombart, Max Horkheimer and others.

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