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NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICIES: THE SWEDISH CASE

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ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this research is to describe and analyze the objectives of national cultural policy, based on the Government's cultural policy document (the cultural proposition), and thereby learn which are the areas covered by the national cultural policy and what is the role taken by the state in relation to that expressed in the policy document. For this purpose, the following research questions were addressed: Firstly, what goals, values and intentions are expressed and provided in the policy document at national level in the selected time period; secondly, what subject areas, actors, groups and individuals are highlighted in the selected texts and time period? Textual analysis was used as method and the strategy to relate the text to the author, as the interest was in understanding the Government's intentions. The results show that, with new opportunities, new challenges arise as do new demands. It is important that future cultural politics take into account these changes and are formed by taking advantage of the young generations' knowledge, values and cultural expressions. This paradigm shift, that citizens, in future will be active creators of culture, rather than passive recipients, is the notion envisaged by the state in the proposition. To conclude, the state's ambition sounds high, but what is political rhetoric and what is actually implementable cannot be answered by this study. Future research must give voice to users and creators of culture giving the answer to the question if there is a cultural policy for all citizens in all parts of the country.

Keywords: Cultural, Culture, Policies, Politics, Case, Sweden.

INTRODUCTION

Sweden is a parliamentary democracy, which means that the country holds general elections every four years and that a political majority rules the country. The Swedish Parliament, which has 349 members, is the supreme political decision-making body in the country. Sweden has three levels of government: national, regional and local. In addition, there is also the fourth level, namely the European level. The local councils, county councils and regional assemblies are the highest decision-making bodies at their respective levels. In this article the overall aim is to describe and analyze the national cultural policy objectives, based on the government bill/[Proposition. \(2009\)](#).

As culture is seen as an important part of a citizen's daily life the purpose of this study therefore is to identify the areas that Swedish national cultural policy covers and to understand the role of the state in this policy as expressed in the cultural policy document. For this, the following research questions were addressed:

Firstly, what goals, values and intentions are expressed and provided in the policy document at national level for the selected time period?

Secondly, what subject areas, actors, groups and individuals are highlighted in the selected texts and time period?

To give the reader of this article an understanding of the Swedish parliamentary system the model of local self-government is presented in the first section together with an overview of how public services are financed in the system. At the end of the section the model of aim and result steering used in the Swedish public system is briefly presented.

In the second section some thoughts on the concept of culture and the field of cultural policy studies along with the theoretical framework are also presented. In the third section, the empirical study is presented. This section is intended to give a perception of what goals, values and intentions are expressed and provided in the cultural proposition and what subject areas, actors, groups and individuals are highlighted in the selected texts and time period.

In the final section some of the conclusions made from the textual analysis of the proposition are highlighted and some suggestions for the future are made.

The Swedish System

The Government Offices are led by the Government and thus form politically controlled bodies whose work the Government directs and whose priorities it sets. Each year, the Swedish Government presents some 200 bills for approval before the Swedish Parliament. Some of these contain proposals for new legislation, while others involve major or minor amendments to existing statutes. The whole process of legislation involves several steps. The process commences with the Government's appointment of a committee of inquiry to look into the preconditions it wants to implement. The Government lays down the terms of reference for the committee, specifying the scope and nature of the issues to be addressed. On completing its assigned job, the committee drafts and submits a report to the Government, which is published in the Swedish Government Official Reports series. The report is referred to several agencies and bodies for consideration, as well as to the Council of Legislation which monitors the legal aspects. The Government then drafts a proposal, a bill, to present to The Swedish Parliament. The bill is reviewed and dealt with by one of the parliamentary committees. The Swedish Parliament then submits the bill to be voted on, and if approved, a new law will be promulgated? and published in the Swedish Code of Statutes. The

Government's annual budget spells out the Government's goals and allocates funds for the works of each agency, as also its requirements for feedback. The Government's bill or propositions are often large overall decisions that will impact on society for a long time. The focus of this research is on the Government's cultural [Proposition](#). (2009).

Agencies are subordinate to the Government and responsible for implementing public policies, overseeing the provision of many public services and discharging a range of regulatory functions. Every year, the Government takes a decision on the preconditions for the agencies' operations. At national level, cultural policies are formulated by the Ministry of Culture. The cultural policy objectives of 2009 state that culture has to be a dynamic, challenging and independent force, based on freedom of expression. Everyone is to have the opportunity to participate in cultural life. Creativity, diversity and artistic quality are to be integral parts of society's development. The Agency for Cultural analysis is a new authority that became operational on April 1, 2011. The agency's mission from the Government is to assess, analyze and present the impact of the measures, proposed and implemented in the cultural field on the basis of the cultural policy objectives.

Local Self-Government

Sweden is divided into 290 local councils, and 19 counties, including four regions. There is no hierarchical relationship between local councils, counties and regions, because they all have their own self-governing local authorities which are responsible for managing their mandate. In this research, the national cultural policies to be implemented at local and regional levels were analyzed and discussed. Local councils are responsible for matters concerning the residents of the municipality and their immediate environment. Their assignments are to render effective service production to their citizens, such as upholding legal security and developing democracy in their local councils ([Sweden, 2001](#)). National cultural strategies and policies are relevant to this article.

Financing Local Services

Swedish local councils, county councils and regions are responsible for providing a significant proportion of all public services to their respective citizens. They enjoy considerable autonomy and independent powers of taxation; they also decide on their own tax rates. The average, overall local tax rate is 30 percent, out of which approximately 20 percent goes to local councils and 10 percent to the county councils and regions. Tax revenues are the largest source of income to Sweden's local councils, county councils and regions and account for approximately two-thirds of their total income.

Grants from the State are either general or targeted. General grants, which are paid to each local council, county council or region, depending on the number of inhabitants, can be used on the basis of local conditions. Targeted grants must be used to finance specific activities, sometimes over a specific period. The average income between the inhabitants of Sweden's local councils, county

councils and regions varies significantly. The cost for the services provided to each inhabitant, as per the entitlement, also varies. To ensure fairness, and provide equitable conditions in all local councils, county councils and regions, the country introduced the local government equalization system, which entails redistribution of the revenues among the respective councils and regions on the basis of their tax base and level of expenditure. The equalization system is managed by the State.

Local councils, county councils and regions may charge the users for the services provided to them, but on no-profit basis, which means that the fees charged may not be higher than the cost of the service in question. If they are obliged to provide a service, they may charge only for that service, if specifically permitted to do so by the law.

Local councils, county councils and regions may procure services from private companies, and the activities carried out by private companies for this purpose are financed through public funds. Privately offered services that are financed by tax revenues must offer the services on the same conditions as those that apply to similar public services. In other words, the citizens pay the same charges for a service irrespective of whether it is provided by the public sector or by a private company (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and regions, 2012).

Management by Objectives

Christensen (2005) claims that the goal and result management model, which is being used in Sweden today, ideally and theoretically should take its standpoint from goals formulated by politicians, who in turn should reflect the needs and wishes of the citizens. This is executed in an administrative process of implementation and following ups in the system should demonstrate whether the objectives are achieved. These goals are often activity targets or performance indicators that have been aggregated into political goals. Research of implementation is a part of the broader approach, known as policy analysis. Policy analysis is about what happens in the administrative process when political reforms are implemented. Policies are decided on and implemented with actors having different perspectives and at different levels, such as state, regional, municipality and private. Premfors (1989) views policy as a chain of decisions to implement public policies or programmes. In the policy process, data can be collected, systematized, analyzed, and hopefully new knowledge developed afterwards. Ideally and in a traditional approach to management, there should be an unbroken line between the goals and intentions of the government and those decided through all levels by society until the user of the services meets the producer of the services, which in this case is the production of culture. Christensen (2005) speaks about shifts in objectives. The shifts occur when aims become obsolete because of strong social changes. Formal and informal norms and values emerge and become relevant to activities in public organizations. Sannerstedt (2001) claims that it is realistic to target goals, which are clear and precise without getting into conflict with each other, and easy to concretize.

The Concept of Culture and Cultural Policy

It is not easy to delimitate the concept of culture in a simple, unambiguous manner. Williams (1983) devoted much of his research tracing the historical development of the content of the concept trying to create a broad definition. Stanbridge (2002) claims that the concept of culture can change in meaning depending on who uses it, for what purpose and in which context. The concept is also linked to societal and ideological viewpoints and the meaning of the word 'concept' changes over time.

The field of cultural policy studies was perceived as a relatively new field of work in 1998 with a few broadly agreed definitions and no clear consensus regarding the nature and scope of its concerns. (Bennett, 1998; Bennett, 2005; Bennett, 2007), besides others (Gibson, 2010), has set the agenda for cultural policy studies.

According to Lysgard (2012), the differentiated, discursive understanding of the cultural political field shows that the problem with culture-based planning is that it simultaneously includes social planning, urban planning, planning of art and creativity/dissemination and economic planning in a single field. Moreover, the motive for planning ranges from economic to social and artistic reasons and the scope of planning includes spatial organization and architecture. In conclusion, it is not necessarily cultural activity or cultural production that serves as the foundation for or as the goal of local cultural policy and cultural planning. It is therefore argued that cultural analyses must include the many different questions that address how culture is produced, consumed, represented and regulated in addition to how it contributes to creating and changing identities Lysgard (2012).

As a comparison to the Swedish case in this article, an example from another western country can be mentioned. Development of local cultural strategies was recommended to all local authorities in England through publication of a guidance document, namely 'Creating Opportunities' by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 1999). Encouraged by the Government, a local Cultural Strategy was adopted and performance indicators developed. Furthermore, the local authorities formalized and published the plans for strategic development of their cultural and culture-related services. They recommended a broad definition for culture. Also a recognition of the value of partnership working within localities, regions and sub-regions according to which the lead role is of local authorities. Gilmore (2004) argues that the DCMS's definition of culture encompasses a wide range of cultural activities and cross-cutting themes, such as social inclusion, economic development, environmental sustainability and place-making and marketing objectives. These suggest potential intervention or co-ordination with a commensurate range of services such as educational and social services, community development, local procurement and transport.

In the Proposition. (2009), it is stated that the conception, in its broadest sense, can be said to contest all aspects of human life, meaning everything that is created or processed by man. In other

contexts, the concept can be understood as values, rituals, traditions and life patterns that are used to understand, interpret and give meaning to one's existence in society or among a group of people. When the concept is given a narrower meaning, it is said to cover art's different forms of expression, such as literature, dance, music, visual arts, theatre and architecture. Even the concept of culture heritage is described in various ways. One way to describe is to say that it is all about traditions, languages, artistic and historical relics, archives and collections of objectives and cultural environments and cultural landscape that are transmitted from one generation to another.

Johannisson (2010) argues that the division between the aesthetic concept of culture that is focused on the exercising of culture and the acquisition of traditional arts and the anthropological concept of culture that focuses on people's overall situation of life are well documented. She also believes that, in Swedish cultural policy, the anthropological concept of culture has been used primarily to convey a citizen's perspective where the conditions for peoples participation in the aesthetic-oriented offerings and people's own cultural exercise are prioritized. The present study may shed light on whether this distinction can be seen in the strategic policy documents of this study and how it is expressed.

As a theoretical framework, theory of citizenship has been found to be useful. A citizen may be described as a member of a political community or a state, who has certain legal, social and moral rights, duties and responsibilities. Citizenship is a political concept with a variety of rights and responsibilities in a given political community. These rights and responsibilities change over time as the result of social struggle, economic change and shifts in governing ideology. The idea of a citizenship is built on people's equal value and equal opportunity to take part of and influence public activities. Even though citizenship can mean different things in different nations it also has a broader sociological and historical meaning that is universal (Pettersson *et al.*, 1998).

Methodology, Implementation and Analysis

Policies are decided and implemented at different levels in society and with different actors who interact with state, regional, municipal and private initiatives. The division of responsibilities can be unclear and therefore the results are often different from the expected. The workflow in this research began with collection of the empirical material, followed by reading, systematizing and processing it. The processed material was compiled and analysed in terms of the research questions and the themes found in the material and presented within the section cultural political fields and actors.

The empirical data in this study is a public document, that is, the cultural proposition. It is a political document developed in a political context. To answer the research questions, it is of interest to study what ideas, arguments and intentions concerning society are presented. An idea can be a mental construction, a conception of reality as a value of something, a phenomenon or a political idea of how to act or how to prioritize.

The work with the texts involves examination of the contents of the texts which have been done with textual analysis. The focus in textual analysis is on who is speaking in the text, who is the sender speaking to, and how the texts are adapted to the situation. In this research, it was interesting to study what the text expressed and what intentions were conveyed and how something was valued and depicted. It was also of interest to find concepts and/or complete sentences, words of meaning, expressed arguments, and priorities given to different ages or groups of individuals and identified actors.

Alvesson and Skoldberg (1994) claim the strategy for analysis consists in relating the text to the sender and the surrounding context. In this research, it was of interest to study what reasons a text could give for a certain perception, and how those reasons strengthened or weakened each other. Hellspong (2001) argues that language and texts have different functions, one of them being to give a picture of the surrounding reality. If the language is used to express an opinion, inform about something, or to execute an act or ask a question, then it is a social relationship. In this study, the speech acts of the texts, and the attitudes and kinds of interactions that the text wanted to bring the reader into were analyzed. Gustavsson (2004) argues that a textual interpretation occurs in two steps: in the inner textual interpretation, different parts of the primary text are related to each other and in the contextual interpretation, the primary texts are related to secondary texts and then a contextual interpretation made in different steps. In this study, the inner textual interpretation was made in several steps and then the contextual interpretation. The strategy used in this study was to relate the text to the sender because the interest is to understand the Government's intentions.

Bergström and Boréus (2000) discuss about how the premises of the argumentation and meanings of the reasons that a text highlights, are so obvious that they do not need any justification. For a better understanding of these premises and the perspective that the text had as its standpoint, the text was set in a larger context. It was interesting to identify the conditions under which certain arguments were selected, and some aspects were ignored by the texts, besides the reasonable and feasible action norms expressed by them, if any. More concretely, and to answer the research questions, it was interested in identifying what areas cultural policies cover and in making visible the role taken by the state as expressed in the cultural policy document.

Some criticism of the method has been the method's ability to display the unspoken, which one reads between the lines. Another reflection concerns the methods and possibilities of capturing the meanings of words and phrases, the variations they acquire with different senders and over time, and the strength of the text which is public, official and visible for the reader to reflect on.

Cultural Proposition (2009/10:3)

This section of the article presents the empirical study, which is structured to include cultural political basic assumptions and values, cultural aims and intentions, cultural political fields and

actors and identified groups or individuals. In the section Cultural Political Fields and Actors, the themes found in the cultural proposition are presented.

Cultural Political Basic Assumptions and Values

A number of strategic considerations and a set of core values of the Swedish Government are visible in the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#). For example, it is argued that material and financial considerations need to be taken into account against intense human, social and cultural values. With such an approach, the Government believes that cultural policy can contribute to spreading and establishing a humanistic society. The [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#) contains clear basic assumptions that *all* shall have the possibility of participating in cultural life and that “Citizens with disabilities shall be considered in all governmental initiatives in the cultural field” (p. 29). The justification provided by the government is that citizens with disabilities are less likely to be engaged in cultural activities than are the average citizens. It is also concluded that “The technical development has for example brought totally new possibilities when it comes to increasing the accessibility for citizens with disabilities” (p. 17).

Throughout the proposition, it is stated that cultural policies in particular should pay attention to children and young people’s right to culture. “Cultural policy should provide conditions for children and young people across the country to have access to cultural activities and cultural offerings of diversity and high quality” (p. 32). I interpret this as an argument from the government to strengthen the possibilities for citizens living in a geographical and socio cultural differentiated country such as Sweden to take part of cultural activities ([Petersson et al., 1998](#)).

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), it is argued that freedom of culture must be safeguarded and promoted, and that culture, with freedom of expression as its foundation, shall be a dynamic, challenging and an independent force. The Government’s policy is that cultural politics should consider cultural and aesthetic values in all areas of public decision-making. References are made to the Convention of Childs Rights which provides children the statutes and the right to freely participate in cultural and artistic life. What cultural policies means to democratic society is emphasized by the government thus: “The fact that many different experiences, thoughts and stories are collected and reflected on is a prerequisite for a living democracy” (p. 22). It is worth noting that the Government throughout the proposition have seen it as important to establish their proposals in international conventions and within the Swedish constitution.

The starting point of the cultural policy is culture’s intrinsic value and role in society. In the proposition it is expressed as follows:

The value of a rich and diverse culture that is given space to develop and which is accessible to all is in itself a quite sufficient reason for the government’s involvement. The legitimacy of the

cultural policy does not need to be sought in the possible effects it may have in relation to other policy objectives (p. 17).

In the quotation above, it can be seen that government expresses culture's intrinsic value as the fundamental value of the cultural policy, but in the proposition other perspectives are also seen.

For example, the Government considers culture and creativity essential to other areas of society. The areas mentioned in the proposition are rural development, international sporting events, the hospitality industry and a special initiative that has begun to recognize the importance of culture with connection to the citizen's health. In addition, the Government argues that aesthetic and artistic considerations in urban planning make our lives interesting and alive. The Government reiterates in the proposition that the mission of cultural politics is not to benefit culture, but to enable culture to develop on its own terms and from the stand point of cultural self-worth. However, in the proposition it is highlighted that the government has actually implemented a number of measures to strengthen the cultural field by advocating the linking of culture with other sectors in the society, such as business, regional growth and international exchange. This is in addition to how [Lysgard \(2012\)](#) argues about that cultural policy and cultural planning must include many different questions addressing how culture is produced and consumed.

In the proposition, the Government gives the reasons for presenting the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#). It is stated that the changes in society and the emergence of new circumstances require that the cultural political goals be reviewed and adapted to today's society. One example is the availability and use of the Internet. Arguing that it can be noted in summary that access to the Internet has led to a series of changes in how people take part in, create and spread culture. The Internet has created new spaces for cultural experiences, expanded cultural offerings, high availability and increased possibilities for dissemination and marketing opportunities. Moreover, it is argued through the Internet global contacts, increasing possibilities for narrower genres of culture, new possibilities for individual participation and creativity and increased consumer and citizen participation.

In the proposition it is seen that the Government have noticed both changes but also new economic conditions for the production of culture (See also ([Lysgard, 2012](#))). The Government state that new opportunities arise, but also new demands and difficulties. This is something that cultural politics have to take in consideration much more in the future to fulfil the aim that *all* shall have the possibility of participating in cultural life. However, a cultural sector only tax-funded is considered inadequate by the Government, it is considered positive if the element of non-public funding increases in Sweden. From the textual analysis of the aims of the cultural propositions and from perspective of theories of citizenship one would agree, that this seems to be the only way to fulfil the ambitious aims and intentions.

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), it is also clearly stated that it is considered positive if financial responsibility for the culture sector “ ... / are shared between public and private funders and volunteers” (p. 13). A reason for this is that opportunities for development and independence of the culture sectors will be strengthened by this, and with reference to that, the proportion of sponsorship and non-profit funding of culture is much higher in other countries. From research it can be argued that this is customized for the Swedish field of culture market.

In the next section, some of the cultural aims and intentions found in the proposition will be presented.

Cultural Aims and Intentions

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), the government proposes the following national political cultural goals. “Culture shall be a dynamic challenging and independent force with freedom of speech as a foundation. Everyone shall have the opportunity to participate in cultural life. Creativity, diversity and artistic quality shall characterize the development of the society” (p. 26).

To achieve these objectives, it is stated that cultural policy shall facilitate *all* citizens to experience culture and education, and to develop creative abilities. Moreover, to promote quality and artistic renewal, one has to promote a living culture heritage that shall be preserved, used and developed. To promote international and intercultural exchange and cooperation, special attention has to be paid to children and young citizens’ right to culture. Furthermore, it appears that the new cultural policy objectives are national and that they steer the governmental cultural policies, besides inspiring and guiding cultural politics of local government.

The government states in the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#) that cultural politics shall have the perspective of citizenship, and that no citizen shall feel excluded from taking part in cultural life. All of that in the line with theories of citizenship ([Pettersson et al., 1998](#)).

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), it is stated that Sweden has recognized five national minorities and five minority languages and their particular rights. In the proposition, the Government refers to the European Council’s framework, the Convention for Protection of National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the ([Language Act . 2009](#)). The five national minorities are Swedish Finns, Jews, Tornedalers, Romans and the Sámi peoples, and the five minority languages Finnish, Jiddish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Sámi. By law, all those who belong to a national minority are given the opportunity to learn and develop and use the minority language. It is argued in the proposition that no citizen shall feel excluded from the cultural life or not invited to participate or influence, due to social, religious or ethnic background. Furthermore, the principle of non-discrimination shall be the guideline. This can be interpreted as that the Government has held that legislation is the best way in which national minorities can be guaranteed

their rights and that it is also needful with special attention paid to a proposition as that will give a guarantee for resources allocated in the budget.

The government also believes that cultural policies should promote international and intercultural exchange and cooperation as the following quotation show. “The society’s internationalization provides the cultural life with better opportunities to develop and to interact and deepen the relations with other countries” (p. 31). In the proposition it is stated that the cultural sector is an important builder of bridges in different policy areas. A statement that is in line with theories of citizenship. For example, [Meer and Sever \(2004\)](#) argue that people define their citizenship in many different ways, in relation to the local, national or global community. Citizenship is both a status or an identity and a practice or process of relating to the social world through the exercise of rights/protections and the fulfillment of obligations.

In the next section, the political fields and actors found in the proposition will be presented.

Cultural Political Fields and Actors

In the proposition, the government highlights that the politicians’ mission is not to define the cultural conception, although it has been done since the cultural political proposition of 1974. It was clearly stated that, for practical reasons, it was hardly possible to take a stand in defining the cultural policy from an overly broad cultural concept. Although it is emphasized that the limits are always exceeded, renewing the main focus on cultural policy is considered to support the efforts directed toward cultural heritage in areas of words, scenes and tone..

The proposition specifies and identifies a number of areas which the Government wants to prioritize. One such area is called the creative school, which is the Government’s initiative to develop culture in the Swedish school system.

Other substantive areas were identified in the proposition, such as music, dance, film, crafts, art, theatre, museums and archive activities, libraries and reading, imaging and designing, cultural heritage, world heritage and cultural environment, cultural and creative industries, internationalization and intercultural work and finally the field of culture and health.

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), the Government announces that the scope of the creative school will be expanded, because culture is an important resource for preschool and school. Furthermore, the Government argues that children and young people be given opportunities to contribute creatively in cultural activities, within the daily school framework, in cooperation with the professionals in cultural life and thus achieve the school’s aims of knowledge. In the proposition, one can also read that the Government suggest allocating resources for the purpose because of the importance of a school system that can contribute to the ambition of culture for all citizens. As earlier quoted and mentioned, this proposition gives the impression that the government have a special focus on

providing conditions for children and young people across the country to have access to cultural activities and cultural offerings.

Music, Dance and Film

Realizing the increasingly widespread interest in music, the Swedish Government argues in the that “A new platform for music can contribute with a national overview and to build up competence ... /” (p. 62). This led to the establishment of the Music Development and Heritage of Sweden with the ambition of promoting a variety of a musical selections characterized by artistic renewal and quality. This is an example of how the Government in a system with goal and result steering choose to centralize parts of the activities in the cultural field to guarantee the fulfilments of the national aims. Another example found in the proposition is dance.

Throughout history, people have been seeking the art form of dance. The majority of Sweden’s population has been engaged in dancing; so, in the proposition, an ambition is expressed that all those who live in the country side shall have the possibility to participate in cultural life and be able to exercise the art form of dance. The Government has been proposing to invest in professional dance, so that more people would be able to take advantage of dance as an art form. This is borne out by the establishment of The National Institute of Dance in the school at Luleå University of Technology, in 2009.

In the proposition, it is stated that it is possible for every citizen having access to the Internet to choose from several cultural expressions. The demand for film, music, art, books and exhibitions and other cultural expressions has never been so huge. Computer programs and technical equipment for movie recording have become easier to use and cheaper to buy, thus creating more possibilities for the new technology to become more creative. From that perspective, it is argued that the Internet culture has strengthened and broadened the cultural field and the whole of society. From the analysis of the texts, one can interpret that the Internet can actually contribute to the fulfilment of the statement of intent of culture for *all* citizens.

Crafts, Art and Theatre

Handicraft and crafts are a part of cultural field, but there is hardly any mention in the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#) about Government’s ambitions in that field. In the Swedish school system, craft is a school subject, and in the proposition it is noted that handicrafts are often “... / seen as activities on the sideline to other school subjects” (p. 69). The National Board for Handicrafts has the overall responsibility of dealing with questions related to crafts. This is reflected in the Government’s proposal in the proposition that, for the development of handicraft and crafts, the board should be involved in an extensive way along with several other authorities.

Opportunities to culture creators for supporting themselves in their work and the conditions for creation of art are the central issues of the cultural policy and something that the Government has to

work on. "It still remains urgent to pursue active politics for the artists. That means, for example, the State gives economical support to professional artists, so that they periodically can be engaged in artistic development in economically secured forms" (p. 24). Furthermore, it is stated in the proposition that the copyright is of great significance to artists' freedom and possibilities of earning an income, and that the conditions to earn an income, through new experiences in art and culture, improved significantly. It can be interpreted from the analysis of the proposition that state funding to professional artists is important for those working in local councils, county councils and regions within rural areas or other areas such as socio economical areas with less income from tax payers and less possibilities for sponsorship.

One understanding is that different Swedish governments have been observant of this. During the 1930s and 1940s, a number of cultural reforms were made in Sweden. In 1933, the National Theatre was founded with the purpose of spreading the best performing arts throughout the country. The National Theatre's tasks today are to be supportive to regional and local theatre groups and to contribute to their development. One can see from the proposition that Sweden's theatre habits have been relatively stable during the last decade and that it is also the Government's intention that "All who live in our country shall have possibilities to participate in the cultural life and have the possibility to experience dance, music, theatre" (p 16). Next some words about the museums and archives and their role in society.

The Museums and Archives Activities

The Government argues that museums have a crucial role in building, managing, and disseminating knowledge about cultural heritage. It is proposed in the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#) that the seven provincial archives be phased out and information relating to their activities incorporated in the archives of a unified government organization, namely the National Archives. The government's justification behind this proposal is that a new authority with a different structure can contribute to better and effective coordination of the operations. At national level, there are two official museums: The National Museum and The Modern Museum. Several regions and local councils also have their own museums. In the proposition, the Government envisages that the Modern Museum, as a central public museum, should be a support for local museums.

The Government entrusts special missions to the Swedish Mountain and Sámi museum to document and spread awareness among the public on how current climate changes impact on a mountain environment, and cultural and natural environmental values. Again an example of how the Government with a goal and result steering system choose to centralize parts of activities or in this case give special missions to guarantee the fulfilments of the national aims. Next, we will examine another example - the library system.

The Libraries and People's Reading

The Libraries promote literacy, education, lifelong learning, and culture, besides information dissemination. In the proposition, the Government considers that libraries are important resources for society and that there is immense potential for their development in future. In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), the Government calls upon the State to assume the overall responsibility for the libraries, and the Royal National Library to coordinate the library system as a coordinating authority. The Royal National Library is currently responsible for preserving national heritage by collecting, preserving and providing what is pressed in Sweden. That is, they make it possible to read and study everything that is printed or published in Sweden, including books, journals, reports, newspapers, pictures, posters and ephemera, such as mail order or theatre programmes. In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), it is pointed out that libraries are an important social resource and that there is a great potential for their development in future. The libraries embrace the [Library Act. \(1996\)](#). Compared to other areas, in Sweden such as in healthcare or in the school system the field of culture and leisure has few legal regulations. The Library Act is one of them, however, this analysis of the proposition strengthens the impression of the necessity of state inventions in different ways such as promulgating new laws, establishing new authorities or providing funding for the quality of the cultural sector.

Image and Design and Cultural and Creative Industries

In the proposition, the Government writes about the cultural heritage and the importance of cultural environment in creating good living conditions and strengthening the human and historical perspective of work with sustainable development. The significance of cultural heritage in the development of democracy, and the importance of cooperation across national borders are also highlighted in the proposition. It is argued within the proposition that Sweden has strengthened its efforts for the UNESCO's Convention for the Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage. [Lysgard \(2012\)](#) argues that this is the problem with culture-based planning simultaneously including social planning, urban planning, planning of art and creativity/dissemination and economic planning in a single field all imbedded in the ambition of environmental sustainability. However, the concept of sustainable development or sustainable growth appears only in a few places in the proposition may seem surprising because of the difficulty associated with the balancing act which often requires many players seeking access to valuable areas, such as world heritage or other valuable cultural environments.

One part of the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#) also deals with the design of the shared environment and the public spaces in the environment, such as parks, plazas, playgrounds, schools and preschools. Here, the Government proposes collaboration between various governmental authorities and agencies. The Government states that "A special child and youth perspective shall particularly be taken into account" (p. 77) but there is also a hope of strengthening citizens' perspective through increased role of environment in the development of the community as a whole. "People living in

the area, and others using the current environment, should have the possibility to make their voices heard” (p. 79).

The purpose of the Government initiative is to strengthen the quality of the built-up and landscaped environment through interaction with citizen’s perspectives and needs. The government argues that such an interaction can provide a holistic approach that includes social, city-plan related, cultural, historical, architectural, artistic and other aspects. [Lysgård \(2012\)](#) claims that the reason for planning ranges from economic to social and artistic reasons, this is an example of that.

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), it is stated that the Government proposes to focus on cultural and creative industries and allot funds to them for a three-year period. This is because the Government’s assessment is that cultural and creative industries contribute to regional growth, employment and competitiveness, and in the long term to Swedish welfare. Furthermore, the Government argues that the cultural field contributes to promote the attractiveness of the regions and therefore the potential of the cultural field should be utilized and developed both nationally and regionally. “A vibrant demand on culture and well maintained and developed cultural environments is of great importance for the tourism industry locally, regionally and nationally” (p. 73). This is an example of how the Swedish Government search for economic development and marketing objectives through activities in the cultural sector in all parts of the country, see also [Gilmore \(2004\)](#).

World Heritage and Cultural Environment

In the [proposition \(2009/10:3\)](#), it is mentioned that a variety of actors are involved, in one way or another, in the cultural field. Analyzing the proposition these actors are seen at all four levels, namely: municipal, regional, state and European levels. In some cases, actors’ operations are mentioned globally. This can be interpreted as an expression of the impact of globalization on society. “The Government has, through a variety of efforts, stimulated the internationalization of Swedish cultural life” (p. 80).

Sweden’s entry into the EU in 1995 is stated, in the proposition (2009/10:3), to have been of great significance for Swedish cultural policy. Reference was made in this regard mainly to the EU’s Culture Article (No: 151), UNESCO World Heritage Convention and UNESCO Convention on the promotion of cultural diversity. In the proposition, mention was made of cultural awareness and cultural forms of expression as the key skills of EU. These key skills are considered necessary in a knowledge society for personal fulfilment, active citizenship and employability.

In the proposition (2009/10:3), internationalization and intercultural cooperation are cited as priority tasks for cultural politics and to develop strategies in this regard, a number of guiding principles are given. These include internationalization of different areas in the cultural field, continued development of authorities, international and intercultural exchange, collaboration

among different political areas and active participation in the works of cultural political causes of the EU, UNESCO and Nordic cooperation. The Government provides, as an example, a long-term goal within the European Commission. The European Parliament, European Council and UNESCO bring in the child and youth perspective within the existing programme of cooperation in the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World's Natural and Cultural heritage. "A long term goal is through actively work with the European Commission, European Parliament and the Council will enter a child and youth perspective" (p. 84). From the analysis it can be argued that many of the goals and intentions of the proposition are based on international conventions and ambitions and on European and international cooperation. These goals and intentions are an expectation from the authorities of people's active citizenship as well as of people being a part of the society more globally in a form of global citizenship.

Culture and Health

A very small part of the proposition (2009/10:3) illustrates the relationship between participation in cultural activities and improved health. In the proposition, it is argued that those who often go to cinema, theatre and museums generally have better health than those of the average population because of biological and psychological reasons. The Government refers to the on-going work in local councils, regions and county councils on how arts and culture can complement the more traditional methods in healthcare and public health work. As examples in this regard, mention is made of dance and music as a resource for healing processes or dementia and cultural experiences for pain relief. As this seems to be important to the Government actually very little is said about it. This can be interpreted as the authors not having enough information about cultural activities and improved health to make clear statements and intentions.

Identified Groups or Individuals

In the proposition (2009/10:3), a number of groups or individuals in groups were identified such as elderly people, different professionals in the field of culture, citizens living in different areas of the country, minorities and citizens with disabilities. However, as mentioned earlier in this part under the heading 'cultural political basic assumptions and values', children and young people's needs and opportunities to take part in cultural activities are frequently seen in the proposition and they are of high priority for the government. "It is therefore a certainty that cultural politics are designed so that it also takes advantage of the young generation's knowledge, values and cultural expressions" (p. 16). This refers to access to high quality professional culture, as also to their own creativity. The premise is that children and youth culture can be defined as culture, with and by the children and the young.

As the following quotations show, it is also clear in the proposition (2009/10:3) that the government takes upon itself the task of discouraging people from feeling excluded or uninvited to take part in cultural life. "Nor should factors like age, sexual orientation or disabilities prevent people from actively participating in cultural life" (p. 23) and "Regardless of age, gender, any

disability or ethnicity, socio-economic or religious background ... /” (p. 19). The conditions under which the citizens prefer to take part in cultural life depend on their area’s geographic location, population density, population structure, and need for extra support and stimulation through additional resources. Elderly people’s possibilities depend on whether they live in urban or rural areas; the same holds good for middle aged and young families too. Opportunities for children and young people to take part in cultural activities depend on age, residence, parent’s education, the school they go to, and in some cases, parent’s finances too.

People with any kind of disability are less involved in cultural activities than the average person. This has been consistently taken into account in the proposition.

CONCLUSIONS

Culture is not a major political area in Sweden, and government’s expenditure on culture is less than one percent of the state budget. Yet, there is no doubt that the Government’s ambitions in the proposition are high. The results of textual analysis indicate, on the contrary, that the conditions for creating a cultural life of the highest degree throughout the country is directly or indirectly dependent on political decisions, which can even be considered a prerequisite to achieving the objectives of cultural policy in all the regions of Sweden, including both urban and rural areas.

The outcome of the Government’s ambitions expressed in the proposition depends on how well the cultural political goals have been implemented and how well the providers have been aware of those goals [Lipsky \(1980\)](#) and [Schierenbeck \(2003\)](#). Objectives can also be understood from the perspective of the producers of culture, as also from the receiver’s or co-creators’ perspective. However, this study cannot answer what is political rhetoric and what is actually implementable and developed.

Some idea of how well the cultural political goals and aims were fulfilled can be obtained by evaluations in which users and/or co-creators of cultural services can share their experiences of influence, participation and accessibility. To be critical, from that perspective, the statement made by the Government in the proposition (2009/10:3) seems to be self-contradictory where it is stated that the content in culture and art cannot be steered by political decisions, but by society through well-organized cultural policies that can create conditions favorable to strengthen cultural life which develops and thrives on its own terms.

[Christensen \(2005\)](#) speak of the offset of goals which occurs when the goals become obsolete because of sweeping changes in society. Formal and informal norms and values emerge, which are relevant to activities of public organizations. In the proposition, development is reflected by how people participate, create and disseminate culture in completely different ways than before. It is said that Internet created new space for cultural experiences and new possibilities for individual

participation and creativity. Changes in information and communication technologies affect the entire culture sector and the Internet has strengthened and broadened the citizens' perspective not only in the field of culture but also in other areas which affect the whole of society.

To sum up, with new possibilities, new challenges occur and also new demands. It is important that future cultural politics take into account these changes and take advantage of the young generations' knowledge, values and cultural expressions. Because of this paradigm shift, it is envisioned in the proposition that future citizens will be active creators of culture, rather than passive recipients. An ambition from the Government is also seen in the proposition about to meet these changes. The State's ambitions are extensive, but what is political rhetoric and what is actually implanted could not be answered by this study. It is suggested that future research must give a voice to the users and creators of culture which might provide the answer if there is a cultural policy for *all* citizens.

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