

# Globalization, Neo-Liberalism and Community Psychology

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**Abstract** A longitudinal analysis (1984–2005) of media language in Norway is presented, demonstrating how the current globalized capitalist market ideology is now permeating this long-established Scandinavian welfare state. This ideological shift carries powerful implications for community psychology, as traditional welfare state values of equal services based on a universalistic principle are set aside, and social and material inequalities are increasingly accepted. The methodology developed in the present study may serve as a “barometer of community changes”, to borrow a metaphor used by Sarason (2000).

**Keywords** Community psychology · Societal ideology · Ideological shifts · Market ideology · Welfare state

## Introduction

The ecological model (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998; Nafstad 1986; Pettigrew 1997; Prilleltensky and Nelson 1997) locates individual development, wellbeing, competencies, behavior and problems in a systems-within-systems model. The outermost system, the macrosystem, consists of attitudes, belief systems and ideologies of culture, as well as social norms and societal values. These elements of the macrosystem influence phenomena on the community and individual levels in a complex, dynamic interplay. This article intends to examine a facet of this interaction by investigating ideologies

and ideological shifts in Norway, traditionally a Scandinavian welfare state, with the presupposition that qualities of community, microsystems, and individuals are shaped by factors in the macrosystem.

Traditionally, individuals have developed their belief systems, understandings or *Weltanschauung* through social experiences within face-to-face interactions within the different micro and meso systems, although stories and traditions may be transmitted over generations. However, to a growing extent local community experiences and face-to-face relationships are now supplemented by indirect associations with others, such as the media in today’s “globalized” world (Baran and Davis 1995; DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989; McQuail 1994; Perse 2001). As Mutz (1998, p. 11) argues, one has to admit or recognize the increased compartmentalization “... of what we know through lived experiences in face-to-face interactions with those who are known to us, as opposed to through sources that are mediated by those beyond our experience or acquaintance.” Moreover, as Meyrowitz (1985, p. viii) asserts: “Where one is has less and less to do with what one knows and experiences” because media is continually “... changing the ‘the situational geography’ of social life” (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 6). Today, media in particular, operating in a globalized context, strongly contribute toward creating and shaping our ideologies, both as producers and mediators of these ideologies. In turn, these ideologies form and shape society’s and community’s service and welfare systems, which have a direct impact upon the people’s wellbeing.

Taking as a point of departure that in conceptualizing and understanding the world around us we are increasingly drawn into beliefs about the world that cannot be experienced directly in face-to-face interactions (Billig 1991), the present article provides an analysis of ideologies and

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ideological shifts in the public discourse in Norway as they are reflected in the language of Norwegian newspapers during the last two decades. More specifically, this study analyzes the impact of late capitalist ideology on Norwegian society, a well-established welfare society of the “Scandinavian” model. It maps out how the current globalized capitalist ideology of free markets, consumerism, and individualism affect, merge with or eventually replace the traditional local welfare ideology valuing social equality, social obligations, and the universalistic principle for distribution of common goods. The analysis will also capture potential resistance and counter ideological moves against the new, predominant ideology.

### The Concept of Ideology

The concept of ideology came into use in science around 1800 to describe the work of a group of French philosophers who were exploring the science of ideas (Wilson 1992). Within Marxism, the concept of ideology has a long history regarding the analysis of how society and its structures are established and sustained (Adorno 1967, 1968; Horkheimer 1972; Mannheim 1936; Marcuse 1968; Marx and Engels 1932/1976). The concept of ideology has also proved useful in the analysis of more specifically delineated social relations, such as power/powerlessness (Marx and Engels 1932/1976) and how people or groups in power impose veiling views of the world to prevent others from understanding that they are being oppressed and marginalized (Adorno 1967, 1968; Billig 1991; Prilleltensky 1994), or as Montero (1994, p. 5) formulates it: “By drawing a kind of cognitive veil over reality, ideology conceals and deforms it.”

Therefore, one may distinguish between two interrelated aspects of ideology: First, ideology can be understood as the common sense of a society (Billig 1997; van Dijk 1998), which consists of shared ideas, and is not necessarily coherent. From this perspective, the concept of ideology refers to: “... the ideas and thoughts that people hold, including both the form and content of their consciousness” (Sampson 1981, p. 731). Ideology can thus be understood as an “economizing device that incorporates a world view that legitimizes the existing order and provides a framework for a consensus of the general purposes of community life” (Wilson 1992, p. 19). A second aspect of ideology is hegemony, rule or veil by consent or accepted authority. Moreover, this concept also refers to the perceived legitimacy and often widespread support that a certain system, e.g., consumerism, receives from the public (Augoustinos 1999, 2006; Nelson and Prilleltensky 2005; Schwartz 2000, 2004). Hegemony involves the incorporation of subordinate groups into the dominant ideology,

often facilitated by the construction of alliances, and thus winning the approval of these groups (Fairclough 1992). Both the common sense and hegemony perspectives imply that ideology becomes to a large extent naturalized. This is in accordance with Eagleton (1991), who understands ideology as encompassing the thinking and acting that is usual in a given society, and entailing an uncritical acceptance of these ways of thinking and behaving as being “natural”.

A key psychological function of ideology, therefore, is not only to produce ideas and to explain reality, but also to legitimize the status quo regarding the natural way of living. This also involves explaining specific social purposes such as how public service institutions should be formed, for example, how solidarity with the chronically ill should be conceptualized and organized within community. Ideology therefore also serves as system justification (Jost et al. 2001; Prilleltensky 1994). However, as Montero (1994) points out, ideologies often lead us to accept social institutions, meaning structures and value systems which may imply serious deprivation for groups of people. Finally, it should also be noted that ideologies also may function to consign oppositional voices to silence. The concept of ideology thus in sum affords the opportunity for systematic analysis of how society and individuals define, experience, understand, justify and accept the status quo of social, material and political life. Our use of the term includes predominating ideas, beliefs and value systems, taking as our point of departure that the current global capitalist market ideology may have some negative effects on various sectors of community life and therefore for individual wellbeing. Thus we argue that the traditional spirit of the Norwegian society and therefore equal distribution of public services and common goods are most probably increasingly influenced by this global market ideology.

### The Globalization of Late Capitalist Ideology

Throughout the past several decades an increasing amount of people throughout the world have come face to face with and are likely to be influenced by late capitalist market ideology, which includes components such as globalization (Cowling and Tomlinson 2005; Sklair 2002), neo-liberalism (Harvey 2005), consumerism (Bauman 2000) and individualism (Bourdieu 1998). Each of these components can be viewed as ideologies in their own right. As instruments of an overarching ideology of free market capitalism, however, they are means of ever-increasing corporate power, gradually surpassing even that of nation states. This global free market ideology, moreover, is grounded in the power of multinational corporations

arguing for free trade by means of removing political and governmental rules and regulations that may inhibit the movements of goods, services, and capital across any border. Thus, the market increasingly replaces the state as the principal regulatory force in society (Touraine 2001). This contemporary variant of capitalist ideology therefore represents an unprecedented challenge to community psychology on a global scale due to this accelerating process of cultural convergence towards such a global meaning structure, with local customs, traditions and political arrangements losing ground (Friedman 2004; Reich et al. 2007). Thus, the modern individual finds itself in a world characterized by an increasingly pervasive globalized ideology of competition, self-fulfillment and consumerism, taking place within a so-called free market (Bauman 2000; Giddens 1991; Gledhill 2004; Nafstad 2002, 2005; Sloan 2005; Stiglitz 2002).

In summary, community psychologists, therefore, have to realize and take into consideration that the lives of people throughout the world, in particular in the Western cultures, are increasingly directed by this ideology of individualism, materialism, consumerism and competition. Not only material, but also social life is conceptualized as a market (Kasser 2004; Myers 2004; Nafstad 2002; Nelson and Prilleltensky 2005; Schwartz 2000, 2004). Each one of us is therefore ascribed a price or value in the market. Moreover, this ideology presumes that people's psyche in the end amounts to little more than the single individual's freedom to choose and compete, and to do so in such a way as to maximize the possession of one's own material and non-material goods. People are thus primarily conceptualized as entirely self-interested, competitive and independent individuals, in the end driven by asocial greed, while aspects of common goods and collective arrangements are left unconsidered and ultimately banished from the various social systems which constitute the individual's ecological environment. One may therefore be concerned about the potential loss of solidarity in society and community.

This neo-liberalistic market ideology may have positive effects for some sectors such as technology and economic interdependence (Arnett 2002; Cowen 2002). However, we will argue that in emphasizing above everything else the values of materialism, consumerism, individualism and competition, it is a threat that may dehumanize society, communities and individuals. First, this corporate-led globalization concentrates wealth and power in the hands of a few in which the principle of social equality is not valued. Secondly, as most psychologists will appreciate, the wellbeing of individuals is not based merely on self-interested consumption of their social and material surroundings (Nafstad 2002, 2005). Psychological research provides ample evidence that individuals are social beings with a genuine psychological sense of social solidarity,

justice and community (e.g., Fiske 1991; Sarason 1974). Thirdly, this variant of free market ideology affects the social contracts between the individual and the community in disruptive ways that can in fact radically change social, collective or common arrangements and 'safety nets' such as labor unions and welfare provisions within a community. The ideal of benefits identical to all members may be a value increasingly ignored.

### **Public Discourse in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Case of Norway**

Traditionally the Norwegian welfare state has valued social equality and social obligations higher than private materialism, self-interest and social inequality. The value and worth of citizens within the Norwegian political arrangements have not traditionally been ascribed on the basis of the individuals' purchasing power. Services such as health care, school and university education, extended parental leaves and pension benefits have been equally available to all according to the universalistic principle. Traditionally, the ideals of social justice, security empowerment, and community participation have been cornerstones in the Norwegian welfare state (Carlquist et al. 2007).

Our analyses will address questions of whether, due to the rapidly growing dominance of the current globalized capitalist ideology, the Norwegian society is undergoing substantial ideological changes which create a climate of legitimacy for increasing individualism and for social and material inequalities, which in fact renounce public care and responsibility for the welfare of society, community and others.

However, in a modern democratic society differential ideologies will exist side by side. Therefore, our analyses will also demonstrate counter-ideologies in the Norwegian society making resistance against the growing market ideology; advocating values that human beings should not be respectively conceptualized as individual commodities and consumers and that life is more than economic transactions and disposable income for individual consumer purchases.

### **Language and Ideologies**

Linguists, social scientists, and psychologists have for quite some time acknowledged the close and reciprocal relations between language and ideology. Today, it is primarily linguistically oriented anthropologists and discourse analysts that have endeavored to investigate this interplay. Using the deliberately ambiguous concept of "language ideologies", more or less specialized anthropological

traditions analyzing the interaction of language and ideology have evolved (for reviews, see Kroskrity 2000 and Woolard 1998). Within the multi-disciplinary field of discourse analysis, language usage is often studied in relation to ideology (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Fairclough 1992, 1995; Jaworski and Coupland 1999; Potter and Wetherell 1987; van Dijk 1998). Kroskrity (2000, p. 3) illustrates the fruitfulness of the connection between the two when he states that: “language ideologies provided an additional tool or level of analysis (Silverstein 1979) that permitted us to use the more traditional skills of linguistic anthropologists as a means of relating the models and practices shared by members of a speech community to their political-economic positions and interests.” Silverstein (1985) also emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between language and ideology: “the total linguistic fact, the datum for a science of language, is irreducibly dialectic in nature. It is an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms contextualized to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology.” (p. 220) It is this contextualization and mediation through cultural ideology which renders language, indeed even the single word (Blakar 1973/2006, 1979; Pennebaker et al. 2003; Rommetveit 1968, 1974; Rommetveit and Blakar 1979), into a potentially very precise and undisguised reflection of the society at hand, and its influence on the individual. The relationship between macrosocial structures such as ideology or culture on the one hand, and linguistic practice and the singular word on the other, is constituted by everyday knowledge. Such knowledge exists in the form of social representations which, although individually held, are shared between members of a group or society (Jovchevitch 2006).

The Russian linguist and philosopher Bakhtin (1952/1986) argued that social psychology is localized in the word, the gesture and the act. In the same way as Wittgenstein (1953) demonstrated how we obtain knowledge about human beings and society by studying language in use, introducing the analytical concept “language games”, Bakhtin (1952/1986) emphasized how we obtain knowledge about society by studying various “speech genres”. Furthermore, through concepts such as “symbolic domination” and models of “linguistic markets”, the French poststructuralists, in particular the sociologist Bourdieu (1977, 1991) and the philosopher Foucault (1972, 1980), noted the close and mutual interplay between societal ideologies and power relations on the one hand, and linguistic means on the other.

In summary, words reveal important aspects of people’s psychological and social worlds (Pennebaker et al. 2003; Rommetveit 1968, 1992). Moreover, changes in language usage over time reflect macrosocial or ideological developments (Blakar 1973/2006, 1979). In order to analyze

societal and cultural impacts on the individual, then, words and expressions are useful analytical units. They are empirical indicators of ideological change, and at the same time they are the instruments by which individuals make sense of the world. Word and language usage thus constitute a subject matter where the societal and the individual levels meet and merge.

To summarize, the purpose of the present study is to demonstrate how the (Norwegian) language—by far the most central tool in community psychology—over time has become shaped by the current variant of global capitalist ideology at the cost of the traditional welfare ideology. The study involves a descriptive, longitudinal investigation of ideologies and ideological shifts in Norwegian public discourse as reflected in the language of newspapers, with a particular focus on several core aspects of the current capitalist market world view:

- All aspects of life can be conceptualized and understood as markets, involving competition and commodification.
- The values of individualism and outright self-interest.
- The potential redefinition, through market forces, of the societal contract between the individual citizen on one side and society and community on the other.

## Method

### A Longitudinal Design

The study is based on a longitudinal design, mapping ideology and ideological shifts over time from 1984 to present as reflected in electronically archived media (newspaper) language (Nafstad and Blakar 2002, 2006; Nafstad et al. 2004, 2005).<sup>1</sup> In the present part of the study our aim is to assess changes in frequencies of usage of crucial search words to establish a kind of “barometer” concerning which ideological issues are at stake in society across a designated period of time, which indicates a quantitative design. Here we are thus primarily interested in describing ideological changes by means of shifts in frequencies in usage of special words reflecting core issues in current market ideology. However, a few qualitative content analyses will also be presented.

<sup>1</sup> The method is developed as a ‘mixed methodology design’ (Creswell 1995; Patton 1990; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998) in that aspects of both the quantitative and qualitative paradigm are combined throughout most steps of the process of assessing ideological shifts. However, in large scale mappings such as the present study, it is possible to adopt the method purely quantitatively, mapping changes in frequencies of newspaper articles using various key words over time.

## Materials: Newspapers

An increasing number of newspapers in Norway have been digitally filed and made electronically accessible by way of a comprehensive database (A-tekst) located on the World Wide Web. Thus, it is now possible to identify and trace a variety of changes in media language over time.<sup>2</sup>

To ensure representativeness, an array of available newspapers with differential profiles should be included when analyzing the current ideological situation. Various newspapers make different ideological contributions and reflections about society. However, given the way the electronic archives are established, as newspapers are gradually added over time, it is easier to ensure representativeness in synchronic analyses than in longitudinal or diachronic analyses. In 2005 the Norwegian electronic archive of newspapers covered 22 newspapers. However, merely one newspaper, the nation-wide *Aftenposten*, has been included from the very establishment of the electronic database in 1984. As it is most essential for the present study to cover as long a time span as possible, the analysis reported here is restricted to *Aftenposten*, which allows analysis across more than two decades (1984–2005). As our longitudinal analyses from 1984 onwards are based on only one newspaper (*Aftenposten*), its representativeness as an indicator of developmental changes in media language, is critical.

To assess representativeness, we correlate the developmental pattern identified in *Aftenposten* for each search word with the combined developmental pattern identified in the five other newspapers available in A-tekst since 1992.<sup>3</sup> Only search words for which the developmental trend in *Aftenposten* correlates significantly with that of the other five newspapers for the period 1992 through 2005, i.e., more than two-thirds of the total period we analyze, should be included.

As the total number of articles published each year varies, the number of articles identified containing a particular search word are adjusted according to the total number of articles published each year. This ensures that data are comparable before further analyses are conducted. The mean number of articles published per year during the full period (1984–2005) is used as the basis for adjusting scores for particular search words for each year. All numbers presented are adjusted numbers.

Percentages of changes in the usage of search words from 1984 to 2005 give an understandable expression of

the magnitude of changes over time. However, there are limitations in using mere percentages: First, for new words and expressions being introduced during the period, it is impossible to calculate percentage increase. Second, for words and expressions with infrequent usage, the percentage change may be several hundred. Third, the same percent of change may reflect very different developmental patterns over time, such as a gradual change over the whole period, an abrupt increase/decrease in a relatively short time period, or a more or less strongly fluctuating pattern. Fourth, percentage change for increase and decrease of usage functions differently: Decrease cannot exceed 100%, whereas there is in principle no limit to how many percent the usage of a word or utterance may increase. Fifth, and most importantly, it is difficult to compare magnitudes of change in newspapers that have been electronically available for different periods of time. To meet these obstacles we adopted the following unit to express trend change over time: ‘Estimated mean annual change’ (EMAC). To calculate EMAC we start with the slope of the linear regression line. To turn the slope into a measure that is comparable for different time spans and different absolute levels, we calculate a relative slope. To obtain the relative slope, rather than the absolute gradient of the regression line, one would normally base the calculation on the score of the first observation (the first year of the time series). As the score for the first year in our analysis may be zero (i.e., for new words that are introduced during the period), we have based our calculations on the average number of articles per year during the entire period covered in investigation. In addition to always being above zero, the average is more resistant to random fluctuation than any single measure. To obtain EMAC, we therefore divide the slope (change per year according to linear regression) by average score (average number of articles per year), and then multiply by 100, which gives us the mean annual percentage change.

Finally, a developmental trend can also be described in terms of how strongly the developmental pattern for a particular search word (the time series data) correlates with the annual time series itself (1984, 1985, 1986, ... 2005); this will give correlation with linear time.

## Supplementary Qualitative Analyses

As underlined, the present study is mainly quantitative by assessing the developmental trends of the frequency of usage of various search words over time. However, a few supplementary qualitative content analyses will also be presented. Concretely, content analyses were conducted to assess potential changes in the meaning context over time in newspaper articles containing either of two theoretically very central search words (‘anbud’ (bid for contracts) and

<sup>2</sup> The search procedures are described in detail in Nafstad and Blakar 2002, 2006; Nafstad et al. 2004.

<sup>3</sup> The five newspapers are *Bergens Tidende*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *Nordlys*, *NTB* and *VG*. These newspapers hold different editorial positions on political and ideological issues, and *NTB* is a press agency delivering articles to all Norwegian newspapers.

‘omsorg’ (care)) where the trend analysis did not reveal any systematic patterns of change in the frequency of usage over time.<sup>4</sup>

#### Materials: Search Words

How do we select search words? In principle, most words and expressions of the actual language (in our case Norwegian) might constitute possible search words for selection. With such a potential infinity of possibilities, it is a challenge to identify search words or profiles of search words that will enable one to expose special ideological influences upon language, which in the case of the present study is late capitalist ideology. The search words used to expose the neo-liberalist market ideology in the present study were identified by:

- Looking for words with conceptual and theoretical relevance to core values of market ideology, such as to buy, to purchase, to sell, customer, and so on. With specific reference to communities, we find it particularly useful to study words used by New Public Management, the most central neo-liberalist organizational model today aiming to improve service production to make it more efficient (Busch et al. 2001; Pierson 2001; Walsh 1995). Thus search words such as ‘bid for contracts’; ‘exposure to bidding’; ‘exposure to competition’; and so on are central.
- Looking for new words being proposed to label phenomena and/or processes introduced by neo-liberalist service practice. In this respect it was helpful that in Norway the language authorities (Språkrådet) publish a list of new words which are introduced each year.
- Looking for words and expressions—particularly newly introduced ones—counter arguing the neo-liberalist market model; thus indicating an ideological battle. Such words were often identified through the qualitative content analyses.

As can be seen in Table 1, the developmental patterns found in *Aftenposten* correlate significantly at .05 level for all but four search words and at .001 level for more than half of the search words.<sup>5</sup> We are confident, therefore, that the patterns of change in language usage that we have identified are representative of Norwegian media language, at least from 1992 to 2005. There should be no reason to assume a different situation in the pre-1992 period.

<sup>4</sup> These content analyses of newspaper articles containing either one of these two search words were conducted in 2005, and thus cover the period 1984–2004.

<sup>5</sup> Those four search words, which are all included for special reasons, will be discussed with great care.

## Presentation and Discussion of Results

### Life as a Market: Consumerism and Greed

Within a neo-liberalist market ideology, life revolves around obtaining and consuming products. Thus, above all, the rise of the neo-liberalist market ideology should be reflected by an increased focus on consumerism in the public discourse, which is likely to involve a growing media attention to the role of the consumer or customer. None if any other words or expressions capture the individual and pleasurable side of consumerism better than ‘*shoppe*’ (to shop) and ‘*shopping*’ (shopping). These two words, despite their Anglo-American origin, were several decades ago assimilated into the Norwegian language, and have since been an integrated part of everyday Norwegian. During the 22 year period 1984–2005, there was 1,050% increase in articles using the verb ‘*shoppe*’ (to shop) and 250% increase in usage of the word ‘*shopping*’ (shopping).<sup>6</sup> The developmental trend of both words correlates highly significant with linear time, with estimated mean annual changes (EMAC) of respectively 11.0% for ‘*shoppe*’ and 4.2% for ‘*shopping*’ (see Table 1). The usage of ‘*kjøpe*’, the more neutral and much more frequently used Norwegian word for ‘buy’ or ‘purchase’ covering all types of trade and commerce, not only shopping, also increased markedly (33%) during this period. However, since the developmental pattern for ‘*kjøpe*’ in *Aftenposten* did not correlate significantly with the developmental pattern found in the other five newspapers taken together; this search word was not reliable enough to be included in our analysis, in accordance with our pre-defined criteria.

However, even though the analyses reveal the strong predominance of consumer capitalist ideology, counter-ideological moves can also be observed. The introduction in 1988 of a new word, ‘*kjøpefest*’ (literally buying feast) is a prototypical expression of counter-ideological voices. From its introduction in 1988 it is by now a commonly used word (on average used 35 times annually in 2003–2005, with a peak in 2003). Moreover, a 36% increase in the usage of the word ‘*kjøpepress*’ (pressure to buy or purchase) is an indication of the same counter-ideological voice.

Billig (1999), in line with Bauman (2000), argues that consumer capitalism is characterized by a diminishing awareness of the productive origins of consumer goods. Further evidence for the effect of consumerism may therefore be found by investigating discourses of the opposite process of consumption, namely production. We compared our findings above with the development of the

<sup>6</sup> Percentage rates are corrected for variations in total number of articles per year contained in the newspaper/database.

**Table 1** The search words used in the longitudinal (1984–2005) analysis with number of articles observed in 2005, percentage increase/decrease since 1984; correlations (Pearson's  $r$ ) for developmental trends 1992–2005 between Aftenposten and the five other newspapers registered from 1992 on; correlations (Pearson's  $r$ ) with linear time (year); and estimated mean annual change (EMAC) for each search word

Search word	Adjusted no occurrences in 2005	Percent increase/decrease since 1984	Representativity Pearson's $r^a$	Correlation with linear time (year)	Estimated mean annual change (EMAC) (in %)
anbud* <sup>b</sup> (bid for contracts)	312	14	.38 ns	.01 ns	0.03
anbudsett* (exposure to bidding)	3	New	.74**	.39 ns	4.6
ansvar (responsibility)	4,539	–22	.93***	–0.53**	–0.9
bestemor på anbud (the tendered grandmother)	3	New	.88**	.11 ns	3.5
borgere (citizens)	402	8	.52*	.25 ns	0.5
brukere (users) <sup>c</sup>	353	43	.88***	.80***	3.1
brukermakt* OR forbrukermakt* (power of the user or consumer)	15	1,500	.49*	.61**	8.3
felles* (common; communal; shared)	3,318	–30	.90***	–0.79***	–2.1
giverglede* (joy of giving)	34	6	.72**	–0.40*	–2.1
grådige* (greedy)	117	86	.56*	.81***	4.4
grådighetskultur* (culture of greed)	1	New	.92***	.26 ns	7.9
jeg OR meg (I OR me)	21,935	44	.59**	.81***	1.4
karre til seg (grab for oneself)	4	9	.35 ns	.51**	5.4
kjøpefest (feast of buying)	21	New	.88***	.54**	8.4
kjøpepress (pressure to buy)	15	36	.73**	.38*	2.9
konkurransett* (exposure to competition)	67	New	.82***	.68**	9.0
omsorg* (care)	1,061	11	.20 ns	–0.53**	–1.1
omtanke (thoughtfulness; concern for the others)	99	–28	.48*	–0.73***	–2.5
plikt* (duty; obligation)	686	–30	.93***	–0.85***	–2.0
produksjon (production)	874	–44	.95***	–0.92***	–2.3
rettighet* (right; entitlement)	1,157	31	.60*	.64***	1.3
rovdyrkapitalisme (predator capitalism)	2	New	.58*	.52 ns	19.2
samhold* (social cohesion)	157	–36	.68**	–0.90***	–3.8
samhørig* (belongingness)	29	–68	.69**	–0.91***	–3.0
shoppe* (to shop)	138	1,050	.88***	.86***	11.0
shopping* (shopping)	210	250	.87***	.93***	7.9
skatteutt* OR kutte skatten (tax cut)	14	New <sup>d</sup>	.94***	.70***	12.4
solidari* (solidaritet)	291	–60	.79***	–0.85***	–4.7
stoppeklokkeomsorg <sup>e</sup> (care according to stopwatch)	12	New			
tidsklem* (time squeeze; time crunch)	62	New	.94***	.74**	10.5
turbokapitalis* (turbo capitalism)	12	New	–0.18 ns	.24 ns	5.9
ut på anbud (exposed to bidding)	141	86	.66**	.78***	5.1
utbrenthet* (burnout)	27	540	.89***	.78***	9.1
valgfri* (optional)	260	95	.85***	.34 ns	1.6
valgfrihet* (freedom to choose)	206	131	.84***	.29 ns	1.5
velferdssamfunn* (welfare society)	65	–60	.57*	–0.89***	–6.6

**Table 1** continued

Search word	Adjusted no occurrences in 2005	Percent increase/decrease since 1984	Representativity Pearson's $r^a$	Correlation with linear time (year)	Estimated mean annual change (EMAC) (in %)
vi OR oss (we OR us)	30,139	6	.49*	−0.16 ns	−0.1

The registration and retrieval procedures of this electronic media archive have been revised/improved several times since the present research commenced in 2002. Moreover, the 'rules' for what is included/not included in the archive has varied, e.g., according to authors' copyright. Therefore, over time, searches have produced marginally differing results for some search words. However, the overall developmental patterns have been the same

<sup>a</sup> To assess representativity, the developmental pattern over time of the frequency of usage identified in Aftenposten for each search word is correlated with the developmental pattern of frequency of usage identified in the five other newspapers available in the electronic archive since 1992 combined

<sup>b</sup> \* Means that the word string is searched truncated

<sup>c</sup> 'brukere' (users) and 'borgere' (citizens) had to be searched in plural to avoid other meanings of the word

<sup>d</sup> Not used in our baseline year 1984, but obviously not a new word or phrase

<sup>e</sup> Not enough observations (years) to calculate correlations

ns non significant, \*significant at .05 level, \*\*significant at .01 level, \*\*\*significant at .001 level

word '*produksjon*' (production), and found clear support for Billig's claim. '*Produksjon*' showed a marked decline (−44%) throughout the period from 1984 to 2005. This developmental trend is smooth, correlating highly significant with linear time, with an estimated mean annual change (EMAC) of 2.3% (see Table 1). Our analysis thus illustrates a subtle, but clear shift of discursive balance between production and consumption. Presumably, this change in language usage serves to naturalize consumption, at the expense of production. Psychologically, this may result in a 'collective forgetfulness' in society and communities; the productive origin of goods is increasingly ignored, thus legitimizing even more consumption (Billig 1999).

In his empirical analyses based on economic parameters, Thurow (1996) concludes that in addition to individual consumerism, greed has emerged as the ideological ideal or central cultural value within neo-liberalist ideology. Our analyses based on changes in Norwegian public language support this conclusion. The usage of the word '*grådig*' (greedy) increased by 86% from 1984 to 2005; the developmental trend is stable and correlates significantly with linear time with an EMAC of 4.4%. The usage of the more extreme and somewhat unusual expression '*karre til seg*' (grab for oneself) also shows striking changes in frequency of usage during the past two decades. The usage of this phrase increased more than 200% and reached a peak in 2000–2001 before the usage fell back almost to 1984-level. The introduction of a new word, '*grådighetskultur*' (culture of greed) is particularly interesting. The first occurrence in Aftenposten of this phrase was in 1992, and towards the end of the nineties this clearly counter ideological expression was in common usage (20–40 occurrences a year; the usage peaked in 2000). Two other noteworthy

critical expressions are that of '*turbokapitalisme*' (turbo capitalism) and '*rovdyrkapitalisme*' (predator capitalism), signifying that capitalism has gone too far or out of control. These rather special words were first introduced in 1997 and 2000 respectively, and has thereafter been used a few times (1–12) and (0–2), respectively, every year. We contend that these expressions along with an increasing focus on greed within the public discourse are indicating an emerging counter ideology within the Norwegian society arguing that this strongly increasing selfishness and egoism cannot contribute to wellbeing for the individual and the community (Nafstad and Blakar 2002, 2006; Nafstad et al. 2006, 2007). However, the counter ideology envisaged in these new words '*grådighetskultur*', '*turbokapitalisme*' and '*rovdyrkapitalisme*' constitutes a weak minority voice within the Norwegian society compared to the ideological pressure represented by the globalized capitalist market ideology that we have thus far seen reflected in shifts and changes undergone in current language usage.

#### Life as a Market: Competition and Tendering

Within a neo-liberalist ideology, the social and material world is also conceptualized as a system of exchanges and transactions, with the existence of free competition between citizens, businesses and institutions as another basic tenet. The shift from a social democratic, carefully regulated welfare state toward a free market ideology requires, therefore, new words to describe competitive situations and instruments, and most importantly how social relations are modified to accommodate a more competitive world (Nafstad 2002; Nafstad and Blakar 2002, 2006; Nafstad et al. 2006). One such word is '*konkurransesetting*', which in English can be translated



approximately as ‘exposure to’ or ‘opening up for’ competition.

In September 1995 this word appeared in *Aftenposten* for the first time. The introduction of this new linguistic construction signalizes an ideological shift in Norwegian welfare policy as in Norway a variety of services to the public have traditionally been offered exclusively by governmental authorities or local councils. However, ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ signalizes the neo-liberalistic turn, as mentioned, referred to as New Public Management (Busch et al. 2001; Pierson 2001; Walsh 1995) in which private-sector firms are now invited to compete for the operation of, for example, homes for elderly people in the community or local bus services, and the company with the lowest bid being awarded the contract. Its construction is therefore not coincidental, but reflects a fundamental ideological shift in social organization of the various spheres of people’s life in their community. This is seen in the fact that ‘*konkurransetsetting*’, today part of the common-sense vocabulary, was non-existent in *Aftenposten* until 1995, when it was used only once. From then on it was quickly established as a common word; estimated mean annual change (EMAC) was 9% and the developmental trend correlates significantly with linear time (see Table 1). This development not only reflects a shift towards a more individualistic market ideology, and subsequent justification of the new economic order, but also served to objectify and naturalize the word ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ as it rapidly entered lay discourse.

In a separate study of changes in language usage in the Norwegian public discourse adopting a qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles conducted within the present research program, Enkerud (2004) demonstrated how the neo-liberalist market ideology reflected in words such as ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ permeated in the health and social sector in Norway during the late 1990s. For example, newspaper articles containing both of the words ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ (‘exposure to competition’) and ‘*eldreomsorg*’ (‘care for the elderly’) appeared already in 1996, only one year after the word ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ was first introduced in *Aftenposten*. The increase of occurrences of such articles was rapid; in 2003, the last year included in Enkerud’s (2004) analysis, a total of 36 articles including both of these words appeared.<sup>7</sup> The qualitative content analysis revealed a marked change in context for the usage of ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ from the introduction in 1995 through 2003. In 1996–1997 articles were almost unanimously positive, explicitly arguing or

implicitly taking for granted that competition would improve the care for the elderly, and contribute considerably in cutting costs so that communities would save money. Some years later, in 2003, however, the evaluative context of such private organization of care was negative in more than half of the articles (Enkerud 2004). Making phenomena explicit by means of new words such as ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ enables resistance, critique and oppositional voices to lift the veil of neo-liberalist market ideology.

A commonly applied instrument for increasing competition is the use of competitive tendering. The traditional neutral and by far most frequently used word to describe tendering in Norwegian, is ‘*anbud*’ (bid for contracts). As can be seen from Table 1, there was no systematic change in the usage of this particular word. The correlation with linear time is close to zero, reflecting a developmental trend characterized by fluctuations during the two decades. A content analysis of articles including ‘*anbud*’ showed, however, that the context of this word changed during this period. In 1984 ‘*anbud*’ (bidding for contracts) mostly occurred in the context of private-sector business transactions, and with regard to public-sector purchasing of technical equipment. Twenty years later it was significantly associated with health and welfare service provision within communities.

This transformation was also reflected in language in that the more specific expression ‘*ut på anbud*’ (exposed to bidding) showed a marked increase (86%); developmental trend correlating significantly with linear time with an EMAC of 5.1%. Moreover, a new compound word with similar connotations, ‘*anbudsettelse*’ (exposure to bidding), was introduced in 1997. These latter expressions resemble ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ in that the preposition ‘*ut*’ (out) is applied. This very subtle element indicates that something is being metaphorically removed to the outside, i.e., out of the collectivity or public sector, shifting away from the traditional welfare state ideal of the same standard of service for each senior citizen, moving toward services depending increasingly more on the senior citizen’s own private economic situation.

Also within this field, our analyses identified words and expressions expressing resistance to the implementation of market ideology in the health and welfare sector. The expression ‘*bestemor på anbud*’ (the tendered grandmother; competitive bidding for [the care of] grandmother) is one such expression which became established in the late 1990s, and was used for the first time in *Aftenposten* in 2000. This expression signifies that even our most loved family members have now become objects of competition and free market forces. Another counter ideological expression, ‘*stoppeklokkeomsorg*’ (care according to stopwatch), was first used in *Aftenposten* in 2005. Thus, these

<sup>7</sup> A total of 117 newspaper articles including both of the words ‘*konkurransetsetting*’ (‘exposure to competition’) AND ‘*eldreomsorg*’ (‘care for the elderly’) appeared in the 10 Newspapers electronically available in 2003 when Enkerud (2004) carried out her analyses.

new expressions represent crucial elements in exposing and unveiling the predominant ideology.

#### Life as a Market: The Values of Civic Commitments

So far, our analyses of language usage in public discourse have, as expected, revealed the ideological portrayal of the Norwegian society as more market oriented and competitive. Such ideological developments will as we have argued be reflected in the attitudes and value systems endorsed by communities and individuals. The theoretical model of the market can be traced back to 1776, when Adam Smith wrote “*An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*” and postulated self-interest as the driving force behind economic development and successful societies. However, Smith did not assume, as current neo-liberalist market ideology does, that a society based on the market could exist, let alone flourish, solely on the human motive of self-interest. In “*The Moral Sentiment*” (1759/1976), Smith emphasized the social and pro-social aspect of human nature as a necessary element of a successful society; actually the most important moral dimension of the modern welfare society.

Our analysis reveals an unequivocal decline for a number of words and concepts which may be connected to communality in the Norwegian society. First and foremost, the usage of the word ‘*felles*’ (common; communality; shared) has decreased by 30%; the reduction in frequency of usage correlates significantly with linear time with an estimated mean annual change (EMAC) of  $-2.1\%$  during the 22 years period. Moreover, the usage of the words ‘*samhold*’ and ‘*samhørighet*’, both referring to social cohesion and belongingness, declined by 36 and 68%, respectively. For both of these words the reduction in frequency of usage correlates significantly with linear time with EMACs of, respectively,  $-3.8$  and  $-3.0\%$ . Similarly the word ‘*omtanke*’ (thoughtfulness; concern for others) declined by 28%; a significant negative correlation with linear time, with an EMAC of  $-2.5\%$ . The word ‘*giverglede*’ (joy of giving) was also reduced (see Table 1). These changes accelerated towards the end of the 1990s. Most thought provoking, during the same period, is that the usage of the word ‘*velferdssamfunn*’ (welfare society) fell by a notable 60%; this decline correlates significantly with linear time, with an estimated mean annual change (EMAC) of  $-6.6\%$ . All of these words and concepts refer to the pole of the social and natural contract Smith (1759/1976, p. 88) conceptualized as “... a natural love for society”.

Whereas the usage of words denoting and connoting communality and community has decreased, the usage of words denoting individual rights and entitlements, however, has increased. A strong indication of this shift is

demonstrated by a 44% increase of articles including either ‘*meg*’ OR ‘*jeg*’ (me OR I) which correlates significantly with linear time with an EMAC of 1.4%. On the other hand, the number of articles containing either ‘*vi*’ OR ‘*oss*’ (we OR us) has remained stable. This marked change toward me/I is clearly indicative of increased individualism; most likely connected to the discourse of rights rather than duties (see below).

‘I’, exerting my rights, presupposes visions of options and a freedom to choose. Interestingly, the usage of ‘*valgfri*’ (optional) increased by 95%, whereas the usage of ‘*valgfrihet*’ (freedom to choose) increased by 131% during the last two decades. However, trends for change over time for these two words do not correlate with linear time (see Table 1), as these marked changes in language usage took place more abruptly within shorter periods of time. The usage of ‘*valgfrihet*’ (freedom to choose) increased most during the first half of the 1990s, whereas ‘*valgfri*’ (optional) increased rapidly in the mid-1990s. The usage of both these words has reached a new peak during the last few years (2003–2005).

One can furthermore argue that for ‘me’ to realize ‘my options’ ‘I’ have to keep my resources for myself, therefore, ‘I’, the individual, cannot make a significant contribution to community and society. Not surprisingly, therefore, the usage of the word ‘*skattekutt*’ OR ‘*kutte skatten*’ (tax cut OR reduction of tax) has markedly increased. Of all the search words in the present study, this was the word with the highest estimated annual mean change (EMAC)  $-12.4\%$ .<sup>8</sup>

These last findings take us to the core of the social contract between society, community and the individual. A certain balance between the individual’s rights and entitlements on one hand and duties and responsibilities on the other, is required to ensure the wellbeing of the individual and the well functioning of society or community. However, this is a subtle balance. As the following findings will demonstrate, there is now reason to assume that predominant neo-liberalist market ideology has changed the current social contract between society and the individual in Norway in directions that may soon prove challenging for organizing community around the traditional solidarity principle.

During the last two decades the usage of the word ‘*rettighet*’ (rights; entitlements) has increased by 31% at the same time as the usage of ‘*plikt*’ (duty; obligation) has been reduced by 30%. The developmental trends of the usage of both words correlate significantly with linear time (see Table 1). Moreover, the usage of the word ‘*ansvar*’ (responsibility) has been reduced by 22%; the

<sup>8</sup> However, a marked decrease in 2005 may signalize a changing trend.

developmental trend also correlating significantly with linear time. Add to these findings that the usage of the word ‘*solidaritet*’ (solidarity) during the same period has been reduced by –60%. Furthermore, the above descriptions of the ideological shifts are underlined in that individuals are conceptualized increasingly as ‘*brukere*’ (users); the increase of the usage of the word ‘*brukere*’ has increased 43% and the developmental trend correlates significantly with linear time. At the same time there have been no systematic changes in the usage of the word ‘*borgere*’ (citizens) (see Table 1).

‘*Omsorg*’ (care) is a word of particular relevance when communities plan their policy for potentially disadvantaged groups such as the elderly or chronically ill. As can be seen in Table 1, this is one of a very few search words included where the developmental trend identified in *Aftenposten* does not correlate significantly with the five other newspapers registered from 1992 to the present. Moreover, only minor shifts are revealed in its usage (see Table 1). Nevertheless, a content analysis of articles including ‘*omsorg*’ showed that subtle contextual changes have taken place as the concept of care has become more institutionalized during this period. For example, ‘the ministry of health’ was renamed ‘the ministry of health and care’ in 2005. More generally, however, the differentiation between care for family members in the home on the one hand, and professional, institutionalized care on the other, has become more pronounced. Furthermore, instruments for care are more frequently mentioned towards the end of the 22 year period. This includes profit-maximizing corporations offering care services as well as quantitative measurements systems (“care points”). In summary, there is a conceptual development from care as an absolute and indisputable value towards institutionalization, instrumentalization and price-competitions of different parts of the care for the elderly, the chronically ill, etc. The earlier mentioned counter ideological expressions ‘*bestemor på anbud*’ (the tendered grandmother; competitive bidding for [the care of] grandmother) and ‘*stoppeklokkeomsorg*’ (care according to stopwatch) are obviously reactions against this development.

The introduction in 1995 of a new word, ‘*tidsklemme*’ (time squeeze or time crunch) also illustrates ideology shifting away from social cohesion toward more self-interested individual consumption. Norwegian, on a par with English has a variety of different ways to express that we are short of time; have too little time; do not have enough time; are too busy, and so on. Nevertheless, ‘*tidsklemme*’ was introduced as a new word. From its first occurrence in 1995, it has been integrated as a common word used on average 74 times annually in 2003–2005. This term portrays in a much more vivid way than e.g., “short of time”, the unavoidable “squeeze” of the self-

interested individual engaged in pursuing and consuming as many as possible psychological, social and material aims at the same time. Simultaneously, however, it signals a resistance to the prevailing ideology as it renders people “squashed” in their daily life, i.e., subjected to structural forces out of their control. This connotation points to an understanding of the aspirations of growth, speed and efficiency as backfiring, to the detriment of the individual. In this connection we might also note the extreme rise (540%) of ‘*utbrenthet*’, a noun referring to the psychological state of burnout.

Taken together the developmental patterns of the various search words give a broad description of how neo-liberalist market ideology is currently invading and taking control over the (Norwegian) language. Its impact on language, and thereby our thinking and acting as social beings, seems to be profound. However, it is also essential to note the counter ideological voices that have been identified. They are examples of local counter ideological expressions which offer means of resistance to the growing ideology of consumerism and profit, self-interest and greed. However, the intensity of the ideological battles varies over time. During the more than two decades covered by our analyses, efforts on behalf of “the offensive side” (neo-liberalism) can be seen in the late eighties/early nineties. During these years the frequency of usage of several of the prototypical neo-liberalist words experienced an extra increase. On the contrary, efforts on behalf of “the defensive side” can be seen in particular during the late nineties when counter ideological words and expressions were exploited more frequently than during the whole period examined.

### Limitations of the Present Research

A critique of the present study may be that we have been too quantitative in our approach to describe developmental trends and ideological changes within society. It is thus possible to argue that identifications of mere changes in frequency of usage over time carry little information about ideology if one does not also know the context of the search word such as whether or not the word in focus is used in a positive or negative context. However, we have two arguments, one pragmatic-methodological and one theoretical, in defense of the chosen strategy. First, in order to assess developmental trends over time in a reliable manner, a potentially huge number of articles containing the chosen search words have to be identified. A calculation based on the numbers in Table 1 demonstrates that in the present study more than one million newspaper articles containing one or another of the chosen search words have been identified. Having chosen frequency of usage as the approach, it is thus evident that it is impossible to carry out

qualitative content analyses of more than a million newspaper articles to assess the meaning context of the search words. More decisive, however, than this pragmatic argument for our choice of methodological approach at this stage is the fact that trend analyses of changes in usage marked by frequencies for various key words are, as we see it, indeed informative independent of the meaning context. To give an example, whether words such as ‘konkurransetsetting’ (exposure to competition) are used in positive or negative contexts, (marked) changes in frequency of usage demonstrate that the ideological issue, ‘exposure to competition’, is higher (lower) on the agenda in the public discourse. Naturally, it would have been valuable to know whenever ‘konkurransetsetting’ (exposure to competition) is used, is it being used in a positive or negative meaning context. Within our ongoing research program we are now pursuing these qualitative issues. However, we contend that demonstrating the launching of new words and expressions such as ‘konkurransetsetting’ (exposure to competition), ‘grådighetskultur’ (culture of greed), ‘tidsklemme’ (time crunch), ‘bestemor på anbud’ (tendering grandmother), and mapping out their frequencies of usage, in itself represents qualitative knowledge.

Another critical objection could be that we have presented the developmental trend of too few words. In order to conclude about the influence of neo-liberalist market ideology upon language, many more words should be analyzed as number of search words is critical to the validity of the description. However, we have, as argued, tried to select a variety of words representing core aspects of the welfare society and the neo-liberalist capitalist market ideology respectively. How many words should be included in the analysis is naturally open to discussion. However, we feel that by combining the selected search words we have managed to offer a useful description of the most salient and relevant ideological shifts within the field in focus.

## Concluding Remarks

Most people are now living in mass mediated societies, rather than in small communities in which shared ideas, values and worldviews are negotiated largely in face-to-face contexts. Thus, the media have become primary sources of taken-for-granted frameworks for the construction of our understanding of the world around us. Media provide “many of the communal resources through which people make sense of their situations and interactions with others” (Hodgetts et al. 2006, p. 520). It is therefore an essential task for community psychology to investigate and understand what kinds of ideological outlooks are predominant in the mass media.

The present study has focused on how the current global capitalist market ideology infuses local ones, in our case a Scandinavian welfare ideology. Our analyses have demonstrated how the rhetoric of neo-liberalist market ideology has increasingly gained predominance in the public discourse in Norway during the past two decades. The methodology we have adopted enables an assessment of ideological discourses and changes on the societal level, thus enabling community psychologists continually to obtain relevant information with regard to which ideologies individuals are exposed to and use to construct and make sense of their world. One of the founding fathers of community psychology, Sarason (2000), stated the need for developing barometers of community change. We contend that what we have presented through this study represents a first critical step towards establishing, to use this metaphor, such a potential barometer of change of community and society.

To conclude, although we acknowledge that the current variant of globalized capitalist ideology may have positive effects for some sectors, we contend that this ideology, to a certain extent, imposes a homogenized world view on all of us. It involves degradation of local determination and above all it legitimates social inequality, valuing concentration of wealth and power in the hands of few. This ideological situation is thus a threat for social justice and equal access to resources, services and common goods. Therefore, an increasingly important task of community psychology should be to explicitly argue for alternative values and worldviews based on solidarity and social equality. In this enterprise, or task of symbolic resistance, barometers for community changes, such as that which we present in this study, constitute a useful tool for the community psychologist.

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